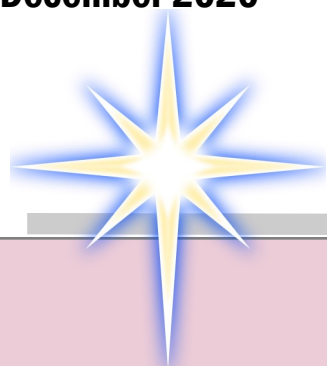


Volume 60, Issue 12
December 2020

Our Savior's & Melo Lutheran Churches

OSL/Melo Faith Connection

Merry Christmas



Pastor

Rev. Janet Warnes
oursaviors@oursaviors-melo.org
Office: 745-4478
Cell: 507-458-1960

Part-Time Youth Director

Vacancy
oslyouth@oursaviors-melo.org

Secretary

Mallory Craik
Mon 1-3 Wed 2-5
Fri 9-1
osl@oursaviors-melo.org
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OSL Custodian

Jake Reinier
701-740-5299

Sunday Worship Times

9:00 am Melo Worship
10:45 am OSL Worship

A video of OSL Sunday Worship can be seen on Monday at 3:30 pm on cable channel 13 and on YouTube. The service is streamed live also. A link can be found on the OSL/Melo church website, and archived services can be viewed as well: www.oursaviors-melo.org.

RELIEVE EDITORIAL STRESS:

**TURN IN
YOUR ARTICLES
EARLY!**
REMEMBER:
**DEADLINE FOR
NEWSLETTER
ARTICLES IS**

December 19th



Melo

Christmas Eve

Service will be held *Thursday December 24th at 3:00 pm at Melo church. Please call the church to reserve your spot. We presently can have 50 present at the service with masks and social distancing guidelines followed.*

OSL

Christmas Eve

Service will be held *Thursday December 24th at 4:30 pm. A beautiful virtual service will be played on Channel 13 and Facebook—This will include a number of special music selections, readings and more!*

With the COVID situation changing daily please watch the church **Website & Facebook** for the most up-to-date information. If you have any questions call or email the office. Also check out our weekly devotionals!



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE YOUR SERVANT MONTH AT OSL, OR IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE YOUR SPOT IN THE ROTATION AT MELO, PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE (745-4478) BY MID-JANUARY 2020. IF YOU'RE ABLE TO BE AN OSL SERVANT MONTH LEADER, PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE. THANK YOU TO ALL FOR SERVING OTHERS AT



December 6th
and December 20th
Drive Through Communion
In the Alley between
Bremer and OSL



From the Pastor

I think all of us are looking forward to completing the year 2020 and moving into 2021.

It has been a year for change, flexibility and challenge. As you have noted we are adding ministries to meet the needs of our members.

Beginning on December 6 and again on December 20 we will have **Drive Through Communion**. All are welcome – kids too!. You and your family will receive the sacrament and blessing in addition to a devotional book for the Advent Season. Please enter via W. Johnson Ave. between Bremer Bank and the Church.



We are also mailing out a **6-month supply of the sacrament** to over 60 families in the parish. This sacrament is an Extension of the Table and blessed. It is to be used while you are watching the service on-line. (You can also use bread and wine from your own home.)

We also have moved the 7th and 8th grade Confirmation Classes to zoom classes. As I write the **9th Grade** mentors, parents, and students will be considering if they will go to zoom or meet in person once a month.

The Youth will continue to meet. They are part of a project to brighten the windows of the church by drawing a **representation of the Biblical Christmas Story**. Supplies are on the narthex table in the church. These will be hung on the front windows of the church.

The Youth are also putting together **Blessing Bags** available by December 20 for you to pick up and given to anyone you would like just before Christmas. They will be observing all the COVID standards.

We are also participating in the **Sharing Tree**. There is a box in the narthex for you to drop off items by Dec. 2.

To date I am restricted to do in home visits. So, I am calling on a regular basis over **60 of our members**. Please note the prefix of my cell is 507.

The **bulletin** is being emailed and mailed out weekly. There is also a weekly devotional posted on Facebook.



In addition, calls, cards, texts are being made to many in the parish. You are also welcome to call the church with any needs you may have. Leave a message if you like.

Committees and councils are continuing to meet. We are awaiting an update from Education about a possible virtual SS Christmas Program.

The quilters and Men's Bible Study have been meeting. They are presently on pause.

