

DECEMBER 2019

# Newsletter

Ozaukee Congregational Church  
News & updates from our church for our community

## Turn on the Christmas Lights!

### CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

3:30 Family worship

5:00 With the OCC choir

7:00 With Bella Musik

### CHRISTMAS DAY OPEN HOUSE

3:00-5:00pm

### CLICK HERE

Click to view this month's video message from Jeff on YouTube.

You can also find the video by searching Ozaukee Congregational Church on YouTube or Facebook!

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Anders, our oldest, was adamant in his opinion that we not turn on the Christmas lights until the day after Thanksgiving. Turning them on before Thanksgiving is over, he said, is not treating Thanksgiving with enough respect. Thanksgiving is its own day and deserves to be celebrated independently of Christmas.

Well stated Anders, but I respectfully disagree.

Maybe there are practical reasons some of you would like for there to be a few more weeks in between Thanksgiving and Christmas, but to me Thanksgiving and Christmas go hand-in-hand. Besides both holidays being time for family, food, and fellowship, both Christmas and Thanksgiving are born from a recognition of our need. At Thanksgiving we acknowledge that everything we have been given is from the hand of God. At Christmas we give thanks for God's gift of Himself to us in the person of Jesus. Every year, in the middle of the world's on-going emphasis on hard work, achievement, production, development, progress and the like, the seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas encourage us to pause, remind us of our need, and point us again to our dependence upon our Creator.

As we remember God's gift to us at Christmas, we respond with Thanksgiving, and it makes sense to me that, as we pause at Thanksgiving to give thanks, we begin the Christmas season.

And since I was the one who put up the Christmas lights, we turned them on Thanksgiving night.

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas.

*Jeff*

# From Your Moderator

The Christmas season is around the corner: colorful lights, wreaths, Santa, elves, reindeer, Christmas movies, Christmas trees, nativity scenes and...lo and behold, the birth of Jesus! Oh, and eating, decorating, and shopping. For many of us, the rush of searching for the right gifts, preparing our houses, and baking begins right after Thanksgiving and continues well into December, and for some, through Christmas Eve. The hustle and bustle, the crowds and lines, the exhaustion and overeating begins....and continues. Many become weary and frustrated, some become crabby or even nasty. Then Christmas Day arrives, and in one 24-hour day, it is over. Some are even glad for the 26th so they can be done with this hectic time.

But wait! Isn't there supposed to be a reason for this holiday? Shouldn't this be a beginning and not an end?

What if we stop, take a deep breath, and focus on the reason for the season? What if we focus on the miracle of the birth of Jesus and the love God gave us in human form that day long ago? If we can be mindful of the reason for us to celebrate Christmas, while we gather with family and friends, and while we make or buy gifts for others, maybe our December can be a bit more enjoyable, calm, reflective, and peaceful. Maybe if we pause periodically to remind ourselves of the reason for the Advent season, we can shed some of the stress and gain comfort in the coming of Jesus.

I pray that all of you and your families and friends can truly relax, slow down, and enjoy each other's company, and in those quiet moments (and the hectic ones, too) remember that Jesus is the reason for the season.

May God bless you all and Merry Christmas,

*Stacey*

# From The Trustees

TAX TIPS BY RIP PRETAT

If you're philanthropically-minded, you likely stand to gain by being strategic in the way you make your charitable donations. Last month we talked about making charitable contributions from an IRA if you are over the age of 70. But what if you haven't hit that milestone yet?

Because of the increase in the standard deduction and the limitations on formerly allowed itemized deductions, many taxpayers receive little or no tax benefit from their charitable contributions. One strategy to maximize the tax benefits of charitable giving is the "bunching" of charitable donations. When it comes to bunching, your aim is to accumulate enough charitable contributions in a single tax year that it benefits you to itemize, versus taking the standard deduction.

In other words, you double up on contributions in one year and have zero charitable deductions in the next year. For some people, making no charitable contributions in the alternate year may seem an awkward thing to do, but there is a solution to this problem. In the first year, in addition to making your normal contributions, you can donate the following year's anticipated total amount to a "donor-advised fund" (at a brokerage firm or mutual fund company) and take the doubled up itemized deduction in the first year. Then, in the second year, you make all of your charitable gifts from the donor advised fund to the charities of your choice (like OCC!) while taking advantage of the standard deduction in that year. The only difference is that you get increased tax savings. Bunching multiple years into one tax year can result in even more tax savings.

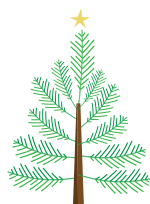
The bunching strategy is not appropriate for all taxpayers, so you should consult your tax advisor regarding your individual tax situation before proceeding.

