Dear Parishioners of Divine Savior and our Cherished Visitors:

Luke, the Gospel writer, has a unique way of focusing our attention. Today’s Gospel lists five different rulers within the Roman Empire as well as the two highest authorities in the Jewish faith. And all of this information is in one sentence which ends with the words, “the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert.”

God chooses people according to His own standards to do what needs to be done for the sake of the people He created. All the people in power were not overly concerned with what God wanted. That same Word comes to us in several ways. Most importantly, as we prepare to celebrate the feast of Christmas, we give thanks for how the Word of God became flesh in Jesus. The Word in the Bible helps us to understand that God desires to have an intimately interpersonal relationship with all of us. John prepared the way for Jesus by inviting the people to acknowledge that their lives were not in line with how God wanted them to be. Both our Gospel and first reading use images from nature to speak about the kind of transformation that the Word of God is quite capable of bringing about.

We all have moments when it if we are lost in some forlorn place like a barren desert. The Word of God leads us to find our way along straight paths to live a fuller life in our relationship with our loving God and with one another. Regardless of the seemingly challenging aspects of our lives, remaining attentive to God’s Word helps us not only to make the best and most of these challenges but also to find our lives infused with meaning and purpose. We come to realize that we really are somebody and that God will never abandon us. As the last line of today’s Gospel states, “all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

Our first reading reminds us that healing and wholeness is possible. It presents the story of the woman with the issue of blood, whom Jesus heals. This healing is a symbol for what God wants to accomplish through us. Even when we are mourning and in misery, God desires to wrap us in the cloak that helps us realize that God wants to accomplish through us.

The Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be celebrated during the 11:30 am Mass today, December 9th. Please join us in song, worship and fellowship on this day to reflect on the apparitions of the Virgin (“Our Lady of the Americas”) witnessed by St. Juan Diego and her miraculous gift of the incredibly beautiful image that she left on his tilma nearly 500 years ago.

Divine Savior’s Our Lady of Guadalupe Society is pleased to invite you to the Hospitality Room after all the Sunday Masses today.

Christmas Schedule
Advent Communal Reconciliation Service Experience God’s love
Thursday, December 13th, 6:30pm
Reconciliation is what God does. Receiving it and celebrating it is what we do.
Advent is an ideal time to celebrate the reconciling love and the healing graces our Divine Savior offers us.
It is a wonderful opportunity to join our sisters and brothers in asking for forgiveness and healing.

Christmas Eve Masses
4:00pm-Mass of Christmas
6:30pm-For Families & Children all ages welcome
10:00pm–Candlelight Mass of Christmas in the dark of night beginning with Las Posadas
Christmas Day Mass
10:00am-Mass of Christmas

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On behalf of the Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Committee, we are pleased to report that the Capital Campaign achieved its 4-year goal of raising $1.5 million and that our separate building fund collection raised an additional $300,000. Thank you to everyone that made our capital campaign a success! Here is a summary of how the funds have been used.

Use of Funds
- Retired the final $350,000 of debt on the multi-purpose building
- Spent $300,000 on repairs and upgrades to Parish property and facilities
- Projects include: roof repairs, repaving and relighting parking lot, replacing HVAC (air conditioner) in church, and upgrading media system in church
- Reserved $300,000 as “seed” money to build on empty lot in front of the church
- Contributed $550,000 for Divine Savior’s share of the Diocesan ONE campaign

Note: Thanks to our ongoing monthly building fund collection, we have enough funds to continue current campus repair and development projects, such as the landscaping project (have you noticed?). However, there is so much more we can do with the amazing campus we are empowered to share. Please consider increasing your weekly contributions as well as monthly building fund contributions to help keep our parish strong and achieving its mission well into the future.

Use of “Seed” Funds and Gathering Parishioner Feedback
Four years ago we held town hall meetings to propose goals for the capital campaign and show designs of what a building might look like on the empty lot next to the church. We would like to create a new 5-year plan for the Parish and we would like as many parishioners as possible to have input in creating the future look and feel of our parish. We have formed a Strategic Vision Committee to design a survey and organize town hall meetings in 2019 to review whether the following objectives remain our top priorities:

- Create a warm, welcoming and safe environment
- Serve the needs of parishioners and those in our neighboring communities
- Serve people of all ages, abilities and means
- Inspire parishioners to grow in the knowledge of the Lord and follow Him more closely
- Offer quality educational programs, social events, music and faith formation activities

Everything We Have is a Gift
It is impossible to list all of the amazing achievements of our parish ministries. In the last 4 years the Community Meal, Small Faith Groups and numerous other ministries have been formed while others have grown. The goal for the future is to help every parishioner express their gratitude by participating in ministries and programs that make other churches wonder, “What is going on at Divine Savior?” We look forward to all parishioners participating in our feedback gathering efforts in 2019.

Second Collection for Retired Religious
Senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests ministered for years for little or no pay. Their sacrifices now leave their religious communities without adequate retirement savings. Your gift to today’s second collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious helps to provide medication, nursing care, and more for tens of thousands of elderly religious. Please be generous to this week’s second collection on December 8/9.

Canned Food Drive This Weekend Dec. 8-9!
We are collecting non-perishable food to supplement our Christmas Basket Ministry and St. Vincent de Paul Society. These donated items will help those in need to have enough food especially during the schools’ winter break period. Please place canned and non-perishable food into the large red box in the vestibule on December 8/9.

Ideas: canned soups/vegetables/fruit, ramen, instant rice/mashed potatoes, mac and cheese, pasta noodles and sauces, juice boxes, applesauce, cereals, oatmeal, granola bars, crackers. Thank you for your generosity!

Respect Life Ministry will meet this Sunday, Dec. 9th at 1:00pm in the parish office, small conference room. Everyone is warmly welcomed!!

The Christmas Eve Children’s Mass is at 6:30pm on December 24th. We would like you to join us as an actor, singer, or a reader for this special night! We need children to fill the following parts: angels, shepherds, stable animals, wise men, singers, & readers. PLEASE RSVP to Elaine Bauer, elaine@divinesavior.com, or call 989-7400. There are only two rehearsals: BOTH REHEARSALS ARE MANDATORY!

Monday, Dec. 17
5:30-6:45pm rehearsal

Thursday, Dec. 20
5:30-6:45pm rehearsal

Monday, Dec. 24
Please arrive at 5:45pm

TANZANIAN WATER WELLS
The Lay Salvators are continuing their appeal for support for water for the African Tanzanians. Any amount would be appreciated. We would like to remind you that water is life and many of these Africans have no access to clean water. Even if they do have access it is a long distance away by foot. We will be collecting for a few more weeks so if you would like to donate they will be able to take your donation at the church office.