

Newsletter



December 2023

Special points of interest:

- Christmas in the Barn
- Advent Season
- Advent, Christmas and Epiphany blessings to you from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson,

Inside this issue:

Cofirmaiton Corner	2
High School Youth	3
JAM	3
Advent, Christmas and Epiphany blessings to you from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson,	5
Calendar of Events	7
Church Council Minutes	8
Financial Updates	9
Confirmation 2023	10

Pastors Ponderings

Once again we are approaching the seasons of Advent and Christmas. And, as this is the place for *Pastor's Ponderings*, I recalled an article I wrote some years ago that invited you to join me in pondering. I am sure that you recall how after Jesus' birth and the visit of the shepherds, "Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart."

There's another place the word ponder shows up — it is in the hymn, *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*. There we are implored to "Ponder anew, what the Almighty can do, if with his love he befriend you." When the Almighty sent the angel Gabriel to announce to Mary that she will conceive in her womb and bear a son, God did do something incredibly new! Because the angel also announced that Mary is to name the child Jesus, which means Savior. So quite clearly, with this news God chose to befriend us with his love!

Every year, it is life giving for us to, "ponder anew, what the Almighty can do." From the prophet Isaiah, chapter 43, the LORD says, "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." It seems

strange for God to ever say, "Do not remember the former things..." Because God and God's prophets are usually telling us just the opposite — to recall and remember all the incredible blessings and actions God has showered on us. Yet I believe that for God's people at this time, living as exiles who were in captivity in Babylon, it was likely that they were stuck on (and in) the recent past or even stuck on (and in) their present intractable mess.

We too get stuck on (and in) our recent past. We also get stuck on (and in) our present messes. It may be due to gun violence, climate change, our deeply polarized politics, the wars in the Ukraine and Israel and Gaza, or something much more specific and immediate for you. Yet all of these ways that we can get stuck only cause us to limit our ability to ponder anew what the Almighty can do. Clearly, for those in exile, they must have felt certain that their best days were in the past and they probably believed that God had abandoned them. When that is the case, hope is utterly lacking. So when God does do a new thing, as God surely will do(!), the Israelites definitely needed to ponder anew what the Almighty can

(Continued on page 9)

Confirmation Corner by Jill Logghe

November has been an eventful month for our 7th, 8th, and 9th Grade Confirmands!

The overnight retreat for 9th Graders began Friday night, November 3rd, with a "Holy Hike" up to the City Cemetery and back down through the streets of town. A highlight was competing to see who could run the fastest using the speed monitor on Maple Street! Back at church we shared pizza, games, faith statements, prayers, and closed the evening with Romans & Christians – a game that the students will always remember! Thank you to Melanie and Zachary for joining us!

On Saturday, Gloria Hill, a co-leader of the Altar Guild, joined us to teach them how to make communion bread, banner bookmarks, and change the altar paraments. We closed the Retreat with rehearsal and the assigning of parts for the Confirmation service.

The Veterans Appreciation Dinner/Program was the Mentor Event held in November. Our Confirmands and High School Youth honored 17 local Veterans and families for their service with a delicious fall supper and program following. Eighty people were served! A BIG thank you to Carol Teigen, Mary Ann Ross and Becky Hahn for preparing the meal and to Thrivent for the Action Team sponsorship.

On November 21st a number of 7th and 8th grade Confirmation students learned how to make tater tot hot dish and scotcheroos. These were part of the meal they delivered to Salvation Army Grace Place in New Richmond. Thanks to the congregation members who donated for this meal.

Please note we do not have regular class in December.

Advent meals are served for ALL at 6:00. Students meet in the classroom at 6:45 prior to worship at 7:00. **Mentors and Parents are urged to join students for worship** with a worksheet relating to the evening worship experience.

December Mentor Event: Poinsettia Delivery Mentors and Confirmands deliver poinsettia flowers to many of our elderly congregation members throughout the community. Poinsettia flowers will be here by Sunday, December 10th. Mentors, please use the sign-up sheet with names/addresses for delivery.



Wishing you joy, peace,
and God's unending love
this Christmas season!

High School Youth by Melanie Hill

I hope your Thanksgiving celebration was wonderful. I was so proud of our youth with their participation in the Veteran's Day program in November. We even had youth outside of Holy Cross participate in our program, which was wonderful to see. Many of those same youth will be in the Christmas in the Barn program in December!

We have a busy December coming up. Christmas in the Barn, Cookie Decorating for Christmas in the Barn, preparing and serving the Advent Meal and our Christmas Party!

We have already begun practicing for Christmas in the Barn. It is so delightful to see the commitment by so many of our youth to keep an active relationship with God and their church.

