

## Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

Greetings to you in the Name of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ! We pray that this finds you well, as we continue celebrating our Lord's resurrection from the dead, and we are about to celebrate His glorious ascension into heaven, where He lives and reigns to all eternity.



It has been a while since we sent out a newsletter, so we wanted to give you a quick update about our life and about the Lord's work through us here in Madison. It seems surreal that we are already at the end of May! Where has the first half of 2022 gone? Of course, the world never stands still, and the Lord's work continues from day to day.

This year, Our Savior Deaf Lutheran Church is working hard on rebuilding as a congregation. As some of our longtime supporters may know, this congregation has faced some challenges in the past. The year 2021 was a time of transition, as we laid some of those things to rest (Lord willing), and this year we are working on picking up and moving forward, following the Lord's leading through this wilderness that we call life on earth.

The biggest thing the Lord is doing in our midst right now is that we started the beginning of February on a mission of serving meals to the homeless every Sunday evening. Last year, we were praying about how to reach out and support our community, and to our surprise the City of Madison decided to install a homeless camp right across the street from us! Talk about God answering pray in an unexpected way! Now we have thirty neighbors who have no ability to cook fresh meals and nowhere to eat together, and this is a need that we can help to fill. In partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank and the South Wisconsin District –LCMS, and with extra volunteers from Monona Lutheran Church, we are feeding our neighbors. We may not gain new members in our congregation, but we are showing the love of Christ to those in need.

This project has been a big learning experience for us as a congregation. Not only have we had to learn all the ins and outs of preparing and serving a large meal regularly – menu planning, food safety, foodservice standards, etc. – but even more so we are learning about all the facets

that are involved with homelessness and the people we are serving. Many people have a lot of preconceived notions about people who are homeless (mostly negative), but we are seeing up close that each resident of the camp is an individual, with a face and a story. We are only a small piece of the puzzle in terms of helping them solve the problem of homelessness, but the least we can do is more than they had without us. A smile and a “home-cooked” meal go a long way to making someone feel seen and valued.



#### FAMILY NEWS

The children are anxiously awaiting the end of the school year! Only two more weeks to go. Final concerts and recitals are lined up, vacation plans are coming together, and spring is in the air!

The week after school gets out, Rhys will go with Grandpa and Grandma for a camping road trip for three weeks, around the Great Lakes. Then, in July, the whole clan is going to spend a week camping at Lake Wissota State Park. The last week of July, Rhys and Ryan will go to Higher Things at Valparaiso University. Ryan will be interpreting the conference in ASL, and they will be joining a group from St. Paul Lutheran Church, Austin, TX.

The first week of August, Ryan and Emily will take a vacation and leave the kids with Grandpa and Grandma. This year we celebrate our fifteenth wedding anniversary, and we are going to take a special trip together.

The beginning of May, we got to have our turn with COVID-19. It went through our house, and everyone but Kaj got it. Thankfully, no one got too seriously sick, and we are all pretty well recovered by now.

The kids are keeping busy with music lessons. We now have our own string quartet in the house: Eva and Kaj on violin, Joshua on viola, and Rhys on cello. They are all making progress and growing as musicians.

Recently, we have taken up bonsai as a family hobby. Last weekend we went to a show/demonstration by the Badger Bonsai Society, and we are having fun researching plants, methods, and equipment. So, if you come visit, don't be surprised to find potted plants all over the house. Maybe this makes up for us not being able to have a garden outside.

Ryan is continuing to work on his PhD dissertation. He is currently about 30% done with the initial draft. The goal is to have the whole thing drafted by the end of 2022, so that he can do the editing and then defend his work in 2023.

Emily is busy with a whole list of craft projects. She is almost finished knitting a sleeping mat out of "plarn" made from plastic grocery sacks – she says she will not make another one. She is also knitting another temperature blanket this year, and knitting socks. Last year, she started to get into sewing and even venturing into quilting.



As always, we are grateful for your ongoing prayers, support, and encouragement as we follow the road that the Lord has laid out for us. We would especially appreciate your prayers for:

- ❖ Safe travels and vacations throughout the summer
- ❖ Blessings on our work with the residents of the homeless camp
- ❖ Continued health and growth for Our Savior Deaf Lutheran Church

May the Lord of the Church keep you together with all His people in peace and safety until the day of our Lord's return!

In pace domini,

The McDermott Family

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