

THE MESSENGER

a monthly congregational newsletter & events calendar



OAK CREEK, WI
JANUARY 2019

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

PSALM 107:1

Developing A Healthy Prayer Habit

BY PASTOR STEPHEN SCHMIDT

As we begin a new year, self-improvement is on a lot of people's minds as they make resolutions to live life in a more healthy and productive way. They're going to give up some bad habits. They're going to begin healthy habits. Whether or not they keep these resolutions or not, at the very least those who are making them can see there's room for improvement.

I'd like to suggest that many of us might want to make a spiritual New Year's resolution, specifically concerning God's gift of prayer.

A quick internet search reveals that the Bible contains 508 separate passages about prayer. **508!**

I'm not going to claim that I read each and every one of them in preparing this article, but I am confident in saying this: out of those 508 passages, the number of passages that urge us to pray less than we do is exactly zero. In fact, we are constantly told exactly the opposite. Consider just some of the words God inspired the apostle Paul to write:

"Pray continually." (I Thessalonians 5:17)

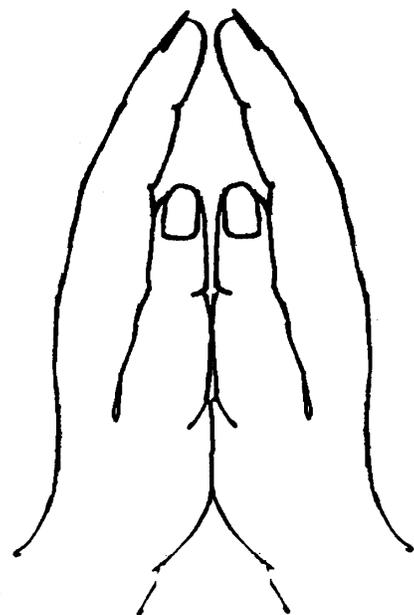
"I want the men in every place to pray." (I Timothy 2:8)

"Now I urge you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to struggle with me in prayers to God." (Romans 15:30)

"I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people." (I Timothy 2:1)

"You join in helping us with your prayers for us. Then many people will thank God for the gracious gift given to us through many prayers." (II Corinthians 1:11)

It's impossible to miss the message - God wants us to pray. And it's easy to understand why. First, prayer is an act of worship, as we need to know and believe in our God before we can offer a prayer to him. Secondly, prayer is powerful, as we unload all our cares and worries on God. And God is only too happy to remind us that he is willing and able to carry our burdens with us.



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MISSION STATEMENT

Jesus told his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (*John 20:21*). Therefore, we the members of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church welcome his Gospel Mission for us. God created each of us and our congregation to make all people lifelong disciples of Christ. We will use the power of God's Word and Sacraments to nurture believers for spiritual growth and service, and to evangelize our community and the world, all to the glory of God.

Prayer Habits *(continued)*

BY PASTOR STEPHEN SCHMIDT

So it's fitting for every Christian to ask himself or herself: "How's my prayer life?" Most of us would admit there's at least a little room for improvement. Some of us might even say there's a lot of room for improvement. And if a consideration of the blessings of prayer leads you make a spiritual resolution for the new year, your congregation is ready to help!

First of all, our staff minister prepares a prayer sheet every week that is available for you to pick up in the Welcome Center. In it you will find prayers for each day of the week, prayers for special occasions, and a list of your fellow church members for whom you can pray. We encourage everyone to make use of this valuable resource!

Secondly, in the new year we are beginning a weekly Prayer Group that will meet Wednesdays at 7:00 PM at the church. The Prayer Group - sponsored by our Adult Discipleship board - is exactly that: a group of people meeting for prayer. Come as you are, bring whatever is on your mind, stay for just a few minutes or as long as you like (each session will last 45 minutes to an hour). We'll start on January 2nd, and we'll plan to meet every single Wednesday throughout the year, even after Lenten and Advent services. You can even text or email Pastor with a prayer request if you're not able to make it on a particular Wednesday.

It's always easier to keep a resolution if you have someone to help you keep it. As Christians who have been granted the gift of prayer, let's help each other grow in our use and appreciation of it!

Pastor Schmidt

New Prayer Group

BEGINS JANUARY 2

We are launching a weekly Prayer Group that will meet Wednesdays at 7:00 PM at the church, sponsored by our Adult Discipleship Board. The first meeting is on January 2nd, and we plan on meeting every single Wednesday throughout the year. The Prayer Group is exactly what it sounds like: a group of people meeting for prayer. Come as you are, bring whatever is on your mind, stay however long you like. Each session will last 45 minutes to an hour. If you're not at all able to make it on a particular Wednesday, you can also email Pastor at pastor@stjohnsoakcreek.org or text or call him at (414) 651-0313 with a prayer request.



