

Happy New Year

I'm going to get more exercise. I'm going to eat healthy. I'm going to spend more time with my 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.

What all these resolutions seem to be about is a longing for 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. We examine who we are and how we are living and set goals for change over the next year. And, if you're like me, you get pretty excited. You start with all the energy you can muster, diving headlong into your new goals.

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. That is the false promise our resolutions too often give us; 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 your goals, you are a claimed Child of God, loved and accepted in God's eyes.

Happy New Year,

Pastor JonPaul



Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church Council
December 7, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6:14 by Vice President Randy Sands. Pastor led us in a devotion from Mark, chapter 3, a discussion, and a prayer.

The secretary's report was read by members. The treasurer's report was read by members. We were in the black for November by \$271.77. Year-to-date at the end of November, we are in the black by \$1,362.83. The Mission Offering for the month of November, for the Mondovi Food Pantry, was \$339.50. The Pastor's report was read by members. On Christmas Eve, at the 5 p.m. service, Pastor JonPaul would like us to leave the cars and gather for the singing of Silent Night, with the votive candles, at the end of the "Candlelight Service." (We have 44 candles, which should be enough for the group of worshippers.)

We will have a new member recognition in the spring.

Right now, we only have one youth in confirmation. Teegan Johnson has chosen to do a community service project of making and delivering 20 dozen cookies to "neighbors." Pastor is thinking toward a time when we have no children of Confirmation age. Could we possibly have an adult group of renewal of confirmation or baptism group study? We again spoke about the requirements to go back to in-church worship. He had a couple graphs showing the Covid statistics.

There was a motion from Dave to accept the reports. Second from John. Motion carried.

Education – The Sunday School Christmas Nativity program will be held on Sunday, December 12, at a 10 a.m. service. The children will arrive at 9 a.m. If possible, the program will be in the park. Randy and Dave have volunteered to plow the park to make it accessible. If that is not possible, the children will be at the base of the stairs outside the handicapped entrance. Kay Sands and Ruth Poore will serve hot chocolate and hot apple cider. Apples and chocolate bars will be handed out at the end of the program. Pastor will check on the plans for the apples and chocolate.

The Sunday School families and Pastor JonPaul will plan how they want Sunday School to go until spring.

Worship –

We will have the Christmas Eve drive-up service, as we did last year, at 5 p.m. on Friday, December 24, 2021.

We will get poinsettias for our shut-ins: Bob Dutter and Gary and Sharon Hazen. We will also get one for Sadie Odegard. Roxie will deliver Sadie's and we will see if the visitation team can deliver the others. Ruth will get the poinsettias.

Property – We still have a land issue about the title of the strip of land on the north edge of the cemetery. We need a release on the title to complete the deed so we cannot be held liable in the future.

The water still tests high for nitrates. Signs will be posted at all outlets stating the water should not be consumed by children under 6 months of age or by pregnant women. Also, Steph will sign a form and send it to City/County Health stating that we have taken care of this.

As per the insurance request, the combustibles in the furnace room under the stairs have been removed.

Jerry Larson has again agreed to do the snow plowing this winter.

The mowing of the park, which was done every week this spring, summer, and fall, will now be a paid job, and put in the budget for 2022. Park mowing has been volunteered by Randy Sands up to now.

TCC has a \$2/month program meant to diagnose problems with the phone. Our answering machine is not working well, and needs to have something done. Right now we are not clear on what the problem is, so Ruth will call several times before next Sunday and leave a message. We will listen to the messages on Sunday and see what can be done.

NEW BUSINESS

We went over the proposed budget for the 2022 calendar year. Some changes were made. A Special Meeting to approve the new budget will be held on January 16 after the regular church service. There will be notices in the bulletins and newsletter making the congregation aware of this Special Meeting. We will need a quorum in order to vote on the budget.

Also, we need two new members-at-large to be voted onto the council at the Annual Meeting.

Mission Sundays –

December – Feed My People
January, 2022 – Sojourner House
February, 2022 – Bolton House

Pastor JonPaul will be working at the hospital on December 26, 2021. The Praise Team will handle the service.

Steph will be borrowing two roasters during two weekends in January.

Next council meeting will be Tuesday, January 4, 2022, at 6 p.m.

Other

At 8:12 p.m. a motion was made and seconded to close the meeting by Roxie and Ruth. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Poore, Council secretary

Members present: Pastor JonPaul Dragseth, Roxie Ulness, John Poore, Stephanie Kuehl, Randy Sands, Dave Vlcek, and Ruth Poore.

Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church Council Minutes – Emergency Meeting December 19, 2021

The special emergency meeting was called at 9:45 to take a vote on paying a title agency to finish the filing of the title on the northern strip of the cemetery that had not previously been titled to the church. The total cost is \$259.75: \$100 for the letter report, \$125 for the drafting of the deed, \$34.75 for the reporting of it. Roxie made a motion to pay the title company the \$259.75. Cortney seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Poore, Council secretary

Members present: Roxie Ulness, Stephanie Kuehl, Randy Sands, Dave Vlcek, Randy Sands, and Ruth Poore.

***Announcements:**

*We will have a special meeting on January 16 to vote on the budget for the 2022 year. It will be after the service, and will be drive-up again. We will

have ballots to accept or reject the proposed budget. We will need a quorum.

Praise Team News

The praise team will lead worship at Pleasant Valley on January 26. The group will also lead worship at the Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility on January 19 and 26. Practices at Wednesdays at 6:30 pm--come and join the group!

Treasurer's Report

Summary of Offering and Expenses

	Offering	Misc. Income	Expenses
Y-T-D	\$46,653.54	\$3,884.12	\$48,561.25
Oct	\$4,294.98	\$3,392.00	\$3,914.94
Nov	\$5,128.12	\$285.00	\$5,141.25
Dec (thru 12/19)	\$3,718.36	\$115.00	\$3,219.98

Offering Over Expenses – Oct - \$380.04

Offering Over Expense – Nov – \$271.87

Offering Over Expense – Dec (to date) - \$613.38

Y-T-D Offering Over Expenses – \$1,976.41

Mission Offerings:

October – Hurricane Ida relief - \$255.00

November – Mondovi Food Pantry - \$339.50

Memorials: None this month

Respectfully submitted:

Roxie Ulness, Treasurer

Cemetery Association

Cemetery Dues are due in in January. The Association is planning on raising the from \$15.00 to \$20.00 per year, but have not voted on that yet. If you have any thoughts on this proposal, please talk to a board member. We cannot cover the cost of the grass cuttings on membership dues alone. Please remember the Cemetery Association when you are giving memorials. Please keep in mind that your board members are getting older, and if you're interested in taking over a board position in the

future, consider doing so." The Board – Dick Bahr, Larry Sands, & Dale Anderson

Did You Know:...

.When you eat the juice of 3 whole carrots.....

Three carrots give you enough energy to walk 2 miles, and they were first grown as a medicine, not as food.

.Eating pistachios before bed ... helps with sleep as they are one of the most melatonin rich foods.

.If you eat chocolate while studying...

Eating chocolate while studying helps the brain retain new information easily!

“Sing unto the Lord a new song.” Psalms 149:1

“With a fresh heart and a new spirit shall I sing.”

By the light of the Psalms by Chris Shea
.....

Update about Sharing the Dream in Guatemala Scholarship Student

An email was received from Lauren Vaske, Executive Director at Sharing the Dream, on December 12. A portion of her email that reports on the scholarship student, Keyla Lisbeth, Pleasant Valley is sponsoring is below. Lauren also asked if Pleasant Valley would be interested in continuing to sponsor Keyla as she begins junior high, and the church council has approved \$300 to support Keyla's scholarship for 2022. A letter from Keyla, detailing the successes and challenges of her 2021 school year, is included in this newsletter on a separate page.

From Lauren's email: "The school year in Guatemala has just ended, and Keyla finished the year in good standing. She was in 7th grade this year, and although she is still waiting for her final report card, we know she will pass. Overall, Keyla's grades were consistently good throughout the year. English class was hard for her, but she has been working with Lucrecia on it during their tutoring sessions. Keyla missed having in-person classes this year, but she proved herself to be a disciplined student. She made the most of her

tutoring sessions, and the tutor, Lucrecia, has really become a role model for Keyla."

