



Our Saviour Lutheran Church

THE SEEKER

MARCH 2024

Rev. Justin Johnson, pastor



Risen Indeed



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Our Saviour Evangelical Lutheran Church
56 Cleveland Drive
Croton-On-Hudson, NY 10520
(914) 271-4632

Sunday Worship Schedule

Sunday School: 9:00 am
Worship: 10:00 am
Coffee Hour: following worship

Weekday Office Schedule

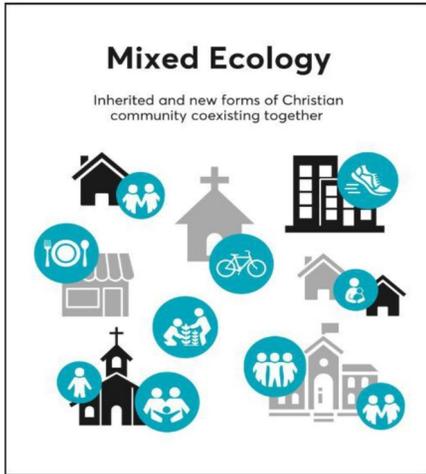
Office hours: 9:00 am - 12:00
Office Phone: (914) 271-4632
Office E-mail: mail@oursaviourcroton.org
Website: www.oursaviourcroton.org

Rev. Justin Johnson, pastor



Mission Statement:
Our mission is to offer spiritual grounding and growth by connecting with God and one another.

Vision Statement:
Our vision is to provide meaningful, well-attended, active, and growing worship, education, fellowship and service opportunities.



A few weeks ago, the council met in a retreat setting in beautiful Ossining, NY right on the Hudson River. One of the items I shared with them was this image of what the church now looks like-

I shared it because in a post Covid world, congregational connection has shifted. There was a time, for example, when how many people sat in the pews was the sole standard for a congregation's effectiveness. We hear this in the question- how big is your congregation? With the answer as to how many people attend on a Sunday. Example answer- our congregation is about 100-120 on a Sunday.

While the shift was happening leading up to Covid, the lockdown hit fast forward on the Church by about 7-10 years. This means that what was slowly happening in the 2000s, rapidly happened in the 2020s. Predictions that were originally supposed to happen within a decade or two, happened within a year. It was that dramatic of a change.

A concrete example was in 2019, there were some congregations exploring how to use social media to broadcast their services live. The thought was in about 7-10 years 80% of congregations would be broadcasting on social media. In 2020, every congregation began broadcasting their services via social media and didn't stop once Covid began to be normalized. It was that rapid of a change.

I can continue to share examples, but I believe one could get the idea that a great shift has taken place in the Church and our congregation within the last two years. With this shift, as I shared with the council, we should now look at our congregation as 4 different types of communities ==>>>>

(like the picture shows).

The first community is in the pews. This community worships live together, has coffee together, Bible study, etc. This is what many will think about when talking about a congregation because it was how congregations were looked at for so many years.

The second community, post Covid, is the digital community. These are individuals and families who connect with us through our social media, our videos, and via electronic communications. These individuals may never step through our doors, but are connecting with us through a digital medium. These could be people exploring our church, former members, members in another state for a long period of time, former parishioners of the pastor, etc. They feel connected to who we are though and are active in our congregation's life digitally.

The third community has always been there, but often are not looked at as being part of the congregation, but 100% should be. These are the groups who use our building on a regular basis. They may not come to worship on a Sunday, but some are here each and every week, are they not part of the congregation's life? Every AA, NA, Al-anon, yoga, girl scout participant uses our building and feels a connection to Our Saviour the building. For some, this is a place of great healing, as much as someone on a Sunday. This is a lifeline for others, just like some on Sunday. These communities are Our Saviour as much as the Sunday members are.

The fourth community is a little bit more difficult. These are the communities we connect to in our daily lives, who know we are Christian and know we are Our Saviour members. For example, every 9-11 memorial service I lead, I say "my name is Pastor Justin Johnson from Our Saviour Lutheran." You have individuals in your life who know where you worship and know your faith. You are their connection to Our Saviour and you might invite them to something like Christmas caroling or the tag sale and they come. You are Our Saviour to them and they know us through you.

