

# The Vasa Voice

Volume 56 no. 12

December 2020



## Highlights of Vasa in December

### December 8 - Poinsettia Christmas Flower Order Due

The order for Poinsettias will be placed at noon on Tuesday, December 8. Poinsettias will be delivered to church and displayed for the week of Christmas worship services. Plants will be available to take home after Christmas.

### December 9 - Community Dinner

Our community dinner for Wednesday, December 9 has been canceled. See page 5 for details.

### December 20- Children's Virtual Christmas Program

This year the Children's Christmas Program is being presented by 8 families, each of whom has taken a section of the Christmas story and created a video depicting their particular part. Videos will be assembled by our own Mark Hagen, with the final product being released on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, on Vasa Lutheran's You Tube channel.

### December 24 - Christmas Eve Worship

Due to the surge in the Covid-19 pandemic, there will be NO IN-PERSON Christmas Eve worship services this year.

**Wednesday Evening Worship** will be converting to Zoom gatherings, beginning in January. See pg. 10.

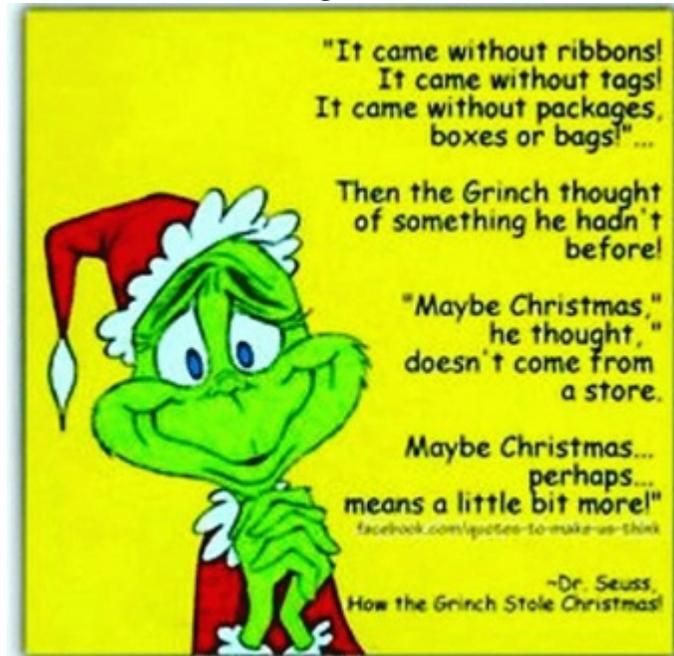
### *Here's what's on the Inside!*

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Wednesday Evening Worship Update





## Pastor's Thoughts for December



As I write this article the corona virus rampages across our state and our nation. Public places are shutting down again in the hopes of slowing the spread of the virus and easing the burden on the medical staff across the country.

We were encouraged to minimize our Thanksgiving gatherings. It is likely that we will have to do the same for Christmas. While I ache to have face to face time with my family I console myself with two things. First, far better to stay healthy so that there is a next time and a next year. Second, I remember what Dr. Seuss wrote in "*How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*"

The Grinch didn't steal Christmas. The Grinch cleared away the clutter so that the true meaning of Christmas could more easily be found. Christmas means the birth of the Savior of the world. He was not born in a royal palace or a priestly household. He was born in a stable. He was not born to a family of wealth or power. He was born to ordinary folks who couldn't find a place to rest after a tough journey.

As we remain in seclusion I encourage you to get out your Bible and read the story of the birth of Jesus from Luke 2. The message of the angels to the shepherds is certainly glorious but those shepherds were just common people working in the fields. As we stay at home in order to stay safe, remember that the message of a Savior being born comes to you right where you are. The Savior of the world comes *to* you and *to* me; the Savior of the world comes *for* you and *for* me.

Over the next few weeks make wise choices,  
Stay safe,  
Pastor Maureen





## ***Mark's Musings***

***By Mark Hagen***

Everyone can see that America is divided. But exactly what divides us is not always clear. Where you stand politically is correlated to several things: education, gender, ethnicity, religion, etc. In his recent book, "The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?" Harvard professor Michael Sandel lays out a startling source for our discontent: merit.

The United States is a liberal democracy (representative government with fair elections and civil rights), but it is also a meritocracy. We regard those that work hard, that have valued skills or talents, or that offer things that we value, as inherently valuable. If someone is a very good basketball player (LaBron James), we accept that he should have a large income. Likewise, we reward those with high academic achievement with high salaries. For the most part this is good. Meritocracy has replaced aristocracy in defining winners and losers.

In a meritocracy, instead of an aristocrat's lucky fortune of birth, we explicitly judge a person's worth by their actions. Theoretically, one's success or failure is not about luck, but a manifestation of one's value as a human. But is this really true? Sandel points out that there is still a tremendous amount of luck in most people's economic success. Talent, culture, and even the capacity for hard work are all things that are not truly under our control; yet in our society, this success is interpreted as just, a measure of a person's moral value, and what they deserve. As a result, losers in this system are implicitly deemed unworthy.

