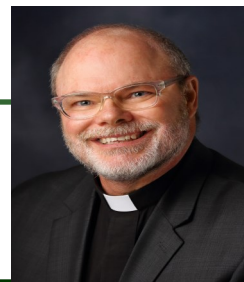




## Pastor Peter Jonas

### What if we don't have the Innkeeper to kick around anymore?



Warning: I'm going to nerd-out on one specific word from the Christmas story for a couple of paragraphs. It is the word commonly translated as "inn" in Luke 2:7, as in "there was no place for them in the inn." I think it will be worth your while.

There is a perfectly good Greek word for a commercial inn that would be operated by an innkeeper and would house guests for compensation. That word is *pandocheion*. Luke uses that word to describe the inn where the Good Samaritan drops off the wounded traveler in the famous parable (Luke 10:34). But that is not the word Luke uses in the Christmas story. Luke calls the place that has no room for Mary and Joseph a *kataluma* in Greek. This word is capable of several meanings, including a spare room in a home for guests (like the Upper Room in Luke 22:11), or a khan or caravansary. The word *kataluma* literally means to put down or to unyoke a draft animal or beast of burden. It is a place where after a long day on the road, a traveler would unburden his animal and rest.

The multiple ways the word *kataluma* is used in Greek means that we cannot be exactly sure what kind of place had no room for the Holy Family. Nor can we be sure what kind of place they wound up staying in. For example the first century apologist Justin Martyr claimed that Jesus was born in a cave in Bethlehem, and a cave is incorporated into The Church of the Nativity.

So sorry to break this to you, but we know enough about the contrast between the inn described in Luke 10 and the place described in Luke 2 to say with some certainty that wherever Mary and Joseph stayed, there was no innkeeper. And unlike our common manger scenes, we can also say with some certainty that Mary and Joseph did not stay in a detached shed that would hold animals. Almost all homes in Biblical Palestine housed animals and people in the same structure on different levels. The animals would be on the ground level and the people would either be on a raised dais or a second level.

I do have a purpose for claiming that our traditional crèche scene and all those sermons we've heard (or preached) over the years either vilifying or exonerating the mythical innkeeper are a bit misleading. I want to engage you in an imaginative exercise. Perhaps we can appreciate the scene of Jesus' birth with greater clarity when we don't have the innkeeper to kick around anymore.

Instead of the crèche scene, imagine a room or cave in Bethlehem crowded with tired travelers. Don't focus on the structure too much—that's the part we really don't know. Instead focus on the travelers. They perhaps have mats on the floor, and their travel necessities lying about. Maybe different groups each have a bit of space cleared out to have a meal. The people may be distant relatives who vaguely know each other. Helpful images to think of might be a hostel where people sleep in a common room or a temporary shelter packed to the gills after some natural disaster. The people who got there first claimed the best turf and staked out their space.

*Continued on page 2*



# Our Saviour's Members in Nursing Homes



Pigeon Falls Nursing Care Center-P.O. Box 310-Pigeon Falls, WI 54760

**Jeanette Gilbertson, Marian Miller & Arline Stuve**

Assisted Living- Pigeon Falls - P.O. Box 310-Pigeon Falls, WI 54760

**Richard Eide**

Sunrise Manor - 36024 Park Street - Whitehall - 54773

**Clinton Larson & Ann Torrason**

Trempealeau County Health Care Center-W20410 WI-#121-Whitehall- 54773

**James Windjue**

Grandview Nursing Home - 620 Grandview Avenue - Blair - 54616

**Marilyn Speestra, Mavis Mitskogen & Donna Oates**

Meadowbrook Care Center-1311 Tyler Street-Black River Falls - 54615

**Fern Moe**

The Classic - Eau Claire

**Joanne (Selkurt) Martin**

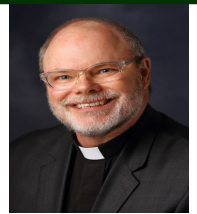
## **Pastor's Message** .....continued from page 1

A man and a pregnant woman arrive. They scan the crowded scene and look at the faces. They are hoping someone will make eye-contact or someone will smile. Perhaps they are hoping to see a face they recognize. Most of all they are hoping that someone will wave them over and start shoving his or her possessions closer together to make a little more room. But the people only glance back at Mary and Joseph warily. They are maxed out. They too have travelled some distance. They too have been displaced on account of the census. They have their own problems and their own families to worry about. There isn't enough room for all the people who have already squeezed together. And so the Bible tells us, "there was no place for them in the *kataluma*".

