

From Pastor Dan

We are now in the season of Advent as we look forward to the new life of Jesus and a new life in Jesus symbolized by his birth at Christmas. However, a lot of folks are not looking forward to what lies ahead. Many are concerned about all the challenges in the world which relentlessly bombard us from the screaming screens of 24/7 news channels. We see droughts, floods, fires, melting ice caps, wars, terrorist attacks, demented dictators, rural communities dying, and city children being murdered. That is just the beginning; we are also besieged by all the challenges in our own lives: bank accounts which are shrinking, bellies which are expanding, children misbehaving, parents too controlling, jobs that are a grind, relationships which seem to be a mere shadow of their former selves, boredom, worry, and that nagging “one more thing” that has to be done; there always seems to be one more thing that has to be done

So, what do we do? Well.... since it is Christmas, maybe we could drop our guard for a moment, open our ears and our hearts for a moment, and hear what our ancestors in the Bible heard as they looked forward to the birth of Jesus; which was, “Do not be afraid...” You see, the author of Luke tells us that the angel of the Lord came to Zechariah and told him that his wife Elizabeth would give birth to the one who would announce the coming of Jesus, John the Baptist. The angel prefaced the message to this shaken old man by telling him, “Do not be afraid...” The story continues as the angel appears to Mary, a virgin, and told her she would give birth to the savior of the world. The angel begins this shocking news in saying, “Do not be afraid...” On the night of Jesus’ birth, the angel again appears, this time to startled shepherds and reassuringly announces, “Do not be afraid...”

This just may be sound advice for us as well. Maybe as we approach our remembering the birth of the savior of the world, we too can be comforted by hearing and heeding, “Do not be afraid...” Maybe when we are overwhelmed by all the stuff going on in the world, things over which we have no control, we can be calmed by hearing and heeding, “Do not be afraid...” Maybe when we are overwhelmed by all the stuff going on in our lives and cannot see how we will ever be able to handle one more thing, we can experience the peace that passes all understanding by hearing and heeding, “Do not be afraid...”

Advent is a season of the church year which leads us into the anticipation of new life in Jesus Christ at Christmas. It can be a joyful time but also a stressful time in which the cares of the world come crashing down on us and seem to smother us under the obligation of one more thing to do. I have no particular panacea to help you get through the challenges of this season or even help you get through the challenges of your daily lives. So, I guess I will simply defer to the wisdom of the angel who spoke to faithful folks long ago and speaks to us today, "Do not be afraid..."

Merry Christmas,

Pastor Dan

"Council Corner"

Duane Askew, Evangelism

Evangelism - as defined by the Constitution of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church says-"...the ministry of bringing the Gospel to the unchurched, including all of God's people in the work of spreading the Gospel, strengthening and deepening the faith and spiritual involvement of all members of this congregation and the proper soul accounting at all times."

We are called to promote and direct congregational activities at wide and organize evangelical undertakings such as periodically sponsor dinners, fellowship and other outreach activities.

We currently have five committee members who are encouraged to plan and participate in spiritual outreach in a variety of current and future activities throughout the community.

Council Members. Here is a list of Council Members. Please contact them with any concerns or issues you may have. Council meets once a month and welcomes input from the congregation.

President: Randy Knapp – 715-581-5558; rknappeoj@gmail.com
Vice President: Sue Cooley – 715-675-8566; cooley1512@outlook.com
Treasurer: Arden Mikich – 715-298-3220; ardenmikich@frontier.com
Secretary: Sue Rakow – 715-675-7213; suszir@aol.com
Trustees: Laverne Grunenwald – 715-675-6880; mgrunen@yahoo.com
Don Voelker – 715-675-7062; midmainefarms@hotmail.com
Evangelism: Duane Askew – 75-675-4111; daskew@airrun.net
Fellowship: Mike Kluetz – 715-218-1357; mdk@airrun.net
Education: Connie Nowak – 715-675-1577; bcdenowak@gmail.com
Worship: Jan Mueller – 715-675-9558; dmjm5455.wau@gmail.com

Mission Statement: “We are called to serve God; serve each other; serve the community; serve the wider church.”

Serve God through worship, prayer, and the dedication of our lives to His kingdom.

Serve Each Other by mutual care and support to encourage everyone to fulfill their God-given potential. **Serve the Community** by making known the good news about Jesus and the love of God by word and deed. **Serve the Wider Church** through prayer and practical support to help spread the good news about Jesus throughout the world.

Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. Sunday Mornings

Please join us as we worship our Lord!

Homebound Parishioners. The following parishioners are no longer able to consistently attend worship services. I visit them to remind them that they are loved by God and loved by their community of faith, St. John. Sometimes it is helpful to hear those reminders from someone in addition to me.

Betty Tietz
4602 Barbican Ave., Room 106
Weston, WI 54476
715-393-0215

Ann Kieckhafer
1347 Crystal Avenue
Room 236-1
Naperville, IL 60563

Orville Anklam
Rennes Health Center
4605 Valdres Springs Ct.
#511
Schofield, WI 54476

Ellen Kruit
3312 Terrace Court #19
Wausau, WI 54401

Gift-Giving Solutions

Trying to find gifts for certain people – or letting others know what *you* want – can be quite challenging. After all, most of us don't need anything.

Realizing that the best gifts aren't material items offers a new perspective on giving and receiving. Consider these insights from author Charles Swindoll:

“Some gifts you can give this Christmas are beyond monetary value: Mend a quarrel, dismiss suspicion, tell someone ‘I love you.’ Give something away – anonymously. Forgive someone who has treated you wrong. Turn away wrath with a soft answer. Visit someone in a nursing home. Apologize if you were wrong. Be especially kind to someone with whom you work. Give as God gave to you in Christ, without obligation, or announcement, or reservation, or hypocrisy.”

Proper Perspective

Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love.

Reminder! If you are in the hospital and would like Pastor Dan to visit, **PLEASE CALL** and let him know. Because of privacy issues, the hospital will not notify him or the church that you are there.

Food Pantry. The food items collected for the food pantry in December will be donated to The Salvation Army. Your donations are appreciated. If you are able to help out with delivering these items to the local organizations, please contact the church office.

Council Meeting Minutes. Copies of the minutes from the most recently held Council meeting are by the mailboxes. Please feel free to pick up a copy. If more are needed, please contact the church office.

Announcements. If you would like to have an announcement included in our weekly bulletin or newsletter, please submit the information in writing and put it in either Pastor Dan's mailbox or the administrative assistant's mailbox located in the narthex. If it is more convenient for you, you can submit your announcements via e-mail to stjohnwausau@msn.com. The deadline for submitting announcements for the Sunday bulletin is the Thursday before by 9:00 a.m. The deadline for the newsletter is indicated on the monthly calendar.