# Holiday Happenings

*Calling all bakers and artisans!*

## **Christmas Cookie, Bakery, and Craft Sale**

DECEMBER 15TH AND 22ND



Christmas cookies, candy, cakes, pies, and other savory treats, as well as craft items, are needed for OCC'S Annual Christmas Bake Sale on December 15 and 22 following the 9:00 and 10:45 services. Items should be brought to church the Saturday before or EARLY on the day of the Bake Sale. A sign-up sheet is in Fellowship Hall to give an idea of the number of treats to expect. Proceeds underwrite the costs of our Annual Adult Christmas Party on January 11, 2020, at Fire Ridge Golf Club.

## **Gingerbread Houses**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH @ 10AM



Everyone is welcome – kids, parents, grandparents, friends, people, anyone – to build gingerbread houses with us on December 14th in Fellowship Hall! This is a great event to bring the generations together. Sign-up in Fellowship Hall, or just come! Bring a friend or a neighbor!

## **Kids' Christmas Pageant**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22ND @ 9 & 10:45AM



Emelia, Eli, and our kids have been working hard to get ready for our Kids' Christmas Pageant, happening at both services on December 22nd. You will want to be here!



## **Christmas Eve Services**

JOIN US FOR OUR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES!

3:30PM Worship for Families and Friends

5PM Worship featuring the OCC choir

7PM Worship featuring Bella Musik

## Midweek Bible Study

TUESDAYS @ 7-8:15PM IN THE YOUTH ROOM & WEDNESDAYS @ 10:30-11:45AM IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

Dec. 3-4 Ecclesiastes 12

Dec. 10-11 Isaiah 9:1-7

Dec. 17-18 John 1:1-16

Dec. 25-26 Christmas week hiatus

Jan. 1-2 New Year's hiatus

Jan. 8-9 Bible Study is back!

**To receive text reminders and alerts on Midweek Bible Study, just text @midweekb to 81010.**

## December Women's Fellowship Outing

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12TH

The OCC Women's Fellowship will visit the Old World Christmas Market at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake on Thursday, December 12. The market is modeled after the Christkindlmarkt in Nuremberg, Germany and is open 10am to 5pm. So, put on your walking shoes and comfortable clothes to explore the works of local and international artisans and to sample the food court featuring schnitzel, apple strudel, and more. Admission is \$7. We will have lunch at 12:30pm at Otto's Restaurant in the resort. We will meet at the church at 9am to carpool. If there are changes due to weather, participants will be contacted by phone. A sign-up sheet will be available in Fellowship Hall. Questions? Contact: Sue Ann Walczak (262) 442-8365 or Mary Scheffel (262) 276-0617.

## Attention Prayer Shawl Knitters!

We will meet in Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 1:00. Any and all knitters and/or crocheters would be most welcome to join with our small, but really nice, group. However, if you would like to work at home and contribute shawls, that is also very welcome. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact Barbara Read 414-899-5257.

## Men's Fellowship

DECEMBER 7TH @ 7PM

Join the OCC Men as we watch the Concordia Falcons Men's Hockey team take on the St. Norbert Green Knights at the Ozaukee Ice Center! Sign-up in Fellowship Hall or just meet us there. Tickets are \$5 through the church or \$7 at the door.

## Lessons & Carols

DECEMBER 8TH @ 10:45AM

Join us for our annual Lessons & Carols with the OCC Choir and members of the Milwaukee Symphony. We will have typical worship at 9am and then the Lessons & Carols at 10:45am. You are welcome to come for worship at 9am, and then stay for Lessons & Carols, or come whenever. The Ozaukee County Sheriff's office has said we can park on the street, so we hope there will be plenty of room for everyone!

Nancy Wilkinson and Bob Smith will read from a script created by Mary Scheffel which uses scripture to tell the story of Jesus' birth. The meaning of each reading is reflected in the anthems sung by the choir, accompanied by members of the Milwaukee Symphony. The anthems range from unusual settings of familiar Christmas Carols to a closing number in Bluegrass style. Come celebrate the Christmas season with us!



# OCC Seasonal Activities

2019

- December 8** Lessons & Carols with members of MSO, 10:45am
  - December 13** Youth Christmas Party
  - December 14** Gingerbread Houses, 10am
  - December 15** Bake Sale, 9 & 10:45am
  - December 22** Bake Sale, 9 & 10:45am  
Christmas Pageant, 9 & 10:45am
  - December 24** Christmas Eve Services at 3:30, 5 and 7pm
  - December 25** Christmas Day Open House, 3pm
  - December 29** One worship service at 10am
  - January 5** Regular worship times resume
  - January 11** OCC Holiday Party @ Fire Ridge, 5:30pm
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# Youth Ministry

GRADES 6-12 (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)



To receive text reminders and alerts regarding youth ministry activities, just text @youthocc to 81010.

