



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

December 30, 2020 – Congregational Letter #20 regarding COVID-19

Dear Friends and Members of Our Saviour's,

As we finish a year full of adjustments, changes and surprises, I believe the year 2020 has exposed the true character of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. While each of us has faced challenges personally, and corporately, our church has withstood the storms, standing firm in the faith and standing firm with one another. Your ability to make adjustments, persevere over the long haul, respond to needs, see the bright side and continue to serve beyond yourselves has left me astounded. I am so grateful, thankful, and with humble pride praise God for our ability to remain united, committed and hopeful for the future.

The year 2021 is going to open up new doors for ministry. We will have opportunities to share God's love and the truth of the Gospel in new ways. As we close the chapter on one year and open a new chapter, we must keep our eyes on the prize. Jesus is the head of the body, the church, and we must focus upon his lead and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us to open doors and open hearts. This is a spiritual exercise and a spiritual journey. The more deeply we are united in Christ and growing in the Spirit, God's love and power will naturally flow from us.

We are joined to an association of churches that call themselves, "Lutheran Congregations **in Mission** for Christ." Ed Stetzer, in his book, *Comeback Churches*, declares, "**Missional churches** do what missionaries do, regardless of context. They can parachute-drop into a village in India or go into a metropolitan U.S. city, (or a rural town like Stanwood), and be missional. If they do what missionaries do – study and learn language, become part of culture, proclaim the Good News, be the presence of Christ, and contextualize biblical life and church for the culture -they are missional churches." (page 4)

But before we run off and "do something good for the Lord", we must begin with that key spiritual exercise – **PRAYER**. Stetzer claims that the most important element in seeing a church grow, transform and multiply its influence for Christ, rests upon its acknowledgement and use of **PRAYER**.

As vaccines begin to get a handle on COVID and life begins to resume with some normalcy – the tendency will be to "zoom" back into busy schedules. Precisely why we need to begin this new year with a corporate commitment to grow deeper in prayer – having conversation with God – bringing our hurts, pains, confessions to him, share our needs, expressing our dreams, but also to listen, receive, be encouraged, and led by Him. It is said that Martin Luther declared that he had so much to do, he could not get through it all without spending at least three or four hours on his knees before God each morning. We would consider this a pretty intense attitude toward prayer. But when an individual and a congregation move from the "**duty**" of prayer, to the "**desire**" of prayer – when there is a growing move of the Spirit among believers to want greater fullness of faith – that is when the spiritual sparks begin to fly. I believe we at Our Saviour's are right on the cusp of this experience. We are moving into deeper

spiritual waters as we are desiring deeper connections with God. We are beginning to develop a more powerful spiritual culture – that will reach lives just by our living witness, let along our words and service.

Our LCMC Association has set aside 3 days – January 5, 6, and 7, for our congregations to join together in focused prayer. We want to join in this national effort to bring our people to God – calling upon Him to provide, protect and lead our people as we present the Gospel.

Sandy Schreiner, our new Evangelism Council person, has written prayers that give some direction and focus for these three days. They are divided up into **morning, afternoon and evening** prayers – that align with the overall LCMC focus, while personalizing it for ourselves. We hope you find the outline and prayers helpful.

Please include prayer of comfort for those who have recently lost loved ones. Margaret Utgard, whose daughter, Linda Utgard, recently passed away. Scott and Bernice Stensen, whose son, Kenneth Stensen, suddenly passed. And Nick Hanson and extended family – as Esther Hanson, his mother has passed away.

Also, we celebrate in the baptism of Madison Ann Grohs, daughter of Adam and Sarah (Williams) Grohs, and granddaughter of Rick and M'Lisse Williams.

Please stay safe over this New Year holiday weekend. I Look forward to seeing you on Sunday.

