

Life together

December 2009

Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish

From the Desk of Your Pastoral Leaders

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Next newsletter items and articles will be due December 28.

Immanuel God with Us

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah the Lord."
Luke 2:10-11

I try to imagine what it might have been like to have been one of the generations who waited patiently year after year for a Savior. I wonder what it must have been like to suffer occupation and cruelty by the hands of the reigning authority, injustice in everyday life. I wonder what it must have been like for parents of Old Testament times, to pass on a hope in a promise that seemed like all words and no action. Better yet, I wonder what it was like for God to enter into God's created world and experience the brokenness that is the result of the freedom God gave the people. I can only imagine the dissonance with which Jesus lived – knowing the dream that God had in mind for the world and encountering something so contrary.

Bear with me here as I imagine something else. What if Jesus came again in bodily form (this is just imagination, not prophecy) and lived, worked and dwelled among us. What would Jesus encounter? How would he be welcomed? What experiences of love and mercy would he witness? What would he say about children, the marginalized, the lost and the sick? What would he say about the ministry of all – those inside the church and those outside the church? Would we act different in his company? What would he think about Black Friday? Would he be more concerned with our actions or our hearts? Would he find a people who prayed and worshipped, who kept Sabbath? Would he be sad or satisfied with our witness of him in the world?

Christianity is the only religion in the world that has God taking on human form,

living and teaching among the people and then suffering a gruesome death and rising again so that all the world could live in the promise of new life. It is in this season that we are especially mindful of Immanuel, "God with us." While it isn't likely that Jesus is going to take on bodily form and descend to earth, the presence of Jesus is with us always through the Holy Spirit. That was one of those promises that Jesus gave before he ascended, that he would give an Advocate. The Holy Spirit, while mysterious to most of us, is with us each moment of each day helping us to ask questions about our journey with God and provide us with a reminder of the hope, mercy and love of the promise.

The Good News bearing angels start their speeches off with "Fear not." Those first century believers were probably well aware that not many encountered God and lived to tell about it. They just wanted to survive the experience. Life in the 20th century might be a little different. We are a post-Easter people who live with confidence in a promise of eternal life. We bask in Good News. We know how the story goes and we know how the story ends. So, why do we keep repeating it each and every year? It's simple. We forget who and whose we are. We become captured by other stories and other distractions that lead us away from the fundamental rhythm of life with God. We are called to enter into this story again this year and encounter the angel; to hear the Good News; to pay homage to the Christ Child and then pass it on. Fear not. Jesus is with us and the Good News message will be proclaimed through your life. You are the presence (presents) of Christ in the world.

May your hearts and minds dwell in the love of the Christ Child this Christmas, Sonja and Gordy

The Olsburg Lutheran Church Council met on Wednesday, October 21, 2009. Co-Chairman Jim Nelson called the meeting to order. Pastor Gordy led the group in prayer.

Members present: Kirby Burklund, Jim Nelson, Laura Clifton, Kristi Fronce, Jan Cooper and Pastor Gordy Sandquist.

Reports

Secretary's Report: Jan moved to approve the report. Kirby seconded. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Kirby moved to approve the report. Jan seconded. The motion carried.

Pastor's Report:

- ✚ Confirmation is planned for this coming weekend. The Olsburg confirmands include Madison Vargo, Mikayla Vargo and Shane Adams. Pastor Gordy will call their parents up to the front for a laying-on of the hands during the Affirmation of Baptism.
- ✚ On November 29th, we will have a "Hanging of the Greens" following church. We will put up the church Christmas tree on this day. We discussed different traditions we might want to incorporate. Gordy also mentioned that Advent starts this week. There will be a children's sermon each week following to build a nativity scene.
- ✚ We will have the Sunday School Christmas Program during church service on December 20th.
- ✚ Christmas Eve – We discussed the possibility of having both an early and a late Christmas Eve service. The early service would be held at 6:00pm. This will give those who don't like the late time an option of going earlier.
- ✚ PMC is currently on hold. There are not enough congregations to participate right now. We will revisit this subject at a later date.

Committee Report:

Property Committee – Kirby reported that someone from Danker Roofing is still planning to give us an estimate on repairs. He also has someone scheduled to look at our PA system. It was also mentioned that some of the lights in front of the church need replaced.

