## Our Savior's Lutheran Church

## Newsletter

December 2023

www.oursaviorschurch.info

## HEAR IT, FEEL IT, LIVE IT, SHARE IT - GOD'S LOVE

Dear siblings in Christ,

I'm sure y'all have noticed, but each year, at exactly midnight the day after Thanksgiving, certain radio stations will switch from whatever their normal lineup is to play exclusively Christmas music. And this will go on from the day after Thanksgiving until midnight of Christmas day. This music is ubiquitous: it shows up literally everywhere we go this season. We'll hear it in Nilssen's as much as at Target. We'll hear it in our cars and on radios at work. And one of the things that's always gotten me (because, trust me, I love Christmas music) is that it seems there are only about a dozen songs to be played. A dozen songs, sung a thousand different ways.

I saw a word that described that recently. It was called the "Christmas Canon." 'Canon,' not the military weapon but instead a word used to describe something legitimate or authoritative. Our scriptures are our Christian canon—our accepted authority of what counts as scripture. There is also a description of a legitimate side story in things like the Star Wars Universe or the Marvel Universe—to be 'canon' means they are officially accepted as part of the wider story. There are only so many Christmas songs because this "Christmas Canon" is a very exclusive list. And what really shocks me is that many of the songs on the list were only written about fifty years ago! Some of them even less! Which means the Christmas Canon can be changed.

I think that's important. Because the Christmas Canon is this weird cultural phenomenon that all of us, from the Midwest to the Deep South, from New England to California, all of us agree on. We all sing the same songs this season. We all agree which ones are properly part of the canon and which ones are unfortunate attempts by celebrities to get their name onto the list. The fact that it can be changed means that there is a list of things we can all actually agree on. And also, we all have certain Christmas songs that we just don't like, but we still accept them as Christmas songs! It's strange, but the Christmas Canon is a wonderful example of what it means to be united in Christ!

Because Christ calls a motley band of people together, doesn't he? We all come from different backgrounds and hold different opinions. But we all proclaim Christ as Lord. We all look forward to the coming of Christ and anticipate him in this Advent season. And we may be discordant at times, we may have our differences of opinion, but at the end of the day, we have to accept that we are all Christians—even the ones we don't like! And that kind of unity that accepts the fact that unity doesn't mean uniformity is exactly what we can learn from the Christmas Canon.

So the next time you're driving down 530th and you hear "Jingle Bell Rock" come on the radio, you can remember that there is someone in West Texas driving down a similar road, listening to Jingle Bell Rock as well, and the both of you know that this is a Christmas song. And you sing, together, so far apart, because you know the lyrics. Even if you don't know each other, you know the song. And when you proclaim Christ as Lord, and sing Joy to the World, you can know that someone somewhere far away is singing it too. And even if you don't know each other, you are united in the fact that you are both Christians

May we find the kind of unity as Christians in this Christmas season that we find in our Christmas Canon. And may this season remind us to love our neighbor, even when we don't like them, because God has put us together for a greater purpose.

In Christ,

**Pastor Lucas** 

God calls us to the waters of baptism, and as we enter the months ahead, keep in mind the following dates that are open for baptisms.

December 17th, January 14th, February 11th, March 30th
Contact the Office if any of these dates would work for your family.

#### AN UNPRECEDENTED GIFT

## Advent and Christmas Greetings from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

Jesus is God's **unprecedented gift of love** for a world in great need. Friends, we live in unprecedented times. The word "unprecedented" means *never done or known before*. In

Christmas is celebrating Jesus as the gift we didn't know we needed because our human brain can't imagine God's generosity.

recent years we've heard of the <u>unprecedented</u> effects of climate change causing more powerful hurricanes and devas tating wild fires. We lived through an <u>unprecedented pandemic</u>, and we lament the <u>unprecedented death toll from mass shootings in our country</u>. We worry about the stability of our democracy after an unprecedented political insurrection at our own capital. At times it feels as though we are reeling from one unprecedented disaster to the next. How do we live as people of faith in this time and place? How do we put our Christian faith into action?

What if we countered with unprecedented goodness?

This is a true story of unprecedented goodness.

