

# *Learn Live Share*

Winter 2021-22



Our Savior Lutheran Church and School  
Quarterly Newsletter

God is good! As we go through the ups and downs of life, the Lord is our constant companion, our sure foundation, and the solid rock on which we build our lives. He never lets us down. I pray that each of you are resting in the Lord's grace, provision, direction, and peace.

We invite you to experience the goodness of God and the comfort of His promises through the ministries of Our Savior Lutheran Church and School. And you are encouraged to invite others! We exist to help people of all ages and seasons of life to learn, live, and share Christ.

We are entering the third year of our Together Campaign, a monumental effort to tackle our building debt, save for facility needs and bless our mission partners. You will learn more in the following pages. I hope you can be a part of this effort as we look confidently to the future.

This is also a season where we celebrate how God came near to us. He didn't come as a giraffe or chinchilla or sunbeam. He came as a human. He was born in a manger. The world had not seen a sinless human since Adam and Eve. Jesus came to live the perfect life and then die for our sins on the cross and rise for our salvation. I pray you would know "Immanuel" – God with us, as the Lord comes near to us in Christ.

The Lord is near to you! Take heart!

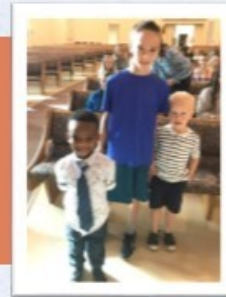
In Joyful Service to Jesus,

Pastor Bill Wangelin <><



# Together

With Christ, in Hope,  
for Future Generations



The Together Campaign at Our Savior is making a big impact on present and future ministry. Despite all the challenges and disruptions of the past year and a half, our congregations' support for the campaign has remained steady and strong. Thanks be to God!

We are entering the third year of our campaign, and this is the time to 'finish strong.' Even if you have completed your pledge, any additional contributions will help us move closer to our goal. If you have not yet made a pledge, would you consider making a one-year pledge or one-time gift to the campaign?

In the letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul writes how the Gospel has brought together Jew and Gentile and made the two one in Christ. He writes, "This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 3:6) Notice the three things that we get to experience together

in Christ. The Gospel brings us together in amazing ways!

When the planning committee chose the name 'together' - we had no idea how important that word would be to us after experiencing a global pandemic and fragmentation of our society and ministry. Yet through it all, we have been a church family, united together in the Lord, and focused on our mission to Learn, Live, and Share Christ. Our staff has served remarkably through these challenges, and our lay leadership rose to the occasion. Our congregation remains committed, healthy, and vibrant as a mission outpost for the Kingdom of God.

THANK YOU for the ways that you support the mission of Our Savior through your prayers, your participation, and support. God has placed us here in this moment 'for such a time as this' so that together, we can fulfill the Great Commission in our day to make disciples of all nations.



# Together

With Christ, in Hope,  
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## By the Numbers

Total Campaign Pledges: \$818,228  
Non-Pledged Gifts to date: \$20,744  
Total Received: \$587,778  
Debt Reduction: \$437,708  
Facility Care: \$99,262  
Missions: \$50,807  
Households Participating: 242  
Current Mortgage Payment: \$28,110  
Balance of Mortgage as of 10/31/21:  
\$4,106,300

## Sharing the Gospel

Average in person worship: 307  
Average estimated livestream worship: 349  
Baptisms in 2021: 24  
(4 adults, 9 students, 11 infants)  
Anticipated Baptisms yet this year: 11  
New Students at OSL 2020-21: 42  
New Students at OSL 2021-22: 32  
New Members received May 2021: 25  
New Members received November 2021: 18

## Looking Back...Together Sunday, October 19, 2019

To kick off the campaign, we worshiped TOGETHER in one service on October 19, 2019, with pledges gathered during the service. A reception following announced the total.

It was a blessed Sunday to celebrate how God has brought us together to learn, live, and share Christ in our community. We are truly blessed with such a vibrant and loving church family!



## An Unexpected Advent

By: Pastor Chris Deneen



Advent is one of my favorite times of year. If you take a look at the hymnal, Advent hymns are my third favorite in the hymnal. Lent is number 1, and Christmas is number 2. Thanksgiving has come and gone, and here comes Advent. The snow starts to fall, Christmas music is on the radio, and there is just a sense of joy in the world. But life still goes on, right? Things can still happen, that are unexpected.

