

***Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
of Stanwood, Washington***

27201 – 99th Avenue N.W / P. O. Box 370

Stanwood, WA 98292

360-629-3767 / www.oursaviourschurch.org

November 18, 2020 – Congregational Letter #19 regarding COVID-19

Dear Friends and Members of Our Saviour's,

Given that Governor Inslee has added further restrictions for gatherings due to the uptick in COVID-19 cases, I want to give an update to church activities.

The good news is that there seems to be a light at the end of the COVID tunnel. Today the announcement came that an effective vaccine looks like it could be on its way, sooner than later.

But due to COVID increasing right now, the **men's breakfast** scheduled at Cama Beach this Saturday, November 21st, has been **cancelled**.

All adult activities IN THE CHURCH FACILITY have been **suspended through December 31st**. We hope that you will continue to connect via internet, Zoom, cards, notes, and whatever other ways you have found useful. Recently, we have had a number of people inquire about joining a small group. **If you have any interest or questions about small groups**, we would love to talk with you and find a group where you feel comfortable. Tom Curtis (206-271-8536) or myself (425-293-1974) would be happy to give you further information. Small groups have been a source of strength and peace for so many during this time. It might be helpful to you as well. We are in a marathon – mile 12?? Reach out and let us know.

Worship services, for the time being, will be LED from the platform or under the awning, depending on the weather. The fellowship hall will still be available for 25% occupancy (72 people) to sit inside. Protocols will be followed, windows open and seats oriented toward the platform- so that those wanting a warmer setting can participate in the worship service inside. If the praise team sings outside, they can have 5 members participate, while being distanced. We have been told that there is to be no singing indoors. You can

sing to your hearts' content in your cars! Let us also remember that worship begins *first* with an open heart to the Lord. Worship is also multi-faceted. While we are currently limited in our expressions – we gather as the people of God in faith to pray, to confess our faith, confess our sin and hear God's word of forgiveness. We share words from Israel's hymnbook, the Psalms together. We hear the reading of God's Word and the Gospel is hopefully preached in power and with relevance to daily life. We pray the prayer Jesus taught us and unite with one another in Spirit. Worship is dynamic and powerful on multiple levels. May we come together, in whatever conditions, to glorify God and express our praise to Him, in heart and mind, with our lips and in the Spirit. The Scriptures remind us, "Do not neglect the gathering of the believers". We need one another and need to worship together more than ever. I hope to see you all, as one body in Christ, this Sunday. These are moments we will remember for the rest of our lives – let us remember how the people of God, at Our Saviour's, joined together and raised a resounding joyful noise unto the Lord!

Thanksgiving Eve, Wednesday, November 25th, we will worship in the same manner at **7:00 p.m.** Hopefully, lights and luminaries will set the stage for a warm and worshipful moment before Thanksgiving Day – as we enjoy the day by ourselves, without friends and family. :) How much more meaningful to gather as the people of God, in the midst of darkness, yet worshipping in the soft glow of firelight, turning our attention in Thanksgiving to the Light of the World. Can we be thankful in these moments? These moments expose the character, condition and quality of our faith and trust in God. Let us step into these moments, fully convinced that God is with us and will lead us through the valley of the shadows!

Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24th, will also be led from the platform, filled with light and begin at **7:00 p.m.** You can worship in your car or from the fellowship hall, whichever way you are comfortable.

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL: If you would like to read a daily Advent devotional leading up to Christmas, the North American Lutheran Church synod has made one available. Bishop Dan Selbo, who was a seminary classmate of mine, has put together a devotion for the upcoming season. You can access the devotion at "thenalc.org/advent" – the site will give you a variety of options on how to receive the writings.

GATHERING PLACE “DRIVE THRU” THANKSGIVING MEAL – Barbara Christoferson is leading a small crew to prepare **individually served Thanksgiving meals** the morning of Thanksgiving. Snohomish County Health Department gave the green light for this service to our community. This service will certainly bless many in our community during this time of isolation.

