

# LEARN LIVE SHARE

Winter 2024-25



Our Savior Lutheran Church and School  
Quarterly Newsletter



## You're Grounded

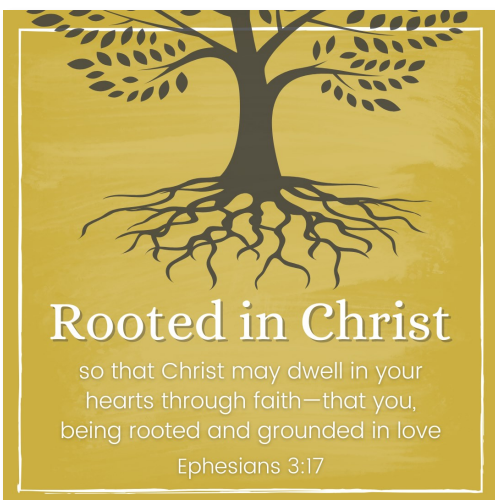
By: Pastor Bill Wangelin



It was never a good thing to be 'grounded' as a kid. Having to stay in your room or not being able to leave the house was a consequence of not following the rules. As an adult, I found there were other meanings to the word 'grounded.' My house has wire running through it and into the ground. Electrical

wires have a bare copper wire called the ground. These are good things. It is also important to be emotionally, mentally, and spiritually grounded. That's when you have a way to sort through the confusion and chaos of this world and have something solid to hold onto.

We live in a world that is accelerating and fragmenting. We are buried under information online and through social media. Our searches produce too many results. Different ideas about politics, religion, relationships, and reality all conflict with each other. People are becoming more disillusioned, lonely, and anxious. How do we stay grounded in today's chaotic world?



In Ephesians 3:17 it says that the Lord strengthens us with power through the Holy Spirit, so that Christ can dwell in our hearts through faith and so we can be "rooted and grounded in love." The love of God in Christ Jesus is what grounds us in this turbulent

world. It is the solid rock, the firm foundation, and the anchor in the storm. You are grounded in Christ!

Our "churchschool" is a place that keeps us grounded in the Lord. Joining together in worship keeps us grounded. Reading our Bibles keeps us grounded. Joining in fellowship with other believers gets us out of ourselves. In this edition of Learn, Live, Share, you will find a number of opportunities to be grounded in Christ with our church family at OSL. Especially during the holidays, when the pace accelerates and the pressure mounts, it is important to stay grounded in Christ.

Jesus is the reason for the Season. That keeps us grounded. I pray that the Lord will strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit to Learn, Live, and Share Christ in the coming months, to let the light of Christ shine and to point people to our Savior.

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

## Experiencing Grief

By: Stacy Boyd

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18 (NIV)

The death of a loved one can be one of the most devastating experiences many people encounter. It often turns their world upside down, shattering the life they knew into pieces. Mourning that loss and putting together the fragments takes time. Compounding these difficulties are the many misconceptions about grief. All too often, people feel pressured to stuff away difficult feelings and move on with their lives.

The death of a loved one can stir up faith struggles too—people may feel angry at God or even question God's existence, and then feel guilty for having such thoughts.

Those who have lost a loved one often assume they need to hide their grief or move through it quickly.

Grief is a very normal, natural, and necessary process. Grief is normal because it is how people respond to a significant loss. Grief is natural in that it is a completely human thing to do. Grief is also necessary because it provides a healthy way to cope with the loss and everything it means to us. Caring for someone experiencing grief is one of the more frequent situations in which Stephen Ministers serve.