God Bless You All! Pastor Mark

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

The family and friends of Esther Hanson; Scott and Bernice Stensen in the loss of their son, Kenneth; the family of Audrey Angevine; Margaret Utgard in the loss of her daughter, Linda; Marv Hansen and family in the loss of his granddaughter, Jenae Larson; Cindy and Ron TD; Ken Scott and family (brother-in-law of Sheri Durham); Amanda Hobbs; Amy Thompson; 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; Michele Kunzman; Margaret Berk; Gary Rygg; Robin Erickson; Shary Richards; Beverley Klatt; Dave Matthewson; Gary Aldinger; Ryker (grandnephew of Judy and Paul Anderson)

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

OFFICIAL NOTICE

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Stanwood WA

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 24, 2021 11:00 AM

OSLC Fellowship Hall and in Vehicles on FM

One Worship Service – 9:45 AM

To be eligible to vote you must be a **confirmed member**,
have **worshiped at OSLC**, have **communed**,
and have made a **contribution of record to OSLC** within the last two years.

Meeting Agenda will include:

- Approval of Minutes of last Congregational Meeting
- Reports from Council and Committee Chairs
- 2020 OSLC Audit Report
- Election of Nominating Committee for 2022 Council positions
- Election of Delegates to Josephine Caring Community
- Any other business to be discussed or voted on.

**Items that require congregational action must be announced
at least 10 days before the called meeting.**

President, Dan Norris

Financial Updates:

Reminders from Sheri:

2020 Offering Envelopes are available. It is a great help to the Treasurer when you use these envelopes for your contributions to OSLC. Call the Church office to make arrangements to have them available for you. Thank You!

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!

2020 OSLC Budget \$501,377.00

November 2020 Summary – (last reported November 16, 2020)

	Actual Received	Budget Need
Offering – November 23	\$ 9,140.00	\$ 9,642.00
Offering – November 30	\$ 5,376.70	\$ 9,642.00
Month to date	\$ 37,761.17	\$ 48,210.00
Year to date 11/30/20	\$419,848.17	\$462,816.00

Building Fund Balance 11/16/2020	\$30,691.92
Offerings/Pledges Received 11/23	\$ 615.00
Offerings/Pledges Received 11/30	\$ 303.82
Payment Steeple Cross Repair	<u>-13,373.44</u>
Building Fund Balance 11/30/2020	\$18,237.30

December 2020

	Actual Received	Budget Need
Offering – December 7	\$ 17,390.00	\$ 9,642.00
Offering – December 14	\$ 14,654.20	\$ 9,642.00
Offering – December 21	\$ 4,630.00	\$ 9,642.00
Offering – December 24	\$ 1,540.00	----- Christmas Eve offering
Offering – December 28	\$ 7,359.05	\$ 9,642.00
Month to date	\$ 47,570.32	\$ 38,568.00
Year to date 12/28/2020	\$467,418.49	\$501,377.00

Building Fund Balance 11/30/2020	\$18,237.30
Offerings/Pledges Received 12/7	\$ 1,625.00
Offerings/Pledges Received 12/14	\$ 640.00
Offerings/Pledges Received 12/21	\$ 95.00
Steeple Cross Repair Donation	\$11,603.44
Offerings/Pledges Received 12/28	<u>\$ 1,250.00</u>
Building Fund Balance 12/28/2020	\$33,450.74

THREE DAYS OF PRAYER

January 5 – 6 – 7, 2021
(Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)

Let us join with millions of other believers on these days and raise our prayers to God, constantly, with particular emphasis on these topics in the morning, at mid-day and at night. Add your personal thoughts as Holy Spirit so moves you.

January 5, Tuesday – Day of Confession

Psalm 39:12 - "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears."

Morning: I love you God and I am sorry that I have not thanked you often enough for your grace and love. I have not taken everything to You in prayer and have not acknowledged my sin, my fears, my doubts, and my worries. I have not shared Your grace with other people when I feel have been sinned against. I have not lifted my thankful heart in praise for Jesus' standing between me and judgement. I have not daily thanked You for all Your blessings of living in this country where we have freedom to worship You in any manner, at any time, we choose. I have often forgotten to thank You, and my fellow citizens who defend this right for me.

Mid-Day: I have not invited You, Holy Spirit, into every part of my daily life; sometimes, I only remember to check in with You on Sundays. Yet, You never leave me alone – You are always with me. Thank You! I have not seen and recognized Your lost and lonely, those who are hurting, or who need help physically, emotionally and spiritually. Help me to see them through Your eyes.

