



Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

December Newsletter

2018



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God's Encouraging Word ... when I wonder if I will go to heaven

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." - John 3:16

I saw my name on Santa's list! I was so excited. I didn't think it would be there. I got mad and hit my sister on Thanksgiving Day. I admitted my fault. Since then, I was very well behaved. After all, Santa brings good things to good boys, right? I saw MY name! I was getting a puppy for Christmas! I did it! I made up for my sin.

Christmas came and no puppy. I was crushed. I thought I deserved one. I thought Santa loved me. Was the name on Santa's list someone else with the same name as mine? Did Santa think my apology was insincere? Was hitting my sister such a horrible thing that he would totally reject me? No puppy that Christmas. (It would be another 29 years before I got a puppy.)

What if God treated us like that? We would never be sure we are going to heaven. But God does not treat us like that, and we can be sure we are going to heaven. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son..."

Notice what God did not say. "God so loved the ones that don't hit their sisters..." "God so loved the good ones... the top 50%... those who help themselves." No, God loves sinners, all sinners, you and me. He loves the whole world.

God gave us the greatest gift of all. Jesus, God's Son, came at Christmas to save the world from sin and hell. God gave us a gift only he can give—eternal life. God did that by sending Jesus into this world to live a life without sin. Jesus never hit his sister. He never even thought angry or insulting thoughts about anyone. Jesus was punished for all our sins, in our place. Jesus rose from the dead to guarantee our sins are paid for. He did this for the whole world. That includes you.

Jesus is the greatest gift ever given. Trusting him as your Savior, you can be certain you will go to heaven. Enjoy God's gift of Jesus this Christmas.



A Message from our Inreach Pastor . . .

Curly head dolls that toddle and coo. Elephants, boats, and kiddie cars too. Santa Claus is comin' to town. (Santa Claus is comin' to town by John Frederick Coots and Haven Gillespie)

You'll hear those lyrics often during the holiday season—a song about a man who's coming to bring all sorts of gifts. But, are they really gifts?

The definition of a gift is “something given voluntarily without payment or condition.” The man in red certainly has conditions.

You better watch out. You better not cry. You better not pout. He knows if you've been bad or good, so be good ... If you give someone a gift only if they meet certain qualifications, that is not a gift.

But there is One who is coming, bearing real gifts, profoundly important gifts.

Jesus came that first Christmas to win forgiveness and give all the gifts that come with it: hope, peace, joy, love. He is coming again at the end of this world to give you the gift of resurrection to eternal life. In the season of Advent, we connect Christ's first coming with His second coming. We rejoice in all the unconditional gifts he gives.

Walking together with the brothers and sisters of our church body (WELS), we are striving to share those gifts with one-million souls this holy season. The Sunday's of Advent will all carry the central theme: *'He Comes Bearing Gifts.'* Each week, we will take a look at another gift that Jesus brings and makes ours which makes all the difference. On December 2nd, we look at his gift of Hope. On December 9th, his gift of Peace. On December 16th his gift of Joy. And on December 23rd, we see his gift of Love.

Who do you know that needs to hear about those gifts of Jesus? Invite them to join you for these services. (Remember, there is communion on 12/9 and 12/23; so be sure to talk to any non-WELS friends you invite on those weekends about our close communion practice, and how we ask that non-members, for their protection, refrain from communing until we've had a chance to meet with them to discuss the Lord's commands in connection with the supper that bears his name – HIS supper.)

Then that special theme continues in our Christmas Eve Service as well. On Christmas Eve, we will celebrate Christ's birth with a *brand-new service* of lessons and Christmas carols that WELS worship division has created. The service was crafted keeping in mind which Christmas carols are most beloved in this generation. The fact is that Americans love Christmas music, and not just Sinatra's Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas or Mariah Carey's All I Want for Christmas is You! They love the religious carols too. Spotify and Pandora are pushing Christmas music earlier each year for one simple reason – there is a huge demand. In December 2017, the magazine Vogue published an article entitled: *'Why do Millennials Love Christmas Music So Much?'* So, a Christmas Service which includes their favorite carols, as this one does, offers a great opportunity to invite your friends to worship on Christmas Eve. And the sermon that evening will be a simple law - gospel presentation that takes people to the manger to see the Savior who came to forgive them!

