

Beautiful Savior January 2021 Newsletter

Infinite: Our God is ... Infinite

"You are!"

"No, you are!"

"Yeah? Well, you are times a gazillion!"

Katie knew that gazillion was going to be tough to beat, but thinking hard she finally proclaimed: "Oh yeah? Well, you are ... to infinity!"

His jaw dropped because Joey knew his sister had him beat. How could he compete with *infinity*?

Simply put, infinity means stretching on and on, without any end. When something is infinite it has no boundaries. It is unlimited and immeasurably great.

The Bible helps us understand the concept as it describes God. ***"Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?" declares the LORD. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the LORD"*** (Jeremiah 23:24).

There is only One who is everywhere, who always has been, who always will be, who had no beginning, and who will have no end. That is God.

God wants us to feel good about him being infinite.

As we begin a new year, it can be great to know that God is always with us. Wherever the year takes us, God will be there too.

The comfort of God's unending presence is ours through faith in his Son, Jesus. As the Apostle Paul says: ***"In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence"*** (Ephesians 3:12).

God knows everything we think, everything we do, and most importantly, he knows everything we need. In fact, God already took care of our greatest need. He sent his infinite Son to be our Savior! Trust him.

Joey and Katie challenged each other with the concept of infinity. Come and visit us to learn more about the only one who can truly change your life so you have comfort that will last...to infinity!

** The above article reprinted with permission from WELS Outreach resources*

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From the pen of the Pastor. The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: ""The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."" So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.'" (Numbers 6:22-27) These words are the Old Testament reading for New Year's Day and they are very fitting as we end one year and begin another. In spite of challenges and problems throughout this past year, the Lord has blessed us by shining his grace and mercy on us throughout the year. He has done this by bringing us peace through forgiveness and by walking with us and giving us strength as we live day by day.

As we now begin a new year, may we continue to look to the Lord for his blessings and may we rejoice because he does not disappoint us. He continues to come to us through his Word and Sacraments to hold us close to him, to bless us, to give us strength, and to guide us in our lives. May you make every effort to stay close to your Lord and Savior throughout 2021 and he will bring you peace as he promises.

Recent Membership changes. Michele Williams and children Landon and Lihanna released from membership.

Alice Tomaschko was called home to heaven on Christmas Day morning. She received the best Christmas present one could have on Christmas Day! Due to the Covid restrictions, her family is planning a funeral service for the spring.

Communion – In January communion will be offered during worship on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays of the month (1/10/2021 and 1/17/2021).

If you have not been able to attend services and would like communion, please call Pastor Welke to set up a time for private communion.

Women's Bible Study – Women's Bible Study will take place on Monday, January 18th at 9:00 AM. We are studying the book of Micah. You can join in on the discussion or just listen and learn. No prior Bible knowledge needed. Come and join the study and discussion! It is okay to bring a friend.

Finances and Attendance. We finished December with \$19,066 in offerings against a budgeted need of \$10,076. We thank those who gave special offerings this month. We had a number of months where we didn't make our budgeted amount so the offerings in December helped us to finish the year closer to the 2020 plans and budget approved last January.

The average attendance for December was 38 per Sunday. Our midweek Advent services averaged 16 per week. We also had 29 on Christmas Eve and 26 on Christmas Day.

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Voter's Meeting – The annual voter's meeting will take place on Sunday, 1/24/2021 after the worship service while the children are in Sunday School. The main item on the agenda will be the proposed budget for 2021.

How to watch us – We live stream every Sunday on our Facebook page – Beautifulsavioraustin all as one word. The service videos are archived on our Facebook page to be viewed at any time and also can be seen on our webpage at beautifulsavioraustin.org along with an electronic copy of the sermon. If you need any help finding us or viewing the videos, call Pastor Welke. We can also send a printed copy of the sermon or a DVD of the service. Just contact Pastor Welke for that as well.

Returning to church – when is the right time to start worshiping in-person? I can't answer that question for you but I would like to encourage you to consider in-person worship as we enter 2021. We are taking precautions by regular cleaning, social distancing, and wearing masks as mandated by the state. We don't serve food or drinks. But we are not perfect and at times may gather a little closer than 6 feet or not have our mask covering our nose or face as originally designed. Children 5 and younger are not required to wear masks and some don't.

Keep in mind that Jesus has promised that wherever two or three come together in his name there he is in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20) and he encourages us to meet together on a regular basis (Hebrews 10:25). Joining us online is a good alternative but it isn't the same as worshipping in person with your church family. Maybe you might come once a month on a communion Sunday. It is okay to come a little late and sit in the Fellowship Hall and leave a little early if you want to avoid too much contact.

I can't guarantee that you won't get Covid at church but there is no guarantee that you won't get it at Walmart or HyVee or any other place. And God has promised to bless us through his Word and Sacrament. There is no wrong answer but this is something to think about and to pray about as we move forward into a new year.

WELS & ELS Singles Facebook Group. If you're single (unmarried, divorced, widowed) and looking to socialize, make friends, or enjoy fellowship with other singles who share your faith, we encourage you to join our Facebook group! Our group consists of over 290 members with ages ranging from 18-65+. We're an active group who loves sharing Biblical encouragement, prayers, Lutheran memes, personal victories, and food. Our page is full of discussion posts and we typically have a weekly video hangout on Sunday evenings. We'd love to have you join us. This is a private group so you must answer a few questions and request to join. The following link will take you to their page which contains a little bit more information. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wels.els.singles>