Night: Please forgive me and give me discernment to hear You, wisdom to understand and follow Your guidance and boldness to share Your grace with others by what I say, what I do and how I live.

January 6, Wednesday – Day of Petition

Ephesians 6:18 - "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication."

Morning: Abba – have mercy on this lost, sinful world – please, don't take Your love and grace from us. Dearest Jesus – continue to show me daily, how to love You more, honor Abba more and how to seek, invite and listen to Holy Spirit more. Holy Spirit – thank You for not giving up on this crazy, sinful world. You have walked with us for millenniums and are always with us no matter how badly we mess up. I want more of You, more boldness to speak God's truth, more forgiveness for others when my toes get stepped on, more insight to see the lost, the invisible, the hurting, more inspiration and creativity to share Your love with our world.

Mid-Day: I pray for this world and the USA – please bless the entire world with containment of the COVID infection and let our economies rebound and help people who have lost their jobs or businesses, find even better ones than they had before, and bless all our families with security, health and deep faith. I pray for all believers and missionaries – particularly those who live in countries where the governments are hostile to You and persecute believers. I ask that You have mercy on these people who are in authority and forgive them for the pain and suffering they cause and, please, bring them to faith and repentance, so that they become crusaders FOR You, instead of against You. I pray for the "movers

and shakers” of the world – those who are Your followers and have enormous amounts of money and are seeking to follow You and Your plan for their lives, while helping others. I’ve heard these people work together for Your glory and call themselves, ‘The Family’. Guide them in Your will always. I pray for our country, Lord – help us to join in unity, under Your sovereignty, no matter which party’s representatives are elected – for everything is set in motion and will work for Your glory.

Night: I pray for our Stanwood/Camano community – protect us from the spread of COVID and restore health to all who have been sick. I pray for all Your churches to be lit on fire for You! Lead us to seek the lost, the hurting, the needy, those who are challenged with more than they can handle – let each of us be Your hands and Your encouraging voice in our community. Lead me to act, Holy Spirit. I pray for our school teachers and our students – this year has been very challenging for everyone. Here, too, I ask for Your inspiration in creating new ways for teachers to reach our children. And, lastly, I pray for myself, Dear Lord. You know what I need and what I want...let my wants mesh perfectly with Your plan for my life. Protect me from the evil one who constantly tries to pull me away from You. Show each of us, every day, how to recognize the war that is going on for our souls – keep us strong with Your armor.

January 7, Thursday – Day of Vision

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - “Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Morning: I pray for new visions, far more exciting and beautiful than I can imagine today! I see a new world where the evil one has been vanquished and never hurts anyone ever again; I see Jesus, surrounded by multitudes of angel armies, moving over the earth and all destruction and brokenness is made new and perfect. I see a world where there are no words for sin, heartache, pain, anger, ugliness, hardness of heart, fear, doubt, lies or deceit – because they don’t exist anymore and we don’t even know their meaning. Earth has become “our Father’s world” in all ways.

Mid-Day: I see visions of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, and Your Church wherever it is located in this world. I see worship services full – every seat occupied. I see children and youth growing into adulthood and I see those same children, as adults, bringing their children to Your House, generation after generation after generation – be it OSLC or another church. I see some activity at OSLC every day of the week – morning and afternoon or evening – even all three!!! I see three worship services each Sunday. I see OSLC as a safe place to DREAM BIG – for Holy Spirit is moving Your people to action!

Night: Abba – I see myself doing new, exciting things; meeting new people; having new experiences and opportunities to share Your grace and story of salvation. I see a new love of life, shared with people I have not yet met. I see a time coming when I will see nothing but Your glory, reflected in everyone and everything – no more pain or ugliness or destruction or brokenness. I thank You for seeing me washed clean in Jesus’ blood and righteous in Your eyes now. Let me always Dream Big and see magnificent visions of Your glorious will being done here on earth!

In Christ’s blessed and holy name, I pray..... Amen