In-Person Worship

This is a tough one. To date the Minnesota Department of Health has restricted us to 50% of the fire code. That would be 40-50 for Melo 75-100 for OSL. The MDH also has asked in the next 4 weeks to limit in and out of home gatherings to 10 or less. In addition, they have suggested that these folks be from your immediate family. When I asked that they clarify they said the church is open but guidelines should be followed.

The Synod is asking congregations to reassess in-person gatherings. I have included in the newsletter a letter from the Bishop. Many congregations are mirroring the actions of their local school districts. If the school goes to distance learning the church goes to distance worshipping. The Synod's preference is that we do on-line worship to the end of the year.

This is the Advent and Christmas Season, a very important season in the church year and to our families. On November 17 the Councils of Melo and Our Savior's met. Our Savior's passed a motion to have on-line services through the end of December, 2020. Melo will be going on-line November 22 and 29 and will reassess for **December. Hence, in-person worship is TBD (To be decided).**

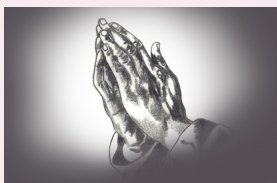


As we enter this holy and beautiful season, we are here to provide all we can for you and your family. When the service at OSL is being taped at 10:45 am drop-ins are welcome. Please observe COVID protocols.

The church is scattered in the season of COVID but we remain. Our doors remain open and the ministries of the church continue.

We thank you for your generous financial support. We thank you for your flexibility. We know that each one has an opinion about COVID. Our goal is to get through this, meet the immediate needs of our members, grow virtual ministries and come out stronger at the end of this. We can do this but we must do it together.

Blessings,
Pastor Janet



*"For to us a child is born,
To us a Son is given, And
the government will be on
his shoulders And He will
be called
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace."
Isaiah 9:6*



Christmas Letter from the Pastor

A blessed Christmas to you and your loved ones.

This year as you gather with family and friends we are reminded of the great gift we have in Jesus Christ. Christmas is always a special time of year. We are captivated by the lights, the music, the smell of fresh pine, the smell of cookies baking, and the nativity scenes. It is easy to become overwhelmed and overbooked with holiday events, shopping expeditions, and holiday gatherings - as small as they may be. I would invite you to take just a few minutes each day and focus your thoughts and prayers on Christ.

Christ is present with and for us this Christmas Season. Each one of the Advent Services, Christmas Programs, and Christmas Services are designed to lead us further into the meaning that this beautiful season has.

Pause, even as you read this Christmas letter to celebrate Christ in your midst. Jesus comes to us through the Word and Sacrament. Jesus comes to us through family and friends. Jesus comes to us through the beautiful Christmas carols of the season.

Jesus comes to you. He knows our need and our concerns. He carries them for us. He opens for us the way to experience His eternal presence.

May your Christmas be blessed by the presence of the Christ-Child.

Pastor Janet

Our Savior's Lutheran Church Council meetings minutes for October 27, 2020

Members present were: Adam Sparby, Tony Johnson, Jim Duckstad & Pastor Janet

Meeting was called to order, roll call taken and Pastor Janet gave devotions.

Approval of Agenda and previous meeting minutes from September 15, 2020. M/S/C Tony, Adam

Pastor Janet gave Treasurer's report and her report with handouts. M/S/C Adam, Tony

Pastor Janet gave Committee report on Stewardship. Blessing of Harvest was October 4th. The sharing tree collection is set up.

Worship and Evangelism was discussed by Pastor Janet. Melo is having their own candlelight service this year. OSL is looking at a possible Virtual service. However, we can have 100 people in the Sanctuary and more in the basement.

Education and Youth. A virtual Christmas program is being looked into.

Property and Management. The tech committee is still working on the projection system. A tree at the parsonage still needs to be taken down. Tabor Nursery will take care of it after freeze up. A new microphone and computer needs is still being worked on.

Old Business:

Joan Peterson turned in her letter of resignation as youth director. She also resigned her office manager position that



she was going to start in December. She accepted a job at the school as a substitute teacher through November 30. Joan will continue on as organist. A motion was made by Adam and seconded by Tony to accept the resignation letter from Joan and to appoint Mallory Craik as our Office Manager and continue on past November. She will receive a salary of \$16.00/hour, 25 hours of work per week and receive two weeks of vacation.

