

LEARN LIVE SHARE

Spring 2024



Our Savior Lutheran Church and School
Quarterly Newsletter

Building Up the Kingdom

By: Pastor Bill Wangelin



When Our Savior Lutheran Church and School started in September 1956, the first bulletin stated that the purpose of the mission church was “to enlarge the Kingdom of our Savior.” This was to be done through the new mission church and especially a Christian school. This has been our mission ever since.

“Mission is the church of God in motion.” This quote by Lutheran pastor Wilhelm Loehe (who helped establish the Frankenmuth mission colony, the seminary in Ft. Wayne, and so much more) puts mission as the essence of the church’s being. The mission of God (Missio Dei) is motivated by God’s love, established by the death and resurrection of Jesus, and realized through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.



You have a place in this mission.

We are joining Jesus on His mission as a churchschool (one ministry), committed to equipping disciples of Jesus to learn, live, and share Christ. Every member of the body of



Christ matters to God, and to our church family! And each person has a role to play. We are building up the Kingdom together when we share the Good News of Jesus in word and deed. We enlarge the Kingdom of our

Savior as we learn, live, and share Christ.

The staff of our church serve as trainers and coaches so that you, the members of the body of Christ, can exercise your gifts and roles in the Kingdom of God. We are cheering you on and supporting you! And God is doing amazing things through you!

Danish Lutheran Soren Kierkegaard once said, “People have an idea that the preacher is an actor on a stage and they are the critics, blaming or praising him. What they don’t know is that they are the actors on the stage; [the preacher] is merely the prompter standing in the wings, reminding them of their lines.” When we spend time in God’s Word in worship, Bible Study and Christian Education, we are “learning the lines” of God’s mission so that we can live them out in our daily lives.

In this edition of Learn, Live, Share, you will read about a number of ministries that illustrate what “the church of God in motion” looks like as we build up the Kingdom together.

In Joyful Service to Jesus,
Pastor Bill Wangelin <><

Easter Every Day

By: Pastor Chris Deneen



We are Easter people. Yes, we are Christmas people, and yes, we celebrate Good Friday, but most importantly, we are Easter people!

When Jesus entered that cold dark tomb on Good Friday, it wasn’t the end of the story. It was a short interlude, and three days later, the story

completely changed for the disciples and for you and me.

Thus, we are Easter people. And not just during Holy week, not just during the Easter season, but always.

Because the story of Jesus, the story of the Christ child at Christmas, and the man Jesus who healed and forgave sins, that story comes to a culmination on Easter morning. Had anyone else been in the tomb, what would the disciples have found on Easter morning? A body.



But because it was Jesus who went in that tomb on Good Friday, what did the disciples find? A reason to be nervous. A reason to be afraid, because Jesus wasn’t there!

We read in John 21: 19, “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

The disciples were afraid, because they weren’t sure what the political or religious leaders would do to them. But those words of Jesus, “peace be with you,” calm their hearts, quell their fears, and give words of hope. Words that give us the hope of the resurrection. Words that give us the hope of eternal life. Words of a risen Lord who conquered sin, death, and the devil for you and me.



Thus, we are Easter people. Because the Easter hope and joy that we experience on Easter morning is the joy and hope that we experience each and every day.

Because no matter how many times we stoop down and look into the tomb, it will always be empty. And because the tomb is empty, our hearts are full. And because the tomb is empty, our eternity is secure.

So while we shout and sing out loud on Easter morning, and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, may that joy be ever on our lips!

Because we are Easter people! Every day!

Pastor Chris <><

Play IS the Work in Early Childhood

By: Windy Carroll, Early Childhood Programs Director

On any given day of the school week, one could drop by an Early Childhood classroom or outdoor play space and see exactly what you would expect... children playing. In the Early Childhood field, we often hear the question, "Do they just play all day?" The simple answer is YES! But there is much more to it than meets the eye. Young children connect play experiences to real world concepts and build upon those over time, leading to lasting learning. Nurturing play through planning and constructing engaging provocations in the classroom is much of the work of an Early Childhood teacher. Through continuous observation and interaction with children, teachers assess what areas of development need bolstering for the children in the classroom. Then, teachers invite children to play in ways that are meaningful to their developmental growth by carefully selecting stimulating materials to offer in classroom centers and in the outdoor space. The cycle is endless as children continue to grow over time, requiring new challenges to maintain their growth. Indeed, a young brain is always at work.



