PLEASANT VALLEY NEWSLETTER

*That all may come, Serving all the people of God*

**Pastor’s Corner, January, 2016**

A New Year

I’m going to get more exercise. I’m going to eat healthy. I’m going to spend more time with family. I’m going to watch less T.V. I’m going to spend more time playing with my kids.

‘Tis the season for New Years’ resolutions. We start out strong- this year, we really are going to make these changes in our lives. “This is the year I will lose weight,” we tell ourselves. “This is the year I stop eating out and pack a lunch instead,” we insist to ourselves. “You will stop smoking,” we demand of ourselves.

It seems to me that New Years’ is really about new beginnings. Like the birth of a child, a marriage, a divorce, or even a death, the start of a new year marks an opportunity to redefine ourselves. It’s really, then, about hope. Hope that things can be different; hope that we can be different. Hope that this time, this year, we can make the changes we want for ourselves.

And then, like each year before this one, we slowly slide away from our resolutions. The initial calm after the busy holiday season quickly picks up again with work, school, community events, and family gatherings. That gym membership goes unused. Picking up fast food is just so much more convenient than preparing a salad. Smoking is just too ingrained in our daily habits, especially when stressed. And, January’s promises fade to old patterns.

Hope is a powerful thing. Hope can keep us going in the darkest of times and bring us out of the depths of despair. Hope makes us confident in a future that is yet uncertain.

But, when we place our hope for a new future or a new life in our own ability to overcome obstacles, we set ourselves up for failure. I think this is what bothers me most about these kinds of resolutions; too often they set us up for defeat and lead to thoughts and feelings of not being good enough or strong enough or smart enough to do the things we hoped for.

But that is not what God says about you. In the waters of baptism, God has claimed you. You don’t have to be skinny enough, smart enough, wealthy enough, eat the right foods, or read enough books. God loves you for the child of God that you are.

And yet, we all have unhealthy habits that affect our lives. We do eat too much and not get enough exercise. We really would be better off if we spent more time with our children and spouses. We would be much healthier if we drank less or quit smoking.

So, let me give you this as you set your resolutions for the coming year. Place your hope in God. Hope and trust that no matter what challenges you face; in your health, your personal life, or in the workplace, God walks alongside you. And, make your resolutions with a friend; someone who seeks the same change as you. Someone who will help you stay on track with your goals and will be there as a support when you aren’t doing as well as you had hoped.

Walk together this New Year. Walk beside each other in times of great joy and great sorrow. Walk beside each other in heartache and in celebration. Faithfully remind one another that God is your hope and that regardless of your progress toward you goals, you are a claimed Child of God, loved and accepted in God’s eyes.

Peace,

Pr. JonPaul

**Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church**

**Council Minutes**

Sunday, December 6, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 by President Nola Herzberg. Pastor JonPaul led us in prayer.

NON-AGENDA

 The poinsettias have not yet been ordered for the shut-ins. I will call Ellen Johnson and ask if she will do that. I’ll have a number after today’s caroling.

 We are out of envelopes printed with our return address. Should Monica order more? We will go with plain envelopes and a label with our return address.

 We will not send a bulletin to Phyllis Goss. She no longer reads her mail. We will also take her off The Lutheran mailing list, but still send her the newsletter.

 Aaron wondered if we should be video-streaming the weekly service to the shut-ins and others wanting to see the service from home. We decided it might be better to record it on an I-pad or tablet and post it on the web page. Pastor JonPaul will try recording the service and placing it on the web-site. He is also keeping the facebook page current.

REPORTS

The secretary’s report was read. The treasurer’s report was read. Some yearly bills were paid – Luther Park, Lutheran Social Services, and the Hill Family. The total mission offering for the Ludwigson’s was $329. We collected $179 for the Fund for Leaders; a fund to help seminarians pay for their education. The net proceeds from the bazaar were $3,285; up from last year.

The Pastor’s report was presented. Pastor JonPaul has begun confirmation class. The class meets on Monday from 5:30 to 6:15 in Eau Claire. There are two students in the class. No decision was made on 5th grade first communion as to a date.

There was no Ambassadors report.