Yes, Jesus is coming, bearing true gifts. Let us prepare our hearts to meet him. And let's use the opportunity to invite others to come and spend time with him this Advent and Christmas season to receive his gifts as well.

Yours in Christ
Pastor Steve Neumann



Financial Summary

Below is our information for November 2018:

Total Budget Needed:	\$29,150.00
Total Budget Received	\$31,257.75

We exceeded reaching our budgetary ministry needs in November by \$2,107.75 (\$526.94/wk).

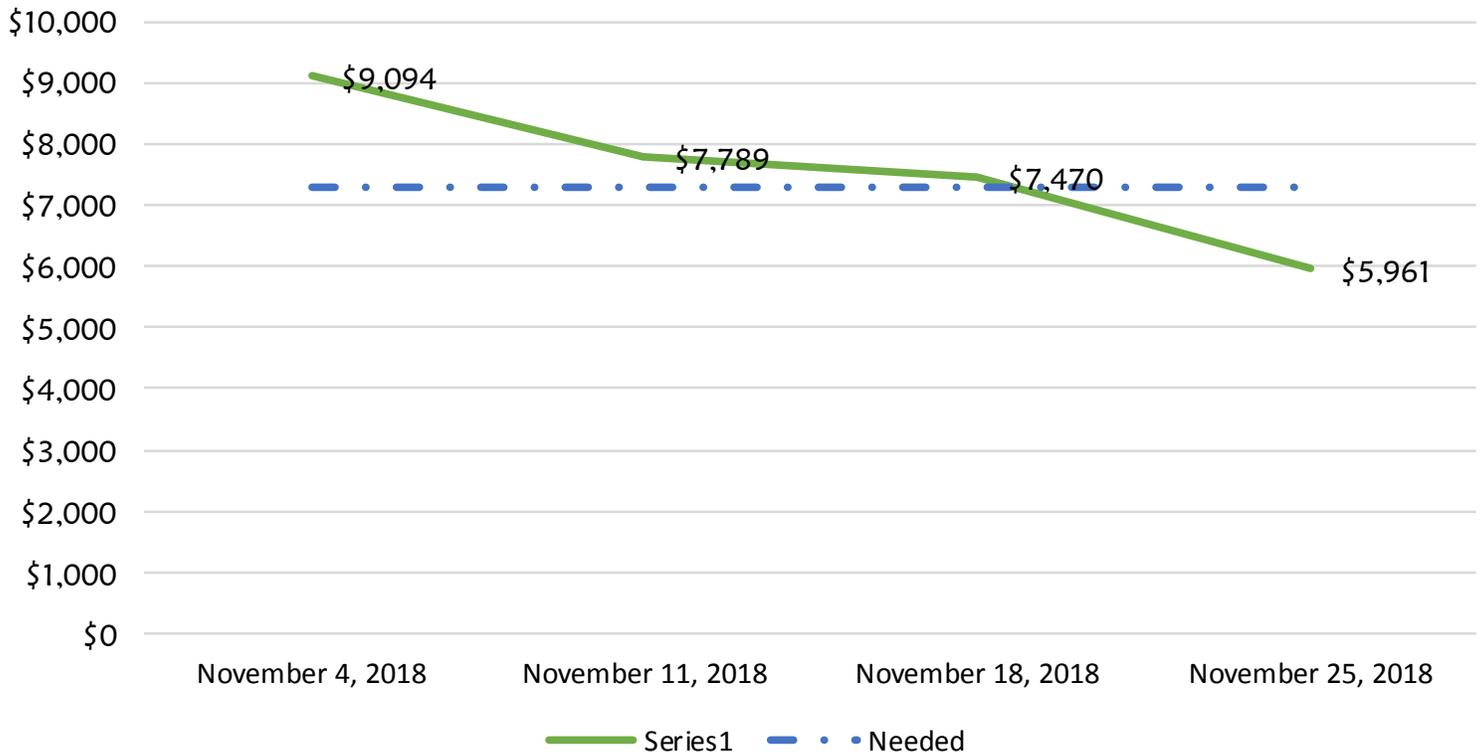
Our current Fiscal Year to Date Budget is: -\$1,821.28 (which is \$82.79/week)