Each spring, the Early Childhood program teachers and staff are blessed to attend the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MiAEYC) Conference in Grand Rapids,

Michigan – this year, we look forward to attending once again April 18-20th. In our time there, we engage in many training sessions on various topics that will continue to enrich our programs as we discuss and implement new ideas learned there. Networking with other professionals and conversing about all our blessings and challenges with educators from around the country renews our passion for the work we do every day. But each year, as we reflect on

our experience, we often agree that some of the most significant experiences we have while away is in the time spent together, in fellowship, praying over and sharing a meal, engaging in meaningful conversation and singing in the car, laughing together over shared experiences, and simply enjoying the city together. These are the moments that feel like "play" but are invaluable to us as individuals and as a team. Certainly, "play" is just as beneficial to adults as it is to children. Our brains need breaks – and as adults, we often forget to allow ourselves that luxury.

Spring is also enrollment season! In an exciting parallel, we look forward to welcoming new students and planning for another new school year as the seasons change, the weather begins to warm, and plants begin to pop through the soil and show themselves as part of God's perfect creation. So far, we are

incredibly blessed to have received many inquiries, new enrollments, and tour opportunities for new (and returning!) families for the Fall in Early Childhood.

Simultaneously, enrollment for Panther Camp 2024 has begun! We are thrilled to be able to host this program again this year at Our Savior, looking forward to welcoming so many new children and families, even if just for the season. How exciting it is to meet these new families and introduce them to our ministries, our mission to "Learn, Live, and Share Christ", and our philosophies on the importance of play!

The American Academy of Pediatrics states, "Play is not frivolous. Play is brain building, a central part of healthy child development, a key to executive function skills, and a buffer against the negative impacts of stress." So parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, leave time in your busy schedules to play with the children in your life, but also to allow yourself to "play" sometimes, too – your brain will thank you! Play is powerful. Play is important.

Play IS the work!



You be You

Embracing Your Identity in Christ

Ladies, join us as we take an inspiring journey together in the rich promises of God's Word unveiling your need to lean on Christ, your vine, as He reveals who you are as one of His branches.

- 📅 Saturday, April 13, 2024
- 🕒 At 8am - 3:30pm
- ✅ \$35/person includes lunch
- 📍 Reserve your spot: oursaviorlansing.org/events

Scrap Metal Drive

April 8 - 15

The OSL Youth Group will be collecting scrap metal from Monday, April 8 - Monday, April 15.

Any scrap metal items can be dropped off in the trailer next to the Paper Gator in the parking lot during that time.

Items accepted: Industrial scrap, appliances, small machinery, sheet metal, metal furniture, household items and more!

All proceeds support the travel and expenses for Our Savior Lutheran youth group as they have the opportunity to attend the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana.



Halftime Reflections

By: Vicar Noah Pieper



I'm writing this exactly half way into my vicarage. I thought I would share some halftime reflections:

In my few months being here at Our Savior, there have been some amazing opportunities to experience what it's like to be a pastor. I have gotten to preach and teach God's Word. I love preaching and have enjoyed every opportunity I have been given to grow in this area. One area that specifically stretched me this fall was teaching on the book of Jonah. The story of Jonah has always been one of my favorite books of the Bible to read and it was great to work through verse by verse together with the Wednesday night Bible Study group. Another part of the pastoral



ministry I have enjoyed is shut-in visits. I have been blessed in many ways by spending time in conversation, prayer, and communion with these members. When I reflect on leading worship, there are a few significant services that have especially impacted me—our outdoor service after the power outage in September, Reformation Sunday with the confirmands, preaching on All Saints Day, and of course, Christmas Eve worship.

Outside of work, my wife Anna and I have loved experiencing Michigan. When we first arrived and it was warmer outside, we visited Holland, South Haven, Frankenmuth, and even got up to Mackinac Island. We have also grown to love the Lansing area. I am sure this comes as no surprise, but Horrocks has been a favorite location of ours. It always seems to work for a last minute date night walk around the grocery store - especially because it's within walking distance of our apartment. Another part of Lansing we have enjoyed is the green and white pride. While we have refrained from converting to become Spartan fans, Anna and I have loved getting to see football, basketball, and hockey games. It's a great part of Lansing.