Old Business

Council Positions: The council terms for Jan, Jim and Kristi will expire at the end of the year. These three should meet to determine if they would like to run for re-election. In addition, there are also three vacant positions. One position was vacated earlier in the year. The second position was recently vacated by Mike Apley. Willis Poppe has asked that he be replaced at the end of the year. His seat will need to be filled also. Two members have expressed an interest in filling these positions. We need to continue to look for one more individual.

Front Doors: Jim stated the work on the doors will be done in the spring.

Nativity Scene: The Nativity Scene is being purchased with memorial funds. Luellen Kasselmann has been working with the Memorial Committee to make arrangements for purchase and delivery.

Love Gift: Laura is working to coordinate this project. Church members will be able to purchase packs of food based on hours of volunteer work plus \$23. The food will be given to those in need. We would like to be able to purchase 21 packs to distribute in the community. Laura will make an announcement during church.

Thanksgiving Service: We discussed not having the community service this year because of such low attendance in the past. We could possibly do some sort of celebration of giving during our regular Sunday service.

New Business

Sharing of the Peace: It's been recommended by several that we discontinue "Sharing of the Peace" during the flu season because of the spread of germs while shaking hands. It was decided we would continue the practice, but Pastor would mention during church that shaking hands was not necessary. Pastor is using hand sanitizer and we may want to put some in the narthex. The Altar Guild has decided to use plastic cups during mid month communion.

Budget Expectations for 2010: Jim will organize a meeting to discuss budget.

Resignation: Maxine Anderson has resigned her position as church custodian. April Brenner expressed an interest in the position. Jan moved to hire April. Jim seconded. The motion carried. April will be hired at the same rate of pay. It was mentioned that a new vacuum is needed. Jan made a motion to approve the purchase of a vacuum for less than \$200. Kirby seconded. We will ask April to look for a vacuum.

Calendars: We discussed purchasing calendars again this year for the Luther League to sell as a fundraiser. Kristi moved to approve purchasing the calendars. Jan seconded. The motion carried.

Confirmation Reception: There will be a reception following confirmation with cake, cheese, crackers and punch.

Adult Sunday School: Gordy asked if the old office might be cleaned out so it could be used for adult Sunday School.

Ladies Retreat: The council asked Gordy if there were out-of-pocket expenses paid by either him or Sonja that should be reimbursed. It was felt they should not have to incur these expenses. Jan moved to reimburse those expenses for the retreat. Kirby seconded. The motion carried.

Jan moved to adjourn the meeting. Kristi seconded. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned with The Lord's Prayer.

December birthdays and anniversaries

If you know of a member whose birthday is not listed, please contact the church office.

Birthdays

- 2 Loren Oman (W)
- 3 Willa Erickson (O)
Blake Fronce (O)
- 6 Carol Deetjen (W)
- 7 Kim Berggren (O)
- 10 Carla Hageman (W)
- 11 Beverly Sundgren (W)
Rita Nelson (W)
Alyssa Kulp (W)
- 15 Loree Allen (W)
- 17 Vern Bulk (W)
LaRae Kraemer (W)

- Adam Bestwick (W)
- 18 Kylie Grater (W)
- 20 Brian Monser (O)
Garrett Olson (W)
- 22 Tom Nelson (O)
Brandon Rogge (W)
- 26 Heather Nelson (O)
Mildred Nelson (W)
- 28 Rick Johnson (O)
Kent Nelson (O)
- 29 Jerome Flohr (W)

- 22 Floyd and Julie Munson (O)
- 29 Dale and Eva Larson (W)
- 30 Russell and Terry Peterson (W)

January 1-8

- 3 Darnell Vargo (O)
- 5 Gavin Hargrave (W)
- 6 Gary Holt (O)
- 7 Kenneth Neilson (W)
- 8 Julie Strauss (W)

Anniversaries:

- 2 Loren and Lorraine Oman (W)
- 9 Roger & Oneita Bohnenblust (W)
- 13 Allan and Paulette Kulp (W)
- 19 Raymond & Maxine Anderson (O)

Members in service this month

Thank you to these members for their service to the parish during December.