Mary and Joseph's pleas for help were not rejected by a single innkeeper who was either overwhelmed with guests or too callous to offer the traditional gift of hospitality to strangers. Mary and Joseph's need for a place to stay was rejected by their fellow travelers who had their own worries about where they were going to stay, and who were also uprooted from their homes.

Each of us chooses whether to acknowledge another's hopeful glance or not. Each of us faces the choice about whether our own problems, worries and insecurities will stand in the way of our making a connection with another human being in need. We face these decisions not only as individuals, but as churches and as nations. Loving humanity in general isn't really that difficult. Loving people as individuals often requires some rearranging of the stuff of our own lives, and that's never an easy decision. Can we make room? Can we yield?

Peace, Pastor Peter





# ***Church News***



## **December Birthdays**



**3 - Judy Haralson, Dawn Sauerwein**

**6 - Gavin Gaulke, Janice Johnson,**

**7 - Eric Gaulke, Nancy Rutschow**

**9 - Olivia Moats**

**10 - Chris Foss**

**11 - Clarice Henrickson**

**12 - Kaylin Metzler**

**14 - Sandra Erickson, Barbara Johnson, Dennis Lyngen,  
Bryanna Schneider**

**15 - Mary Lou Beck, Adam Berg**

**16 - Clayton Densmore**

**17 - Andrew Johnson, Pastor Peter Jonas**

**18 - Mary Jane Herness, Matthew Gilbertson**

**21 - James Hughes Jr.**

**22 - Marnalee Anderson, Celina Kopp**

**24 - Randall Lindberg**

**27 - Constance Kastad**

**28 - Carol Byington, Clinton Larson, Caitlin Toraason**

**29 - LeAnn Ring**

**30 - Lisa Schmitt**

**31 - Sawyer Kurth, Debra Olson, Jeffrey Rieck, Mackenzie  
Standish, Coltan Smith**



*Happy  
Birthday*



# Church News



## Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Council Minutes, November 1, 2022

**Members Present:** Dave Anderson, Pastor Jonas, Marnie Anderson, Ellen Hauser, Barb Mathson, Kay Nelson, Clarice Laehn, Jeff Sygulla and Lori Paulson.

Dave Anderson, council president called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

### **Preparation:**

1. Opening Devotions: Pastor Jonas shared a scripture reading from the book of Hebrews followed by prayer.
2. Prayer Requests/Homebound: Richard Eide has transferred from assisted living to nursing home in Pigeon Falls.
3. Communication from Congregation:
  - a) Quilters would like to hold a quilting retreat at Our Saviour's. A contribution would be made to the church for use of the facilities. Council agrees that this is a good opportunity for fellowship.
  - b) Some members of the congregation would like to hear old hymns at services

### **Communication/Action:**

1. Secretary's Report: Kay Nelson made a motion to approve October minutes with a second by Clarice Laehn. Motion carried.
2. Treasurer's Report: Discussion held regarding income not meeting expenses. Barb Mathson made a motion to approve treasurer's report with a second by Kay Nelson. Motion carried.
3. Ministry Teams Updates:
  - a) **Harvest Dinner:** Kay Nelson is retiring from overseeing the Harvest Dinner. Council expressed their gratitude to Kay for her many years of service and leadership.
  - b) **Worship & Music:** Noisy offering donations have been very good.
  - c) **WELCA:** There is a meeting scheduled for Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> at Our Saviour's.
  - d) **Life & Growth:** There will be a meeting in November.
  - d) **Men's Brotherhood:** No report.
4. Sharing from Pastor:
  - a) The baptism of Haelynn Peters will be on Sunday November 6<sup>th</sup>
  - b) Scott Brown will lead the Thanksgiving Service at Grace Lutheran
  - c) Confirmation class is considering serving breakfast after the Christmas program

### **Celebration/Affirmation:**

1. The next council meeting is scheduled for December 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.
2. Starting with the next council meeting council members will share devotions.