New Business:

Continued outreach due to covid-19. If the WAO School closes, In-person Sunday School, Confirmation and worship will be canceled. Council will review it month to month and may change with the Governor's Orders. M/S/C Jim, Adam.

Next meeting November 17, 2020.

Meeting adjourned with Prayer.

Respectively Submitted by
Jim Duckstad, acting secretary



Committee Annual Reports need to be in to the office by January 13, 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter. It is planned to have the annual reports available for pick-up ahead of the annual meeting.



DECEMBER YOUTH NEWSLETTER

December Acolytes

Dec 6 – Gracie and Lexi Kittleson
 Dec 13 – Brodie Wurtzel
 Dec 20 – Macey Novacek
 Dec 22 – Ethan Zutz
 Dec 24 – Max Carlson and Elliot Clark
 Dec 29 – Breawna Bolton

YOUTH ARE INVITED TO DROP BY THE CHURCH AND DRAW A REPRESENTATION OF THE BIBLICAL CHRISTMAS STORY. THIS BEGINS DECEMBER 6. SUPPLIES WILL BE ON THE COFFEE TABLE IN THE NARTHEX. THESE WILL BE HUNG ON THE FRONT WINDOWS OF THE CHURCH AS WE CELEBRATE THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.



Youth are putting together Blessing Bags for Christmas. What is a Blessing Bag?
A Blessing Bag is filled with items handy for the winter season as well as a devotional book for Advent and Christmas. These can be picked up in the narthex of the church on December 20. They will meet all COVID restrictions and can be given to anyone you meet as a "Blessing Bag" for Christmas.

CONFIRMATION UPDATE!!

7th & 8th Grade - Wednesday
 December 2nd at 4:00 via zoom

9th Grade— Meets Sunday
 December 13th at 11:45
 (This may change due to COVID)



Christmas Movies To Remind You of the Reason for the Season

1. It's a Wonderful Life
2. It Happened One Christmas
3. Homeless for the Holidays
4. By God's Grace
5. Christmas in the Smokies
6. The Perfect Gift
7. Christmas for a Dollar
8. Christmas Manger
9. A Christian Carol
10. Saving Christmas
11. Christmas Grace
12. The Nativity Story
13. Chasing the Star
14. Christmas on Salvation Street
15. The Ultimate Gift
16. The Preacher's Wife
17. The Star
18. Black Nativity
19. The Heart of Christmas
20. Angels in the Snow
21. The Christmas Candle
22. The Bell of St. Mary's
23. The Bishop's Wife

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 - Chase Anderson Austin Wittman | 12 - Kirby Kilen Steve Kuzel | 20 - Elliott Clark Faith Porter |
| 2 - Jan Johnston Taylor Olson | Larry Rud A ~ Donnie & Linda Hamrick | 21 - Sharon Carlson |
| 3 - Ilene Slusar | 13 - Ashley Helgeson Jessica Carlson | 22 - A ~ Tim & Linda Conely |
| 4 - Ronda Owens Rick Solberg Rita Walker | 14 - Linda M. Hamrick David Miller | 23 - Phil Thompson Collins Reinier |
| 5 - Milo Monroe | Adam Mischel | 24 - Travis Hanel Kristen Duckstad |
| 6 - Chase Knoll Jack Sedlacek Liz Yeado | 15 - Kevin Hjelseth Lucas Kostrzewski Mike Miller | 25 - Danelle Klassy |
| 7 - Hayden Strickler | A ~ Mike & Heather Goroski | 26 - Caden Benson Lacey Riopelle A ~ Alan & Lana Maruska |
| 8 - Gerald Hamm A ~ Ally & Justin Johnson A ~ Pat & Mike Williams | 17 - Lambert Kostrzewski | 27 - Darren Carlson Matt Myrfield Bette Solberg |
| 10 - Macey Boe Michelle Strickler | 18 - Taylor Knoll John Walker | 28 - Jessica Olson Randy Pearson |
| 11 - Carol Anderson Michael Palm Shawn Spidahl | 19 - James Bustrack Carrie DeLisle Alexis Jevning Sara Kostrzewski A ~ Earl & Linda Johnson A ~ Peder & Karen Larson | 29 - Betty Graham Hayden Hamrick Ilayne Potucek |
| | | 30 - Jacquie Clark Brody Knoll |



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Among those celebrating milestones in December are:

Collins Reinier
& Brody Knoll
1st Birthdays!!