Our Advent series this year, will be looking at several characters in the Bible that had their lives interrupted, and the unexpected happened. We will be looking at 4 different “un” words, that will help us navigate Advent, but also can remind us that in the midst of the unexpected, God is still there. Even in the moments that are out of the ordinary, God is still there with us.

When you think of Zechariah and Elizabeth, the birth of their son John the baptizer, was unscheduled. They were both advanced in years, and Elizabeth was barren. Then, an angel appeared to Zechariah as he was entering the temple and burning incense. The angel told Zechariah that his wife was to bear a son, and name him John. While our season of Advent may not have that kind of unscheduled interruption, we still have those unscheduled moments, not just in Advent, but at all times of the year.

John the Baptist wasn't what anyone was expecting. After about 400 years of no prophets, no one around to share the Word of God, John was the one to prepare the way? A man who probably had a long scraggly beard and hair to match, and clothes made of camel's hair and ate locusts and honey. This was the one to prepare the way for the Lord? Yet we have moments in all of our lives that the unexpected happens, and yet God is always there alongside of us.

Can you imagine how Mary felt? A virgin betrothed to a man, and then Gabriel appears to her and tells her that she has found favor with God. More than that, she will conceive and bear Jesus, the son of God. Unplanned? Just a little bit. We all have moments in our lives and times where the unplanned is what happens. And amidst the unplanned? God still works and cares for His people.

Have you ever wondered how Joseph felt? After hearing that Mary was pregnant from the Holy Spirit, he was planning to do what was right, and divorce her quietly. Then an angel of the Lord appears. He tells him to take Mary as his wife, and that the child is from the Holy Spirit. This wasn't at all what Joseph had planned, but God had plans, and better plans. Maybe we don't always understand God's plans, but what He has planned for us is always better.

As we walk through not just Advent, but life, and the craziness that is happening around us, we know that God is still there for us. Even in this world where we face almost everyday the unscheduled, unexpected, unplanned, and unwanted, we have one certainty, one thing that doesn't waver. God. His goodness, and knowing that on Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Christ. On Easter we celebrate the resurrection. Those we can be absolutely sure of, even in this world of the unexpected.

In Christ, Our Risen God and King,

Pastor Chris <><



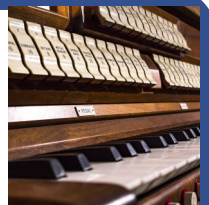
## Voices, Bells, Brass, and Organ Join Together at Our Savior

by John Behnke

First of all, I'm thrilled to come back to Our Savior Lutheran! I have such great memories of playing at Our Savior. This time we will be doing a Hymn Festival with Advent and Christmas hymns on December 1st at 7pm. Who doesn't love glorious Advent and Christmas hymns?

Besides the organ, the choirs of Our Savior, the bells, and brass will bring new and exciting sounds to these familiar hymns. The program has an equal balance of Advent and Christmas hymns, so we share the songs of Advent preparation with the songs of Jesus' Christmas birth.

Let's all look forward to a special evening of proclaiming Christ to the world. Invite a friend, invite a neighbor, and be sure to be in attendance yourself for this fantastic musical and spiritual experience.



## Households of Faith

by Dave Wright, Minister of Family Life

Families with young children are often overscheduled and overwhelmed when it comes to spending time together. There also can be frustration from not having enough resources available to help your child's faith develop and grow. This resource might be just what you need! The following description is from Lutheran Hour Ministries:

"It's time for some good news! For those wanting to increase the spiritual vibrancy of their homes, the just-released Households of Faith Kit is a bright spot in these difficult days. With a stay-at-home scenario the new norm for many around the world, this resource kit comes just in time. Just as LHM's Spiritual Conversations in the Digital Age Kit speaks to today's aspects of faith-sharing interactions, this second collection of resources addresses the way we cultivate and grow spiritual life inside our homes.

