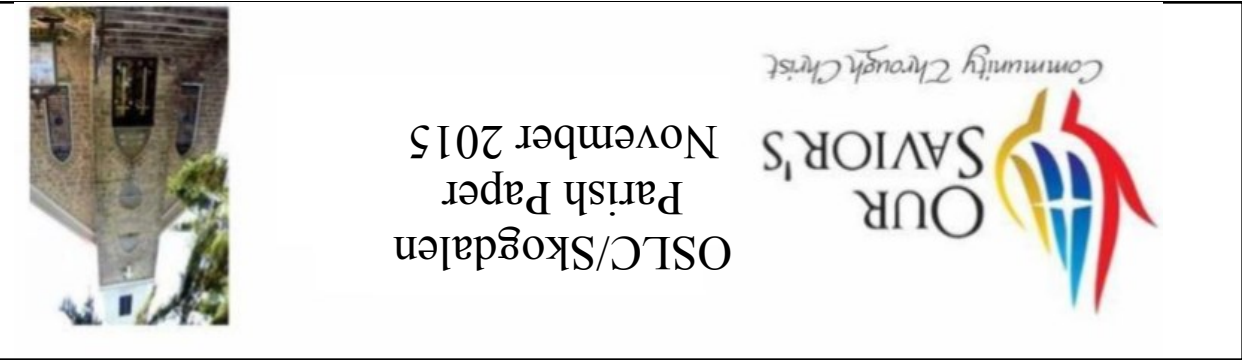


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608.634.4871 www.oursav-skogdalen.org/ oursav@mwf.net
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Our Savior's/Skogdalen Parish Paper

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306 S. Main St.
Westby, WI 54667

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PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

I'm moving the season of Advent to most of November this year to reclaim its meaning.

Let me explain, Advent is the “lost season” of the church year as it is sandwiched between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The word “advent” actually means “the coming or arrival.” For the church that means prepare our hearts, minds and households for the birth of the Savior. Yet the reality is that advent in America isn’t about focusing upon the Christ in our midst but the sales in the stores. The Christian Advent is about Jesus and his way of doing things while our cultures advent is focused upon stuff, busyness and business.

That is why we are going to be lifting up the real Advent in November by focusing upon the essentials of the season using a resource called “The Advent Conspiracy” At first I was a little taken aback by the word conspiracy but the more I thought and prayed about the more I liked the concept. Usually the word conspiracy is associated with something very negative and even destructive, yet another aspect of conspiracy is the action of a group of people to bring about change. When you view conspiracy in that light you begin to realize that Jesus and his followers are the ultimate conspirators as Jesus came to change the world, to reconnect the world to God, to show us how to live!

We will be participating in this ultimate conspiracy in our worship, in our homes and in our lives. Take a moment to look over the Advent Conspiracy Guide and use it as you find useful. Additional copies will be available at church.

So join me as a fellow conspirator for Jesus’ sake as we reclaim Advent this year!

In God’s Surprising Grace!

John

ADVENT CONSPIRACY

This Christmas

Worship Fully-
because Christmas begins and ends with Jesus!

Spend Less-
and free your resources for things that truly matter.

Give More-
of your presence: your hands, your words, your time, your heart!

Love All-
the poor, the forgotten, the marginalized, the sick,
in ways that make a difference.

Americans spend over \$300 billion on Christmas shopping each year. What if a part of this spending was redirected to fight hunger and poverty? That ornament for a teacher could be changed into health and dental care for a child in an orphanage, or that sweater for your spouse could instead be a microloan for a woman in Mexico.

You could actually give a gift that changes lives for generations. You will have an opportunity to browse through the ELCA Good Gifts catalog where you will see more than 50 different giving options that support life-changing projects around the world.

We will have cards available that you may give to let them know that money you would have spent at a store went to someone in need instead. So please rethink your Christmas shopping this year, and substitute at least one gift with a gift from the ELCA Good Gifts catalog. Thanks for your support! 2

Good Gift Catalogs will be available at both churches throughout Advent!