Tim & Linda Conely
30 year
anniversary!

May God Bless you
as you celebrate!



*If your birthday or anniversary is missing or incorrect, please notify the church office.

Poinsettias Have Been Shared By



Lowell & Shirley Hamrick (2)
In Memory of: Frank & Anna Hamrick
Edwin Mykleby, Carl & Alice Grim
Ralph & Julie Hamrick

Elva, Jim, Rick, Andrew & Mark
In Memory of: Harold A. Bustrack

The Duckstad Family (3)
In Memory of: David Duckstad
& Robert Duckstad

Maynard & JoAnn Laymon (2)
In memory of Son Bruce Laymon &
Larry and Maryann Laymon

Carol Anderson (2)
In Memory of: Edwin and Fern Anderson
In Honor of: Jeanie Ulferts and Elva Bustrack

LuAnn, Tony, Lindsey, Easton & Evy Johnson(2)
In Memory of: Ralph, Leona, & Denis Knudsen
and Wayne Theusch
In Memory of: Robin Johnson

Pete & Virlynn Hanson and Family (3)
In Memory of: Roberta Stengl and Jill Anderson
Denise Anderson, Gladys & Selvin Aase
Albert & Ruth Hanson

THANK YOU to those who decorate Our Savior's. The significance of the red color on the left and white on the right is the sanctuary in the following verse:

"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Isaiah 1:18

DECEMBER 2020

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 4:00 PM 7th & 8th Gr. Confirmation zoom | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 2nd Sunday in Advent 9:00 am Worship at Melo with Holy Communion TBD 10:45 Online Worship at OSL Drop Ins Welcome. 11:45 Drive through Communion at OSL | 7 1:00 PM Staff Mtg 5:30 Ed Committee 6:30 Youth committee | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11  | 12 |
| 13 3rd Sunday in Advent 9:00 am Worship at Melo with Christmas Hymnsing TBD 10:45 Online Worship at OSL with Christmas Hymnsing—Drop Ins Welcome. | 14 1:00 PM Staff Mtg 7:00- COVID 8:00 Tech Team | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 9Am-1PM Scouts Fruit baskets |
| 20 4th Sunday in Advent 9:00 am Worship at Melo TBD 10:45 Online Worship at OSL with Holy Communion—Drop Ins Welcome. 11:45 Drive Through Communion at OSL | 21 1:00 PM Staff Mtg | 22 2pm-6pm Scouts Fruit Baskets | 23 | 24 3:00 Worship at Melo 4:30 Virtual Christmas Eve Service at OSL playing on channel 13 and Facebook | 25  | 26 |
| 27 1st Sunday after Christmas 9:00 am Worship at Melo TBD 10:45 Online Worship at OSL Drop Ins Welcome. | 28 1:00 PM Staff Mtg | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

December Servants

Lector

Dec 6 Cathie Borud
Dec 13 Youth
Dec 20 Lindsey Johnson
Dec 24 TBD
Dec 27 TBD

Song Leaders

Dec 6 Katie Benson
Dec 13 Darby Boe
Dec 20 Katie Benson
Dec 24 Darby Boe
Dec 27 Darby Boe
Melo— Mylo Carlson

Melo Custodians

Nov 30-Dec 6 Dustin Johnson
Dec 13-20 John Johnson
Dec 27-Jan Aaron Knoll





Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

November 17, 2020

"Let no one seek one's own good, but the good of one's neighbor." 1 Corinthians 10:24

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus, who promises to be with us until the end of time.

I write to share updated guidance regarding in-person worship, but first this: Thank you. Thank you for your faithfulness and perseverance – for the creative ways you share the gospel, serve God's people and love your neighbors. It's been hard. While the news of a vaccine gives a light at the end of the tunnel, it still feels like a distant light at the end of a long tunnel that must make its way through a Minnesota winter. We are not alone in this. We are living through this as "church together," and our risen Lord Jesus Christ is powerfully present through all of it!

Regarding in-person worship, my recommendation has not changed since April: congregations should refrain from in-person gathering until it is safe for everyone. This speaks to our identity. We are not a church only of the young and healthy. We are a church that "bears one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2), in which the "strong bear with the weak" and where we put our neighbor's interests ahead of our own.