The biggest surprise about this vicarage from the very beginning was the school. I didn't know whether or not I would receive a vicarage assignment with a school, but I am glad I did. The church/school unity is a part of Our Savior's team ministry that impresses me day after day. I love getting to be a part of it by teaching in the classroom, helping with a retreat to Camp Arcadia, assisting after school clubs, leading chapel, and coaching basketball for boys and girls. I love serving here and am looking forward to what this new year holds!

New Improved Our Savior Life Team!

By: Deb Kamm

Just a minute, what's a Life Team? So glad you asked! A Life Team is a gospel-motivated group of church members that communicates and shares the abundant love of Christ, both in life issues within the church and outward into the community.



Our Savior is blessed with a team of more than twenty individuals who have a heart for life. On Life Sunday, several members manned a display table loaded with educational materials. Good

discussion took place with visitors and many 10-week fetal models were given out. We especially enjoyed the teens who came for cookies! How important to reach young people with God's truth about the value of life.

We look for ways to educate, witness, and serve -- in love. We want to involve our school children! This spring,



classrooms will collect items for Hannah's House, a local shelter for expectant moms. Chapel offerings will support Hannah's, and a speaker will visit. We also encourage participation of 6-8th graders in the annual Life Essay Contest sponsored by Lutherans for Life of Michigan.

Last year, our congregation donated \$3,500 to Shared Pregnancy Women's Center, collected through the Baby Bottle Blessing project. Reaching out with God's love is such an honor.

We want to speak out for the most vulnerable. In November, members participated in the March for Life along with several thousand others gathered in Lansing. Many high school students were there -- praise God!



National Lutherans for Life offers the Word of Hope Ministry, a free, confidential online counseling service for anyone who has participated in or is contemplating

an abortion. Word of Hope contact information is located at www.oursaviorlansing.org/community-resources

It's been great sharing about our team. You are welcome to join us at any time! *For more information, contact Deb Kamm at d.kamm@comcast.net.*

Are You an Intentional Family?

By: Dave Wright, Minister of Family Life

Join Christian values and Christian lifestyles do not happen by accident. Yes we believe and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to help us maintain a strong faith, but a faith without works is dead (James 2:26). Intentionality is the key to your family thriving – not just surviving, not just going through the motions of life, not being swept through each day and week by the demands of work, schedules, and other commitments.



So how can we be intentional about faith growth? Simple. Make it the number one priority in your family. This takes effort. It takes time. It takes, well, intentionality.

Let's start with God's word. Are you spending time each day or each week in God's word – not counting worship as one of those times? If not, begin doing so. Gather your family – whether it is just you, you and a spouse, or you and a houseful of kids, and take time to read a short devotion every day. One scripture verse. Lutheran Hour Ministries puts out a daily devotion. Ask me about the Faith Five devotions. Check out the Bible reading plans that are readily available in our church lobby. Google something for a devotion! Take the time to read and discuss God's word together.

Second, pray together as a family. Pray out loud. Pray for each other. Pray for special circumstances or situations that are going on. Did I mention to pray together? Meal prayers don't count. Sorry!



Make worship a priority! "Well, my kid's soccer travel schedule doesn't allow that." Really? You mean the God of the universe who created you, redeemed you, loves you, and wants to give you eternal life is not as important as your kid's sports schedule? Wow! That's too bad. Imagine the gifts of worship that we miss out on for some fleeting moments of earthly hobbies. Do we all miss worship occasionally? Sure. It is inevitable, but when being in worship is an intentional part of your lifestyle, it is not easy to so callously forego worship to pursue hobbies that have no eternal value. If I've offended anyone, I'm not trying to. I would love to sit down and have a discussion with you if you feel that my opinion on this topic is too harsh.

Next, spend time together. Be creative as a family. Set aside time and space within your homes to make things – meals, projects, arts and crafts, care packages, notes and cards of encouragement, home improvement projects – anything that allows you to be together. For married couples – take time to date each other. Show your kids that your spouse and your marriage is important. For you empty nesters – don't stop romancing each other. Be an example to younger couples of what a Christ-centered and devoted marriage looks like. Honoring your spouse and your kids by spending time with them is honoring God. Be intentional when you fill out your weekly calendars – include time together.