Walsburg

Ushers: Russell Peterson, Mike Hagenmaier, Dennis Peterson, Scott Kulp

Greeters: Mike & Debbie Hagenmaier, Russell & Terry Peterson, Dennis & Donise Peterson, Scott & Jennifer Kulp

Communion Ushers: Don Nelson, Kim Nelson, Jay Peterson, Dennis Peterson, Doug Kraemer

***Acolytes:** 12/6 Garrett Olson, Rachel Rheaume; 12/13 Alexis Reed; 12/20 Monique Sandquist; 12/25 Symone Sandquist, Rachel Peterson; 12/27 John Burnett

***Lay Assistants:** 12/6 Rita Nelson; 12/13 Cindy Kulp; 12/20 Larry Bestwick; 12/25 (Julotta) Kris Burnett; 12/27 Doug Kraemer

Flowers for Church: Christmas-Altar committee

Altar Committee: Lila Bestwick, Carla Hageman, Melissa Deetjen

Olsburg

Ushers: Jim Nelson, Brian Clifton, Blake Fronce, Shane Adams

Communion Assistants: 12/6 Kristi Fronce; 12/20 Kirby Burklund; 12/24 Jim Nelson

***Acolytes:** 12/6 Blake Vargo; 12/13 Shelby Adams; 12/20; 12/24 (Christmas Eve) Bryon Nelson, Jacob Nelson, Jonathan Nelson; 12/27 Kyle Clifton

***Lay Assistants:** 12/6 Makayla Vargo; 12/13 Mary Rosell; 12/20 Coleen Esping; 12/24 (Christmas Eve) Nick Cooper; 12/27 Patty Nelson

Kitchen Committee: Susan Adams

Altar Committee: Kathy Monser and Shelly Burklund

***If you are unable to be present for your assignment, please find a replacement and contact the church office so the correct name will appear in the bulletin.**



Minutes of Walsburg Church Council Meeting 8 p.m., September 23, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 8:07 by Council President Albert Lee. Pastoral leader Gordon Sandquist opened with devotions from the book of Mark, followed by prayer. Members present were: Dena Haller, Cindy Kulp, Don Nelson, Doug Kraemer, Christopher Deetjen, Travis Hageman, Larry Bestwick, and Jay Peterson. Rita Nelson, treasurer, was also present.

Minutes from the August meeting were read and approved with a motion from Christopher Deetjen, second from Jay Peterson. The treasurer's report was read and approved with a motion from Travis Hageman, second from Cindy Kulp. There was discussion once again, on the deficit, which is to date, \$ 8,741.79. Miscellaneous funds from the checking account will be used to help offset payments, as was done the previous month. There was discussion on the need for more than just the financial secretary to count offerings, in order to provide safety and security for the financial secretary and the church. Albert Lee will discuss the issue with the financial secretary.

Pastor's Report: Confirmation is up and running for the new year with ten students involved, five from Walsburg, two from Olsburg, and three from the community. The Women's Retreat is coming up. We are looking for more participants.

Music and Worship Committee: none

Education Committee: none

Fellowship and Outreach Committee: none

Church Property: Fall cleanup for the Church and property has been scheduled for November 7, at 9:00 a.m., with a rain date of November 21. The dumpster at the church seems to have been replaced by trash cans. Don Nelson will call A-1 trash service to check on why it was done.

Parsonage: Due to excessive use of salt, the water softener was adjusted and Gordon Sandquist will be paid for the extra salt purchase out of the joint account. Gordon has reported that rain water is entering the basement from the northwest corner, coming through the breaker box. There have also been some snakes sighted in the parsonage yard, but the terminator traps have come up empty to date.

Old Business: The election ballot for the annual Walsburg elections are not completed yet. The nominating committee will meet again to finalize the ballot and get it to the council secretary.

New Business: There was discussion on preparing a by-law concerning the church's acceptance of the issue of marriage as being between a man and a woman only. Many members of the church have expressed their dissatisfaction with the actions of the ELCA. Members of the council discussed their concern over the liberal trend of the ELCA. Pastoral leader Gordon Sandquist expressed his frustration with the council in their lack of acceptance of the ELCA's new guidelines concerning sexuality, and their lack of progress on missions. At the conclusion of Mr. Sandquist's remarks, Albert Lee resigned as the Council President and board member. A committee of council members and church members will be meeting to discuss the church's future with the ELCA.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer, led by Albert Lee.

