

Northwoods STaR Ministries Newsletter

PARISH OFFICE

W4950 State Highway 86
Ogema, WI 54459
715-767-5155

email: office@1stfamily.org

Web site: www.1stfamily.org

Office Hours: 8:30AM—12:30PM M-TH

Travis Rogers, Minister

715-271-7471 (cell)

Office Hours:

Wednesday 9 am to 3 pm in the

Pastor's Study at First Ogema

Thursdays by Appointment

Synodically Authorized Ministers:

Shawnda Hora

Deb Strobl

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH—OGEMA

W4950 State Highway 86
Ogema, WI 54459

Worship Service: 9:00 AM

3rd Sunday: 10:30 AM

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH—WESTBORO

N8909 Business Hwy. 13 PO Box 15

Westboro, WI 54490-0214

Worship Service: 10:30 AM

3rd Sunday: 9:00 AM

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH—PRENTICE

670 Main Street

Prentice, WI 54556

email: firstlutheranprentice@gmail.com

Office Hours: by appointment

715-428-2575

Worship Service: 10:30 AM

3rd Sunday: 8:30 AM

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH—BRANTWOOD

N5090 County Road D

Brantwood, WI 54513

Worship Service: 8:30 AM

3rd Sunday: 10:30 AM

**Visitors and new members are
always welcome!**



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

**DECEMBER
2023**

From Northwoods STaR Ministries...



DECEMBER

Special Worship Events

COME & JOIN US!

December is filled with a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus. For us here at Northwoods STaR Ministries, it is also filled with many wonderful opportunities to worship together this season.

**SUNDAY,
DECEMBER
3**

**LIVE NATIVITY IN THE BARN
AT PALMQUIST'S "THE FARM" | 5 PM
N5136 RIVER ROAD, BRANTWOOD, WI**

**DECEMBER
6**

**WEDNESDAY ADVENT SERVICE
FIRST PRENTICE | 6 PM**

**DECEMBER
13**

**WEDNESDAY ADVENT SERVICE
ZION BRANTWOOD | 6 PM**

**DECEMBER
20**

**WEDNESDAY ADVENT SERVICE
FIRST OGEMA | 6 PM**

**SUNDAY,
DECEMBER
24**

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES
FIRST WESTBORO | 10:30 AM -
(w/SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM)
ZION BRANTWOOD | 5:30 PM
FIRST PRENTICE | 7 PM
FIRST OGEMA | 8:30 PM**



**OGEMA FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH QUILTING GROUP
QUILT RAFFLE WINNERS—November 19, 2023**

1st Prize—Full Size Quilt Richard Radtke—Medford

2nd Prize—Twin Size Quilt Dan Knuf—Lisbon

3rd Prize—Lap Quilt Jo Giese—Ogema

Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets for our quilt raffle.
Proceeds help support our quilting outreach projects.



So we, being many, are one
body in Christ, and
individually members of one
another. Romans 12:5

From Travis...

The Law of Love (Part 2) - Continued from October

Scripture Reading: *John 9-17 and 1 John 5:1-6*

Abiding in Love The reading in the Gospel According to John and the First Epistle of John go together like a hand in glove. Jesus tells his disciples in the gospel to abide or remain in his love and that becomes the theme of chapter 15. That is, the relationship of God and Jesus with one another and the relationship within the community. It is a relationship of presence and mutuality. The Vine imagery used in the previous verses of *John* symbolizes how the life of the Christian community is shaped by love and intertwined with the abiding presence of God in Christ.

Mirroring God's Love In verses 9 and 10 of the Gospel, Jesus explains that the Father's love for Jesus mirrors Jesus' love for his disciples. Jesus then asked the community to mirror that love in their own actions. When he says, in verse 12, "*this is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you*," it is a restatement of what he said earlier in chapter 13, verses 34 and 35. But the extreme example of this is found in verse 13 where he says "*no one has greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends*" and this is what it means to love as Jesus loves. Jesus' death is the ultimate demonstration of his love. Jesus then defines friend and friendship by his own love. To be Jesus' friend is to love Jesus and be loved by him. Jesus ends that section with the commission to the community to go out and do works of love.

What Love Looks Like *First John 5:1-6* continues the description of what love and faith look like and how they are required as proof of those born of God. Simply, everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God and, if you love the child, then you must love the parent. Of course, in our own lives, we have found that that is not always true. *John*, however, is talking about the divine relationship with humanity and, if we love the one who walked among us, then we will love the one who sent that emissary.

Beginning in verse one, John points out that what we believe about Christ shapes our understanding of love. The phrase Jesus is the Christ means that the Messiah came in the form of the historical figure Jesus.

