

LEARN LIVE SHARE

Summer 2025



Our Savior Lutheran Church and School
Quarterly Newsletter

The Power of Invitation

By: Pastor Bill Wangelin



"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" (John 4:29) The Samaritan woman at the well ran to the village and invited people to come out and meet Jesus. As a result, many people came to believe that Jesus is the promised Savior. There is power in an invitation!

In the book, *The Great DeChurching*, a majority of those who stopped going to church at some point in their life indicated that they would be willing to return "if someone invited them." There is power in an invitation!

The majority of guests and visitors that we have in worship on any given Sunday morning are there because someone invited them and offered to meet with them or sit by them. There is power in an invitation!

The best advertising we do for our school ministry, early childhood programs, and summer camp is by word of mouth, hands down. People are bombarded with advertisements and cheap words. They want a referral from someone who has had a personal experience with an organization or ministry and can vouch for them. There is power in an invitation!



There might be some events that are better invitations to certain people than others. Some people might respond very positively to an invitation to worship. Others might respond better to a more casual event like an outreach event, concert, or service activity. You will get a sense of what people might be most interested in coming to. We pray for the Holy Spirit to guide our invitations.

We live in an age that is over-connected digitally, and disconnected socially and personally. In the book *Anxious Generation*, researchers found that the more we use social media and digital communication, the lonelier and more disconnected we feel. People crave community and belonging. Our Savior Lutheran Church and School offers that and so much more! In these pages of *Learn Live Share*, you will see a number of ways we are inviting others to "Come and see." We want people to see Jesus in all that we do, so that they can believe in Him, and in turn, learn, live, and share Christ. Let's pray regularly for our invitations, and for the people God has placed in our lives who crave belonging, community, and a connection with Jesus. He wants all people to know and live in His love, grace, and truth. He wants to be at work through your invitation. Let's step out in faith and see how the Holy Spirit brings power to our invitations!

In Christ,

Pastor Bill Wangelin <><

Adventures with Jesus

By: Pastor Chris Deneen



I love going on adventures with my family. Maybe that's taking a walk to explore a new park. Maybe that's driving around and stopping somewhere we've never gone to before. Or maybe it is just an exciting way to get the girls, who are 5, 3, & 1, excited about going to a grocery store.

But when we get to do something awesome, something fun that we never expected, it is always a blast! When Lauren and I lived in St. Louis Missouri at the Seminary, we went to a Renaissance Festival about 40 minutes away. As we were driving back, we stopped at an outlet mall that just happened to be having a beer tasting festival with music, drinks, food, and it was an amazing end to our afternoon.

You can schedule adventures, you can make a point to try and go on an adventure, you can join us for our Family Adventure night on June 18th! There are all kinds of ways to start an adventure. But the biggest thing I've noticed about our family adventures that turn into something incredible, is when we're willing to step out of our comfort zone, or are willing to take a chance.

This is also true with being a Christian. Jesus invited His disciples on a journey, on an adventure. If they had not been open to the calling of Jesus, their lives would have been drastically different.

How is Jesus calling you and your family on an adventure with Him this Summer?

Many times it just ends up being a step of faith. It ends up being open to the Holy Spirit's moving and calling.



Maybe you have stories about times where you did something you weren't sure about, but you had an idea that God was working in the situation. I've got plenty, if you're interested, just ask. Surprisingly, it's one of my favorite things to talk about. Whether it is talking to and praying with a homeless person and giving them breakfast, talking to a stranger on a plane that ends with a big hug, or maybe as simple as praying on the spot with someone: God is at work. The Holy Spirit is working. Jesus is alive and on the loose.

So the question for you this Summer: Are you ready for the adventure of a lifetime? Are you ready to step out in faith by yourself or with your family? Jesus is calling! The Holy Spirit is moving and grooving!

Let's join Him.