Moments of Service and Witness to Celebrate

Please note the ways that God is working through the good people of Walsburg and Olsburg Lutheran Churches during the past month:

- ✠ Walsburg gathered funds to purchase material that was transformed into cozy blankets that will be sent to soldiers at war in the Middle East. More than 20 blankets were constructed and sent.
- ✠ During the Thanksgiving Season, Olsburg collected funds that allowed them to deliver 23 food packs through Prairie Land Foods.
- ✠ The Walsburg Mitten Tree has been a great collection point at Walsburg, getting hats and mittens to kids that need them at the Ft. Riley School.
- ✠ Last but not least, the Christmas boxes for soldiers and college students will happen soon at Walsburg! Thanks to all who signed up to provide supplies for this annual event.
- ✠ Olsburg has a new outdoor manger scene proclaiming the birth story all over the lawn with a huge star welcoming all into Olsburg...for Swedish Supper and for worship. A special thanks goes to the Memorial Committee for working on this project!

Season of Advent

Advent begins the church year by calling us to wait for Christ's coming. This season has its earliest roots in Spain and France, where it was first celebrated. The word "Advent", which comes from Latin, means "to come;" and the weeks of Advent spark a sense of eagerness and anticipation. After all, when we are expecting the arrival of someone or something important, we organize our lives around this anticipated event. Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, December 25. Each Sunday leading up to December 25 is counted as the first, second, third and fourth "Sunday of Advent."

A season of waiting seems almost out of place in today's world of instant gratification: our culture is used to having what it wants and having it now. We don't like to wait for anything. Thus, we should not be surprised that our society has little appreciation for Advent.

Yet we Christians know that God's promises often take time to be born. Our spiritual ancestors waited thousands of years for the fulfillment of God's Word. Countless generations of Hebrews hoped they would see the promise come true in their lifetime; and as they faded into history, each generation handed on that promise to the next generation. Finally, in the fullness of time – when God saw that all was ready – a young woman named Mary bore the final months of waiting as the promised Savior grew within her.

Advent traditions are oriented toward the theme of waiting in hope. They are designed to help us abide patiently, faithfully, and confidently. During this season, we learn that waiting and believing are nurtured by prayer. Advent brings together all three – waiting, believing and prayer – in a season that prepares us for the promise of God's coming at Christmas. ("All Through the Year" by, David Batchelder, p.27)

A Christmas Eve Meal Blessing

*'Jesus our Savior, you are welcome here.
With animals and angels we sing your praise.
Fill us with joy for your gifts of love,
Given to all who hunger and thirst for your
salvation.
Warm our table with your presence that this
meal may taste
Of all good things to come.
Through Jesus Christ, the light of the world.'*

Season of Christmas

The season of Christmas lasts for twelve days, from Christmas Day (or Eve) until January 6th, the Feast of Epiphany or Twelfth Night. The Twelve Days of Christmas are a period of celebration that date back to ancient times

After keeping Advent, families are well prepared for twelve long days of celebration. Though children may at first feel cheated by having to wait for Christmas festivities, there is a terrific payoff when families claim all twelve days of the Christmas season.

Swedish Supper Bake Sale

Saturday, December 5th @ 4:00 PM
Olsburg Elementary Gym

Christmas Eve / Day Services

Christmas Eve Worship at Olsburg Lutheran

Thursday, December 24th

7:00 PM - Family Worship with Candle Light and Communion

11:00 PM - Traditional Candle Light Worship with Communion

Christmas Day "Julotta" Worship at Walsburg Lutheran

A Swedish Christmas Tradition

Friday, December 25th

6:00 AM – Traditional Candle Light Worship with Communion

(See the sun rise on the way home – provided by God.)

God Jul

Life together

Pastoral Leaders on the Move

January brings a new secular calendar and countless new opportunities to engage in God's work in the world. The Sandquist Family has an unusual amount of movement in January, and we thank you in advance for partnering with us as we engage in the learning and growing needed to further our education and ministry.

During January 2nd – 15th, Sonja will travel to Gettysburg Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania for a Diaconal Ministry Formation Event to help further the discernment and formation process involved in moving ahead with her discernment of call. As it stands, Sonja has been accepted into Luther Seminary as a distance learner. She is pursuing a Masters of Ministry in Congregation Mission and Leadership and has been accepted into the Diaconal Ministry Candidacy formation process, moving toward commissioning as a Diaconal Minister of the ELCA...unless the discernment of the call changes to that of ordained ministry.