In verse 2, *John* says that the proof of our love of humanity and of God is when we do the commandments of God in Christ. But don't be fooled, we're not talking about the *10 Commandments* or the hundreds of legal statements found in the *Hebrew Bible*. We are talking about the one and only commandment given to us by Jesus, the commandment to love. Love God and love our neighbor.

Obedience is Not a Burden But, *John* continues, contrary to some groups against whom John and Paul debated, obedience is not a burden because obedience is done out of love and not out of obligation.

When I was young, my father would give me instruction and tell me "*you can either do it because you love me or you can do it because I demand it*." If I obeyed his instructions out of love, then it was not burdensome. And if I understood his instructions to be given out of love, then the love in me would respond to that.

Conquering the World And this is how we conquer the world—that the law imposed on us has lost its restraint and restriction because we are responding to God's law, to God's commandment and, if we follow the instructions of the Lord, then we have no worries about keeping any sort of religious or even civil law. Like we said last week, if we act entirely out of love, laws and commandments will go unbroken. That is as much true for civil law as it is for spiritual instruction.

So then, we conquer the world through our acceptance of the commandment of Jesus to love. Remember the way the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr explained it by saying, "*Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that*." in another place, Reverend Dr. King declared, "*I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden*."

And there it is! Love removes the burden, the burden of law, the burden of hate, the very burden of being un-Christlike.

Some biblical interpreters want to say that it is our faith or even our doctrine that conquers the world. *John*, however, says that it is our belief that Jesus has come to bring God's love to us and who takes on that love and mirrors that love who can truly conquer the burdens of the world.

John concludes that passage by saying that Jesus came by water and blood. What he means is that Jesus was truly from God, truly identifying with God, and truly dying in order to show that no matter what we do, even crucifying the emissary of God, we cannot separate ourselves from the love of God. The presence of the Spirit of God in Christ and in us proves this to be true.

Please Note: If you need pastoral care or if you know of anyone who should be contacted about receiving a Communion or home visit, please contact the parish office at 715-767-5155 or email office@1stfamily.org.

Or, you may contact our Minister, Travis Rogers 715-271-7471.

From Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson...



Advent, Christmas and Epiphany blessings to you from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson, Synod Ministers, Elizabeth Bartsch, Sara Villarreal Bishop, Diane House, Lidix Montoya, Randy Olson, Laura Ramlow

Mary the Brave: Mary the God Bearer

As a young pastor and working mom, I struggled with the challenges of balancing work and home life, often while carrying a child in my womb, arms, on my hip, in a front or back baby pack, or car seat. Now my children are adults, and I have the joy of watching them carry my grandchildren. They do it differently than I did, their car seats are much nicer than the ones we had, but like us, they carry their children with much love. I still carry my adult children and grandchildren and will always carry them, in my heart with much love.¹ This Advent and Christmas season I'm reflecting on Mary, the God bearer. (In Greek it's Theotokos.²) Mary carried Jesus. Like all parents she carried her child with love, but she is also the God bearer. It was a brave thing Mary did to bear God into the world.

To love is a brave thing. It is a brave thing to become a parent. Mothers put their own lives at risk bearing a child in their womb and giving birth. It requires a measure of bravery for parents to bring a child into this world filled with the bad news of climate disasters, gun violence, war, political upheaval, racism, food/water insecurity, and escalating health and higher education costs.

History has painted Mary to be quiet, meek and mild, submissive to God's will, but a closer read shows us that Mary was brave. Mary was neither meek nor superhuman.³ She had grit. She was faithful, courageous, strong and brave. Most of all, she was human. Her encounter with the angel Gabriel, the messenger of God made her brave. She knew that her pregnancy was dangerous and she could die giving birth. She also knew that as an unmarried teenaged mother it would cause upheaval in her family and community. She would give birth to Jesus during Roman occupation, a time of political unrest. Mary was brave. Her encounter with the living God made her brave.

Her encounter with God gave her bravery and the faith to see that if God was calling her God would also protect her. It revealed to her that God chooses the people on the margins, those overlooked and underestimated. Bearing God in the world was to bring good news and hope to those oppressed. May Mary, the God Bearer, inspire us all to be brave!

This Advent and Christmas season, I invite you to be Theotokos, God Bearers. I invite you to carry the good news of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection to all those we meet on this journey of life and the love of Jesus in your hearts always. —Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

¹Robert Munsch, *I'll Love You Forever*, Firefly Books (September 1, 1995)

²Since the 3rd century, Christians had referred to Mary as theotokos, "God-bearer." The first documented usage of the term is in the writings of Origen of Alexandria in AD 230. Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God | uCatholic

³Mary the Brave: Neither Meek nor Superhuman - CBE International

Luke 1:26ff In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you..." "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High,... the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God... For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Offering Information...