“DRIVE THRU - LIVE NATIVITY” at Our Saviour’s – The Live Nativity event will be held on **Saturday, December 19th from 3:00-5:00 p.m.** This event is being scaled way back, and people will remain in their cars at all times. Lina Richert will direct a small group of people to allow our local residents and children experience a “live” moment with a few animals, Mary, Joseph and the Christ-child – to hear the true meaning of Christmas, and receive a small gift bag, as they DRIVE THRU. This will be a wonderful opportunity to share love and the hope we have with our local community.

“CARDS TO JOSEPHINE” – All the staff at Josephine have been under tremendous pressure over the last number of weeks as they have experienced major increases in COVID cases. I received an email asking if anyone was willing to send a card or note to the staff of Josephine as they feel overwhelmed, fatigued, and concerned for their health and safety. We are faced with many limitations but if you feel led to send a card with words of encouragement – there is no telling what kind of hope it might bring.

Send cards to: Josephine Care Community
9901 272nd Pl. NW, Stanwood, WA 98292.
Attention: Staff Members

Governor Inslee is allowing schools and students to continue without further restrictions. Therefore, for now, our Preschool will continue to operate and youth activities will continue following all safety protocols. **Additionally, NO food** will be served at any activities for the time being, so that masks will be worn at all times.

One Final Note: Would you be willing to **write and share a Christmas story,** experience or memory with the rest of us? We will feel isolated more than ever as Christmas approaches. It seems to me that we could brighten one another’s holiday by sharing a memory – whether a surprise, fun, challenging, heart-felt, difficult or other. As many stories as we receive, we will bring every story to you as we approach the birth of Christ. If you want to hear about my “Spaghetti Christmas” – you will have to share something of yourself. May we

encourage each other as we share our stories. Please Email your stories to oslcstanwood@frontier.com

God Bless You All.

Emmanuel – God is truly with us!

Pastor Mark

Please pray for the following members and friends of Our Saviour's:

Amy Thompson; Ron and Irene Nelson; Ingeburg Paul; Mike Erps (nephew of Leilani Erps); Kathy Slack; Maureen Foster (sister-in-law of Bruce Richert); Marylee and Leon Sams; Helen Neher; Carolyn Belfield; Mick Hanson; Robert MacNeal; Samson, age 6 (grandson of Grant and Phyllis Gard); Leif and Pam Larson (friends of Gards and Marvel Graham); Ramona Brodland (sister of Del Fox); Judy Anderson; Marlene Schuster; Dean (son of Lorri DeFelice); Howard Wangsness; Jessica Sande; Les Stahley; Michele Kunzman; Margaret Berk; Gary Rygg; Tina Wallin; Cindy and Ron TD; Robin Erickson; Shary Richards; Beverley Klatt; Dave Matthewson; Gary Aldinger; Ryker (grandnephew of Judy and Paul Anderson)

Please pray for our Drive-Thru Nativity event – for strength, perseverance, and creativity for all involved in this witness to the community.

Prayers also for:

Our school district: schools, preschools, and daycares; administrators, teachers, support staff, students and parents.

All those suffering from the effects of COVID-19, Fires, Hurricanes, and Flooding.

All those suffering physical, emotional, and spiritual anguish due to ongoing isolation and overall pandemic stress.

For our national and community leaders: President, Congress, WA governor, Stanwood mayor and others in leadership.

Pastor Mark, OSLC Staff and Preschool, Our Saviour's Lutheran Congregation, Homeless, Armed Forces, Josephine and Warm Beach residents, Government and Community Leaders, Safe Harbor

Updated offering Report

Reminder from Sheri:

With many offerings being received by US mail, please note the correct mailing address for Our Saviour's Lutheran Church is P.O. Box 370, Stanwood, WA 98292. Mail addressed to our street address is most times returned to sender as undeliverable. Thank you!

OSLC 2020 Budget - \$501,377.00

November 16, 2020 Offering Report

	Actual Received	Budget Need
Offering	\$ 7,172.10	\$ 9,642.00
Month to date	\$ 22,528.10	\$ 28,926.00
Year to date	\$404,991.32	\$443,532.00

Building Fund balance 11/9/2020	\$30,466.92
Offerings/Pledges Received	<u>\$ 225.00</u>
Building Fund Balance 11/16/2020	\$30,691.92

Pictures taken during cross removal and "almost" replacement!



The new cross will go up when wind permits.