*Continued on page 5*

# More Church News



## Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Council Minutes, November 1, 2022—*continued from page 4*

### Business Items:

1. The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin will be updating the constitution in 2024. A letter and recommendation outline were provided to council members for review and discussion as preparation prior to the 2023 convention. This does not affect Our Saviour's constitution.
2. Courthouse employees have been using the church parking lot which is a concern because of liability issues. Courthouse will be notified that employees cannot park in the church parking lot.
3. Discussion held regarding cost saving ideas to help with the financial situation. Some suggestions were to review insurance policy and costs, and lower heating costs.

A letter has been printed in the November Messenger letting the congregation know of the financial situation. Also, letters will be sent to congregation members letting them know of the financial situation and efforts being made to cut costs. Council President Dave Anderson will speak to the congregation at Sunday's service.

Decorate the House for Advent is scheduled for November 21<sup>st</sup> at 4:00p.m.

Barb Mathson made a motion to adjourn with a second by Kay Nelson. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer. Respectfully submitted by Lori Paulson, Council Secretary

**The Noisy Offering** for December will go to the Star & Cross Fund. The Star & Cross are a lovely reminder of Christ in our Life! Please donate to help keep the Star & Cross shining brightly over Whitehall!



## SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE

Sleep in Heavenly Peace is a non profit charity that builds and provides free complete twin beds and bunk beds for needy children without beds, from ages 3 thru 17. The Trempealeau/Jackson County chapter has been fortunate to have storage and shop space donated to them from Source Cut Industries in Pigeon Falls as their main staging area, but a change in leases now dictate that SHP move their operations by December 31 of this year. We are currently using about 1000 squared feet, including parking for a commercial 17' trailer and electrical hook-ups. If anyone has or knows of appropriate facilities that may be available for our use, please call Pastor Dave Christianson (622-817-4582) or Mr. Tom Twesme (715 -797-6488). Thank you for your continued support.







# More Church News

## “From Worry to Wonder”

A Christmas Message from Bishop Laurie

On June 19, 2020 our granddaughter was born. She was born three months into the pandemic. Her parents were worried. Her grandparents were worried. It is challenging enough to be pregnant and give birth in the best of times but to give birth in the middle of a worldwide pandemic is an even greater worry. We worried about the unknown dangers this virus might present to the mother, the unborn baby, and the new born baby. Our worries kept us up at night. Our worries were relieved when she was finally born, perfect in every way. Our worry gave way to wonder-filled joy. Worry transformed to wonder as we looked back to see how God was holding and carrying them through the unavoidable worry. Our worry transformed to gratitude and wonder watching for what God would be up to next in her tiny life.

It's December 2022. We prepare to celebrate the birth our Lord Jesus. This Advent we come with our fears and worries too. We are living in the midst of challenging times in our country. The very foundation of our nation seems less stable. We each come with our own personal set of worries and fears about our families, health, finances, work, safety, the future...What is it that keeps you up at night? What are you worried about today?

Folks across our church are experiencing doubts and uneasiness about the future of their church. Does it keep you up at night? What are the threats to your church's future? How can the conversation move from fear and worry to wonder? As the miracle of Christ's birth is celebrated this season, we can move from worry to wonder. We wonder what God is up to now in this day and age. Together we wonder what God's will is for the future of our church. Together we wonder; how can we use the abundance and blessings, (what we do have and opportunities in front of us), to make a difference in Jesus' name.

*Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. Luke 2:8-10a*

Shepherds living in the fields watched over their sheep to keep them safe. There were dangers that kept the shepherds up at night and plenty of things for the shepherd's to worry about in the cold night like wild animals, predators, thieves, & bad weather. There was so much to worry about, but one night an angel of the Lord, all shiny and bright appeared and transformed their fears and worldly worry to divine wonder.

*To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" Luke 2:11-14*

Friends, you are precious, beloved, baptized children of God. We know that the antidote to worry is to trust in God.

During this Advent, Christmas and Epiphany season I pray that your worries will be transformed to wonder at what God **is** doing and promises **to** do in your lives and in our churches. May the miracle of Christ's birth transform your worries to wonder! I am grateful for your partnership in ministry.