On March 23, 1847, at a meeting in Skullyville, Indian Territory (Oklahoma), a group of tribal members from the Choctaw Nation, missionaries, and traders heard the news about what was happening far away across the Atlantic in Ireland, the Great Famine. The result was an unlikely, **unprecedented friendship between the Choctaw and the Irish**. Historians estimate that more than a million Irish people died between 1845-1851 from hunger and hunger related diseases. The Choctaw, deeply moved by this story of people they have never met, collected \$174, an incredibly amount of money considering the Choctaw's own poverty due to the fact that they had been forcibly removed from their land by the U.S. government by an unprecedented act of cruelty just a little over ten years earlier. At the time of the donation many Choctaw were living in poverty with inadequate house and food. One historian writes, "It is difficult to imagine a people less well-positioned to act philanthropically." Records show that the donation was sent to New York City to buy grain and food that was shipped across the Atlantic. Seven Irish newspapers published an account of the

Jesus also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. <sup>3</sup> He said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. <sup>4</sup> For they all offered their gifts out of their wealth. But she, out of her poverty, put in everything she had to live on. Luke 21:2-4

generous Choctaw. Why were the Choctaw so compassionate and generous? Why are we so surprised by their generous gift? Perhaps the Choctaw and the Irish were connected by their common experience of colonization, mistreatment and suffering.

Ireland had been colonized by England and forced into a land tenure system that enabled English landlords to gain profit from the Irish tenants farmers while leaving the farmers destitute. Tenant farmers raised crops to pay the landlord's rent and to feed their own families

they grew potatoes. A disease, blight, to the potato plant caused the famine. The English refused to help and often blocked aid to the Irish.

The Choctaw were forced from their tribal territory by the U.S. government when President Andrew Jackson signed the

Indian Removal Act in 1830. The Choctaw were tricked and threatened into ceding 25,000 square miles of their land in Mississippi and were forced to walk 500 miles to Indian

Territory now Oklahoma. Thousands of

Choctaw died during that winter's blizzards from disease, and starvation walking what is now called the Trail of Tears and Death. With that memory still in their lived experience, the

"We are never too poor to give or too rich to receive." <sup>2</sup> a favorite proverb of Bishop Joseph Bvumbwe, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malawi

Choctaw had compassion and collected money (\$174) to be sent to those who were also suffering a great injustice 4,000 miles away in Ireland. It was truly a gift of unprecedented goodness, unprecedented generosity.

This story was largely forgotten until 1990 when an Irish writer uncovered it and began to connect with the Choctaw in Oklahoma. It began by Irish citizens joining members of the Choctaw to walk the Trail of Tears and members of Choctaw traveling to Ireland to join in a commemorative Famine Walk. Later there was a visit by the Irish prime minister to Oklahoma and in gratitude for the earlier gift offers of scholarships to pay for Choctaw students to study in Ireland.

God sent Jesus into our broken, fallen world. Jesus is God's gift of unprecedented love. Jesus is a gift we desperately needed and did nothing to deserve, a gift we could never repay, a gift that transforms our despair and gives us hope. Advent/Christmas 2023: May this season inspire us to give generously to those who have experienced injustice and live with great need in response to God's unprecedented gift of generosity to us.

In Jesus' name, AMEN

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson



Advent, Christmas and Epiphany blessings to you from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson, Synod Ministers, Elizabeth Bartsch, Sara Villarreal Bishop, Diane House, Lidixe Montoya, Randy Olson, Laura Ramlow

## Mary the Brave: Mary the God Bearer

As a young pastor and working mom, I struggled with the challenges of balancing work and home life, often

while carrying a child in my womb, arms, on my hip, in a front or back baby pack, or car seat. Now my children are adults, and I have the joy of watching them carry my grandchildren. They do it differently than I did, their car seats are much nicer than the ones we had, but like us, they carry their children with much love. I still carry my adult children and grandchildren and will always carry them, in my heart with much love. This Advent and Christmas season I'm reflecting on Mary, the God bearer. (In Greek it's Theotokos².) Mary carried Jesus. Like all parents she carried her child with love, but she is also the God bearer. It was a brave thing Mary did to bear God into the world.

To love is a brave thing. It is a brave thing to become a parent. Mothers put their own lives at risk bearing a child in their womb and giving birth. It requires a measure of bravery for parents to bring a child into this world filled with the bad news of climate disasters, gun violence, war, political upheaval, racism, food/water insecurity, and escalating health and higher education costs.