TEXTS FOR JANUARY

*All services will be drive-in
Unless you are notified*

**Second Sunday of Christmas /
Epiphany Sunday – 2nd**

Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12
Psalm 72:1-7,10-14

**First Sunday after Epiphany - 9th
Baptism of Our Lord Sunday**

Isaiah 43:1-7
Psalm 29
Acts 8:14-17
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

**Second Sunday after Epiphany – 16th
Special meeting for budget**

Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 36:5-10
1 Corinthians 12:1-11
John 2:1-11

Third Sunday after Epiphany - 23rd

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Luke 4:14-21

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany – 30th

Jeremiah 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6
1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30



WE INVITE PRAYERS FOR:

The Family of Kamilla Sessions – passed from Covid; age of 59

The Family of Howard Peterson – Joan Timm's brother

Steph's friend Erin's dad -fighting cancer

Kathy Tweet – doing more testing

Sadie – home after being hospitalized

Whitney Prochnow – 9 years old, health concerns- Kim Vlcek's sister's grandchild

Duane Vlcek and Ayla Hakes and family

Maureen Kuhn – bone marrow biopsy - Kay Sands Sister-in-law

Kari Karnatz - good test results; healing

Carol Peterson – Joan Timm's family – fighting cancer

Missy – friend of Kari's; has pancreatic cancer

Gwen Chubb – Monica's cousin –cancer;

Teresa Edison- Monica's cousin - cancer;

Emily Horban - Cathy Winger's mom- living with dementia

Martha McCourt – Marianna's mother, living with dementia

Henry Karnatz – Kari's dad, living with dementia

Holly Poore – teaching English and Spanish in Thailand

Shelby Hill and family - missionaries living in France

Keyla Lisbeth - the Sharing the Dream recipient, student in Guatemala

All our service men and women:

Alex Bauer stationed in England

Inmates at CVCTF – and their Chaplain

All those who are missing a loved one

Those on our visiting list: Bob Dutter &

Gary and Sharon Hazen

Keyla Lisbeth's letter to our congregation (received by email 12/2/21):

To: My dearest sponsors

Hello! I send you warm greetings. I hope that all of you are in good health and are successful in all that you do.

I want to tell you about my schooling. In May, we switched to distance learning and started to fill out workbooks for all of our classes. We had to work on our workbooks at home, and each week contained three lessons and an activity to go along with each lesson. So that I can understand my schoolwork, I have been reading the lessons several times and then completing the activities. We haven't received classes in any form, either virtual or in-person. We just fill out our guides.

When I am done with my schoolwork, I work on sewing my Chichicastenango corte (traditional skirt). My sisters also sew cortes, and they are teaching me to embroider. On Mother's Day, we each completed a craft project to give to our mothers. I gave my mother mine and let her know that I made it with my whole heart.

In June, we did a lot of different activities during our tutoring sessions. We had reading activities and we all read the same book. One of the reading activities that I really liked was to create a reading butterfly. I used all my creativity to create it. I still have the butterfly and would like to show it to you all someday.

My hardest classes are math, English, and technology because we are learning new things. Thankfully, my tutor, Lucrecia, helps me to learn what I don't understand. She does a good job explaining things to me. My favorite classes are physical education and art because they're easy to understand and do the activities.

In July, we had our quarterly exams. I started on my exams, and we only had a week to complete them. I did well in all three of my hardest classes. In our Guatemalan culture class, I earned 100/ 100 points that quarter. One of my classmates congratulated me, because we were the only ones to earn 100%. When I saw my grades, I jumped up and down, because it was the first time I had earned such good grades. My parents and sisters congratulated me on all the effort that I put into my studies and homework.

In August, we had distance-learning school again and used our workbooks. We learned about occupations in English class. In natural science, we learned about natural phenomenon. In Spanish, we worked on simple words, derivatives, and parenthesis. Lucrecia helped me with each of these topics during our tutoring sessions. I tried to make the most of my time with her and get all my questions answered. We had to suspend in-person tutoring in August due to the high number of Covid cases. We did our tutoring over the phone, but it was difficult to work that way.

In September, we continued to do phone tutoring sessions. My hardest class was math. Lucrecia tried to explain it to me, but I still didn't get it. I got even more confused when I read our lessons. Lucrecia promised to help me to learn the content, since what we were learning is the basis of algebra. Together with Lucrecia, I learned the classwork.

In natural science, we learned the characteristics of human beings. Human beings are living organisms made up of cells. In English, we continued learning occupations and worked on forming a sentence. We also worked on writing out the numbers 100 to 1000 in words. In Quiche language, we worked on narration and its elements. One activity that I really liked was drawing a mental map.

My family is healthy. We are so grateful to have your support for my schooling. I say goodbye to you for now. I send you a big hug from afar. Take care.

Yours truly,

Keyla Lisbeth Tiriquiz Calgua
Your scholarship student

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"That all May come, Serving all the People of God"

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