Your generosity allows our churches to keep moving forward and fulfill the mission, vision, & call God has placed on them. We thank you for your support!

Offerings can be mailed to your church anytime:

FLC-Prentice, 670 Main Street, Prentice, WI 54556

FLC-Ogema, W4950 State Hwy 86, Ogema, WI 54459

FLC-Westboro, P.O. Box 15, Westboro, WI 54490

Zion LC, c/o Karin Kivela, W2476 US Hwy 8, Brantwood, WI 54513

Zion Brantwood's Forth Quarter Noisy Offering will go to the Phillips Food Pantry.



Westboro Fall Supper...



Another wonderful Northwoods STaR Ministries fall supper was held on Saturday, November 4. Thank you to all who donated food, money and time to make the Westboro Fall Supper a success. There was a great crowd to enjoy the delicious meal and try their luck at a chance to win one of the many basket raffles provided.



Upcoming Events, Opportunities and Information...

Live Nativity in the BARN

Special Worship Service Event

PALMQUIST'S "THE FARM"

N5136 River Road Brantwood, WI

(DRESS APPROPRIATELY FOR THE WEATHER)

SPONSORED BY:
ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH, BRANTWOOD,
NORTHWOODS STAR MINISTRIES, AND THRIVENT



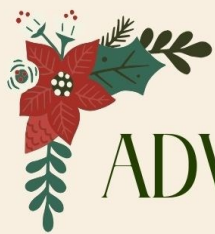
**SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 3, 2023
5 PM**

**LIGHT REFRESHMENTS & FELLOWSHIP WILL
FOLLOW IN THE PICKAROO LODGE**

Please join us as we present this Christmas gift to our community. Experience the story of Jesus' birth with live animals, scripture readings and Christmas hymns.

If anyone would like to bring cookies or light snacks (finger food) to share for the fellowship after the Live Nativity Service, that would be appreciated. In addition to the regular church offerings, a free-will offering will be collected and donated to the Phillips Food Pantry.

Upcoming Events, Opportunities and Information...

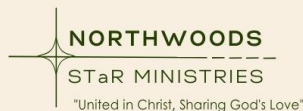


Wednesday
ADVENT SERVICES

DECEMBER 6
FIRST LUTHERAN PRENTICE | 6 PM

DECEMBER 13
ZION LUTHERAN BRANTWOOD | 6 PM

DECEMBER 20
FIRST LUTHERAN OGEMA | 6 PM



GOD IS IN THE
Manger



Waiting
Mystery
Redemption
Incarnation

Join us for a worship series that employs meditations from the Advent devotional of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's writings *God Is In the Manger*.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023

FIRST OGEMA | 9 AM
FIRST PRENTICE | 9:30 AM

First Ogema and First Prentice will be decorating their churches in place of a Sunday morning service on December 3.*
We invite everyone to help us as we decorate and enjoy some holiday fellowship. Light snacks and refreshments will be served as we decorate the sanctuary and church for this special season.

*Northwoods STaR Ministries Joint Worship Live Nativity Service will be held at Palmquist's Farm at 5 p.m.



PLEASE JOIN US

Christmas
DECORATING



DECK THE HALLS

Bible Study....



POINTING to the PROMISE
AN ADVENT STUDY GUIDE

THURSDAYS

November 30, 2023
December 7, 2023
December 14, 2023
December 21, 2023

5:30 pm
First Lutheran Church - Prentice

Sunday School, Confirmation and Youth...



These two young adults made public profession of their faith in front of their congregation, family, and friends after having completed their Confirmation education.

Be sure to welcome our newest members to First Westboro and Northwoods STaR Ministries.



Seamus Calvin Highfill

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16 KJV)

Clinton C. Peterson

Be content with what you have; for He has said, "I will never fail you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5b RSV)



Confirmation Schedule for December

December 3, 2023—Help with Live Nativity Service

December 10, 2023—OGEMA at Noon

December 17, 2023—OGEMA at Noon

December 24—NO CLASS

December 31—NO CLASS



The annual Care Package project was prepared at First Prentice by Northwoods STaR Ministries members. Approximately 20 boxes were sent out to our college students/military members to let them know we are thinking of them as they are away. Thank you to everyone who helped with the process.



