

THE IMMANUEL MESSENGER

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IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF OSMAN

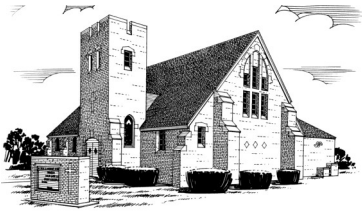
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

Reverend Jeffrey McPike, BCC

**"Unto you is born this day in
the city of David a Savior,
who is Christ the Lord."**

Luke 2:11

December 2020



From Pastor McPike's Desk...

Merry (?) Christmas?

"Quiet, everyone! Please! Quiet! Quiet. Shh. I've got some bad news, folks. Christmas is going to be canceled. There's nothing I can do because of this weather-- "

Those of you who, like I did, grew up in the earlier years of television, when there were usually only three or four TV stations – one for each network: NBC, CBS, ABC, probably looked forward to a show narrated by "Sam, the talking Snowman" (Burl Ives) where these words were featured just before the hero, Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer, shows with his very shiny nose that he will save the day by leading Santa's sleigh through the murky, terrible storm.

The church council made a tough decision, and I don't think a red-nosed reindeer is going to be able to step in and save the day. Just as we had to cancel our church celebration of Thanksgiving, so we are going to also cancel the celebration of Christmas on Christmas Eve. This, of course, is a real loss to us here at Osman. Our little church carries on some lovely Christmas Traditions from years past, including a Christmas Eve service that, at the end, is completed by many gifts being exchanged and the distribution of very traditionally filled treat bags including fruit and candy.

Of course, contrary to Santa's dramatic announcement of "canceling Christmas" in the 1960s holiday TV show, only the celebration of Christmas is canceled. Only the service and accompanying traditions are canceled. Because NOBODY can cancel Christmas.

Oh yes, there were those who tried. King Herod the Great tried with his murderous rampage in Bethlehem, ordering the deaths of all baby boys two years old and younger. And there were other attempts to

keep our Lord from His mission to save us. But Jesus was true to His mission and died and rose again.

Christmas will be quite different this year. Many families are wisely staying in their small family groups, not mixing households which is one of the more dangerous ways in which the virus is spread. We will grieve the ability to celebrate the way that we are used to. But Christmas didn't get canceled back in Jesus' day, and the joy of Christmas goes forward.

Here at Osman, we will attempt to compensate a bit. Normally we have a "progressive decoration" of the church during the season of Advent. This helps remind us that the details about the coming of Christ took a very long time throughout the whole history of the Old Testament. This year, the church will be entirely decorated by the Second Sunday in Advent (first Sunday in December). Also, while we normally sing only Advent hymns in Advent, we will sing Christmas hymns all during December since we won't be meeting on Christmas Eve.

Every Sunday Communion

In the October Newsletter, "Every Sunday Communion" was presented. There are any number of good reasons for it, not the least being that Communion was instituted by our Lord Jesus to be done **often**. Each service has a sermon, Bible readings, prayers and hymns. Communion should be a regular part of that.

This is a change in custom here at Osman. Many can probably remember when Communion happened far less often than it does now. However, for probably 20 years it has been encouraged by the LCMS, and many area sister-LCMS churches adopted it long ago. Please read the article (October, 2020 Newsletter) if you have questions, or contact Pastor McPike.

Starting the First Sunday in Advent, we are going to hold communion on every Sunday. The Church Council considered how in-person church services were suspended for 17 weeks through Holy Week and Easter, which meant that we missed quite a few Communion opportunities. Also, we are beginning to notice a trend... there are those who call to reserve a spot at church, but ask first if we are having communion and then indicate they won't come if we don't.

The council's decision is not yet a permanent change. The period where every Sunday communion will be celebrated starts in Advent and runs through the end of Epiphany. The council will reconsider the issue at the January meeting and determine if it will continue through Lent and into Easter. By the end of the Spring we will evaluate again and determine how to proceed.

Regular service schedule continues

The Covid-19 situation is changing daily. A Carle colleague who is a United Methodist pastor said that all Methodist churches in Illinois received shut-down orders from church leadership effective until later in December. Other churches have yet to open.

The Governor is once again closing things down, and stopped short of including churches, probably because his office was sued by good, Bible-believing Christian denominations wanting to be excluded from COVID regulations (sarcasm fully intended; Romans 13 speaks directly about obedience to the government). While Churches are not REQUIRED to follow group-size limits, it is probably good to do so. Here at Osman, we are very careful. It is for that reason that we are able to continue at the level we have been at since July when we opened again. As long as we continue to follow some simple rules, that should remain our practice. Please keep in mind:

- * Congregating and conversation at the back of the church is discouraged both before and after church.
- * Please follow the directions of the ushers both entering and leaving the church. The church will be filled from front to back and dismissed from back to front. This provides a traffic flow where no line of people will walk past a group of seated people.
- * IF you have a cough or any similar COVID symptoms, please don't come.
- * Masks are worn at all times when in the building.