I know that the summer, with the relatively low case numbers in most of our communities, provided an opening for many of our congregations to return to in-person gathering for a while. Most of you did so responsibly, following safe guidelines around social distancing, mask wearing, etc.

However, today's numbers throughout our region are surging at an unsustainable level. I recently saw one statistic that shocked me. It is the COVID-19 exposure risk percentage – the likelihood that a person at a public gathering will come into contact with someone who has the disease. Where I live in Becker county, it is 95%! Many of our counties are running a 99% exposure risk! With risk percentages that high, it is just a matter of time before congregations in the high-risk areas who continue to hold in-person gatherings become the source of a potentially deadly outbreak.

If you have returned to in-person gatherings, now is the time to reassess. Please obtain your local case information and use that to determine whether it is time to dial back and return to providing worship and other services via virtual media, mailed resources and single household gatherings. Many of our congregations are mirroring the actions of their local school districts to gauge whether or not to gather. My staff and I stand ready to consult with you, so don't hesitate to reach out.

We on synod staff continue to accompany you through monthly virtual gatherings of rostered ministers and presidents, and with regular online worship resources such as our Advent series, "Lord, Stir us to Dream," a full worship service for Sunday, December 27, and countless other resources. The day will come when we look back on this and see God at work everywhere, just like God's people did after their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Until then, join me in trusting Jesus one step at a time.

In Christ our Brother,

Rev. Bill Tesch, Bishop

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Treasurer's Report ~ October 2020

Receipts

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| General Fund | \$ 11,469.00 |
| Melo Pr. Sal/Benefits | \$ 540.41 |
| Proj 2000/Bldg Fund | \$ 40.00 |
| Mission Fund | \$ 120.00 |
| Endowment Fund | \$ 40.00 |
| Total Income | \$ 12,209.41 |

**Expenditures**

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Salaries/Pulpit Supply | \$ 8,496.26 |
| Pr. Pension/Insurance | \$ 2,830.59 |
| Bldgs/Phone/Internet | \$ 662.02 |
| Worship/Music | \$ 871.52 |
| Education/Youth | \$ 25.26 |
| Church Insurance | \$ 3,636.50 |
| ODC Custodial | \$ 280.00 |
| Groundskeeping | \$ 432.90 |
| Office Repair/Maint. | \$ 151.19 |
| Office Supplies/Postage | \$ 513.56 |
| Church Repairs/Maint. | \$ 694.59 |
| Bank Service Charges | \$ 7.50 |
| Total Expenses | \$ 18,601.91 |

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Net Ordinary Income | (\$ -6,392.50) |
| Net Income | (\$ -6,392.50) |

Account Balances

| | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| General Fund | \$ 199,097.38 |
| Memorial Fund | \$ 14,605.01 |
| Proj 2000/Bldg Fund | \$ 44,842.42 |
| Mission Fund | \$ 5,396.45 |
| OSL Servant Group | \$ 7,384.26 |
| Bell Ringers | \$ 688.49 |
| Money Market | \$ 58,092.70 |



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT THIS
PAST YEAR



Boy Scout Troop 50 Annual Fruit Basket sale! Baskets are prepared fresh and available in \$20, \$30, \$40 (small to large sizes). We offer free delivery within city limits.

Open Sale and pickup days are Saturday, December 19th 9:00am to 1:00pm and Tuesday, December 22nd 2:00pm to 6:00pm.

For phone and pre-orders, please contact Sara at 218-779-9429. The order pickups will be at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 220 W. Johnson Ave., Warren. Proceeds to be used for Troop activities.

If there are changes to be made to the 2021 OSL

Yellow pages, please notify the church by mid-January. If you have dropped your land line phone please notify the office.

Yarn has been donated for **prayer shawls**. If you'd like some yard and directions on the prayer shawls contact the office for a pick up time.

If you receive the **newsletter** by mail and would like to change to email delivery, please notify the office.



Liz Yeado will be 99 years young on December 6th! We'd love to have church friends and others in the community send her cards!

Liz Yeado
1033 Manor Place NW
Elk River, MN 55330

Our Savior's & Melo Lutheran Churches

220 W Johnson Ave
Warren MN 56762

www.oursaviors-melo.org



Lessons for December

December 6

Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

December 13

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126
1 Thess 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 20

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16
Luke 1:46b-55
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

December 24

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14

December 27

Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40