During January 18th – 30th, Gordy will be working to fulfill two requirements of his M.Div. program. He will meet with the candidacy committee, synod staff and Luther Faculty for an endorsement interview. Upon a positive response, Gordy will then be qualified for the internship portion of his training...at two rural congregations in NE Kansas. (One of the expectations during internship will involve the participation of congregational members to serve on his internship committee for ongoing evaluation and support for ministry.) Shortly thereafter, Gordy will travel to the Pine Ridge Reservation near Custer, South Dakota for two weeks of cross cultural immersion ministry. This is one of the requirements that help pastors prepare to serve in contexts that are different from those that are both familiar and comfortable to them.

Everyone will be home in February. A new slate of on-line learning will begin. Sonja will be taking Greek and Gordy will be taking two classes: The Reformation of the Church and Foundations of Biblical Preaching...(Finally! Just kidding.) Thank you all for your patience and understanding. God is up to a lot in our little corner of the world

Life together

Congregational Meetings in January

Keep watch for the meeting at your church so that you might participate in the business of the church. Reports will be available prior to the meeting so that you might be well informed. If you chair a committee or group, please remember to start working on your annual report.

Yearbooks

The annual yearbooks for both churches will be ready to pass out/pick up no later than Dec. 31, 2009.

Adult Education

SALT (Stewards Attending Life Together)

Bible Study @ Walsburg

The Book of Faith: Genesis

First and third Mondays

Due to schedule conflicts, we will only meet on December 14th this month.

7:00 – 8:30 PM (or so)

Bring your bible and lot of questions!

Sunday Morning Bible Study @ Olsburg

The Book of Faith: Genesis

Sundays at 10:00 AM

We will not gather on December 27th.

Bring your bible and join us for coffee and cookies every Sunday!

Beth Moore Study @ Olsburg

Second and Fourth Mondays

4:00 – 6:30 PM

Due to schedule conflicts, we will only meet on December 14th this month.

New participants are still welcome.

Celebrate
The Birth Of Christ

Youth and Children's Ministries

Luther League Christmas Party at the Parsonage

Friday, December 18th

7:00 – 9:30 PM

Friends are welcome!

Bring a Gag Gift and join the exchange! Make sure it is wrapped!

Bring a Christmas treat to share!

Don't miss the great Scene It! and Guesstures Challenge!

Middle School Christmas Party at Olsburg Lutheran Church

Tuesday, December 22nd

7:00 PM – Mixers inside

7:30 PM – Bigger or Better Scavenger Hunt and Invitation Delivery

8:00 PM - Gag Gift Exchange (bring something silly from home all wrapped up!)

8:30 PM – Food and a movie

10:30 PM – Pick up!

All are welcome to celebrate the last day of school with a night of fun, food and games.

What to bring: A food item to share, a gag gift to exchange (Rated G), a permission slip, warm clothes for our outdoor adventures and a friend.

Children's Christmas Chorale Worship @ Olsburg, 9:00 AM and

Children's Christmas Program Worship @ Walsburg, 11:00 AM Sunday, December 20th

Please join the community for a worship led by the children of the community as they proclaim the good news through sites and sounds. We will gather together for this good news complete with a short homily and communion, a visceral experience of the risen Christ in our midst.

Cradle Roll Party at Walsburg

December 5th at 10:00 AM

All children under the age of five years of age are invited to celebrate the season. They will gather together for the story, games, food and fun in the midst of a loving community.

Olsburg Lutheran Church members are Loving and Noisy Givers

October and November provided 2 opportunities for OLC to show how they care. They gave \$232 in the Camp Tomah Shinga "Noisy Offering" as well as gave 21 "Love Gifts" to families in the Olsburg community.

A "Love Gift" is a program offered thru Prairie Land food. An individual or group can purchase a "gift" for someone. The typical food program that is offered by Prairie Land is based on an individual's volunteer hours that allow a set parcel of food to be purchased at a very reasonable price. The typical offering is frozen meats and fresh vegetables and fruits. If you would like to know more, please contact Laura Clifton or Jan Cooper as they regularly participate in the program for personal use.

The Love Gift consisted of a roll of sausage (1 LB), Chicken Drums – 1.5 LBS, Lean Ground Beef–1 LB, Lean Center Cut Boneless Pork Chops (four / 5 OZ) - 1.25 LBS, Fully cooked Chicken Breast Strips for Fajitas – 12 OZ., Sweet Potatoes – 4, Potatoes, Carrots-1lb., Celery - 1 sleeve, Oranges – 4, Pears – 4, Apples – 4, Pumpkin Pie (10" - 40 oz.), Whipped Topping - 8 oz..

The cost per gift was \$23.

<http://www.prairielandfood.com/>



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