

Next Week: Christmas 2

Theme: How come so many people then and now miss the point of Christmas? The real Jesus reveals and gives himself only through his Word.

**PLEASE NOTE: NO BIBLE CLASSES OR SUNDAY SCHOOL
ON DECEMBER 27th OR JANUARY 3RD.**

FOOD PANTRY

We emphasize donating to our food pantry in December. Donations of non-perishable food items are distributed through Good Samaritan Outreach Center of West Allis, St. Marcus and St. Peter's food pantries, and our own Woodlawn food pantry. Donations can be placed in the donation room bins, near the member information boxes. A door collection for the pantries will be gathered after all services on **December 27 & 28**.

Special Thanks goes to the West Allis Community Foundation for donating two cases of food and a check for \$1,000 to our food pantry.

COMMUNION DEVOTIONS

In addition to our normal weekend worship with the Lord's Supper, we will be offering six small group devotions with the Lord's Supper (maximum of 8 people each session) on Wednesday, **December 30**, afternoon and evening. Follow the link for times and to sign up if you plan to attend: <https://www.signupge-nius.com/go/10C0848AFAD2CA6F85-communion>

SEASONAL WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AT WOODLAWN

There will be a special service on **New Year's Eve at 6:30pm**. The Lord's Supper will be celebrated. Remember to sign up for this and the weekend services on the church website or by calling the church office.

SCRIP

Our next order will be on **Monday, January 4**. *NOTE: We have a small inventory of cards on hand if you need something between orders.* Contact Mrs. Gasper at mgasper@logls.org with questions. Order forms and a retailer list are in the carousel outside Pastor Kneser's office.

USHER CHANGES

The head ushers are working on the ushering schedule for 2021. If you would like to be part of an ushering team, contact one of the head ushers – Scott Warras (414-801-5787), Dan Ody (414-475-6288), or Ross Whiting (414-326-0083). Current ushers should also contact them if you need to change your status / time.

THANK YOU MISS BLIEVERNICHT

Miss Lynette Blievernicht served as our teacher from 1983-2020. In summer of 2020, she retired after 43 years total in teaching ministry in the WELS. We would like to show our appreciation for her service to our Lord and our congregation. We will have a box for notes and cards in the entryway. Write a note of thanks or share a memory with her. You can also include gift cards or certificates. They will be presented to her at the 10:30 service on **Sunday, January 17th**.

PASTORS THANK YOU

Family and friends at Woodlawn. Your kindness is overwhelming! Thank you so much for all the cards, generous gifts, and well wishes as we celebrate together the birth of our Lord and Savior. We are blessed to serve our Savior with you. May the Holy Spirit continue to fill us all with the peace and joy that comes from knowing that the child of Mary is God's Greatest Gift to us! Blessings to you this Christmas and for the New Year. – Pastor Tom and Sharon Kneser, Pastor Ben and Lynn Wessel.

POINSETTIA THANKS

Special thanks to Ed & D'Anne Tonne for providing the large, beautiful poinsettias for our services this Christmas season.

**MARY MORNINGS –
A NEW WOMENS' BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITY!**

Lynn Wessel and Jes Woller have decided to try a womens' Bible study and we believe the new year is the perfect time for trying something new!

It will be open to women, friends & family of Woodlawn members & nearby sister WELS congregations. We pray it is an opportunity for you to take a moment to sit at Jesus's feet and 'choose that which is needful' - just like Mary did while busy serving with her sister Martha years ago. It will also give us a chance to connect and be 'together' - something SO healthy (and needed) for us women!!

We plan to meet Saturday mornings twice a month from 9:00-10:30am beginning January 16th. We are planning to offer both in-person & zoom formats simultaneously so you can attend in the way you are most comfortable.

We have chosen the newer NPH Bible study *Full Accessories of God - The Spirit's Makeover for Women* by DeLyn Wagenknecht (NPH order# OL-1201801 \$14.99). You can choose to invest in your own copy of this study as there are many opportunities for personal reflection/thought throughout the book or join us without the book. If our group decides to purchase 10 or more books, we would qualify for a small discount, so reach out to Lynn or Jes if you'd like to buy a copy! If the cost if the book is prohibitive please reach out to us (we can see what may be available to help out).

Please direct any questions to Lynn (wessel0802@gmail.com or cell 414.315.1897) or Jes (jeswoller@gmail.com or cell 414.303.8128)

Plan to grab a cup of coffee/tea and join us!! Looking forward to spending time with you at Jesus' feet!!



BETTER TOGETHER - The Potential of a Merger

Over the decades our congregation has occasionally discussed the possibility of a church or school merger. More recently formal discussions facilitated by a synod consultant have been taking place with representatives from Divine Peace, Jordan, Good Shepherd's, and Woodlawn congregations.

The outcome of this process has faced delays by COVID gathering restrictions and the complexity of four churches considering unification. However, a merger proposal is now ready for our congregations to consider in early 2021. This proposal invites our churches to participate in uniting together to form a new, thriving, and mission-focused WELS congregation in West Allis.

The Church Merger Trend - Around 2 percent of US Protestant churches merge annually – about 6,000 congregations. Another 15,000 are talking about merging in the future. Church mergers have become increasingly common over the past few decades including in the WELS.

In the past, many mergers have often been driven by survival. Decline in membership, financial challenges, and aging facilities requiring extensive maintenance create a situation where congregations can often no longer exist on their own. These churches joined together to continue ministry in their community and keep a pastor on staff.

A New Kind of Merger - While many past mergers were driven by survival, lately a new type of merger has been arising. Relatively healthy congregations are seeing the potential of joining forces with other churches to be stronger and more effective for God's kingdom. These new mergers are not about survival but rather about pursuing the mission to reach more people for Christ. This new kind of merger is about being better together.

Starting in January we look forward to sharing and discussing more details about the opportunity and advantages for our congregation to participate in a new mission-driven merger. Stay tuned!

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS – For all to realize the true meaning of Christmas; that the light of Jesus would shine in the darkness of our world.

THIS WEEK AT WOODLAWN

Sun. Dec. 27– Worship w/Communion at 8:00 and 10:30am; NO Bible Hour

Mon. Dec. 28 – Worship w/Communion at 6:30pm

Tue. Dec. 29 – Prospect Mailing

Wed. Dec. 30 – Small Group Devotions: 2:00, 2:30, 3:00; and 6:30, 7:00, 7:30

Thu. Dec. 31 – New Year's Eve Service w/Communion at 6:30pm

Fri. Jan. 1 –

Sat. Jan. 2 – Worship at 5:00pm

Sun. Jan. 3– Worship at 8:00 and 10:30am; NO Bible Hour

Mon. Jan. 4 – School Resumes; Worship at 6:30pm

If you plan on attending **Communion devotions, weekend or special worship services, and Bible Classes**, we ask everyone please sign up for the service or class you will be attending. Our limit will be approximately **55** people per service. (The new sign-up will be posted on Monday). The simplest way is to go online using this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0848AFAD2CA6F85-communion>. Or click on the link on the church web page (woodlawnlutheran.org). For those without internet access you can call, text or email one of the pastors to be put on the list. The Monday service is the least attended, so perhaps consider attending that if you are worried about too many in the service.