Finally, serve others as a family. Seek out ways to help people within your community. Set aside some money or resources to give to a cause that your family adopts. Look out for your neighbors and take care of their needs when necessary. Be there for the elderly and needy that God has placed you near.

Family life as Christians means being intentional about important things. Reevaluate what your family has been doing – going through the motions or being intentional about living for God through scripture reading, prayer, worship, time together, and service to others.

OSL Drama Ministry

The Drama Ministry began after seeing a need for enhancing scripture through short skits and dramatic readings. In this day and age where the focus for learning is on short visuals (think YouTube, TikTok) it made sense to help people understand context of scripture and how it relates to our every day circumstances through short dramas. The goal is to offer dramas at least 4 times a year and more frequently once we find a core group of actors who can be called upon.



The scripts that we use are from the dramaministry.com website and they are all copyrighted, so we need to perform them as they are written unless permission is given to alter them. There are over 1000 scripts available on this site and it is a paid site. We could also use original scripts from someone who may be an aspiring playwright.

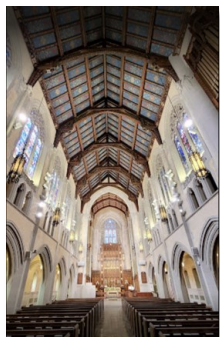


Currently, our team consists of five women, some of whom have had drama experience. We would really like to find a "core" group of actors who would be willing to perform on a regular basis. A lot of scripts call for men and women from ages 18-40 and that seems to be our most difficult group to recruit. The scripts are mostly under 5 minutes so there is not a whole lot of memorizing involved. If this sounds like something you would be interested in doing, we welcome anyone from age 12 and up. For questions or to join, email Jeanie at jbd1230@gmail.com.

2023-24 School Update

Our Savior Music Program on the Road

Our Savior's music program will be making two trips to perform in the last part of the school year. The 7th and 8th grade music groups will participate at the annual Lutheran School Music Festival held on the campus of Concordia University. The band, handbells, and chimes will each play two music selections before an adjudicator. The adjudicator provides feedback including the strengths and opportunities for improvement. The students are accompanied by their homeroom teachers and several parent chaperones who assist with carpooling the students to Ann Arbor, MI. The change of pace from a regular school day is welcomed by the students. Some students are excited about eating college food in the Concordia Cafeteria and they pray that the ice cream machine is working. Another exciting experience the students enjoy is attending chapel at Concordia. Pastor Chris will be leading chapel that day.



On March 20th the 7th and 8th grade choir and handbells will be performing during the mid-day Lenten service at Historic Trinity Lutheran Church in downtown Detroit, MI. Our Savior was invited to perform for the second time in three years. Historic Trinity has many historic artifacts of the Lutheran Church and the students will receive an educational tour to learn about the generations of faith in downtown Detroit. Historic Trinity is a gracious host. They also provide a luncheon for attendees.

Martin Luther's theological beliefs determined his purpose for music. He emphasized the value of God's Word and saw music as a means to share the truth from the Bible. He claimed that music was a gift from God, capable of fighting evil and promoting good. May the music and all in participation be blessed in these experiences.

Senior Bible Study Buddies...New Friendships Spawn in Third Grade

There have been new experiences lately in third grade. This year Mrs. Kristi Sohn fostered cool connections amongst her third grade students and the Wednesday Senior Bible Study attendees. New friendships have emerged in Christ. Through these new found companions, students have been motivated to interview and write about bible scripture and about their buddy's faith in Christ. Recently, during the third grade chapel, Mrs. Sohn's class read their written reflections of what they learned from their senior buddy. One student wrote that Ms. Connie Swaynie said, "Loving God and loving and others looks like helping others and praying for them." He said, "What this looks like to me is helping others when they fall and asking them if they are okay." We learned that Ms. Swaynie's favorite bible verse is from Romans 8:34, *Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

Another third grader recounted her buddy time, "God makes my heart happy. When I talked to Mr. and Mrs. Schroeder, I was happy. They said loving God is treating others better than yourself and loving others the same way that he loves us." She went on to share the Schroeder's favorite bible verse, *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

Students love spending time with their buddy. We thank the senior bible study class and Mrs. Sohn's class for their display of friendship in Christ. And we thank the work of Holy Spirit as we Learn, Live, and Share Christ together.