Peace be with you,

# More Church News



*Please keep the following in your thoughts and prayers:*



\*Mary Harnisch-Johnson

\*Arline Stuve

\*Mavis Olson

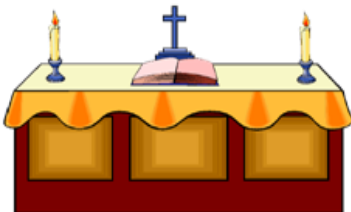
\*Dawn Coburn

\*Donna Lindberg

\*Jason Semb

\*Family and friends of Virginia Clipper

## Members in



\*Altar Guild = Kris Dubiel & Karen Witte

\*Altar Flowers = Kris Dubiel & Karen Witte

\*Ushers = David & Marnie Anderson

\*Acolyte Schedule: 12/4 = Kade & Riley

12/11 = Taylor & Jack

12/18 = Brayden & Cash

12/24 = All confirmands acolyte

# Church Finances

DISBURSEMENT & GIVING RECEIPTS-NOVEMBER 1st, 2022 THRU NOVEMBER 25th, 2022

Disbursements:				
Administration	\$294.17			
Physical Plant	\$3,250.33			
Salaries & Benefits	\$10,879.10			
Benevolence	\$0.00			
Parish Expense	\$0.00			
Dues and Fees	\$0.00			
Harvest Dinner	\$310.70			
Total Disbursements =		\$14,734.30		
Giving Receipts				
Simply Giving Total =	\$3,152.30		General Fund Total =	\$19,888.00
On-Going Total =	\$274.19		Improvement Fund - Total =	\$163.00
November, 2022 Giving Grand Total =			\$23,477.49	

# More Church News



## Notes from President David Anderson's Temple Talk on Church Giving:

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 speaks about the importance of financially supporting the Church. We each need to examine our giving, but we can also work to build attendance. Have you invited anyone to church recently?

The Church Council is carefully looking at expenses to see where we can economize. If you have an idea of how we can reduce expenses, please speak to a Church Council member.



## APPALACHIA

Osseo Evangelical Lutheran is planning an Appalachian Service Project trip for high school students scheduled to leave on Friday, June 23, 2023 from OELC. They will spend the week doing home repair/construction for local residents during the day, then have evening fellowship with other groups from around the country. They will return to Osseo on July 2.

Students from neighboring churches in grades 9-12 in the 2022-2023 school year are welcome to participate. Total out of pocket cost is \$200 plus meals and extras on the road. Fundraising may cover some meal costs, but I can't promise if or how many. An anonymous donor has made a \$250.00 scholarship available to one member of OSL or Grace wanting to participate. Please see Pastor Jonas for details when registering.

Commitment is a team-building/Bible study meeting the third Wednesday of each month starting in January (January 18); fundraising; sending blessing June 18 during our 9:00 worship; recap during a worship service in the weeks after the trip; and helping to prepare and serve a Supporters Dinner at OELC in the early fall.

## Baptisms on November 6th

**Haelynn Valerie Peters**

**Daughter of Mitchell & Arlecia Peters**



**Haylee Ann Johnson**

**Daughter of  
Dennis & Katelyn Johnson**







# More Church News

## Harvest Raffle

We would like to thank all of you who donated prizes and bought tickets for the Harvest Raffle held on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

This year we again held a cash and gift card raffle. Prizes totaled \$835.00 with 27 lucky winners!

Funds raised for the mission of the church totaled \$2280.00.

Thank you for your support!