All reports were approved with a motion from John Poore. Second by Aaron Sands. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Education – Practice for the Christmas program will be on Saturday, December 12, at 8 a.m. A Christmas party and lunch will follow the practice. The program will be presented on Sunday, December 13, during the 9 a.m. church service. Mark Koser will pick up apples and candy bars to be handed out after the program. We only need half as many as last year; about 50 candy bars and 1 box of apples.

 Building/property – Adolf Pichler has been contacted. He will not be able to start work on the steeple until spring. It will cost around $3,000 to $4,000 for materials and labor and another $2,000 for lift rental.

 We will attempt to make the bulletins more readable. We will ask Monica to reformat the bulletin to be a whole page format. We will not include the Prayer before Worship or the Prayer before Communion.

Kay Sands is looking for a project or need to use as a memorial for her father, who has recently passed away. A security system (cameras) had been suggested. Also, more padded chairs for upstairs.

NEW BUSINESS

 The Annual Meeting will be on January 24 after church. We will review the Ministry Plan (budget) at our January meeting. The 2 members going off the council at the next Annual Meeting – Randy Sands and Randy Winger - are on the nominating committee to find two new members-at-large to be elected to the council. They are working on that.

The Thanksgiving Eve service, on November 25 at 6 p.m., was attended by 12 to 15 people. That is about 50% of regular attendance, which was felt to be pretty good. We mentioned that some churches have a Community Thanksgiving Eve service put on by different area churches each year and including all worshipers from area churches. Roxie wondered if MACA does something like that.

The baptismal font has been placed in the entry to the sanctuary for a year. While it is used, it prevents handicapped access. We will move it to the side of the entryway and monitor its use.

We may need someone to take over for Pastor JonPaul on short notice when Jessica goes into labor. It is felt that we can handle that.

 Mission offering – December – Marty Knutson family

 January – Barnabas House in Chippewa Falls – now providing all night services for those in need of food and shelter

 Next meeting – January 3, 2016

Motion to adjourn was made by Ruth Poore and Nola Herzberg. Second by Roxie Ulness. Motion carried. The meeting closed at 11:55 with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Poore, Council Secretary

Members present: Nola Herzberg, Pastor JonPaul Dragseth, Roxie Ulness, Randy Sands, Randy Winger, John Poore, Aaron Sands, Ruth Poore

**Treasurers’ Report**

None submitted

Roxie Ulness, Treasurer

**This month’s Mission Offering**

January - Barnabas House in Chippewa Falls – now providing all night services for those in need of food and shelter

**Men's Ministry**

Jan 9th

**Sunday school**

The Pleasant Valley Sunday school will meet on January 10 and 17. Thanks to Sharon for teaching! And thanks to Corissa for a wonderful Christmas program!

Isabella told me, “My friend has to be the donkey for her Christmas program. I get to be Mary. Mary is nice.” Elijah said, “Yes, Mary is nice, but hey, didn’t Mary ride on the donkey?” Isabella said, “That means the donkey is important. I will tell my friend on Monday that the donkey is important.”

**Choir**

The Pleasant Valley choir will rehearse on January 3 and 10 after the morning service, and also before the service on January 17, when we will sing, “Amazing Grace”.

**Parish Nurse**

Blood pressure screening will take place after the morning service on January 17.

There are packets available for anyone wishing to document end of life wishes. If you have questions, chat with Ruthann.

During flu season, if you have the sniffles, please feel free to give a friendly wave instead of a handshake while we pass the peace.

**Stories of Faith**

**Evie’s story**

My mother passed away when I was 6 years old. There were 11 of us kids. A month after she passed away, people from human services came to our house and took us from our father, split us up and placed us in foster care. I felt that the older kids could have helped to care for the younger ones, but we had no choice. I still remember my father crying on the porch as we were driven away from him. He was not allowed to visit with us, so that we would adjust to our new families.

I was taken to Sunday school when I was young, and my favorite chapter in the Bible was Psalm 23, about the Lord being our Shepherd, which I memorized and recited at our church. This Psalm was always a comfort for me.