Thank you for doing your part to keep us all safe. Keeping us safe goes a long way to avoiding having to stop having in-person worship services again.

Change in OUTSIDE (drive-up) Communion

At the November Meeting, the council discussed a possible change in drive-up communion. Instead of the Pastor and elder coming to each car, we will invite the cars to file past the front of the church similarly to the way we did "drive-up communion" back in late June just as we were starting up. An elder will give directions, and also directions will be spoken on Radio Osman when it is time to line the cars up.

RADIO OSMAN Frequency change

If you listen to the church service sitting in the parking lot, the new channel is 88.1 MHz. Rick Hardesty oversaw work that was done by technicians on the system and it works better. Please let us know how it works for you!

Church decorating December 5 at 9 AM

As stated earlier, the church will be entirely decorated for the month of December. We plan to do that on Saturday, December 5, at 9 AM.

Advent

At a time when much of the world is frantically gift shopping and putting up Christmas decorations, Christians around the world are observing the liturgical season of Advent. From the Latin word for "coming", Advent is a time of preparation and anticipation for the coming of Christ both in the past in His incarnation as the baby Jesus, but also in the future with His promised second coming as Christ Triumphant. Furthermore, Advent is a time to focus on His present coming to us in the Word and Sacraments. In the Lutheran church there have been many traditions observed during Advent that help Christians to both prepare for and anticipate His coming at this time. Martin Luther encouraged families to observe Advent as a time for them to teach their children about the coming of Christ.

Advent marks the beginning of the church calendar. It traditionally starts on the Sunday closest to St. Andrew's Day (November 30th) and continues for four Sundays until Christmas. During this time the liturgical paraments and vestments in many churches will change to violet to recognize Advent as a time of

preparation and repentance as well as a symbol of the royalty of the coming King. The color blue can also be used as a symbol of anticipation and hope.

Christians in many countries have adopted various traditions of lighting candles during Advent to observe this as the time of the coming of Christ who is the light of the world. One widespread tradition is the use of an Advent wreath both in the church and the home to mark each Sunday in the Advent season. While the origin of this as an Advent tradition dates back to the Lutheran church following the Reformation, the current form commonly used today was developed more recently and is used in many other Christian churches throughout the world. The wreath is made out of evergreens in the shape of a circle to represent eternal life. It consisted of four candles originally; three purple or blue candles to match the liturgical colors and one pink candle lit on the 3rd Sunday in Advent. This 3rd Sunday is known as *Gaudete* Sunday, meaning “rejoice” in Latin and comes from Philippians 4:4. Lighting this 3rd candle, Christians rejoice in the fact that the promised Messiah is coming soon. Many Advent wreaths also have a 5th candle, the Christ candle, which is lit during the time of Christmas, symbolizing that Christ, the light of the world, has entered the darkness.

There is so much beauty and rich tradition during the season of Advent to prepare Christians for the coming of Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem. When you see the altar draped in blue, remember your King who came to bring you life and salvation. If you don't have one already, consider getting an Advent wreath for your home as you prepare for the coming of Christ, the light of the world. Give thanks to God for the confession of faith He gave to His people to shine His light in dark places. Finally, anticipate with joy the coming of our Lord!

By Deaconess Betsy Karkan

Poinsettias

This year the altar will be adorned with just two poinsettias during the Advent season, instead of poinsettias donated by church members. This is due to the COVID-19 restrictions and the decision made by the council to not have a Christmas Eve service. Thank you, Immanuel Osman, for all your love through the years of donating poinsettias to adorn the altar for Christmas Eve. We will hopefully continue this tradition next year.



Thank You!

Thank you, Immanuel Osman, for all the prayers through the stressful birth of our son, Declan Lammle, his hernia surgery, and two PDA closure procedures. His lungs are not developed enough to be off oxygen and he's still taking medicine for hypertension, but we feel very blessed to have our son with us-a miracle from GOD!! Our sincere gratitude for all you've done from the benefit, to the many cards and monetary gifts, to all your heart-felt prayers. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts! God's blessing to all!