OUR SAVIOR'S COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

(Complete minutes are available at the church office)

- Sunday School, Confirmation, soon choir and some new ministries as well as “Come For Supper” are getting into the “swing of things”. Renovations began October 12th – We must all be flexible and adaptable in the process.
- New member Sunday will be October 25.
- Evangelism – outreach: we need one or two people to take lead in this area creating a “market plan” besides getting newer people engaged in OSLC faith life.
- Confirmation – Sugar Creek Retreat was held October 2-4 with 12 campers and 3 adults (Craig Johnson, Joel Jepson and Pastor John).
- Stewardship Program – theme is Because of God’s Mercy
- Youth & Education – Sunday School is going great although worship and Sunday School attendance has been lower. Have 12 kids in WAY. 2nd week of November will be trip to Minneapolis for Urban Immersion. Book Fair – November 8;
- Property – House cleaning has been done before renovations – items brought to Bethel Butikk. Need bids for snow removal. Need a new vacuum cleaner.

SKOGDALEN'S COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Pastor's report was gone over. Pastor John is on the Sugar Creek Board, Bethel Home Foundation President, a chair on the Church & Society Committee for the Synod.

Cemetery Shed: John talked to Joel and they are going to get a new lock and clean it out.

GPS Training: Lisa attended the GPS training called “Can This Church Live?” There was good information presented by Libby & the Bishop. These meetings are monthly. Everyone is encouraged to go to the April 2nd meeting which is called “I’m on Council. Now What?”



The Meatball Dinner was a success. We had very good comments from everyone about the dinner.

Skogdalen's Annual meeting is scheduled for January 31st.

The next meeting for the council will be Thursday, December 10th at 6:00 p.m. and we will have a potluck.

Pastor will talk to Heather about scheduling the Sunday School Program during church services.



On Sunday, October 25th, we welcomed new members at OSLC:

The new members are as follows:

Ann & Mark Skaaland

Pam and Ken Hammond

Gary & Jody Jensen

Elinor Jensen

Barb & Nick Webb & Michael



Birthday Cakes for Kids - many of our grade school kids don't have the privilege of enjoying a birthday cake due to a variety of reasons. A sample of the kit is in the back of our churches along with an instruction sheet. Each birthday bag cost approximately five dollars.

You can also bring an individual item or make a monetary contribution. The birthday kits will include a cake mix, topping, apple sauce (instead of oil/eggs), aluminum cake pan, directions and a birthday banner all in a solid colored gift bag.



BAPTISMS
Tinley Lynn Speidel, Journey June Dunnum, Matthew Nicholas Webb

WEDDINGS
Carrie Jo Leum & Cody Carpenter

FUNERALS
Dee Goss, Haley Fauske, Donald Jefson, Todd Berger.

OSLC

SKOGDALEN

WEDDING
Caity Siverhus & Jacob Leuck

Youth Group Fundraiser

Butter Braids Fundraiser for the WAY summer trips and activities.

You can help our high school youth participate in the mission trip to South Dakota or to spend a week at Sugar Creek by purchasing Butter Braids. *They make great gifts but they might not last that long as they just taste that good!*

You can make your purchase from one of the youth or through the church office

3

Westby Area Youth!

- **Wednesdays @ 5:45PM at Our Saviors -**
 - **Food provided**

The combined high school youth ministry of Our Savior's/Skogdalen and Westby Coon Prairie/Vang



Minneapolis 2015 Urban Immersion Friday November 12 – Sunday November 14



We will travel to Minneapolis for an unforgettable weekend to experience first-hand the complexities of poverty, to meet and serve those affected and to take what they have experienced and learned and address the issues of poverty in their own communities.