One day, when I was in high school, I saw a man who looked like my father on the corner by Edwin’s in downtown Eau Claire. I asked him what his name was, and he was indeed my dad. I was so happy to see him. I invited him to my foster family’s home where we had a wonderful conversation. He said he was glad to see me, and sorry that he had not been allowed to visit his children. He had his Bible with him, and forgot it at my foster family’s home. He was staying at a hotel in downtown Eau Claire.

When I tried to return his Bible to him the next day, I was told by the hotel manager that he had been sent to the hospital in the night, and then on to the hospital in Marshfield. He died before I could return his Bible. I was very sad that I again lost my dad, this time forever, but I was happy that I now had his Bible, and I still have it.

I am thankful that God always had his hand on my life, that he never abandoned me, and that he continues to be my Shepherd. I am thankful that God gave me a good husband, children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. And I am thankful for Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church, where the people here are also my family.

-Please see Ruthann if you have a story to share!

**Praise Team News**

The praise team will lead worship at Pleasant Valley and at the Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility (CVCTF) on January 24 and 31. In December, the group held a special worship service for the men at CVCTF on Christmas Day. The praise team will be playing at the Barnabas Christian Coffeehouse in Chippewa Falls sometime in February--date to be announced.

**W ELCA**

“All Anew” is the theme for Women of the ELCA’s Tenth Triennial Gathering in Minneapolis, MN, July 13-16, 2017. Think about going along! Talk to Sadie and Monica for more info.

\***FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE.**

**\*NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS: Sunday, January 17th for the February Newsletter.**

**Call Monica Bahr - 715-287-4742,**

**or E-mail:** dmbahr@tcc.coop. **Also, E-mail the church at:** plesntvalleyluth@tcc.coop **with any bulletin or newsletter announcements, esp. prayer request and updates. Thanks.**

**Bulletin items due no later than Wednesday afternoon.**

**I’ll be printing them on Thursday evening.**

**Happy Birthday** to Phylis Goff January 19th, If you wish to send her a birthday card here address is: 4510 Gateway Dr. Apt 101, Eau Claire WI 54701

**TEXTS AND READERS FOR JANUARY**

**Epiphany of Our Lord – 3rd**

Isaiah 60:1-6 *Sharon Anderson*

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

**Baptism of Our Lord – 10th**

Isaiah 43:1-7 *Roxie Ulness*

Psalm 29

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

**Second Sunday after Epiphany – 17th**

Isaiah 62:1-5  *Kay Sands*

Psalm 36:5-10

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

John: 2:1-11

**Third Sunday after Epiphany – 24th**

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 *Annabelle Vikingston*

Psalm 19

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Luke 4:14-21

**Third Sunday after Epiphany – 31st**

Jeremiah 14:21-30 *Dan Herzberg*

Psalm 71”1-6

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Like 4:21-30



 **IN NEED OF PRAYER**

**Here is our Prayer Concern list:**

**Lucie McBride Family -** friend of Kim Koser and Morgan Foss, the family is struggling with

financial difficulties

**Laurie McDowell** – Cancer has returned, Ruthann’s niece

**Dale Erickson** – Recovering and having therapy at the Mondovi American Lutheran Home

**Isabella Knutson** – health concerns

**Kim Vlcek** - Full recovery from shoulder surgery

**Christine Thompson** – Recovering from a fall

**Linda Ahlers –** undergoing chemo for liver cancer; Lake City, MN (friend of the Poore’s)

**Joy Glende -** She is having many tests done due to the car accident.

Her son **Duane** - also having test done

**Alea Bahr –** young grandniece diagnosed with CP - cerebral palsy.

**Brittany Beavens** - She has Myotonic Dystrophy. She is the daughter of Kim and Mark Koser and resides in MN.

**Her son Jeremiah** - also has Myotonic Dystrophy (Type 1).

**Our service men and women, including Alex Bauer** being deployed to Kuwait

**The inmates at CVCTF** - Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility in Chippewa Falls

**This month’s Mission offering -** *- Barnabas House in Chippewa Falls – now providing all night services for those in need of food and shelter*

Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church

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“That all May come, Serving all the People of God”

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**JANUARY 2016**

**Happy New Year**

**January 6th Epiphany**

**Baptism of our Lord**

**Annual Meeting Jan 24th**