Women's Book Club

MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 6:30 PM

The Women's Book Club will be held on January 14th at 6:30 PM, here at St. John's. We will be having a discussion on the book "Crimes Against A Book Club", written by Kathy Cooperman . Any questions can be directed to Jody Vircks at 414-248-2896.

Men's Bible Study

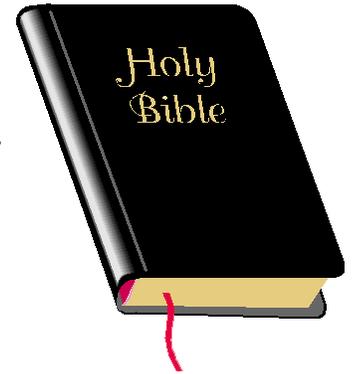
1ST & 3RD MONDAYS | 7:00 PM

On Monday, January 7 at 7:00 PM the topic will be "Dual Citizenship." Learn and discuss the role of politics in the pulpit. Yes, we are discussing religion and politics together! Please feel free to invite a friend for this Biblical approach to sharing God's Word.

Adult Bible Study

SUNDAYS | 9:15 AM

Adults (high school graduate and older) along with parents of students in YBS are encouraged to attend the adult Bible study with Pastor Schmidt in the lower level. The Bible lesson taught to the youth will coincide with the adult lesson each Sunday. Apply the truths of each session in prayers, discussion and daily living throughout the week. The Bible Study is held in the lower level fellowship area and begins at 9:15 AM.



Bible Breakfast

TUESDAYS | 6:00 AM

Start your morning early with food for the soul and body at the Oak Creek Diner every Tuesday from 6:00 AM to 7:00 AM. Pastor Schmidt leads the Bible study each week as we learn and share God's Word and fellowship, amidst the aroma of coffee and bacon. It may be cold outside, but warming inside!. The Oak Creek Diner is located at 6878 S. 13th St.in Oak Creek (between College and Rawson).

Teen Bible Study

SUNDAYS | 9:15 AM

Teen Bible study is held in large upper room classroom off the Welcome Center area. Today, teens are pulled in many directions, with instant information available on any subject. Learn what God's Word has to say on the many questions that they or their friends may have. *Real topics, Real solutions are discussed.* Teens, please plan to attend Sundays at 9:15 AM.

Youth Bible Study

SUNDAYS | 9:15 AM

Our regular Sunday sessions will resume on Sunday, January 6th. If you have children ages 3 -14 please enroll them if they are not. Starting the beginning of the second semester is a great time to enroll your child. To get started, simply talk to Staff Minister Rod Bollinger or one of the teachers and they will assist you. The YBS time is 9:15 AM to 10:20 AM and the adult class in the lower level at the same time uses the same lessons.

We want to remind our parents of the importance of sending their children to YBS each Sunday. Here they have the opportunity to grow in their faith as they hear and learn God's Word. What a tremendous blessing!

Thank You!

TO THE CONGREGATION

Pastor and Margo Schmidt and Rod and Karen Bollinger would like to thank you for your heartfelt Christian love, support, prayers and encouragement offered this past year. It is appreciated very much. We extend our prayers for a blessed, peaceful, and happy New Year to all of you.

CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS

We thank the parents for making sure their children took the opportunity to attend our Christmas for Kids on Saturday, December 8th. It was a special day for all those in attendance as they heard about the real meaning of Christmas, sang Christmas songs, enjoyed a snack, constructed various crafts and made new friends.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

A special thanks to and to the many people who helped put up Christmas decorations under the leadership of Jon Forston and Barb Korntved. The decorations added much beauty to the church during this festive and meaningful season of the church year. A thank you is in order to all those who took on additional usher duties for the many Christmas services as well.

ADVENT SUPPERS

We wish to thank the Boards that served the Advent suppers. All of these Boards served delicious meals that provided a time for fellowship as well. The Boards that served were: Board for Fellowship, Property Management and the Elders.

CHILDREN'S SERVICE

We thank the children who worked so hard to provide the gospel message to our congregation and visitors for the Christmas service, "Let the Children Come!" All in attendance were reminded of the awe and wonder of the miracle of our Savior's birth in Bethlehem. We were able to hear about God's love and wisdom of a baby boy born to an earthly mother and heavenly Father. Most importantly, we heard and learned that the greatest gift that we have is that of God's Son, Jesus who gives us eternal life. We pray that the message of God's Word in recitation and song touched all those in attendance and will remain in their hearts.

There are far too many people to thank individually, but to all those who helped with specific aspects of this service such as: music, narration, power point/sound and service folder we extend our sincere thanks. We thank all of our YBS children and parents for working with their children at home. We thank the teachers for the time and effort they put forth for this to come together as it did. We also extend a thank you to all who provided lunches for the rehearsals.