Luke 1: 26ff In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you... "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, ... the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God ... For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

History has painted Mary to be quiet, meek and mild, submissive to God's will, but a closer read shows us that Mary was brave. Mary was neither meek nor superhuman.<sup>3</sup> She had grit. She was faithful, courageous, strong and brave. Most of all, she was human. Her encounter with the angel Gabriel, the messenger of God made her brave. She knew that her pregnancy was dangerous and she could die giving birth. She also knew that as an unmarried teenaged mother it would cause upheaval in her family and community. She would give birth to Jesus during Roman occupation, a time of political unrest. Mary was *brave*. Her encounter with the living God made her brave

Her encounter with God gave her bravery and the faith to see that if God was calling her God would also protect her. It revealed to her that God chooses the people on the margins, those overlooked and underestimated. Bearing God in the world was to bring good news and hope to those oppressed. May Mary, the God Bearer, inspire us all to be brave!

This Advent and Christmas season, I invite you to be Theotokos, God Bearers. I invite you to carry the good news of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection to all those we meet on this journey of life and the love of Jesus in your hearts always.

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Robert Munsch, *I'll Love You Forever*, Firefly Books (September 1, 1995)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Since the 3rd century, Christians had referred to Mary as theotokos, "God-bearer." The first documented usage of the term is in the writings of Origen of Alexandria in AD 230. <u>Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God | uCatholic</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Mary the Brave: Neither Meek nor Superhuman - CBE International

## Our Savior's Council Meeting Minutes

### November 7, 2023

**Call Meeting to Order:** President Tim Wiff at 7:00 PM.

Attending: Debbi Pittman, Jill Rosenberry, Pastor Lucas, Lanette Place, Donna Constant, Ron Halverson, Mike Rehbein,

Tim Wiff, Audrey Severson, Ann Young, Mark Jensen, Patricia Peterson

Absent: John Traun

**Opening Devotions:** Pastor Lucas lead a discussion of the accidental death of an 8<sup>th</sup> grader in the community. Reading: 1Thessalonians 4:13-18. Pastor reminded us he is here to help any of us with the grieving process.

#### **New Business:**

Approve Agenda: Patricia made a motion, seconded by Ann to approve the November 7, 2023 agenda. M/C Money Counters & Tech Asst: Nov. Ann & Audrey December- Lanette & Audrey

#### **Old Business:**

Lutefisk Supper: Approximately 600 meals were served, including 466 dine-in, 45 take-out orders, and 85 workers. A huge Thank You goes to Gina Place for chairing the Lutefisk supper and to all the Youth that helped out at the supper. It was all very much appreciated!

Insurance Check for Roof Repairs: Lanette made a motion, seconded by Donna, to move the roof repair insurance money check into the CCF money market account until needed, in order to earn more interest. M/C

Light up the Fair: The council previously voted to open the fairstand on the second weekend only, due to the cold weather. Donna reported that better heaters have been offered. With that in mind, Lanette made a motion, seconded by Pastor, to amend the October motion so that we will have the fair stand open both weekends. Pastor then amended that motion, seconded by Audrey, to include that the money will be evenly split between the youth account and the fuel bill. M/C The Youth will be asked to sign up to help at Light Up the Fair, and those hours can be used toward their service hours. Ron graciously offered to put up the lights on the fairstand for the event.

#### Secretary's Report-

Lanette made a motion, seconded by Donna, to approve the October 3, 2023 council meeting minutes as presented by Jill.

#### **Treasurer's Report-**

Designated Account \$153,393.25 (this includes the insurance check for roof repairs)

General Account \$272.19 Money Market \$33,573.50 \$187,238.94 Total

Debbi will cancel AT&T accounts now that we have Swift Current.

Lanette made a motion, seconded by Patricia, to accept the Treasurer's report as presented by Debbi. M/C

Pastor's report- Pastor Lucas highlighted a number of events from the month of October. Pastor will lead Coffee and Conversation on Monday, November 13, at 10 am. The topic will be the conflict in Israel, the history of Israel and Palestine, and what are we called to do. Pastor Lucas' full report is on file.

Youth Report- Patricia provided a printed report highlighting upcoming events. Many of our youth participated before or during the Lutefisk supper. The youth received \$400 from the sale of Lutefisk t-shirts. The Candy Walk will be on December 9. The full Youth Report is on file.

#### Committee Reports-

Worship Committee: It was decided that since Christmas Eve is on a Sunday, Christmas Eve services will be at 9 am and 4 pm. There will be no Christmas Day service. The beginning of Advent will be November 26.