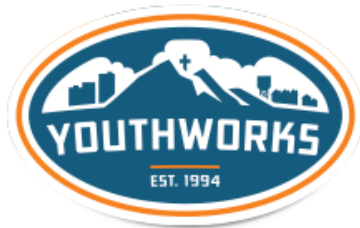
SUMMER EVENTS

Sugar Creek House Boating Sunday June 26 – July 1

All current 8th through 12th Grade Students are eligible to participate.

Join us on a memory-making journey down the Mississippi River! You can explore the dunes, swim, slide, boat, laugh, and play in the beauty of God's amazing creation!

Enjoy campfires and Bible study on the sandbars as well as intentional community-building activities. Each boat group consists of up to 10 campers and 2 counselors, one of whom is a lifeguard. This is a fantastic experience for high school youth!



PINE RIDGE MISSION TRIP 2016 Friday, July 15 through Friday, July 22, 2016

All current 8th through 12th Grade Students

On this trip, we will have the opportunity to continue our relationships with people of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation by ministering through children's programs and painting and weatherizing homes. This can and will be a life-changing experience. Meeting new friends and developing relationships with children & their families will last in your hearts forever! For more information or to register, please contact Pastor John!

Coming to grips with happiness -

Excerpts from the latest addition of the Lutheran from ELCA Bishop Eaton



The pursuit of happiness in American culture has become an obsession. Discomfort, unease and disease are to be avoided if possible and dealt with firmly with the aid of the appropriate analgesic — medical, emotional, social or religious — if necessary. Tension in relationships or within oneself isn't to be tolerated.

We have become a pain-averse, anesthetized society. We believe that everything is just right the way it is. There are times in our lives when we should feel pain. There are times when tension shouldn't be resolved too quickly. There are times when we should struggle. I'm not advocating the when-I-was-your-age-we-walked-uphill-to-school-both-ways-in-the-snow-while-chewing-on-lead-based-paint-and-wrapped-in-asbestos kind of toughness. Rather, I'm raising the possibility that "happiness" that avoids all discomfort is a desperate and fruitless illusion. It's life-dulling and can become a kind of captivity, an all-consuming search for relief that, significantly, leads to a life of consumption.

Life in Christ offers an alternative. Joy. This is an active, living participation in the gracious love of God demonstrated in Christ's death and resurrection. The crucifixion wasn't a painless event.

This ultimate act of radical presence and vulnerability by a passionate God gives us life, hope and a future even and especially in the face of all of the ugly and deadly things life throws at us. This is diametrically opposed to a "happiness" that immures us in empty comfort. This is true joy.

It's an odd and difficult thing that the cross is a symbol of joy. It might be even more odd and difficult to believe and trust that a life conformed to the suffering, serving and death of Jesus is, in fact, the good life. The world offers "happiness"; Christ gives joy. The world wants "easy"; our life in Christ gives simplicity. The world touts positive thinking; we're invited to have the same mind that is in Christ.

And so, dear church, what form might this joy take? Joined in baptism to the death and resurrection of Christ we can be fully aware of suffering — our own and that of others — and not turn away from it. Acknowledging pain, we are compelled to bring healing. Living in the tension between God's merciful will and the brokenness caused by human sin that the cross brings into greater relief, we can point to the ultimate victory of God even as we work to realize it in our communities.

Jesus didn't die to make us happy. Jesus died so that his joy may be in us and that our joy may be complete.

Sparkhouse Family Resource Fair



Stop by OSLC before and after church services on Sunday November 8th to browse or purchase videos, Bibles and books for your home. We will have sample materials displayed in the back of the church for anyone who would like to order through the month of November. Books make great gifts for everyone.

Hosted by the Youth & Education Committee

Need help with your Christmas shopping?

Good news... the Sunday School will again be hosting a Good Gifts Fair this year!