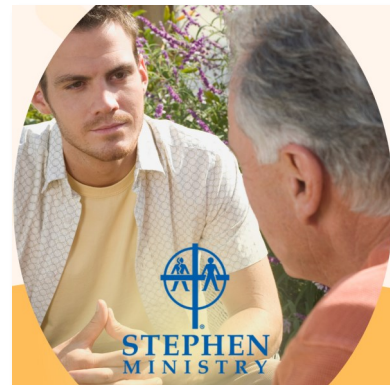
### Stephen Minister Insight

"Walking alongside a care receiver who is grieving is your gift to them. Their allowing you to walk alongside is their gift to you. But the biggest gift is God working through the caring relationship to heal the person's heart. That's a gift to both of you."

A Stephen Minister typically meets with a care receiver once a week for an hour to listen to the care receiver's feelings and concerns and to pray with them and for them. The Stephen Minister and the care receiver decide together how long the ministry relationship continues and their meetings and conversations are confidential.

If you are an adult experiencing grief and would like to consider having a Stephen Minister walk alongside you, please contact Sue Sundstrom, our Referrals Coordinator, in the church office at 517-882-8665 or [ssundstrom@oursaviorlansing.org](mailto:ssundstrom@oursaviorlansing.org). She can help determine if a Stephen Minister is right for you, and if so, prayerfully and confidentially assign you one of our Stephen Ministers.

*Dear Heavenly Father, Please guide anyone who is grieving to consider having a Stephen Minister to help support them emotionally and spiritually through this difficult time. Amen.*



# The Promises of God

By: Pastor Chris Deneen



Have you made any promises lately? I know I have! And guess what? I didn't stick to all of them. Some as simple as, "I promise we'll get ice cream this weekend!" And then the weather doesn't cooperate. Others a bit bigger, "I promise I'll fold that laundry!" And then the laundry sits unfolded for too many days..

As you all know, yes, I'm a sinner, who doesn't always hold to his word. I try my best, but I fall short.

God, He never fails or goes back on His promises. Look at all of the promises we'll look at during Advent!

The Promise of a Savior  
The Promise to Abraham  
The promise of Bethlehem  
The promise of Immanuel

God, He never fails or goes back on His promises.

We see it at the very beginning in Genesis 3:15. After Adam and Eve sin, play hide and seek with God, blame each other and others, what does God do? He promises a Savior to save His people.

To Abraham, we see God promises him that he will have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, even though he and his wife didn't have any children, at the time.

Bethlehem. A small, town, a little town, you could say. Not of great weight or importance. But God promises, there, of all places, the Savior will be born.

And that Savior to be born? Jesus. Immanuel. God with us.

God, He never fails or goes back on His promises.

We see these promises through Advent, through Christmas, even to Easter! And Jesus gives us even more promises that we can hold to:

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." John 14:3

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:20

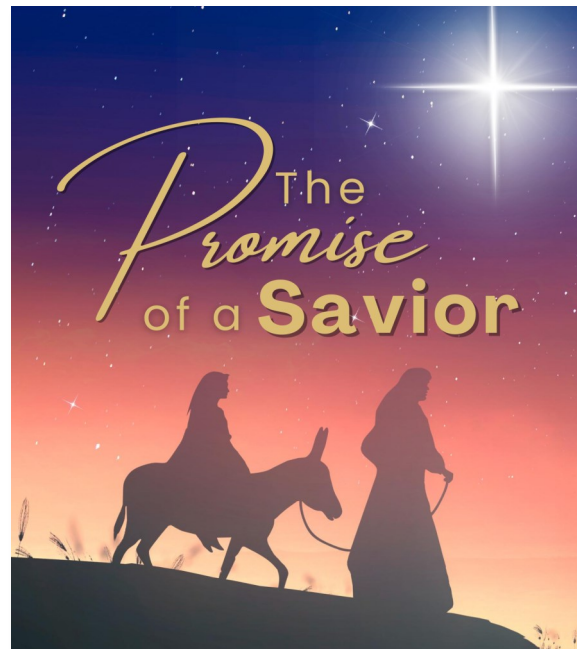
Jesus, He never fails or goes back on His promises.

Through the promises of God we have the promise of salvation, life eternal, the presence of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit to be with us.