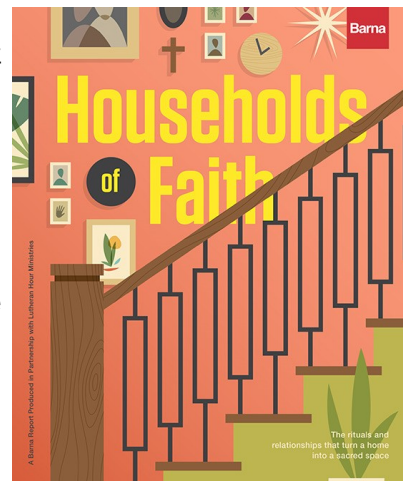
Based on extensive research obtained in partnership with Barna Group through hundreds of surveys, the kit is ideal for households eager to deepen their shared faith life. (See The Lutheran Layman's Winter 2020 issue for kit resources.) First comes the 150-page research-based monograph: Households of Faith: The Rituals and Relationships That Turn a Home into a Sacred Space. Here, essays, data, graphs, illustrations, stories, suggestions, and more describe real-world household traits and offer insights on how to make your home a spiritually active and vibrant place.

For example, do you have children you would like to encourage in their faith-walk with God? If so, the kit's three Helping Your Child booklets by Mary Oldfield-HYC: Have a Relationship with God, HYC: Grow Through Faith Conversations, and HYC: Welcome Others-are full of great ideas, insightful anecdotes, and Scripture references to help parents in this vital task. Use these booklets' thoughtful takeaways to help you raise children who love God and who want to share Him with others.

For many households, talking about spiritual matters is like speaking a foreign language. But knowing what to do with a deck of cards is another matter. The kit's Vibrant Conversations Deck is a great way to play your favorite card games and get people talking about God and faith at the same time. Use the deck's 52 questions and prompts to spark conversations during game night, as an ice-breaker game with your Bible study group, or as a fun Q&A resource for the great questions they have.

Additional kit resources like the book, The Spiritually Vibrant Home by LHM's Content Manager Don Everts, along with a small group study DVD, three illustrated children's booklets, and 30-Days of Household Devotions booklet will help households come together during these days of social distancing. You can order a Households of Faith Kit from LHM for \$37 by going to the LHM storefront at [shoplhm.org](http://shoplhm.org)."

Check out the Household of Faith kit in the OSL library (inside the boardroom)!



## OSL Memorial Garden

On September 12, the Memorial Garden was dedicated between the services. The Memorial Garden serves as a place of prayer, reflection, and remembrance. It also serves as the resting place of believers who have been cremated as we await the day of resurrection. While the exact burial locations will remain unmarked, their names are written in the book of life - a marble sculpture that is a feature of the garden. We want to thank the many households who contributed to the Memorial Garden Fund, which allowed us to break ground in the summer with the garden fully funded. Annual maintenance of the garden is paid for by burial fees and donations. An ongoing Memorial Garden Committee will meet annually to oversee the care of the Garden.

"The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels."

Revelation 3:5



## Sharing the Love of Jesus with Young Children

by Windy Carroll, Early Childhood Programs Director

A question I often receive from new or prospective parents on the Early Childhood Programs is “How is faith incorporated into the classroom setting?” or some derivative of that same question. The answer is fairly simple: our teachers incorporate faith into every aspect of learning and throughout every day! Indeed, I often marvel at the skill of our teachers in teaching Jesus to our youngest students. Regarding young learners, we know that children relate best to concrete ideas and content. Often, their young brains are not ready to comprehend that which they cannot physically see, touch, or hear. Yet, our teachers are tasked with the duty of sharing Jesus with our young children, some of whom are experiencing Him for the very first time in their lives.



To that end, teachers hear questions from children, too. “Can Jesus come visit our classroom?” “Why can’t I see God/Jesus?” “When we talk to God/Jesus, how come we can’t hear him answer?” These are tough questions that many adults may feel ill-equipped to answer, or may be flustered to come up with the best answer on the spot – but for our teachers, these questions are par for the course, and their answers are spot-on. It’s wonderful to be able to observe our classrooms and take in how our teachers, who feel called by God to teach and share Christ’s love, are able to grow children’s knowledge of the Bible, create lasting memories of faith experiences in the classroom, and nurture children’s relationship with the Lord at such a young age.

What a joy to listen to the interactions of children and teachers during Bible story time, in which you may find the group singing songs of praise, listening to the teacher tell a story with animated

enthusiasm, or watch the children engage in one of many teacher-led interactive faith activities, connecting children to Jesus through hands-on experiences. But, faith-building in the Early Childhood classroom is not limited to one part of the day. In fact, our teachers incorporate faith into every part of the day with admirable deftness. For instance, when coaching children through conflict, one will often hear teachers help children recall and incorporate the lessons learned from previously-told Bible stories and how Jesus would want us to care for one another. And, as prayer is integrated throughout the day and school year, teachers are often tasked with starting from square one in teaching children how to pray. Even in our outdoor classroom, teachers utilize the time spent interacting with nature to teach children to praise God for the blessings he bestows upon us.