The problem occurs when those that obtain economic success get too full of themselves. Resentment builds when those who have done well believe it was all their own doing. Jesus (and Martin Luther) understood the peril of this kind of thinking.

Grace is defined as God's love and mercy, given to us because God desires us to have it, not because of anything we have done to earn it. Paul asks (in his letter to the Romans) "If we are saved by grace, why be good?" His answer (which takes 16 chapters) is that if you consider the sacrifice made for you by Christ, you will naturally want to be righteous. Matthew has Jesus say "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law (*rules of merit*); I have come not to abolish, but to fulfill the law." John begins his gospel by saying "From Christ's fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Martin Luther proclaimed that it is by faith alone (*sola fide*) and by grace alone (*sola gratia*) that we are saved. Good works are something believers should undertake out of gratitude towards their Savior; they are not necessary for salvation. Luther leaves little room for merit.

So how does this relate to our social and political lives? Jonathan Haidt, in his book "The Righteous Mind", says that what separates liberals and conservatives is how they see fairness. Liberals see fairness as *equality*--equal access for all, regardless of race, skill or effort. Conservatives see fairness as *proportionality*--those that work harder should get more. Yet it is often well-educated liberals that do not see the affect that grace has had in their lives. And it is often conservatives that are resentful of their declining social status.

Maybe the fix for this circumstance is for all of us to recognize the extent to which God's grace has shaped our lives. We proclaim this in the Lutheran liturgy—but do we hear it? A little humility on the left and a little benevolence on the right might go a long way toward healing our nation.



## Volunteers for Christmas Eve Readings

*..Will be needed!!  
As with  
Thanksgiving, we  
will pre-record the  
readings. If you  
are interested,  
please contact  
Pastor Maureen.*

VASA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Treasurer's Report  
October, 2020

For the Month of October:

Checkbook Balance, October 1, 2020	\$ 46,128.18
General Fund Contributions:	12,850.69
Total Funds Available	58,978.87
Budget Approved Monthly Expenses:	14,647.34
Checkbook Balance, October 31, 2020	\$ 44,331.53
Mission Investment Fund, Sept 30, 2020	\$20,550.73
Mission Investment Fund, Oct 30, 2020	\$20,568.09



Families have selected their scenes from the Christmas Story and are busy creating videos of their parts for the Christmas Program. Videos are due to Mark Hagen by Sunday, December 6. The final product will be available for viewing on December 20, 2020. You will find it on the Vasa Lutheran YouTube channel. Thanks to all the families and Sunday School age children who are making this possible in these most challenging times.



*Apologies for mistakes  
or omissions. If you  
know of any birthdays  
that are missing or  
wrong, please contact  
the Vasa church office.  
THANKS!*

## Birthdays



- Dec. 8 - Aliyah Chaska  
Andrea Gillis
- Dec. 9 - Dahmon Romness  
Chris Weigman
- Iris Volz
- Dec. 12 - Oliver Endres  
Piper Endres  
Samantha Pearson
- Dec. 13 - Boedy Sense
- Dec. 14 - Debra Donath  
Dustin Lindstrom
- Dec. 15 - Wyatt Lyden
- Dec. 16 - Randy Klein  
Shirley Hedeem
- Dec. 18 - Sonia Peterson
- Dec. 19 - Sandy Wollschlager
- Dec. 20 - Sharon Olson
- Dec. 21 - Andrea Mandelkow  
Hailie Lindblom  
Mark Hagen
- Dec. 23 - Duane Lindstrom  
Katie Featherstone
- Dec. 28 - Joe Wollschlager  
Joleen Hanson  
Audrey Hyllengren  
Samuel Gesme
- Dec. 31 - James Josephson  
Bruce Olson  
Jerry Rietmann  
Stuart Samuelson



**BLESSINGS  
ON YOUR  
BIRTHDAY**



## Goodhue County Christmas Project

Due to Covid-19, the giving

tree has been put up in the entryway of the Lutheran Center this year. The Center will be open Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM - 6:30 PM through December 15th- for people to come and select an ornament, and then return their gifts. We plan on having all of the gifts packed for pickup on December 20th.

Please bring the unwrapped gifts, with the ornament from our tree attached, to the Lutheran Center by

**Tuesday, December 15th at 6:30 pm** at the latest.



## COMMUNITY DINNER

It was with great regret that the Vasa Community Dinner Team made the decision to cancel the December 2020 Community Dinner. The Committee recognized how great the need is, especially given the amazing response we had during the September, October and November dinners, where we served a combined total of 721 meals.