Property Committee: The ballfield will have extra piles of dirt. They will check to see if any is wanted at church.

Donna advised there will be rocks mixed in.

**Evangelism Committee:** The Christmas Gift Box program tree will be put up November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Sunshine Crew: Thanks to all that helped make and deliver lunches to all the farmers field workers. 80 lunches were delivered.

#### Conflict Detection-

There have been issues with the sound for the Live Stream services. Patricia will talk to Keith about it and try to remedy the problem.

Pastor prayed with us. At this time, the Council went into Closed Session: 7:57 pm

Adjourn- Lanette made a motion, seconded by Donna, to adjourn, following our Closed Session. M/C 9:00pm

Closing Prayer-The Lord's Prayer Next Council Meeting: December 5, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by Jill Rosenberry

Men In Mission Meeting - November 11, 2023

After breakfast served by Dave Jordahl and Donna, the meeting was called to order by President Mike Rehbein,

The secretary's report was read and approved.

Reporting for Treasurer Tom Holdorf, Clair said we have \$3480 in the Luther Point Bible Camp fund, \$22,513 in the fair stand fund and \$3201 in the General fund. Motion made by Bruce P./Bill B. to approve the treasurer's report.

#### Old Business:

Bruce read thank-you notes received from Pauline Laughnan's and Julie Henthorne's grandchildren from their camping at Luther Point.

Donna reported on the ball park progress. Excavation costs for the north of the stand will cost between \$3000 and \$3500. There will be plastic wall coverings in the bathroom. The urinal will be returned and replaced with a waterless urinal. Wall covering for the stand has been selected and will be applied soon. We have about \$13,000 left in the ballpark stand improvement fund. The profit from the concession stand last summer was \$3196.

Motion made by TimW./Clair that the ballpark electric bills continue to be paid by the MIM general fund.

#### New Business:

Clair reported that we have \$22,513 in the fair stand fund. If we hold back \$3000 for next year's start up money And \$2200 for upcoming maintenance, we would be forwarding \$17,300 to the church for outreach ministries. Motion made by Dave J./Donna C. to do so.

Donna talked about proposed fund raisers.

Light up the ball field with lights along the fence. Lights would be bought at \$10 a bulb, White lights for those in-memory-of and blue lights for those in-honor-of. The LED lights would be donated. Motion made by Tim W. and Bruce P. to do so.

Also proposed was the selling of church ballpark league sweatshirts on-line.

Oyster stew scheduled for January 28, 2024. CHURCH WILL BE ONE HOUR LATER ON THAT DATE. Bruce will apply for the Thrivent Action Team money. We will have our three additional soups; chicken-wild rice, vegetable beef, and chili. There will be take-outs. Motion made by Brian J./Clair to do so.

Proceeds from the coffee hour tomorrow will go to the fuel fund. (We raised \$193.)

Coffee hour in December will feature cookies from the UCC cookie sale.

Next MIM meeting will be January 20, 2024 with Tim Wiff and Bruce Place serving.

### **Stewardship Focus – Care of Talents**

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10

During the months of November & December we are acknowledging many of our God given gifts and talents. Take note of the overhead screens during the offering collection of our worship services.

Let's all be thankful & celebrate the vast talents & December we are acknowledging many of our God given gifts and talents. Take note of the overhead screens during the offering collection of our worship services.

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<u>FOOD PANTRY NEEDS:</u> The Pierce County Food Pantry continues to need certain items. For the month of **December;** we will be collecting;

Canned Corn, Hamburger Helper, Tuna Helper, Canned Pineapple, and Ramen Noodles.

Please put the items in the grocery cart in the back of the church.

Thank you for showing your concern. Money donations are accepted as well. Did you know that every dollar donated can purchase \$7 worth of food? Online donations can be made @hungerpreventioncouncil.net, call 715-273-2070 or to arrange a food drive sponsored by your family or organization.

Lets help end hunger in Pierce County.





<u>Operation Christmas Child:</u> A big thank-you to all the members for making it possible to bring 116 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. To all of you, have a Blessed Holiday Season.