Barb Mathson and Karen Witte



Prize	Donated By	Winner
<b>CASH PRIZES</b>		
\$300.00	Raffle	Angel Przybilla
\$25.00	Barbara Mathson	Dawn Peterson
\$25.00	Barbara Mathson	Celina Kopp
\$25.00	Lori Paulson	Shirley Hanson
\$20.00	Francis & Faye Hilgart	Gary & Debbie Fromm
\$10.00	Barbara Mathson	Sharon Sluga
\$10.00	Barbara Mathson	Chad Foss
<b>GIFT CARDS</b>		
Randy's Neighborhood Market \$50.00	Dave & Marnie Anderson	Tammie Coburn
Kwik Trip \$25.00	Kurt & Barb Johnson	Karen Witte
Alcivia/Cenex \$25.00	Jeff & Melanie Sygulla	Clarice Henrickson
Sweet Temptations \$25.00	Unknown	Kathy Gauger
Randy's Neighborhood Market \$25.00	Shirley Wozney	Roger Oelrich
Maple Leaf Meats \$25.00	Jim & Kay Nelson	Tom Matchey
Maple Leaf Meats \$25.00	Jim & Kay Nelson	Roger Oelrich
Maple Leaf Meats \$25.00	Jim & Kay Nelson	Bev Waldera
Maple Leaf Meats \$25.00	Jim & Kay Nelson	Sue Halama
Randy's Neighborhood Market \$25.00	Randy's Neighborhood Market	Casey Killian
Kwik Trip \$25.00	Clarice Laehn & Anita Semb	Faye Hilgart
Remember When \$20.00	Karen Witte	Tammy Solsrud
Creative Designs \$20.00	Karen Witte	Carol Byington
Ritter Hardware \$20.00	Karen Witte	Anton Johnson
City Cafe \$20.00	Shirley Wozney	Jeff Sygulla
Kwik Trip \$10.00	Chuck & Connie Kastad	Barbara Mathson
Maple Leaf Meats \$10.00	Ivers Woodworking, Brad & Sharon Ivers	David Berg
Maple Leaf Meats \$10.00	Ivers Woodworking, Brad & Sharon Ivers	Wyatt Gardner
Randy's Neighborhood Market \$10.00	Ivers Woodworking, Brad & Sharon Ivers	Karen Witte
City Cafe \$10.00	Ivers Woodworking, Brad & Sharon Ivers	Hank Sass

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# WELCA

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Grace in Pleasantville will host the December meeting on Thursday, December 1st at 1:30 pm. Pastor Jonas will lead us in a lesson on the Advent Season. Please bring 1/2 dozen of Christmas treats to share for lunch. Hope to see you all there!

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## Christmas Gift Boxes



We are still accepting Christmas Gift donations for Trempealeau County Health Care Center, New Horizons & Pajama Granma. Boxes for donations will be in the church narthex thru November and early December. Boxes for donations will also be at Ritters Hardware Store.

**\*New Horizons wish list:** Is requesting only gift cards due to lack of storage space. Gas cards, Dollar Store and prepaid phone cards are preferred items on the gift hit parade.

**\*Trempealeau County Health Care wish list (new items only please):** Crossword puzzle, Word Find and/or Coloring books. Markers, colored pencils and/or crayons. Sketch Pads, Hair Brushes, Decks of playing cards, Hats and Gloves.

**\*Monetary donations for PAJAMA GRAMMA may be dropped off at Royal Credit Union.**

**\*Whitehall Elementary School:** A mitten tree will be set in the narthex for hats, mittens,



## GOOD GIFTS - MISSION

It is Christmas once again and we have the opportunity to give gifts to those less fortunate around the world. The GOOD GIFT program is a great way to give a living and lasting gift.

1. Choose an ornament from the Hat and Mitten tree in the narthex.
  2. Fill in the order form and place it in the envelope provided with your check or cash
  3. Then simply put the envelope in the offering plate. Thank you and God Bless, Life & Growth Team!
- 

## FAMILIES IN NEED

We have a little girl (preschool), that is in need of a dresser to store her clothes. Please contact Peggy Kneifl at work cell: 715-538-3154 or Personal cell: 715-533-4017.

Thank you for your continued support of the children and families that we service here in Trempealeau County.





# Announcements and Upcoming Events

## Sunday School Christmas Program

During worship on Sunday, December 18th, the Sunday School children will be performing their annual Christmas program. There will be songs sung, skits performed, and fun to be had by all!! Please join us in celebrating the Christmas season!



## Community Breakfast:

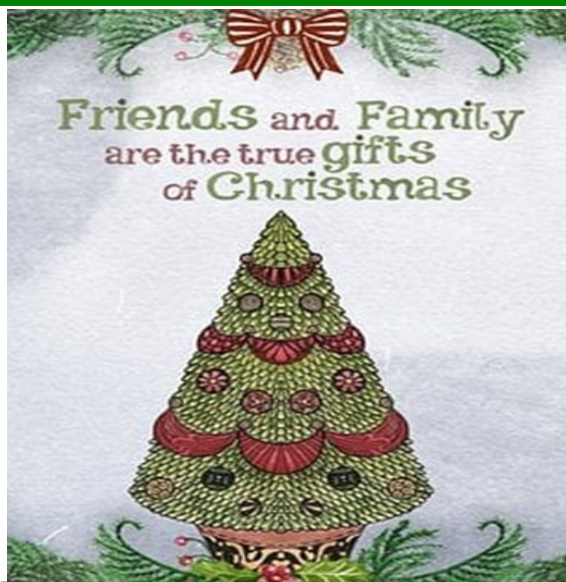
Our Saviour's confirmation students will host a pancake breakfast for the community in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30 am on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. The menu will include pancakes, bacon and dessert bars. A free will offering will be taken with proceeds going towards the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students' trip to Washington DC and to purchase a farm animal in a developing nation through the ELCA Good Gifts Program.