"The strong partnership of Our Savior Lutheran Church with the School is what led me to accept the Call here just a few years ago. This school year I wanted to find a meaningful way to connect my third graders to the Church community. I decided that my class would start building a relationship with the Seniors who attend the Wednesday morning Bible Study. We join them once a month to share what we are learning, but also to ask them about their faith walk. The students have sung songs, made prayer cards, shared treats, and worked on an art project together. They love that time spent with their "Senior" buddy and many Seniors have responded with cards and encouragement. The students used our school theme "Love God and Love Others" in preparation for the Chapel they led. They shared in our Chapel service information learned from their Senior Buddies including their favorite Bible verses. We look forward to the rest of the school year as we meet together and continue to build on those relationships." - Mrs. Sohn, 3rd Grade Teacher

Lenten Services & Events

Lenten Midweek Meals

Weekly Meal and Fellowship
Wednesdays - 5:30- 6:45pm
February 14 - March 20

Lenten Midweek Worship

Colors of the Cross
Wednesdays - 7:00pm
February 14 - March 20

Palm Sunday

March 24 - 8:30am & 10:30am

Maundy Thursday

March 28 - 7:00pm (Communion)

Good Friday

March 29 - 12:00 & 7:00pm

Easter Egg Hunt

March 30 - 9:30 - 10:30am

Easter Sunday

March 31 - 8:30 & 10:30am
(Communion)



Getting to Know You: *Stephanie Bogart Trapp, OSL Business Manager*

Stephanie joined the Our Savior staff as Business Manager in December 2023. Please say hi and welcome her to Our Savior when you see her!



1. Where did you grow up? I lived on the West side of Lansing through the 4th grade then my family moved to Portland, MI due to my dad's job promotion. My parents made the decision to send me and my sister to Portland St. Patrick's and this decision changed my life forever. When I arrived at St. Patrick's, I was reading at a 2nd grade reading level and I didn't make very good choices in friends. It was my Christian education and support of this community which lead me to graduation with a strong GPA and attend College.

2. What are your favorite hobbies? I love camping, hiking, and riding my bike all over Michigan but my favorite place is in the Pentwater/Ludington area. I also enjoy attending MSU Football games and Tiger games with my husband.

3. What is your favorite bible verse? Revelation 2:10 – *Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.* This is my favorite bible verse because this was one of my in-laws favorite bible verses and both my children chose it as their confirmation verse.

4. What is your favorite food? I love anything chocolate without nuts.

5. What led you to seek a career in church/school ministry? We all know that God has a plan for us and I truly believe this was God's plan for me. I had been struggling with the decision to retire from Lansing Community College after spending almost 32 years in the field of Financial Aid. In October, my husband, Phil, who was a Board Member, asked me if I would be interested in the Business Manager position. After reading the job descriptions and speaking with Pastor Wangelin, I decided to apply for the position and I felt throughout the entire processes God was guiding me to make this big career change. So, I retired from my position as Executive Director of Financial Aid on December 8 and started at Our Savior on December 11 as the new Business Manager.

6. One fun fact about you: I was named after the singer Stevie Nicks, whose legal name is Stephanie Nicks. I was actually called Stevie until about the 6th grade.

Spring Events

March


- 2 Auction
- 3, 10, 17 First Communion Milestone
- 10 3rd Grade Money Milestone
- 20 Service of Healing
- 24 Palm Sunday
- 28 Maundy Thursday - 7pm
- 29 Good Friday - 12 & 7pm
- 30 Easter Egg Hunt - 9:30am
- 31 Easter Sunday - 8:30 & 10:30am

April

- 1 Easter Monday
Offices Closed/No School
- 1-5 Spring Break
- 13 Women's Conference
- 21 Blessing Letter Milestone

May

- 6-10 Teacher Appreciation Week
- 12 Mother's Day
- 16 School Instrumental Concert
- 19-22 8th Grade Class Trip
- 27 Memorial Day (Offices Closed)



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