Merry Christmas

Weekly Total Budget Received

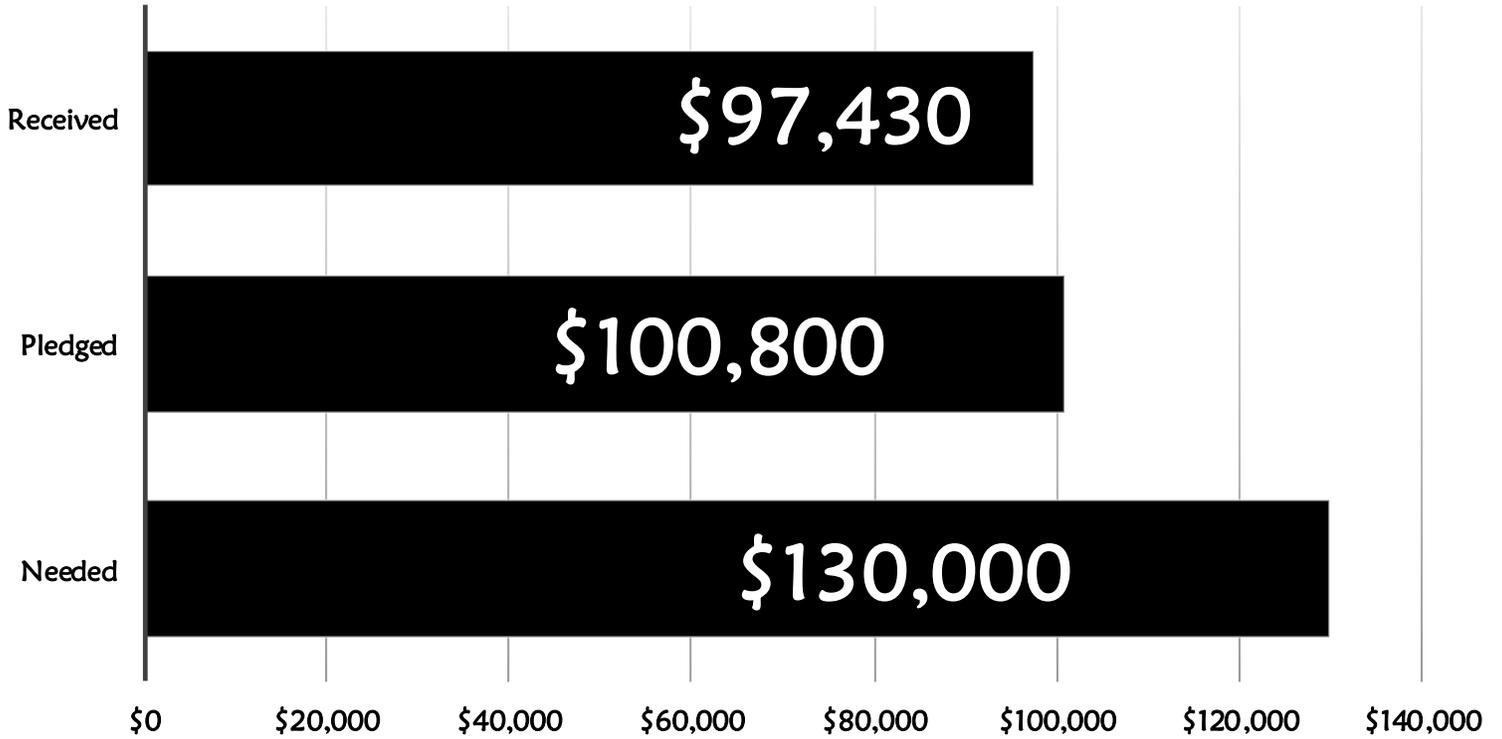
Needed Weekly: \$7,288

Weekly Average for Month: \$7,578 / Weekly Average for Fiscal Year: \$7,205



Capital Campaign

Progress towards \$130,000 our Goal
As of November 30th, 2018



Received & Spent Comparison

(Income & Expenses)