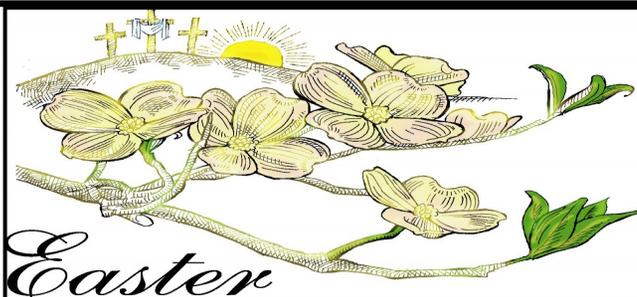
Now comes the post-2020 challenge- last year we had more people connecting with us on Facebook (avg attendance 50) than we had in the pews (avg attendance 26). What might a digital focused ministry look like over and above broadcasting our services? We are looking to expand our building usage for the next few years. What could we do that is more hospitable and to help these groups know they are loved here? These are the new Easter questions. As one way of doing church ends and dies, how does new life bloom?

One thing I keep reminding people is, while we say internally we are a small congregation, across Metro NY Synod and across Westchester, we would be considered a medium sized congregation. Church, as a whole, is

Continued ==>>>

not the same as it once was in any denomination. Every congregation is reshaping and re-looking at how they do ministry. We made early moves to become community focused with who we brought in to rent the church.

We want to continue this, not so we can grow on Sundays, but so we can be Jesus in the world and help others. This is who we are. The church since its inception has been about serving others. Somewhere along the line, the size of the church became what was important, but that was not the vision cast in Acts. The Church was meant to be a place of service to the community, to the poor, to the immigrant/refugee (the alien is the word in the Bible), the widow, and those on the fringe. It was to be a voice to help bring justice and hope where there is no hope. That is what I want us to keep focused on because if that is what we are doing, then we are doing the mission of Jesus. Rick Warren famously wrote in this book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, "it's not about you. It's about God and God's purpose for you." In other words, it was never about growth or bank income, but always about service and how we can serve others.



2024 COUNCIL MEMBERS & OFFICERS

OFFICERS:

President: Sue Montgomery Vice President: Matt Papertsian
Secretary: Marilyn Grantner/Jamie Polcari Treasurer: Bryan Montgomery

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:

Property: Matt Papertsian Stewardship: Marilyn Grantner
Worship & Music: Eleanor Keil Social Ministry: LeeAnn McCarthy
Finance: Sue Montgomery Christian Education: Jamie Polcari
Evangelism & Outreach: LeeAnn McCarthy Finance: Sue Montgomery
Mutual Ministry: MaryBeth Soucy

NATIONAL QUILTING DAY

MARCH 16

1:00 – 4:00

Celebrating 76 years of comforting the world with over 28 million quilts.

Light refreshments will be served.

Downstairs in the LWR (Lutheran World Relief) Room

Please join us to be a part of this wonderful event to show "God's work our hands." Invite friends and neighbors to experience this opportunity to help those in need around the world. Lutheran World Relief has already sent quilts to Central America, Africa, Near East and is continuing to send quilts to Ukraine and surrounding countries taking in refugees.

But more is needed. Do you have some clean cotton or cotton blend sheets or large pieces of cotton fabric that you can donate? Financial donations are always appreciated to purchase batting and keep our sewing machines going. But most of all, your helping hands to cut, tie, pin, iron and sew are always needed.

We look forward to seeing you.

**March 16, 1-4:00pm,
downstairs in the LWR room.**

**Sponsored by:
Christian Crafters**



Happy New Year 2024!

2023 was a very productive year as summarized in the annual report. Our happy group of 8 work so well together it is a joy to meet every **Tuesday morning at 9am**. We would love to have you join us in 2024.

We received a gift from Resurrection Lutheran Church in Mt. Kisco. Their sewing group has disbanded, and sent us 3 roles of fiberfill, 2 bins and a box of fabric. Immediately, our group started imagining new and colorful quilt tops and backings. We filled our fabric closet then had to be creative where to put the rest. We are most appreciative and extend an invitation to sewers of Resurrection to join us anytime if they would like to help sew quilts and bookbags this new year.

We look forward to National Quilting Day again this **March 16 from 1:00 to 4:00**. We will be in the LWR room below the church. Follow the red balloons. Drop by to help design, cut, sew and or iron. Remember... "if you can tie a knot you can help." Come join in the fun, fellowship; and the joy of helping those in need around the world.