Events to Mark on Your Calendar

December 2nd: Cookie Decorating and Popcorn Popping for Christmas in the Barn - 10am

December 2nd: Christmas in the Barn Dress Rehearsal - 4pm

December 2nd: Christmas in the Barn Performance - 6:30pm

December 3rd: Christmas in the Barn Performance - 4:00pm

December 6th: Advent Meal - prep for meal at 5:00 pm. Meal at 6:00pm.

December 6th: DECEMBER YOUTH MEETING 7:00pm

Christmas party: TBD.

I can't wait to see you all at Christmas in the Barn.

Merry Christmas to all.

Melanie

JAM News by Bruce Kelm

Jesus and Music held a program on October 29th for the congregation. Despite the low number, the JAMmers in attendance stepped up and performed their selections with beauty and enthusiasm. The songs were centered around the theme "God is Good, All the Time". The congregation showed their appreciation with rousing applause.

Our next performance will be December 17th during the 9:00 a.m. worship service. It is a Christmas program/play called "Christmas Letters". A correspondence will be sent home with each JAMmer, asking for permission to be in this exciting opportunity to help tell the story of Jesus' birth. We hope that parents will be able to accommodate their child's attendance on that Sunday.

Giving Tree — Mitten Tree

The Mitten Tree is back. Bless those that are less fortunate with the warm gift of Love and Giving. Hand Made or purchased mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves will be donated to Grace Place and WestCap. The tree will be up in the Narthex November 19th-December 20th at which time the items collected will be delivered.

Thank You Sue Kahler for setting up this drive. Let's completely cover the tree this year!!



Christmas in the Barn

Live Nativity Program

With camel, sheep, donkey, goats, and rabbits!!
Presented by Holy Cross Lutheran Church



December 2nd @ 6:30 p.m.

December 3rd @ 4:00 p.m.

Refreshments served.

Everyone is invited to this free event!

***Venue is heated with bleacher seating.**

Hosted by Topline Equine Dr. Jennifer & Dean Teigen
3087 130th Avenue, 1 mile south of Glenwood City off Hwy 128.



Advent, Christmas and Epiphany blessings to you from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson, Synod Ministers, Elizabeth Bartsch, Sara Villarreal Bishop, Diane House, Lidix Montoya, Randy Olson, Laura Ramlow

Mary the Brave: Mary the God Bearer

As a young pastor and working mom, I struggled with the challenges of balancing work and home life, often while carrying a child in my womb, arms, on my hip, in a front or back baby pack, or car seat. Now my

children are adults, and I have the joy of watching them carry my grandchildren. They do it differently than I did, their car seats are much nicer than the ones we had, but like us, they carry their children with much love.¹ I still carry my adult children and grandchildren and will always carry them, in my heart with much love. This Advent and Christmas season I'm reflecting on Mary, the God bearer. (In Greek it's Theotokos².) Mary carried Jesus. Like all parents she carried her child with love, but she is also the God bearer. It was a brave thing Mary did to bear God into the world.

To love is a brave thing. It is a brave thing to become a parent. Mothers put their own lives at risk bearing a child in their womb and giving birth. It requires a measure of bravery for parents to bring a child into this world filled with the bad news of climate disasters, gun violence, war, political upheaval, racism, food/water insecurity, and escalating health and higher education costs.

History has painted Mary to be quiet, meek and mild, submissive to God's will, but a closer read shows us that Mary was brave. Mary was neither meek nor superhuman.³ She had grit. She was faithful, courageous, strong and brave. Most of all, she was human. Her encounter with the angel Gabriel, the messenger of God made her brave. She knew that her pregnancy was dangerous and she could die giving birth. She also knew that as an unmarried teenaged mother it would cause upheaval in her family and community. She would give birth to Jesus during Roman occupation, a time of political unrest. Mary was brave. Her encounter with the living God made her brave

Her encounter with God gave her bravery and the faith to see that if God was calling her God would also protect her. It revealed to her that God chooses the people on the margins, those overlooked and underestimated. Bearing God in the world was to bring good news and hope to those oppressed. May Mary, the God Bearer, inspire us all to be brave! This Advent and Christmas season, I invite you to be Theotokos, God Bearers. I invite you to carry the good news of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection to all those we meet on this journey of life and the love of Jesus in your hearts always.

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

Luke 1: 26ff In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you... "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, ... the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God... For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

¹ Robert Munsch, *I'll Love You Forever*, Firefly Books (September 1, 1995)

² Since the 3rd century, Christians had referred to Mary as theotokos, "God-bearer." The first documented usage of the term is in the writings of Origen of Alexandria in AD 230. [Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God | uCatholic](#)

³ [Mary the Brave: Neither Meek nor Superhuman - CBE International](#)

Advent Season

Sundays in Advent

December 3rd, Worship at 9:00 a.m. with Holy Communion – Hope Lives!