You and I, we may not always come through on our promises. We may fall short and break them. But.

God, He never fails or goes back on His promises.

Pastor Chris <><



## Our Savior Lutheran Church & School 2025 AUCTION

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2025 - 4:30PM

Get your hats and seersucker suits ready for a derby style auction!  
Now accepting donations and sponsorships.

Purchase your tickets or donate today at  
[oursaviorlansing.org/auction](https://oursaviorlansing.org/auction)

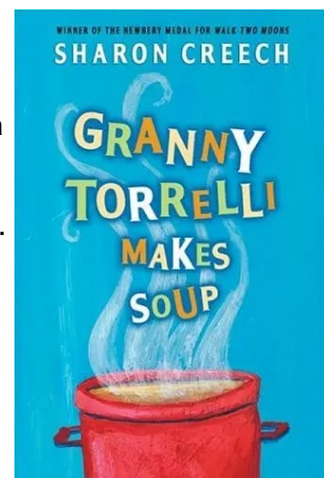


# Sharing Faith Connections in the Classroom Through Story

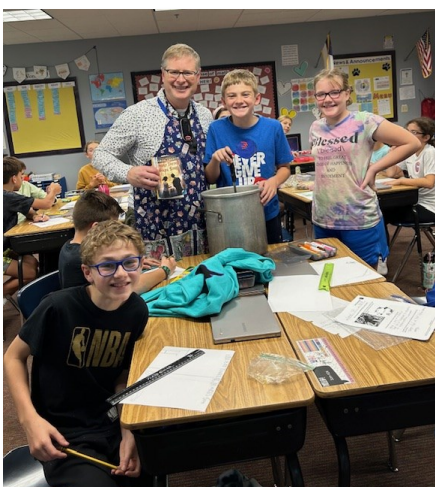
By: Matthew Couser, Principal



Each year I seek an opportunity to guest read in classrooms. One of my favorite stories to read is *Granny Torrelli Makes Soup* by Sharon Creech. It is a heartwarming middle-grade novel that explores themes of friendship, compassion, family, and forgiveness. The story revolves around Rosie, a twelve-year-old young girl, and her best friend, Bailey, who is visually impaired. As tensions arise in their friendship, Rosie's Italian grandmother, Granny Torrelli, steps in to help mend their bond through cooking and storytelling.



Granny Torrelli is a wise and nurturing figure who uses her life experiences, shared through the act of making soup, to teach Rosie valuable lessons about life and relationships. Granny's stories reveal her own struggles with friendships and her understanding



of what it means to love and forgive. While cooking with Rosie, she does offer some explicit instructions, for example, stir the soup and be gentle with the meatballs. However, she simultaneously allows space for the children to practice independence. For instance, Rosie gets to pick which salad she wants (the one with oranges). Through cooking together, Rosie learns that friendships, like a good soup, need patience, a balance of flavors, and a willingness to let go of bitterness.

I especially love the meals motif prevalent throughout the novel. The novel is broken into two parts, with each part revolving around the preparation of a meal: either zuppa (soup) or pasta. In both cases, the meal preparation and the sharing of the meal afterward reflect the characters' emotional beats, including their moments of reflection and realization.

While the book doesn't directly state faith connections, through a Christian lens I have discovered Christian themes

that I share with our students as they learn and grow:

**Compassion and Forgiveness:** Rosie and Bailey's journey involves misunderstandings and hurt feelings, but with Granny Torrelli's guidance, they learn to forgive each other and find compassion in their friendship. In Christianity, forgiveness is a central teaching (Matthew 18:21-22), and Granny's storytelling helps Rosie understand the importance of reconciling with Bailey. The act of forgiving and empathizing, which Rosie learns by listening to her grandmother's life stories, embodies the Second Greatest Commandment of loving one's neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39).