Ryan, Sandy, and Declan Lammle



Operation Christmas Child



On Sunday, November 15th, twenty-four shoe boxes were filled with “goodies” to be shipped to an Operation Christmas Child distribution center. Bella Ford, Jenna Clemmons, and Addi Warsaw carefully filled their shoe boxes with a little help from some adults. Some of the items were donated by members of the congregation as they graciously put them in a collection box at the back of the church a few months ago. Other items were purchased with a Thrivent Action Team Visa Card. It cost \$9 per box for shipping so much of the Visa Card was used for that. Some members of the church made their own boxes so a total of 28 were delivered to the Gibson City Bible Church on Tuesday, November 17th. A special thank you to all our church members who donated school items and to Terri Hooker and Connie Warsaw who coordinated this project. When the shoe box gets to the distribution center, a booklet entitled "The Greatest Journey" is added to the box. This is a 12-lesson discipleship course which the children are taught in the weeks after opening their boxes. In this way, many children hear about Jesus for the first time. With the help of the Holy Spirit, many become believers. Bella, Jenna, Addi, and the adults watched the video sponsored by Samaritans Purse after the boxes were packed. The happy faces of the children in the video when they received their box and learned about the love of Jesus was so heartwarming. Labels were attached to each shoe box so they will be tracked so our group will know where our boxes were delivered. Yes, we shared the love of Jesus with children all the way around the world as Matthew 25:40 states “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”

Blue Ridge Back Packing Program



One of the services that our congregation supports annually is supporting the local school district's programs that provide extra food for the low-income students. The three school districts that were supported this year were Fisher, Mahomet, and Blue Ridge. Every month volunteers gather in the Blue Ridge High School gym room to fill bags for Schneider Elementary, Blue Ridge Intermediate and Junior High, and Blue Ridge High School. In November, the volunteers prepared both the November and December bags. 200 bags were filled with a variety of food staples. In October Jeff Warsaw used his Thrivent Action Team \$250 Visa Card to purchase food for these.

Merry
Christmas

Ladies Aid/LWML News

8 Ladies Aid/LWML members met on Thursday, November 12, at 7 PM in the fellowship hall. Opening devotion was given by Deb Martin. The topic, "It's Thanksgiving!" was given by Brenda Hendricks. Diana Zimmerman, in the absence of Marsha Warsaw, read the minutes. Sue VanWakeman, treasurer, gave the balance as of November 1 as \$1009.74. Correspondence from the newly adopted Seminary student, Mark Peters, was read by Deb Lammle. Terri Hooker reported on the adventure of delivering the 95 finished quilts to Flatville to fill the semi provided by Lutheran World Relief. There were new restrictions on loading the quilts due to Covid 19. Since the group does not quilt in December, the next quilting dates were announced as January 4 and 6. Diana Zimmerman sent 42 more dresses to Dresses for Africa which brings the total to 344 since we began this mission project. The adopted family, Abby and Amelia Kirkpatrick of Saybrook, were treated by Terri Hooker, Brenda Hendricks, and Connie Warsaw during the last three months. It was decided that we would keep this family as our adopted family until February 2021. It was decided to cancel our December meeting which is usually the Christmas dinner and gift exchange due to restrictions pertaining to Covid 19. The group was encouraged to think about meeting dates for 2021 so that a discussion can be held at the first meeting in 2021 and possibly make a by-law change if necessary. The next meeting will be March 11th at 1:30 PM. Wilma Grussing and Diana Zimmerman served delicious refreshments after the meeting.

125th Anniversary Ornaments

Please remember that we have plenty of the Osman 125th Anniversary Ornaments remaining for your holiday giving! They are \$10.00 each. Please contact Deb Martin, Wilma Grussing or Marsha Warsaw, if you are interested.

Help us get the Correct Attendance Count

Please call Rick or Jill Hardesty if you are coming for the services on Sunday's, so your attendance is counted for the week. We appreciate your cooperation!

It's that time of year again!

Nominations are being taken for several church council seats for the January 2021 Voters meeting. Seats available are: Secretary, 2 Elders, 1 Trustee, Asst. Finance, and Asst. Sunday School Supt. Please see any council member or Chairman Hardesty, if you are interested. Thank you!



DECEMBER 2020

Please help us keep everyone safe by calling Rick (309-830-8531) or Jill (217-841-3487) to indicate your desire to attend church the upcoming Sunday.

While "reservations" for church may sound really counter to Christ's example of being welcoming, it is currently an unfortunate part of the way this nasty virus has turned our world upside-down.

Thank you for doing your part to keep us all safe!

Osman's Upcoming Events

Due to the COVID-19 Virus guidelines, all these activities will be pending the decisions made by the Church Council and Pastor McPike.

Tentative Upcoming Events

2021 - Centennial Celebration

Statistics

Date	Worship	Sunday School	Conf	Adult Class
10/25	n/a	0	0	0
11/1	34	0	0	0
11/8	32	0	0	0
11/15	n/a	0	0	0

Birthdays

Myron Zimmerman12-02
 David Hasty12-05
 David Brown12-08
 Deborah Martin12-09
 Darren Peyton12-12
 Barbara Reifsteck12-16
 Jerred Grussing12-17
 Alicia Haggin12-17
 Amber (Hendricks) Kouri12-17
 Diana Zimmerman12-21
 Nathan Hooker12-25
 Deb Johnson12-28
 John Grussing12-31

Anniversaries

Martha and Darwin Warsaw.....12-31-1966