Pastor Chris <><



Family Time Together

By: Dave Wright, Minister of Family Life



I can't tell you how many times my wife and I climbed down from our sleeping area onto and over one of our kids sleeping on a lower bed (which doubled as a table and booth during the day) in our little pop up camper. It felt like we were playing a game of Twister every morning when we woke up. When our kids were young, we spent many summers enjoying camping all over Michigan. Talk about close quarters! That little pop up camper really kept everyone about as physically close as possible – especially during rainy weekend camping trips. As the boys got older, we upgraded to a bigger bunkhouse trailer and, ironically, the boys preferred sleeping in tents instead. There were so many activities and traditions that were implemented on those camping trips. I taught the boys where to search for salamanders. We always enjoyed s'mores at an evening campfire. We carried this gigantic plastic tub for bath time when the boys were little (yes, even while camping). We always brought bikes, skateboards, scooters, and all of the sporting goods that we could possibly fit into our vehicle. We assembled foil packet dinners for the boys to cook on their own in the fire. We always took a final bike ride of the day after it was dark, which we called a ghost ride. Such great memories!

Our summer vacations were and are important and satisfying aspects of family life! For most families, family life fun and family togetherness looks a little different. For your family it might include travel sports or even just community or school sports. That can be a great time for families to spend together. Some families are low key and simply prefer to take walks, ride bikes, go to the library, or play video games together. What are you intentional about when it comes to recreational time with your family?



It is so important to spend time together – away from the hustle and bustle of every day work and school schedules. This summer – and every summer – should be a time for your family to enjoy adventures together. It doesn't matter what you are doing. The important thing is to be doing it together, without the rigid schedule and stress of the school year or the work week.

In an article by an organization called Parenting Focus, there are six positive benefits from families spending time together:

- It builds children's self esteem
- It strengthens family bonds
- It encourages communication
- It can help your child's academic performance
- It can help your child be a good friend

<https://www.parentingfocus.org/resources/time-together-importance>

In Mark 6:31-32 Jesus, after a period of intense activity with his disciples said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. Jesus knew when it was time to get away. He is a great example to follow of balancing work and rest.

You don't have to buy a boat or new camper this summer, although I'm not opposed to that at all. ☺ But families should make an intentional effort to spend time together – away from the normal, busy, and fast-paced schedule in order to play and rest and enjoy family life together. Have a great summer!

FAMILY ADVENTURE NIGHT

Wednesday, June 18 | 5:30–8:00pm



Family Crafts
and Games



Pizza, Salad &
Breadsticks



Worship &
Service Project

What To Expect

Dinner starts at 5:30.

Then we welcome everyone to the sanctuary for our opening. Following that, families get to participate TOGETHER in stations (service project, crafts, games, etc) throughout the building.

We will join back together as a group for closing worship and praise.

All Are Invited!

Young families, old families, empty nesters and everyone in between!

oursaviorlansing.org/events

Interview with Onyx the Ministry Dog

By: Matthew Couser, Principal

Principal Couser: Good morning, Onyx! Thanks for taking a few minutes out of your very busy day to sit down for this special interview. First off—how has your school year been here at Our Savior Lutheran School?

Onyx: *Wags tail* It's been paws-itively amazing, Mr. Couser! Every day is a new adventure, and I feel so blessed to be part of the OSL family. There's nothing better than walking through those doors and being greeted by so many smiling faces.

Principal Couser: We've all seen how much the students—and staff—love having you around. What's one of your favorite parts about being at school?

Onyx: Oh, without a doubt, nestling in laps or curling up next to students during class time. I love being close—it's my way of saying, "I'm here for you." Whether it's during reading time or just a quiet moment, being with the kids brings me so much joy.

Principal Couser: You've made some strong friendships this year. How does it feel to be such an important companion for the students?

Onyx: It's pretty special. I can sense when someone's having a tough day, and sometimes just sitting beside them helps ease their worries. I may not talk, but I listen in my own way. I've made so many new friends—from the little ones in preschool all the way up to the middle schoolers. And the teachers too—they give the best ear scratches!

Principal Couser: We've noticed you riding to school with Mr. Wright every morning. Is that your favorite way to start the day?