**Community and Sharing:** The act of making soup together symbolizes fellowship and community, much like the concept of breaking bread together for Communion. Sharing food and stories in the kitchen connects Rosie, Granny, and Bailey, and creates a loving space where they can confront and work through personal struggles. In Christianity, sharing meals and creating community parallels the idea of communion and gathering in unity and in worship, as seen in Acts 2:46.

**Selflessness and Service:** Granny Torrelli's wisdom and patience serve Rosie selflessly, as she imparts life lessons through food and stories. Her role mirrors the Christian value of serving others, as she does not judge Rosie but gently guides her to make better choices. Granny's actions can be seen as echoing Jesus' example of humble service (John 13:14-15), showing Rosie how to be kind and loving toward others.



**Love and Acceptance:** Granny Torrelli's approach to life is filled with grace and acceptance, particularly as she encourages Rosie to accept Bailey, even with his differences. This reflects the Christian concept of agape love, an unconditional, selfless love that values each person as they are (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

*Granny Torrelli Makes Soup* shares friendship journeys. Through the acts of storytelling, sharing meals, and offering forgiveness, the characters model compassion, love, and selflessness. As we value and cherish relationships, we see God's handiwork. I am grateful for the time spent with students and the opportunity to read to and with them (and eat soup). Together we journey as we Learn, Live, and Share Christ.



# Everybody Gets What Everybody Needs

By: Windy Carroll, Early Childhood Programs Director



The children enrolled in Our Savior's Early Childhood Programs hear it almost daily: "Everybody gets what everybody needs." The phrase rolls off the tongues of every teacher in every EC classroom – a phrase we developed over the course of years working together with young children. We say it so often in fact, that this year, we put it on an EC staff t-shirt! But, we don't just say it to children to pacify them or dismiss their (often BIG) feelings about what is or isn't "fair", but we truly believe in the message. Everybody gets what everybody needs.

In the Early Childhood years, children are actively cultivating their view of the world around them. Young children are typically very egocentric, just beginning to understand their own wants, needs, and feelings. Developing an awareness of their own bodies and emotions is a big job – in fact, many of us continue to work on these skills well into adulthood! So, as children enter school at 3, 4, or 5 years old, they must practice not only the skills to recognize their own needs, but also practice the even more difficult task of understanding that every other person – adult and child – in the classroom (and in the world!) has emotions, wants, and needs as well. Not only does everybody have bodies and feelings, but each person has different bodies, thoughts, and emotions – and that's okay!



This set of skills is part of the social-emotional work that children and teachers do in the Early Childhood classroom. Acquiring a broader awareness of the world around them is a monumental task that is just one of the vast encyclopedia of tasks that children learn in their work toward becoming kind, loving, empathetic, and responsible classroom citizens. But, what do we really mean when we say that "everybody gets what everybody needs"? In the classroom, we mean that what one child needs in order to feel safe, loved, successful, and comfortable may not be the same as what another child needs to achieve those same outcomes. A neuro-typical child born into a safe, nurturing environment whose physical and emotional needs are always met may need fewer supports or accommodations to be successful in school, while a neuro-diverse child born into a tumultuous environment whose basic needs are not necessarily always met will likely need a number of supports or accommodations to achieve similar success at school. As teachers, our job is to help children understand that we will keep them all safe, we love them all equally, and we will do our very best to give each of them the individual tools they need to be their best selves.

As Christians, we know that this theme is a reflection of Biblical principles – through scripture, God promises us that He will provide all that we need (Phil 4:19, Psalm 23). However, we are not promised all that we want. We are not promised a life free from challenge or hardship. And, we certainly are not promised equal distribution of earthly wealth or resources. Indeed, as citizens of the world, we see and hear about injustice, poverty, death, destruction, and general hardship all around us – one doesn't need to look very hard to find examples of this. As humans, we tend to notice and sometimes focus on the negative events and circumstances in our lives or in the world around us, and we are often quick to forget the blessings in our lives and in the world at-large. But, we are called to praise God in all circumstances, giving thanks to Him (1 Thess. 5:18), and to lift up our brothers and sisters when they are in need (Proverbs 19:17, Luke 6:30-31, James 2:14). While we may never attain wealth, status, or good fortune, we know that God will provide if we have faith in Him.