We pray for a more peaceful 2024 filled with many more blessings,

Becky, Carol, Evelyn,
Karen, Kathleen, Jeanette,
Lois and Miquel



HOLY WEEK SERVICES

PALM SUNDAY SERVICE

Sunday March 24
at
7:00PM



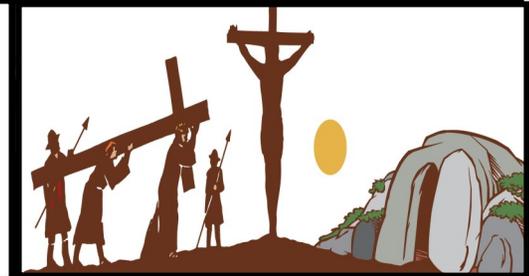
MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

Thursday March 28
at
7:00PM



GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Friday March 29
at
7:00PM



EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE

Sunday March 31
at
10:00AM





That's a Wrap! ***Christmas Fair 2023***



-Lois Leonard

2023 Christmas Fair was an overwhelming success!

Vendors, participants, guests and volunteers seemed to be enjoying themselves. People are already talking about a 2024 fair. If you still have "Christmas Fair Review" sheet for this fair, please return it to Lois; or if you would like to still fill out a review, please contact Lois. We had an anonymous gift of \$2,000 bringing the final cash total to \$4, 113.47. Ten percent or \$412 was sent to Padres Hispanos of Ossining, Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison, and Darajani Secondary School in Tanzania. A total of \$1,236 given in Out Reach by this fair. The remaining \$2,877.47 goes into our church treasury for whatever our church council deems necessary to address.

All of this was made possible by so many of you that stepped forward and took on responsibilities to see this fair went so very well. I can name at least 39 volunteers and 8 vendors. For fear I may leave someone's name out, I send out a great **big thank to you all**. Some of you helped plan and participated in the ever important publicity. Others of you set up, some of you baked or cooked, others participated the day of the fair or were there to help clean up after the fair.

Special Thank You: these people took on leadership roles

Publicity: Diane C., Marilyn D., and Inga C.

Children Activity: Karen P.

Boutique: Lee Ann M.

Bake Sale: Eleanor S.

Crafts: Frya B. & Christian Crafters

Café: MaryBeth S.

Raffles: Marilyn D. and Lois L

Securing Vendors: Lois L. and Lee Ann M.

Cash boxes: Karen M.

Congratulations and Thank You to everyone for a job well done!

It has been a joy and honor to serve as the organizer of the 2023 Christmas Fair.



Easter Lilies & Tulips will adorn our Easter Altar If you would like to sponsor a plant...

ORDER FORM

I would like to contribute _____

Easter Plants at \$15 per plant.

Total Submitted: _____

In Honor or Memory of:

From:

Thank You for making our Easter Season more festive. Orders due no later than Palm Sunday

MARCH 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2 YOGA Class 9:45am AA 7:00pm
3 Third Lent WorshipService 10:00am via Facebook & IN SANCTUARY	4	5 Christian Crafters 9:00am –noon AA 7:00pm	6 NA 7:00pm	7 AI Anon Mtg 1-2pm	8	9 YOGA Class 9:45am AA 7:00pm
10 Fourth Lent WorshipService 10:00am via Facebook & IN SANCTUARY	11	12 Christian Crafters 9:00am –noon AA 7:00pm	13 NA 7:00pm	14 AI Anon Mtg 1-2pm	15	16 National Quilting Day 1-4pm YOGA Class 9:45am AA 7:00pm
17 Fifth Lent WorshipService 10:00am via Facebook & IN SANCTUARY	18	19 Christian Crafters 9:00am –noon AA 7:00pm	20 NA 7:00pm	21 AI Anon Mtg 1-2pm	22	23 YOGA Class 9:45am AA 7:00pm
24 Palm Sunday WorshipService 10:00am via Facebook & IN SANCTUARY	25	26 Christian Crafters 9:00am –noon AA 7:00pm	27 NA 7:00pm	28 Maundy Thursday Service 7PM AI Anon Mtg 1-2pm	29 Good Friday Service 7PM	30 YOGA Class 9:45am AA 7:00pm
31 Easter Sunday WorshipService 10:00am via Facebook & IN SANCTUARY						