

Lifetogether

January 2021

Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish

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Reflections by Pastor Keith

For weeks my sermons have ended with words similar to these: We have a faithful God, a God who comes down to be with us and to help us, a God who hangs in there with us and who never, ever gives up on us!

Thank God we have such a faithful God! As we look back to the year 2020 we must say, it was anything but a normal year! Each year has its ups and downs, its challenges and tough times, but 2020 was exceptional in all the challenges we faced. We needed a God who hung in there with us and never gave up on us - and that is what we have!

The year began normal enough, but that all changed in March. After starting the year worshiping in our church sanctuary, in March we suspended in-person worship because of the corona virus pandemic, shifting our worship from the church sanctuary to our homes. In June we began worshiping outdoors with no singing, no sharing of the peace, no sitting close to one another. In October, as temperatures dropped, we returned to indoor worship in our church sanctuaries. Then, as more and more people in our local area were getting sick with COVID-19 we again suspended in-person worship and returned to worshiping in our homes, this time with live

streamed worship services.

COVID-19 interrupted many of our church activities. The fall began with Sunday school outdoors and then in the church basement, but by the end of November we suspended in-person Sunday school again. Confirmation classes were conducted online through Zoom beginning in April and continuing that way through the year. Vacation Bible School was cancelled, as were fellowship gatherings. No potluck meals. Visits to nursing home residents and hospital patients were not permitted. We were not able to come together to celebrate Holy Week, Easter and Christmas.

We learned a lot in 2020, though. We learned that the work of the church, the work of sharing the Gospel, the work of caring for people and helping them grow in faith, hope and love, doesn't stop just because we are in the midst of a world wide pandemic. We learned to be adaptive, creative, innovative in how we do ministry together. We learned that if one way isn't working, we must try a different way.

We learned to use new tools in doing ministry. In March I began sending out a daily "Reflections" to everyone on our congregational email lists. These daily messages continued

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till June when we began worshiping outdoors. At that time I scaled back to sending 1 to 3 messages a week.

Life Together is published bi-monthly by the Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish.

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Outdoor worship meant we needed an outdoor sound system and a portable digital piano with a speaker. We started live streaming our Sunday worship services in June, which meant making greater use of our congregations' Facebook pages. Later, our websites were also put to use broadcasting our worship services. Zoom video conferencing was used for meetings, Sunday school classes and confirmation classes.

Old tools such as letter writing, cards, phone calls, texting, email were all used to stay in touch with one another. Congregational members were urged to remember especially the residents of nursing homes and folks who were confined to their homes.

In 2020 we continued to be the church in ever new ways. I am so grateful for our two congregations who rose to the challenges, adapted to new circumstances, continued to generously support the work of the church with their loving hands and caring hearts, their prayers, and their financial contributions. Truly, you kept the faith, loved God, loved others and were the church in trying times!

As we look to the new year of 2021 let us do so with the assurance of God's faithfulness. The Bible declares, "God is faithful!" (1 Corinthians 1:9)

Whatever this new year brings, we can face it with boldness that comes from knowing that we have a God who comes down here to be with us and to help us, a God who hangs in there with us, and who never, ever gives up on us! Throughout 2021 let us - Keep the faith! Love God! Love others! Be the people of God!

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Keith E. Wiens

Words of Wisdom

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

- Proverbs 3:5-6

Jesus said, "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow."

- Matthew 6:33-34

Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.

- Proverbs 16:3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

- Hebrews 12:1-2

Financial Support of Olsburg Church

December Income	\$	6,930.00
December Expenses	\$	6,043.47
December Budget	\$	6,171.92

2020 Income	\$	61,605.40
2020 Expenses	\$	67,694.94
2020 Budget	\$	74,063.00

Worship In Our Homes

We are now worshiping in our homes. Because of the increase of COVID-19 cases in our area, the councils of our two churches have made the decision to suspend in-person worship at our churches. No one knows how long this may last, but we certainly hope that we will be able to return to worship in our churches very soon. Meanwhile, we worship at home.

We are making our Sunday morning service of worship available on each

January birthdays and anniversaries

If you know of a member whose birthday is not listed, please contact the church office.