So, as we enter into this season of Thanksgiving and celebration of the birth of our Savior, I pray that we might receive for ourselves and instill in our children a genuine sense of contentment with the blessings we have been given. Though our lives here on Earth will never be perfect, we are the children of a loving God, who holds us safe in His arms, loves us all equally, and gives us exactly what we need to be our best selves through Holy Scriptures. From Hebrews 13:5: "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'".

Everybody gets what everybody needs.



# Tips for Teaching Kids about Marriage

The Gospel Coalition – September 27, 2018, by Jani Ortland

Children are curious about marriage. They see families with various parental arrangements, and they have legitimate questions about them. Children need answers. And children deserve good answers—answers based on the eternal Word of God rather than shifting cultural trends.

Young children absorb information most thoroughly through observation and imitation. Begin teaching your children about marriage through example. If you're married, give your children a living example of the unique and beautiful love that can grow between a husband and wife. Let them see you light up when your spouse walks through the door. Snuggle, kiss, hold hands—show them what it means to bind yourself to that one person who's more special to you than anyone else in the world.



Let your children hear an abundance of loving words flowing between Mommy and Daddy: I love you, darling. Thank you for marrying me. I missed you today. Fill your children's senses with the delight of a father rejoicing in the wife of his youth (Prov. 5:18) and the security of a mother embracing her godly husband (Eph. 5:25).

Additionally, make sure your children know God created this good gift of marriage. Take them back to the Garden of Eden—to the first wedding. Help them understand that even with all the other creatures—even with the presence of God—there was still something missing for Adam.

As they grow, children come to understand that people get married all over the world. Each country has its own laws about what marriage is and who can get married. Help your children learn to distinguish between the laws of the land and the law of God. They aren't always the same.

Your child will be confronted with relationships that go against the wisdom and purposes of God... People sometimes believe they'll be happier if they decide in their own way what marriage can be, but our children need to understand that marriage isn't what we think it should be. Marriage is what God says it is, because God made us, and God made marriage for his own good reasons. Make sure your children grasp that God intended marriage to be between one man and one woman for life (Mark 10:6–9)



Marriage is an unconditional commitment to an imperfect person, and our own selfishness can often complicate that commitment. Sometimes we get angry, and we hurt the people we promised God we would love the most. Children need to see how to deal with anger and hurt within the bonds of marriage. They can learn that marriage is God's good gift to help us become more selfless and more Christ-like.

Sometimes we aren't good at keeping our promises. Sin can harden our hearts, and we break our marriage vows. If divorce has intruded into your children's experience, talk this through with them, assuring them of God's nearness in their sadness (Ps. 34:18) and God's help when family life is hard (Isa. 41:10).

Then bring the conversation back to hope for their own future. When they get married, it will be hard at times, but God will be with them.

Assure your children that marriage is God's kind gift, and it comes to us filled with his blessing. Show them how marriage brings joy to adults and security for kids. And teach them that, best of all, marriage is an up-close display of the forever love of Jesus for his church, whom he calls his bride.

By God's grace, our children can stand firm in their generation. What a privilege to teach them that God's way is loving, and his way is always best.

This article – in a beautiful and simple way – describes how to set an example for children of a godly marriage. Parents, grandparents, god-parents, aunts and uncles, and Christian friends all have the responsibility to model a Christian marriage for our young people.

Do you have a marriage resource or article that would help others? Send it to me at [dwright@oursaviorlansing.org](mailto:dwright@oursaviorlansing.org). We want to provide informative and helpful information for couples and families that will strengthen family life in the home.