Peggy Hoyer

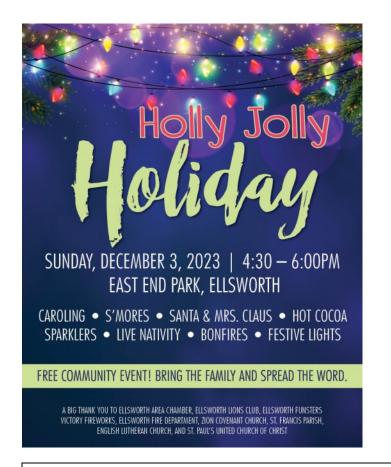


#### Please continue to pray for the following people;

Larry Young, Dean Mewes, Fred Hoyer, John Paape, Wayne Peterson, Eldon Schellfeffer, Mary Jo Bjork, and Kristen Anderson.

If you know of anyone that should be on our prayer list please contact the office.

The names will be on the prayer list for two weeks unless specified.





Salvation Army Bell Ringing: Looking for a way to get into the holiday spirit? Ring bells for the Salvation Army. Shifts are typically 2 hrs and can be scheduled from 4 to 6 at Nilssen's grocery store during the week by calling Rita at 715.307.0570. To ring bells on Friday or Saturday at Nilssen's or the creamery they can sign up by calling Rita at 715.307.0570 or register online at Register to Ring <a href="https://www.registertoring.com/zip.aspx">https://www.registertoring.com/zip.aspx</a>.





# **DECEMBER**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Altar Guilds: Rhoda Foley & Belinda Foley Money Counters/ Tech Assistants: Lanette Place Audrey Severson					1	2
3 9am Worship/Livestream 10am Fellowship Hour 10-11:45am Sunday School Hour	4	5 7pm Council Meeting	6 7-8pm Youth Night	7	5-8pm Light up the Fair	9 8am-1pm Candy Walk 5-8pm Light up the Fair
10 9am Worship/Livestream 10am Fellowship Hour 10:30am Christmas Program Silent Auction Ends	11	12	13 4-5:30pm S.O.S. Kids Crew Christmas Caroling 5:30-6:30pm Family Meal 7-8pm Confirmation	14	5-8pm Light up the Fair	5-8pm Light up the Fair
17 9am Worship/Livestream No Sunday School Hour 10am Fellowship Hour	18	19	20 7-8pm Confirmation	21	22	23
24 Christmas Eve 9am Worship/Livestream 4pm Worship/Livestream	25 Merry Christmas!	26	27 No Quilting No Confirmation	28	29	30
31 9am Worship/Livestream No Sunday School Hour 10am Fellowship Hour	Happy New Year!					

	Greeter's/Ushers	Tech Assistant	Acolyte	Reader	Bell Ringer	Communion Server	Assisting Minister
Dec. 3rd	Keith & Julie	Mary Lundstrom	Luke Lundstrom	Kay	Roger	Bruce	Lanette
9:00am	Lundstrom	Audrey Severson	Matt Lundstrom	Berg	Laughnan	Place	Place
Dec. 10th	Tim & Jodi	Chase Unser	Eli Stockwell	Clair	Roger	Audrey	Ann
9:00am	Wiff	Lanette Place	Ben Johnson	Severson	Laughnan	Severson	Young
Dec. 17th	Bob & Brenda	Isaac Yunker	Hadley Coulson	Larry	Roger	Donna	Rhoda
9:00am	Winger	Audrey Severson	Maddie Constant	Peterson	Laughnan	Constant	Foley
Dec. 24th	Mike & Katie	Marti Allyn	June Feuerhelm	Katie	Roger	Mary	Tom
9:00am	Allyn	Lanette Place	Lucy Feuerhelm	Feuerhelm	Laughnan	Halls	Holdorf
Dec. 24th	Roger & Pauline	Nora Christopherson	Wyatt Kirchner	Steve	Roger	Bruce	Lanette
4:00pm	Laughnan	Mike Rehbein	Brody Flynn	Straub	Laughnan	Place	Place
Dec. 31st	Mark & Crystal	Breken Young	Dustyn Raleigh	Crystal	Roger	Jill	Donald
9:00am	Raleigh	Audrey Severson	Weston Raleigh	Raleigh	Laughnan	Rosenberry	Rosenberry

Thank you for your participation in our worship service. Each ministry participant is greatly appreciated. If you cannot serve on the date assigned, please trade with someone or call Lori Coulson, Mary Halls, or Vicki Bowen if you have any questions. Lori: 715--821-3731 Mary: 715-307-0842, Vicki: 612-756-5067.

Instructions for each ministry position are posted in the narthex.

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