December 10th, Music Sunday at 9:00 a.m. with our talented vocal choir and bell choir beautifully complementing our worship and prayer that Peace Grows!

December 17th, JAM Christmas Program at 9:00 a.m. Our students will present the program *Christmas Letters* and share the message of the season that Love Unites!

December 24th at 9:00 a.m. - the 4th Sunday of Advent we will gather to worship and celebrate that Joy Overflows!



Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

December 24th at 4:00 p.m. we will gather as a whole congregation by candlelight on the holiest night of the year. We will celebrate our dear Savior's birth with the singing of plenty of the most beloved Christmas carols, with Holy Communion, and the lighting of individual candles for the singing of *Silent Night*.

December 25th at 10:00 a.m. we will again be celebrating our Savior Jesus' birth as we sing Christmas Carols and gather to receive the gift of Holy Communion.

Midweek Advent Meals and Worship with *Holden Evening Prayer*

Wednesday, December 6th 6:00 meal provided by our Senior High Youth – 7:00 worship

Wednesday, December 13th 6:00 meal provided by Church Council – 7:00 worship

Wednesday, December 20th 6:00 meal provided by WELCA group – 7:00 worship



December Birthdays



12/1 Jordan Logghe
12/3 Susan Anderson

12/5 Darlene Peterson
Scott Teigen
12/6 Amara Booth
12/7 Brandon Brahmmer
12/9 Gretchen Hanson
Nicole Goossen
12/10 Hannah Ludtke
Leslie Ludtke
Connor Tews
12/11 Jim Luepke
Dustin Rassbach
Jenna McCarthy
12/12 Gwen Wittmer
Barbara Hagen
Max Peterson

12/14 Joann Berends
Eric Hoffman
Elizabeth Erickson
Brayden Hill
12/15 Al Anderson
Jonathan Zielske
12/16 Julie Olson
12/18 Geraldine Luepke
Becky Hahn
12/19 Deelia Hoffman
12/22 Elek Anderson
12/23 Linda Klinger
Elsja Meijer
12/24 Julie Anderson
Aaron Brigham
Logan Brahmmer

12/26 Dan Groves
12/27 David Schroeder
Cheryl Hoffman
Jonathan Bartz
Joshua Wildenberg
Jackson Logghe
Emily Tews
12/28 Daniel Lee
12/29 Corey Klatt
Jacob Thompson
12/30 Trevor Larson
Anna Drinkman
Lyla Drinkman
12/31 Emma Goossen

December

2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 6:30pm-Christmas in the Barn
3 8am—Choir Practice 9am—Worship 10:10—Fellowship 4:00pm-Christmas in the Barn	4 11:00am Bible Study	5	6 3:30pm-JAM 6:00pm—Advent Supper 7:00pm-Worship 7:00pm—Youth Meeting 7:45 –Bell Choir	7	8	9
10 Music Sunday 8am—Choir Practice 9am—Worship 10:10—Fellowship	11 11:00am Bible Study 1:30pm Resources 7:00pm Council	12 10:30am Glenhaven Worship 6:00pmThreads of Love	13 3:30pm-JAM 6:00pm—Advent Supper 7:00pm-Worship	14 8:00am Quilting 1:00pm WELCA	15 Newsletter Deadline	16
17 9am—JAM Christmas Program 10:10—Fellowship	18 11:00am Bible Study	19	20 3:30pm-JAM 6:00pm—Advent Supper 7:00pm-Worship	21	22	23
24 Christmas Eve 9am—Worship 10:10—Fellowship 4pm—Worship	25 Christmas Day 10:00am Worship	26	27 NO Wednesday Activities	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve 9am—Worship 10:10—Fellowship						

Council Minutes 11/20/2023

Meeting called to order @ 7:12pm

Attendance: Derrick Oberle, April Goodwin, Amber Hoffman, Pastor Jonathan, Dave Anderson, Angela Jeske, Jill Logghe

April motioned to approve the agenda, Angela second.

Dave motioned to approve the secretary's report, with a change to the council business section of minutes, Sign-up will be for the 4th Sunday not the 3rd for serving coffee hour. Report second by April.