January Birthdays

- 2 Skyler Zoeller (O)
Landry Zoeller (O)
- 3 Darnell Vargo (O)
- 5 Gavin Hargrave (W)
- 6 Gary Holt (O)
- 8 Julie Strauss (W)
- 9 Jerry Bohnenblust (W)
Emily Nelson (W)
- 10 Marlene Jenkins (W)
- 15 Jeremiah Brenner (O)
- 16 Ethan Bohenblust (W)
Madison Hadden (W)
Witten Ricketts (O)

- 18 Russell Berry (W)
Lacy Brown (W)
Chase Gibbs (O)
- 19 Dawson Dick (W)
- 20 Colt Kasselman (O)
- 25 Bailee Howland (O)
Jan Nelson (W)
- 27 Brandon Nelson (O)
- 28 Alan Nelson (W)
- 29 Ryker Befort (O)
- 30 Bee Erickson (O)

January Anniversaries:

- 7 Mike & Debbie Hagenmaier (W)

Joys and sorrows

† We sorrow with the family and friends of Walsburg member, Marjorie Grater, who joined the saints in the Kingdom of Heaven on December 21, 2020.

Members in service

Thank you to these members for their service to the parish during January.

Olsburg

Ushers: Kent Nelson; Kyle Clifton; Bill Monser; Jacob Nelson
Communion Assistants: 1/17 Kristi Fronce; 1/31 David Gibson
***Acolytes:** 1/3 Jarin Brenner; 1/10 Grady Kasselman; 1/17 Brooklynn Zoeller; 1/24 Emma Kasselman; 1/31 Tori Brenner
***Lay Assistants:** 1/17 April Brenner; 1/24 Karl Kasselman; 1/31 Tom Nelson
Altar Committee January: Kathy Monser; Kristi Fronce

Walsburg

Ushers and Greeters: Dennis & Denise Peterson; Trenton & Lynn Hargrave
Communion Ushers: Rita Nelson & Denise Peterson
***Lay Assistants:** 1/3 Jan Neilson; 1/10 Linda Toomire; 1/17 Mason Scofield; 1/24 Izabel Nelson; 1/31 Lori Rogge
Altar Committee: January: Denise Peterson

***If you are unable to be present for your assignment, please find a replacement and contact the church office so the correct name will appear in the bulletin.**

church's Facebook page. Some of you have been worshiping in this way for awhile. For others of you, this may be a new way to worship. We encourage you to join in congregational worship in this way.

Since we are not gathering together at church, we ask that you mail your offering to your respective congregation. You may mail it to the church directly or to the financial secretary at your church. The financial secretary at Olsburg is Alice Gibson (113 S. 1st St., Olsburg, KS 66520) and the financial secretary at Walsburg is Lynne Berry (14180 Crooked Creek Rd., Leonardville, KS 66449). Our work as the church goes on in many ways. Your financial support is needed and valued.

Stay Connected

If you use email, we would greatly like to add you to our church's email list. In this way you would receive the weekly bulletin, "Pastor Keith's Reflections," the monthly newsletter, and other congregational announcements.

If you are not currently on this list and would like to be added, give you email address to our parish coordinator, Shelly Burklund. Her email address is sburklun@ksu.edu.

Walsburg Sunday School News

Zooming In for Sunday School!! The Walsburg Sunday School children are continuing with weekly Sunday School sessions at 10:00 a.m. using a virtual classroom entitled "Zoom".

During December, the children enjoyed singing "Away in a Manger," "Oh What a Special Night," "Oh What a Glorious Night," and hearing the story of the birth of Baby Jesus. In late November, each child created an Advent Wreath and each Sunday they learned about the meaning of the wreath and the individual candles on the wreath.

In January, Zoom Sunday School will continue with the following Bible Stories:

January 3 - John Baptizes

January 10 - Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

January 17 - Jesus Calls the Disciples

January 24 - The Sabbath

January 31 - Jesus Heals

Walsburg is blessed to have young children in our midst who desire to learn about the love of

Jesus and parents who are keeping their promises made at baptism to bring their children up in the Christian faith.

Walsburg Lutheran Church January Council Meeting

The Walsburg Council met on January 12, 2021, with the following highlights:

- The general account balance is \$59,102.89 with year-end ahead of budget.
- Bids are being obtained for a new sound system in the church.
- The Calling Tree Committee should be contacted by family members desiring to be placed on the prayer chain.
- Guidelines for funerals were adopted allowing 40 people in sanctuary and 30 people in Memorial hall with a request to use face masks and social distance. The balcony will not be used for attendees.
- Resuming worship services was reviewed but no action taken due to a rise in number of positive cases and hospitalizations in Riley County. We will continue to monitor and reevaluate through Phase 2 vaccinations.
- The 2021 Joint Budget and Walsburg Budget were reviewed and will be recommended for approval by the congregation when the annual meeting is able to be held.
- The Annual Meeting has been scheduled for February 28, but subject to change in mid-February if necessary.
- Election of church council officers was conducted. Lee Hartford, President; Vern Bulk, Vice President; Denise Peterson, Secretary, and Rita Nelson, Treasurer.