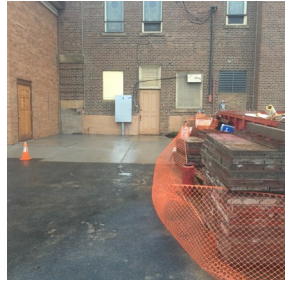
On **Sunday, November 15th** after church, you will have the opportunity to “purchase” animals or supplies for others living in poverty around the world and in our community. Catalogs are available in the back of the sanctuary. Feel free to take one and browse the many options available. If you would like your donation to be a gift for someone on your Christmas list, cards are available to let them know that you purchased a Good Gift in their name.



The Good Gifts material will be available through out the Christmas Season!

OSLC Building Renovation Update

These past weeks have seen a great deal of work on the exterior as new concrete entries have been poured as well as the footings for the heating and air-conditioning units. Inside work included removing the ceiling tile, old wiring and heating ducts in the basement, demolishing the original (1921) men's and women's bathrooms.



In the coming weeks there will be work on the roof, education wing windows, heating and air-conditioning, and electrical. If you would like to see the work please do so after worship on Sundays.

We are in need of a group of people to work with the contractor on the bathroom area. Please talk with Jordan Christianson if you are interested 632.4958.

Couples Retreat February 12-14

Join Pastor John and Georgi this Valentines weekend at Sugar Creek Bible Camp for a fantastic couples get away!

Enrich your relationship with your spouse, and enjoy some time away together at Sugar Creek! There will be ample opportunity to relax, hike, and spend quality time as a couple. On Saturday evening, we will have a special Candlelight dinner! Whether you are looking for a relationship “tune-up” or simply some quality time away together, this retreat is for you and your partner! Lodging is in individual hotel type rooms or private cabins.

This makes a great Christmas Gift - for yourself, for you kids, for your parents, for friends!



COME FOR SUPPER “CFS”

Every Tuesday
During our renovations CFS will be held at
Westby Coon Prairie

Social Hour 4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.
Meal Served 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

NO CHARGE “EVER”

EVERYONE WELCOME

“Come for Supper” is surpassing our expectations as we recently served 100 people! People of all ages and all walks of life have shared in community while enjoying a marvelous meal! A special thanks to the many people who have pitched in to make this a reality. If you feel God calling you to donate money or food, volunteer your time or simply connect with people in community, please contact Marilyn Leum (608) 634-4839

“Come for Supper” is our response to Jesus asking Peter three times, “Do you love me?” (John 21. 15-17) And we say, as Peter did also, “Yes Lord, I love you.” Jesus then tells us to, “Feed my Sheep”. As disciples, we are called to love our neighbors, to uplift one another and help improve our community one meal at a time.



Community Thanksgiving Dinner Thursday November 26

Last year 335 meals were served and we need your help to make this years just as successful.

We need folks to cook the turkeys, bring pies and of course Lefsa! You can also sign up to work a 1 1/2 shift to serve and help in the kitchen. This is a great opportunity for individuals of all ages and families to work together and learn the joy of serving.

Of course⁶ you can participate by enjoying a great community thanksgiving meal!
*This year the dinner will be held at Westby Coon Prairie Church
due to our renovation.*



BECAUSE OF GOD'S GREAT MERCY

a stewardship program for our congregation



“Because of God’s Great Mercy” is the title of our stewardship emphasis this year. The scriptural basis of this focus on our stewardship of all that God has entrusted into our care is I Peter 2:9, *“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.”*

We begin by proclaiming all that God has done for us, hence the title “Because of God’s Great Mercy.” God has made us God’s own people. We will also consider how generous giving is an important part of every Christian’s life, and how our combined generosity can make even greater things possible through our congregation.

We will think together about how our giving to Our Savior’s is an important part of our Christian faith, and how we use our offerings to do God’s work within the congregation’s walls, in our community, and around the world.

“Because of God’s Great Mercy” will ask you prayerfully consider increasing your giving to OSLC by at least ½ of 1% of your household income. Second, you will be asked to consider using an automatic funds transfer program that OSLC already has in place for your giving.

“Because of God’s Great Mercy” will use mail, e-mail, and time in worship to share information with you. Please make a special effort to watch for material during this important time in our congregation’s life.