Westboro Sunday School Program—Sunday, December 24 | 10:30 am

During Christmas Eve (morning) worship service

Jesus birthday cake following the service

December Birthdays & Anniversaries



- 1 Wendy Cummings
Grant Cravaack
Ethan Heikkinen
- 3 Ron Larson
- 4 Jim Wiles
- 5 Kyle Cummings
- 6 Jeanne Cummings
- 8 Francis Dums
Marlene Johnson

- 10 Roxanne Peterson
- 16 Butch Dahlke
- 17 Beverly Hartmann
- 18 Ken Pearson
- 19 Dolores Olson
Seamus Highfill
- 20 Ron Arkola
- 21 Kimberly Ertl
- 23 Tim Peterson
Craig Cummings
David Pfarr
- 25 Serena Moore
- 28 Kason Moore
- 30 Claryssa Moore



- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Karagan Esterholm | 16 Kiah Kalandar |
| 2 Nicholas Cravaack | Kim Kalandar |
| 3 Caelyn Ulrich | Sheridan Makovsky |
| 15 Alice Nelson | |



- | |
|------------------------|
| 1 Bob/Dawn Pipkorn |
| 29 Kevin/Jamie Hawkins |

Women of the ELCA

All women who are members are also members of Women of the ELCA (W/ELCA). We are involved in many areas to promote health and well-being of our church and those who need our help elsewhere. Please join us!



Upcoming Meeting—PRENTICE

No meeting in December

Upcoming Meeting—OGEMA

Sunday, December 10, 2023, following worship

December 2023 Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
5:30 pm Bible Study (Pointing to the Promise) @ First Prentice						
9 am Decorate church (O) 9:30 am Decorate church (P) 9:30 am Sunday School (W) 5 pm Live Nativity Joint Worship Service @ Palmquist's Farm Light refreshments and fellowship following service 	9 am Quilters (O) 6:30 pm Council Mtg (P)	10 am Council Mtg (W) 6 pm Advent Service (P) 	5:30 pm Bible Study (Pointing to the Promise) @ First Prentice			
7:30 am Council Mtg (O) 8:30 am Worship (Z) & Council Mtg after worship (Z) 9 am Worship (O) & W/ELCA Mtg (O) after worship 9:30 am Sunday School (W) 10:30 am Worship (P) 10:30 am Worship (W) Noon Confirmation (O)	9 am Quilters (O) 7 pm SAM's Zoom Mtg	6 pm Advent Service (Z) 	5:30 pm Bible Study (Pointing to the Promise) @ First Prentice			
8:30 am Worship (P) 9 am Worship (W) 10 am Sunday School (W) 10:30 am Worship (Z) 10:30 am Worship (O) Noon Confirmation (O)	9 am Quilters (O)	6 pm Advent Service (O) 	5:30 pm Bible Study (Pointing to the Promise) @ First Prentice			
10:30 am Worship (W) w/ Sunday School Program 5:30 pm Worship (Z) 7 pm Worship (P) 8:30 pm Worship (O) 	 No services on Christmas Day					
8:30 am Worship (Z) 9 am Worship (O) 10:30 am Worship (P) 10:30 am Worship (W) 						

DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS

First Lutheran—Ogema Food Service

Sandy Henthorn

Zion Lutheran—Brantwood Cleaning Duty

The Ladies of Zion

Northwoods STaR Ministries
W4950 State Highway 86
Ogema, WI 54459-8340



COME WORSHIP WITH US



WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 2023

Sunday December 3 1st Sunday of Advent

5 pm Joint Worship Service at Palmquist's Farm

Live Nativity in the Barn—Travis Rogers leading worship

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS TO FOLLOW

Wednesday December 6

6 pm Prentice—**Advent Worship Service**

Travis Rogers leading worship

Sunday December 10 2nd Sunday of Advent

8:30 am Zion Brantwood 10:30 am Prentice

Linda Heikkinen—Leader

Shawnda Hora—Leader

9:00 am Ogema

10:30 am Westboro

Travis Rogers leading worship (Communion)

Wednesday December 13

6 pm Zion Brantwood—**Advent Worship Service**

Travis Rogers leading worship

Sunday December 17 3rd Sunday of Advent

8:30 am Prentice

10:30 am Zion Brantwood

Travis Rogers leading worship (Communion)

9:00 am Westboro

10:30 am Ogema

Mary Wagenknecht—Leader Mark Nyberg—Leader

Wednesday December 20

6 pm Ogema—**Advent Worship Service**

Travis Rogers leading worship

Sunday December 24 **Christmas Eve**

10:30 am Westboro (w/Sunday School Program)

5:30 pm Zion Brantwood

7 pm Prentice

8:30 pm Ogema

Travis Rogers leading all worship services (Communion)

(No Services on Christmas Day)

Sunday December 31 1st Sunday of Christmas

8:30 am Zion Brantwood

10:30 am Prentice

Deb Strobl (SAM) leading worship (Communion)

9:00 am Ogema

10:30 am Westboro

Travis Rogers leading worship (Communion)



Missed a service?
Click to watch all our sermons on