But the committee was equally mindful of everyone's health and safety—not only for those who receive the meals, but also for the dedicated fleet of volunteers who prepare, serve and deliver the meals. And with the rise of community spread in the immediate area, the committee felt strongly that it would be better to do whatever they could to prevent the risk of exposure for all involved.

Hopefully, in January, the routine of Community Dinner Pick-Ups and Deliveries will resume and we can continue this greatly cherished ministry. Thank You again to all who have made this possible.



## Prairie Restoration Begins...



Martin Luther said, "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree." Early in the week of November 16, the drill and prairie restoration seed arrived. Hopefully the ball field ground will dry a little more so that the seed can be planted in the next few days.

In Jeremiah 29:11 the prophet says, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." Planting seed is a hopeful act that points toward a future with hope. As the pandemic rages around us we need hopeful acts and this one brightens my outlook. I hope it brightens yours as well.

*Pastor Maureen*

Council Meeting 10-19-2020

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:30pm by Greg Drewianka, President

Devotions: Duane Hanson

Members present and Absent:

**Present:** Pastor Maureen Hagen; Greg Drewianka, President; Jim Hedeem, Vice President; Rick Samuelson; Dan Hedeem; Duane Hanson; Andrew Featherstone and Sid Featherstone

Eight voting members present

**Unable to Attend:** Kevin Eckblad; Jessica Anderson; Mike Carlson; Lora Gruber; Ben Norman and Steve Hyllengren

Also Present: Kathy Tilderquist

**Adoption of the agenda:**

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as written

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Approval of Minutes:**

At the end of page 1, free Covid testing was changed to free Covid Antibody testing.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2020 council meeting as revised.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Reports Reviewed and Accepted:**

1. Treasurer and Finance Team Report (Attached)

- a. We are getting some credit card donations.
- b. The office computer is currently being worked on and not available
- c. Live streaming of the church service was talked about
- d. We talked about giving to the food shelf

2. Parish Life (Attached)

- a. After the church service on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> the pastor will record individual readings from members of the congregation.

3. Property Team Report. (Attached)

- a. Dan Hedeem gave a update on the insurance claim for hail damage
- b. There is now wi-fi at the church

4. Museum Board (Attached)

5. Endowment Board Report (No Meeting)

## Vasa Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes (continued)

6. Cemetery Board (No Meeting)

7. Executive Board Report (No Meeting)

8. Pastor's Report (Attached)

- a. The pastor has resumed visiting shut-ins

**Tabled/Old Business** (Gazebo update tabled until Dec.)

### **New Business**

a. We have had additional requests to use the Lutheran Center. The pastor will made up use of facility guidelines and talk further with the groups.

- b. The pastor's health insurance is going up \$98 for the next year.

It was moved and seconded to stay with the Portico Gold plan.

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **Discussion**

1. The pastor will check with Tom Erickson to see if the organ needs to be tuned.

November Meeting Dates: (Tentative schedule)

Parish Life: Monday November 2nd @ 6:30pm

Finance: Monday November 2nd @ 1:00pm

Property: Monday November 2nd @ 9:30am

Executive: Monday November 9th @ TBD

Council: Monday November 16th @ 6:30pm Devotions: Andrew Featherstone

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:47 pm.

**MOTION CARRIED**

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Report submitted by:

Rick Samuelson, Secretary

All Team Meeting minutes can be found in the office if you're ever interested in reading more! Not all minutes are put in the Vasa Voice for economical/printing reasons.

1755 Old West Main  
Red Wing, MN 55066

# Red Wing Area Food Shelf

OUR MISSION:

*Secure & Distribute Nutritious Food To Individuals & Households In Need.*

Date: 11/15/2020

Dear, Vasa Church

Thank you very much for your donation of:

117 lbs of food

to the Red Wing Area Food Shelf. With assistance from people like you, we can continue to meet the temporary hunger needs of families in our area.

1755 Old West Main  
Red Wing, MN 55066

# Red Wing Area Food Shelf

OUR MISSION:

*Secure & Distribute Nutritious Food To Individuals & Households In Need.*

Date: 11/17/2020

Dear, VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Thank you very much for your donation of:

80 lbs. of food

to the Red Wing Area Food Shelf. With assistance from people like you, we can continue to meet the temporary hunger needs of families in our area.

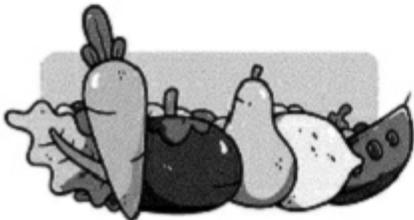
Sincerely,

*Dan Bender*

For the Red Wing Area  
Food Shelf

*\*No goods or services were received  
in exchange for this donation.*

*Thank  
You!*





**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.



October 28, 2020

*Thank You*

Vasa Evangelical Lutheran Church  
15235 Norelius Rd  
Welch, MN 55089-4561

Dear Vasa Evangelical Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your gift of \$100.00 to Lutheran Disaster Response.

*Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God (Romans 5:1-2).*

As a church, we believe that God's grace is freely given to us. This brings us peace and hope. It makes a difference in our lives. Through your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response, you are sharing this amazing grace with others. You are helping people near and far feel the transformational power of God's love.

Your Spirit-filled generosity is helping families and communities reeling from disasters here in the United States and around the world. No matter the variety of disaster, no matter the variety of need, your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response enable people to rebuild their lives and livelihoods now and far into the future.

Thank you for your gracious gifts. The glory of God is shining through you.

In Christ,

*Robin K Brown*

The Rev. Robin Brown  
Mission Funding Director, Congregations

*P.S. Please see the reverse side of this letter for your receipt.*



Wednesday Evening  
Worship Update

*faith*  
**family**  
friends

Along with our worship life on Sundays, Wednesday Evening worship is also adapting to our changing situation. Beginning on the first Wednesday in January (January 6<sup>th</sup>), we will gather via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. to worship, with communion. As has been our practice when we gather in person, our time together includes reading the Scripture lesson for the upcoming Sunday and conversation about questions that arise from that reading. From Christmas through Easter we will be reading the gospel of Luke.

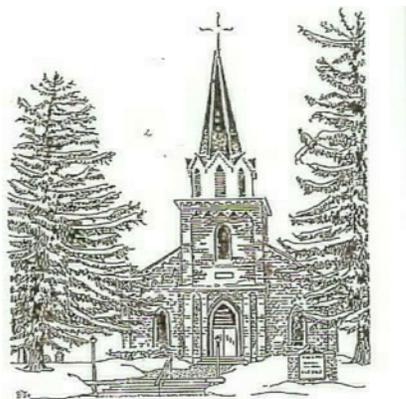
In order to participate you must contact Pastor Maureen and indicate your interest. She will send you an invitation via your email. A computer with camera and microphone is needed, though some people use their cell phones to participate.

This past year has challenged us more than ever to be deliberate in our spiritual growth and development. We anxiously and prayerfully await the time when we are able to gather again as one community, "worshipping together, growing in faith, serving others, and welcoming and loving all."

# DECEMBER 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4 Pastor's Day Off	5
6 9am Service of Holy Communion (Vasa Lutheran YouTube Channel) 9am Sunday School (online) Christmas Program Videos Due	7 Property Team 10:00 AM Finance Team 1:00 PM Parish Life 6:30 pm	8	9	10	11 Pastor's Day Off	12
13 9am Service of Holy Communion (Vasa Lutheran YouTube Channel) 9am Sunday School (online)	14 7:00pm Endowment Team	15	16	17	18 Pastor's Day Off	19
20 9am Service of Holy Communion (Vasa Lutheran YouTube Channel) 9am Sunday School (online) Children's Christmas Program released	21 6:30 pm Church Council	22	23	24  Virtual Christmas Eve Service Released Today	25 	26
27 9am Service of Holy Communion (Vasa Lutheran YouTube Channel) 9am Sunday School (online)	28	29	30	31 HAPPY NEW YEAR! 	1	

VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH  
15235 NORELIUS ROAD (In Vasa)  
WELCH, MN 55089



Historic Vasa Lutheran Church Built in 1869

Vasa Drawing by B-J Norman

### **Worship Schedule**

9:00 am Sundays - via Vasa Lutheran YouTube Channel

### **Christian Education**

9:00 - Online via Vasa Lutheran YouTube Channel

### **Wednesday Evening Worship -**

6:30 pm via Zoom beginning on January 6th

### **Executive Team**

Greg Drewianka 651-301-2472

Jim Hedeem 651-380-6054

Rick Samuelson 651-380-9150

### **Pastor Maureen Hagen**

[pastormaureen@sleepyeyetel.net](mailto:pastormaureen@sleepyeyetel.net)

(Cell) 507-251-5270

Church Office 651-258-4327

Office Email: [vasalutheran@sleepyeyetel.net](mailto:vasalutheran@sleepyeyetel.net)

Website: [vasalutheran.org](http://vasalutheran.org)

### **Church Staff**

Kathy Tilderquist, Treasurer

Emily Peterson, Office Administrator

Melissa McCann, Custodian

Anne Anderson, Worship Accompanist

Gail Strusz-Klein, Wedding Coordinator

Paul & Jay Mikaelson, Missionaries in LaPaz, Bolivia

[pmikaelson@gmail.com](mailto:pmikaelson@gmail.com)

web site: [www.caranavi.net/rtc.htm](http://www.caranavi.net/rtc.htm)

## **Vasa Mission Statement**

We the Vasa congregation, called by God, commit to:

Worshipping together,  
Growing in faith,  
Serving others, and  
Welcoming and loving all!