# Advent at Our Savior Lutheran

## Events & Midweek Services

**Advent Hymns Midweek Service**  
Wednesday, December 4, 7pm

**Advent by Candlelight: "Wrapped with Love"**  
Saturday, December 7, 2-4pm

**Early Childhood & Kindergarten Christmas Program**  
Sunday, December 8, 4pm

**Grades 5-8 Christmas Concert**  
Wednesday, December 11, 7pm

**Advent by Bonfire**  
Saturday, December 14, 5-8pm

**Grades 1-4 Christmas Program**  
Wednesday, December 18, 7pm

**Living Nativity**  
Saturday, December 21, 5-7pm



## Our Savior Lutheran

Learn, Live, Share....Christ  
[oursaviorlansing.org](http://oursaviorlansing.org)

## Sunday Worship Services

**Sunday, December 1 - 8:30am & 10:30am**  
(Communion)  
"The Promise of a Savior"

**Sunday, December 8 - 8:30am & 10:30am**  
**10am - Connect Worship**  
"The Promise to Abraham"

**Sunday, December 15 - 8:30am & 10:30am**  
(Communion)  
"The Promise of Bethlehem"

**Sunday, December 22 - 8:30am & 10:30am**  
**10am - Connect Worship**  
"The Promise of Immanuel"

## Christmas Eve

Tuesday, December 24

3:00pm: Connect Worship

5:00pm: Contemporary Worship

7:00pm: Choirs, Strings, Organ Worship

*All evening services will include candlelight ceremony and communion.*



## Learn, Live and Share Christ through Athletics

By: Vicar Joseph Bender



After being here at Our Savior Lutheran Church and School for a few months I have gotten to see firsthand how important Christian Athletics really are. In the fall I was able to help out with the 4th and 5th grade running club. As a former runner I really enjoyed living vicariously through our runners and encouraging them to meet their goals. Even though the running season is over, another season has arisen! It's basketball season and I have been able to help coach the 7th and 8th grade boys basketball with Principal Couser.

Athletics is a wonderful way to engage students outside the classroom and teach many principles of life all while playing basketball. Our Savior does a remarkable job of fostering that environment for the students to learn, live, and share Christ.

One way they learn Christ on the basketball court is through our daily devotions that we share before practice. This helps ground the students in what is done on the court. They learn why our athletics might look a little different than other clubs they might be involved in. They learn about Jesus and how his word applies to them both on the court and off the court.

Sometimes, the devotional thoughts even tie into different aspects of the game of basketball.

But the students don't simply learn Christ and leave it at that. Rather, they live it out by the way they work together as a team. I have seen countless times students encouraging, helping, and supporting each other in practices. Even when a turnover or missed shot happens, the team constantly lifts each other up and that shows exactly what it means to live as Christ would.

Finally, the team shares Christ by the way they interact with other people. Through practicing good sportsmanship on the court with the other team. By honoring and respecting the referees (even if they disagree with the call). This is ultimately our job as Christians to share Christ with the world and boys basketball is one way Our Savior continues to do that.

It's been a joy to witness the amazing ways Our Savior Lutheran Church and School participates in the mission of God. Boys basketball is certainly one of those ways. I look forward to seeing what the rest of the season brings and how the boys continue to learn, live, and share Christ on and off the court!



# WINTER EVENTS CALENDAR

## DECEMBER

- 7 Advent by Candlelight 2pm
- 14 Advent by Bonfire 5pm
- 121 Living Nativity 5pm
- 24 Christmas Eve Worship  
3pm: Connect Worship  
5pm: Contemporary Worship  
7pm: Choirs, Strings, Organ Worship
- 29 Blended Worship 9:30am

## JANUARY

- 25 Jr. High Winter Blast
- 26-31 National Lutheran Schools Week

## FEBRUARY

- 1 Michigan Theological Conference
- 2 Congregation Meeting
- 3 Re-enrollment Begins
- 9 Learn to Pray Milestone

**Our Savior Lutheran Church and School**



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