WORSHIP SERVICE MUSIC

Thank you to all of the individuals who participated in our Advent and Christmas music this year. Thanks to our choir, song leaders, musicians and accompanists who glorify God with their voices and instruments.



LMWS News

2019 CONVENTION NEWS & BEFRIEND A MISSION

The Milwaukee Metro South Circuit of LWMS (Lutheran Women's Missionary Society) has a program entitled: S.O.S. (Send One Sister). This program is designed to stipend a woman or girl who has never attended the yearly convention. We had asked for names to be submitted no later than December 31, 2018 to Send Two Sisters to the convention in Des Moines, IA, June 27-30, 2019. Recipients will be drawn at the circuit board meeting in January 2019.

The new BAM (Befriend a Mission) assignments for 2019-2020 are available in the Welcome Center. Please keep these missionaries and their families in your prayers. They enjoy receiving cards for their birthdays and anniversaries, so even though St. John's special month to remember them is March, cards and letters at any time are appreciated.

The Milwaukee Metro South Circuit Rally will be held on Saturday, April 27, 2019 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Waukesha. It will begin at 8:00 AM. with registration and a continental breakfast. The guest speaker will focus on our new program, 'IGNITE'.

WINGS Quarterly Meeting

JANUARY 27

Ladies, please plan to attend the quarterly meeting on January 27th at 11:45 AM. We start this meeting by reviewing our ministry programs from 2018 and create a draft plan for 2019. All Ladies are encouraged to attend with new ideas to share the gospel message to our community, nurture our members in God's Word and strengthen our fellowship.

Library News

CONSIDER OTHER BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Several months ago we gave you a list of new Bibles received in the church library. We continue to add to our library holdings in this area. No, the Bible has not changed. Language keeps changing. I wanted to find John 5:39 "Search the Scriptures..." in King James translation. In the NIV it is "You diligently study the Scriptures..." It's the language that has changed. The focus of the library display in January will be keeping up with Bible study and help you find the most helpful ones for your needs. All the new ones are recommended for our study, but some have cautions to be aware of. For example, The New Ungers Bible Handbook and Zondervan Handbook to the Bible have slanted information toward their church teachings. These two have been in publication for some time and are still considered useful. Others are: Amplified Bible, Bible Life, The Open Bible, Why the Bible is Number 1, A Summary of Christian Doctrine, Third Revised Edition, and Bible Discovery Series: Bible Basics: Tools to Read and Interpret Scripture.



Besides these on the library display rack, other items to help you study the Bible will be displayed in the library. Remember to teach young children the importance of the Word of God. It deserves respect and love for God's gift to us. It is God's gift to us.

Open Forum

FEBRUARY 17

An Open Forum is scheduled for Sunday February 17th at 11:45 AM. The theme of this Open Forum is “I’d like it better if...”. Bring your ideas and questions to the church council, Pastor and the Staff Minister as together we grow in our faith and ministry. We will include a few additional ministry reports including an update on the moving of the rental house and the Christmas Eve worship services.

Church Cancellations

WEATHER-RELATED CLOSURES

In the event that we need to cancel worship services or any of our weekly events or meetings at St. John’s due to inclement weather, we will update all four local television networks (WTMJ 4, WITI 6, WISN 12, WDJT 58) along with our Website and Facebook page.



St. John's Wish List

SPECIAL AND NON-BUDGETED ITEMS

The following list is submitted by various committees and individuals and approved by the church council. Please speak with Pastor or the Staff Minister for any of the items below.

Worship and Welcome Center

- Non-flammable candles for the Christmas Eve Service: \$300
- Coffee maker repair: \$250

Outreach

- New large stained-glass window in choir loft. \$32,000

Security

- Exterior lighting to carport and both garage areas: \$1000

Maintenance

- Parsonage front screen door: \$500
- Sanctuary air conditioner unit: \$3000
- Parking lot sealing: \$200

We are certainly appreciative for the contributions and gifts that have been made.

Ministry Offerings

FIRST FRUITS

Please be sure to pickup your 2019 envelopes in the Welcome Center. We also have the automatic offerings option available through Simply Giving. These forms can also be picked up at the Welcome Center.

JULY 2018 THROUGH NOVEMBER 2018 [5 MONTHS]			
FUND	OFFERINGS	MINISTRY PLAN	OVER (SHORT)
General	\$120,251	\$134,581	(\$14,330)
Debt Reduction	\$16,710	\$7,500	\$9,210
Missions	\$3,971	\$5,000	(\$1,029)
Total	\$140,932	\$147,081	(\$6,149)