Worship Services on Saturday the 24th, Christmas Eve:

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church at 4:00 pm

Grace at 6:00 pm

There will **NOT** be a worship service on Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25th.



Wishing you and your families a very Blessed Christmas Season



# December 2022



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<u>1</u> Pigeon Falls Care Center—10:30 am  WELCA—1:30 pm Hosted by Grace	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>4</u> Sunday Worship-9:30am Sunday School-10:30 am	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> Quilters-8:30-Noon  Sunrise Manor 1:30 pm  Our Saviour's Council- 6:30 pm	<u>7</u> Bible Study—9:30 am  In-Class Confirmation—2:45 pm	<u>8</u> Tri-County Nursing Home—10:00 am	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>11</u> Sunday Worship-9:30am Sunday School-10:30 am	<u>12</u> R.U.T.H. at Peace in Pigeon Falls—6:30 pm	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u> Bible Study—9:30 At-home Confirmation 2:45 pm	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>18</u> Sunday Worship-9:30am Sunday School-Christmas Program Community Breakfast sponsored by 8th graders	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> Quilters-8:30-Noon	<u>21</u> Bible Study—9:30 am  In-Class Confirmation—2:45 pm	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u> Worship: 4:00 pm at OSL 6:00 pm at Grace 
<u>25</u> No Sunday Worship Service NO-Sunday School 	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u> Bible Study—9:30 Food Pantry - 11:00 to 1:00 pm  NO CONFIRMATION CLASS	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u> New Year's Eve 



***"Sharing God's Love With All"***

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church  
36197 Main Street  
P.O. Box 455  
Whitehall, WI 54773



**Pastor:** Peter Jonas

**Pastor Email:** [pastoroslc@gmail.com](mailto:pastoroslc@gmail.com)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday-  
Wednesday-Thursday 10:00 to  
2:00 pm

**Church Secretary:** Sherry M. Pabst

**Church Office:** 715-538-4334

**Church E-mail:** [osluthwh@gmail.com](mailto:osluthwh@gmail.com)

**Church Website:** [oslwhitehall.org](http://oslwhitehall.org)

Check us out on Facebook at: [Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Whitehall, WI](#) and [United in Faith Parish](#) and [OS Sunday-School](#) and [OSLC Youth](#).



Here is something new to try. Reverse Advent Calendar. Simply add an item to a Christmas box/bag during Advent. At the end of the month, donate the contents to the Food Pan-

# Reverse Advent Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<u>Nov. 27</u> Box of Cereal	<u>28</u> Jar of Peanut Butter	<u>29</u> Box of Stuffing Mix	<u>30</u> Boxed Potatoes	<u>Dec 1</u> Roll of Paper Towel	<u>2</u> Canned Peaches	<u>3</u> Canned Tomatoes
<u>4</u> Package of Toilet Paper	<u>5</u> Toothpaste	<u>6</u> Jar of Applesauce	<u>7</u> Canned Carrots	<u>8</u> Tooth Brushes	<u>9</u> Canned Tuna	<u>10</u> Laundry Detergent (no pods)
<u>11</u> Canned Pears	<u>12</u> Roll of Paper Towel	<u>13</u> Package of Pasta	<u>14</u> Spaghetti Sauce	<u>15</u> Bar of Bath Soap	<u>16</u> Tomato Soup	<u>17</u> Canned Ham or Chicken
<u>18</u> Canned Chili	<u>19</u> Macaroni & Cheese	<u>20</u> Bottle of Dish Soap	<u>21</u> Chicken Noodle Soup	<u>22</u> Canned Stew	<u>23</u> Box of Facial Tissue	<u>24</u> Package of Oatmeal