Faith and Life Team

- JAM Update-Going well, huge thanks to all that have stepped up to help out in Bruce's absence while out with knee injury
- Confirmation Class Update- Going well! Mentor event will be poinsettia delivery
- 9th Grade Confirmation Retreat and Worship service on November 12th- successful and everyone had fun. All were in attendance!
- Thanksgiving Worship 11/21/2023
 - Advent and Christmas Worship Calendar/Times
 - Christmas Eve Worship will be at 4:00
 - Christmas Day Worship will be at 10:00am

FUN Ministry Team Report

- Trunk or Treat on Sunday, Oct. 29 was the best attendance to date! Thank you to everyone who helped make it happen and successful
- Veterans Appreciation- wonderful turnout, served about 80 people. Thank you to all veterans, your service and sacrifices is much appreciated
- Grace Place Meal- Preparing on 11/21- Almost the whole meal has been covered and donations are greatly appreciated
- Christmas in the Barn- Saturday and Sunday December 2nd and 3rd, practice is underway and kids are doing great. Should be another great year of Christmas in the Barn.

Property and Management

- Fairstand Work Meeting/Discussion for 2024 has been rescheduled for January 14th following church service
- Roof work next year-insurance check will be held and not used until more discussion happens with insurance and members involved

Resources

- Motion by Angela to approve the Financial report as printed for November, second by Jill
- New procedures will be discussed for office flow and best practices for invoice and bill pay
- Need to begin working on budget for 2024

Council Business

- Serving Coffee Hour on December 3 - Amber & Angela
- Serving Advent Meal on December 13 - Spaghetti, Garlic Bread & Salad

Next Meeting scheduled for December 11th @ 7:00

Meeting adjourned at 8:55PM

Financial Update

During this special time of the year, we pause to reflect on all we are thankful for. Family, friends, faith, and of course, since we are the Resource Team, we also include finances. We are thankful to all of you and your faithful giving. This year we have had some major expenditures with the front door and steeple repairs. Our total checkbook balance looks very healthy at \$40,236, but we need to keep in mind that we are holding \$6,000 in restricted funds for future fair stand improvements and \$9,835 in restricted funds that came in for Casas por Cristo donations and will go to pay for the housing materials for the home in Guatemala next month. We have several other restricted funds leaving our unrestricted fund balance at \$15,967.

While \$15,967 seems healthy and we are blessed to have it, we are down from the \$25,546 that we started the year with. Again, we did have some major expenses this year, but we are hoping we can build our unrestricted fund balance up before the end of the year to give us more of a cushion in the event of an unexpected emergency. As we enter this Christmas season and you consider how God has blessed you this past year, we ask you to prayerfully consider your giving to the church. Thanks so much to every one of you for your continued support to the missions and ministry of Holy Cross!

As of October 31st, 2023

	Monthly	2023 YTD Actual	2022 YTD Actual	2023 YTD Budget
Regular Giving	\$ 14,575	\$ 100,269	\$ 93,395	\$ 106,483
Simply Giving	\$ 2,211	\$ 25,042	\$ 27,774	\$ 29,167
Misc Giving/Income	\$ 18	\$ 19,509	\$ 20,278	\$ 15,542
Total Income	\$ 16,804	\$ 144,821	\$ 141,448	\$ 151,191
Total Expenses	\$ 13,129	\$ 144,008	\$ 148,855	\$ 151,190
Unrestricted Checkbook Balance:	\$	15,967		
Total Checkbook Balance	\$	40,236		

Pastors Ponderings Continued...

(Continued from page 1)

do. Because God indeed was, with his love, continuing to befriend them.

The season of Advent is meant to be a time of preparation and anticipatory waiting. Yet in the rush and busy-ness of all of our preparations for Christmas, we often leave little time to ponder, to wonder, to wait, or reflect. But as we hear from Isaiah, God wants us to perceive the new things he is

doing, to take part in what is springing forth, and to experience the new way God makes in the wilderness. So join with Mary to ponder anew — and may the Holy Spirit fill you with wonder at all that God is doing to transform you and the world. Be assured, the best is still to come.

**HOLY CROSS
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

615 Maple St
PO Box 65
Glenwood City WI 54013

Phone: 715-265-4411
gcholycross@dtcomm.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gcholycross



CONFIRMATION CLASS 2023



Kirah Marie Krueger, Parents: Morgan and Lisa Krueger
Addisyn Morgan Petersen, Parents: Bill and Ericka Petersen
Clayton Joseph Thayer, Parents: Scott Thayer; Jennie & Travis Teigen
Langston Charles Walz, Parents: Gabe and Christa Walz
Tori Elizabeth Ohman, Parents: Rob and Misty Ohman
Eli Jared Oberle, Parents: Derrick and Tammy Oberle
Max Danny Peterson, Parents: Barry and Carrie Peterson
Jaxin Allen Lee Olson, Parents: Jess Olson; Keith & Felisha Olson