Certainly, the job of the Christian Early Childhood teacher can be daunting, but we are immeasurably blessed here at Our Savior Lutheran School with truly the best educators we could ever hope for. I thank God for calling these skilled teachers here to Our Savior and for equipping them with the passion and abilities necessary to share His love and grace with our youngest learners so that, as it says in our Early Childhood philosophy statement, “each child leaves our program as a loving Christian, lifelong learner, and responsible citizen”.

## LEADING THE PANDEMIC GENERATION



WITH TIM ELMORE

equipping and encouraging leaders  
of the pandemic generation

**MARCH 19, 2022 8AM-12PM**

\$50 – General Admission, \$20 – Students  
\*eligible for Title 2 reimbursement & continuing  
education credits for teachers

**OURSAVIORLANSING.ORG/ELMORE**

# An Unexpected Advent

## Sundays In Advent at Our Savior Lutheran

**Sunday, November 28** “Unscheduled: Zechariah and Elizabeth”  
8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. In-person & Online

**Sunday, December 5** “Unexpected: John the Baptist” (Communion)  
8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. In-person & Online

**Sunday, December 12** “Unplanned: Mary”  
8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. In-person & Online

**Sunday, December 19** “Unwanted: Joseph” (Communion)  
8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. In-person & Online



## Welcome to Church Extension Fund (CEF) Kids At Work Stamps Program

Did you know that Our Savior is offering a program that provides your child the learning experience of saving money and earning interest? Did you know this same program directly contributes to building and expanding the Lutheran church and school facilities throughout the Michigan District?

The Kids At Work Saving Stamps Program adds another aspect to your child's faith building experience here at OSL— the learning experience of saving money, with interest, while contributing in a meaningful way to the building of God's kingdom. Your child will have the opportunity to purchase a stamp from The Church Extension Fund (CEF) Stamp Program that is offered every Wednesday morning from 8:30 to 11am. Stamp purchasing will be available weekly on Wednesdays through the school year. The stamp consists of two stamp denominations (\$0.25 and \$1) which your child may purchase one at a time, or in quantity, and place in a stamp folder that will be kept at school. When the stamp folder contains at least \$5 in stamps, it will be deposited it into a CEF Dedicated Savings Account in your child's name, earning interest from the day of deposit. These funds, invested from churches and schools throughout the Michigan District, are used to make low-cost loans to congregations (even our own Our Savior Lutheran Church and School) for new building or expansion projects.

If your child or grandchild is not enrolled in the school, Our Savior church families may still participate. In fact, we would love their participation. The first step, in order to have your child participate, is to have a parent sign and return the consent form. Email [CEF@oursaviorlansing.org](mailto:CEF@oursaviorlansing.org) to request a consent form or to learn more about this wonderful opportunity.

We hope you will participate in this savings learning experience for your child to take part in this unique opportunity to join thousands of other children in learning to save...while investing in a growing church! Stamp-by-stamp, every child can make a difference.



Church Extension Fund



# Advent Services & Events

## Wednesdays in Advent

**Wednesday, December 1 • 7pm - In-Person**

*"Sacred Concert: An Advent Hymn Festival"*

Join us for hymns and anthems, accompanied by organ, handbells, festival choir and brass (The Light Metal Band).

**Wednesday, December 8 - Online**

Join Pastor Chris for an online Advent devotion on peace.

**Wednesday, December 15 - Online**

Join Pastor Wangelin for an online Advent devotion on joy.

## Advent by Bonfire

Saturday, December 11, 5pm

## Advent by Candlelight

Sunday, December 12, 2pm

## Living Nativity

Saturday, December 18, 5-7pm

Join us to celebrate the birth of our Lord and experience the true story of Christmas with journey outside to Bethlehem.

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

(Communion at each service)

Friday, December 24

4pm - in-person

7pm - in-person & online

10pm - in-person

Our Savior Lutheran Church & School • [www.oursaviorlansing.org](http://www.oursaviorlansing.org)



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