## MP3 Youth Group

SUNDAYS @ 9-10AM IN THE YOUTH ROOM

- Dec. 1: No MP3. Thanksgiving weekend.
- Dec. 8: Luke 1:26-38, An angel visits Mary.
- Dec. 15: Matthew 1:18-25, An angel appears to Joseph in a dream.
- Dec. 22: No MP3. Christmas Pageant during both services!
- Dec. 29: No MP3. Winter break & Mexico Mission Trip.
- Jan. 5: Revelation 21:1-5, God is making all things new.

## Tri-Y Christmas Fiesta!

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13TH AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN TOSA

Uniting 6th-12th graders from OCC, Tosa, and North Shore!

- \* Food at 6p!
- \* Zany Christmas games & videos!
- \* The “Blind Gift Exchange!” (Bring a wrapped gift, \$5 max., as goofy as you’d like.)

## Confirmation Class

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15TH @ 4:30-6PM IN THE YOUTH ROOM

This month: Protestantism & Reformation Ideals Project due: Visit to a non-Congregational (but Christian) church

Also bring: Your Confirmation folder, including the handouts from last time!

## Agape Table

FREE DINNER & CONVERSATION FOR CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGIANS

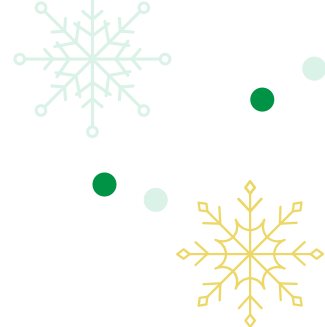
Wednesday, December 11, 6pm at the Memorial Union in Madison.

**If you, or someone you love, would like to be in the “GroupMe” loop on this, please make sure to let Rob know.**

## Mark Your Calendar!

- Hosanna Mission Trip: Saturday, June 20 – Friday, June 26
- WCA Camp Sunday, July 12 – Saturday, July 18

# Outreach Opportunities



Questions? Want to sign up to serve?  
Contact Rob: rcf474@gmail.com or  
414-688-8991.

## Hope House Food Pantry

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21ST

@ 9:20AM-12:40PM

Adults and youth welcome! Sign up with Rob!

## We'll return to Family Sharing in January

Since the "fourth Monday" falls on the 23rd, and everyone will be crazy-busy, we'll skip December. If you'd like to be on the team for Monday, January 27, let Rob know.

## Benevolence Box Wish List

The wooden box in Fellowship Hall stands ready to receive your donations of...

- Plastic Sendik's bags (Hope House)
- Paper handle bags (Family Sharing)
- Empty laundry jugs (Family Sharing)
- Toiletries (Guest House & MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary)

## Treats for Eats raises \$537 for UNICEF

A huge "thank you!" to everyone who brought sweet treats to share, and to everyone who came, ate, and donated money for UNICEF.

## Advocates appreciates your generosity

Many thanks to all who bought toys and other gifts for the women, girls, and boys residing at the Advocates shelter this holiday season. Your generosity will make their Christmas much more merry and bright.

## Book Sorting at Next Door

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2ND

@ 3:30-5:30PM

Adults and youth welcome! Contact Rob to sign up, or if you have any questions.

## Salvation Army Bell Ringing

THURSDAYS, FRIDAYS, &

SATURDAYS THROUGH

DECEMBER 21ST

10-noon, noon-2, and 2-4 at the Grafton Pick 'n Save. Sign up on the clipboard in Fellowship Hall!

## Hosanna Deposits due by Christmas

- Mission trip dates: Saturday, June 20 – Friday, June 26
- For adults & high school youth
- \$150 deposit due by Christmas, \$150 balance due by Easter
- Questions? Talk with Rob!

## Eight headed to Mission Mazahua

This year's Mexico Mission Trip team includes Chloe Barsch, Shannon Brophy, Rob Fredrickson, Nicole Lennie, Willie Moran, Julia Peksa, Jimmy Radtke, and Michael Wininsky. They'll be leaving home December 26 and returning January 2. Among other projects, they expect to be building a water cistern and pouring a concrete roof. Please pray that their efforts will be fruitful, their adventures memorable, and their journeys safe.



# OCC Council Members

As we move forward in our journey, let us remember to ...

**“covenant together, of our own free will, to love God and to enjoy God forever, to walk in God’s ways, known and to be made known, to study the life and the teachings of Jesus Christ, to live and work together in unity and peace, and to care for those whom God has given us to love.”**

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<b>Rob Fredrickson</b>	Assoc. Minister	414-688-8991	rcf474@gmail.com
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<b>Tim Nolan</b>	Nominating Committee	414-595-7433	nolantj13@gmail.com