Onyx: Absolutely! I love our rides—windows down just enough for a good sniff of fresh air. Mr. Wright always plays great music, and it's the perfect way to get ready for a full day of ministry work.

Principal Couser: I've heard you've even helped students learn how to care for dogs—tell us about that.

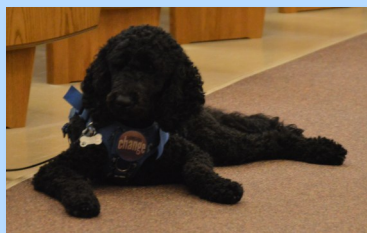
Onyx: That's right! I've been teaching students how to walk me properly on a leash, how to approach dogs kindly, and how to take care of a furry friend. It's so rewarding to see them grow in confidence. Some even want to become veterinarians now!

Principal Couser: Onyx, you've had such an impact on this school year. What would you say to everyone at OSL?

Onyx: *Tail thumps happily* Just a big woof of thanks! Thank you for loving me, trusting me, and letting me be a part of your days. Being your ministry dog is the greatest job in the world. I'll be right here, tail wagging, ready for more snuggles, walks, and tail-wagging joy next school year!

Principal Couser: Thank you, Onyx. You're a blessing to this community, and we're so thankful for all the ways you serve and love our students. God has big plans for you!

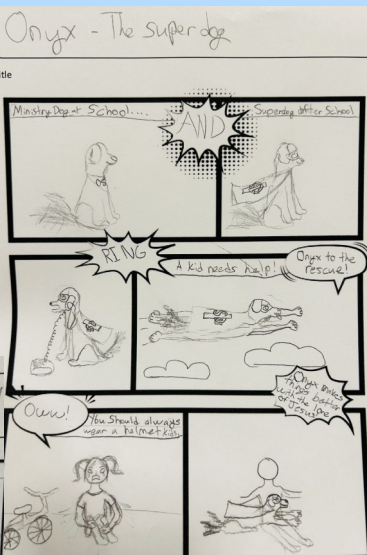
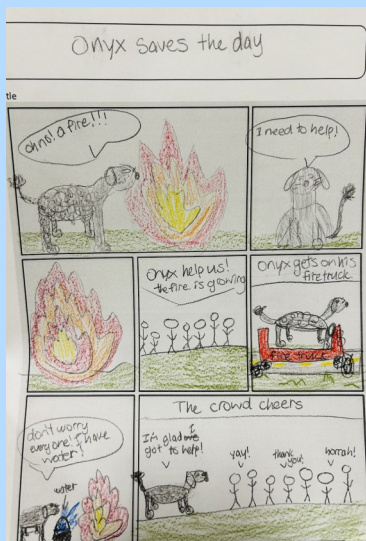
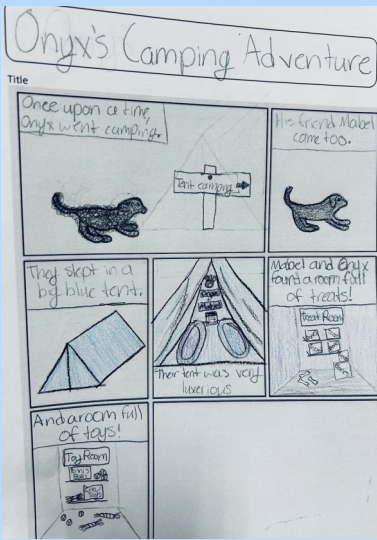
Onyx: *Happy bark* Amen to that!



Onyx joined Our Savior as our Ministry Dog in August of 2024. Since then, he has brought joy to students, staff, congregation members and everyone else he greets. He is a golden doodle (even though his fur is black) and he loves chewing on bones, loving on the students of OSL and stealing socks when he is at home!

8th grade Onyx Cartoons Illustrated in Art class

Our 8th grade class created some great artwork during their illustration section of art class. Please enjoy!



Hospitality

By: Vicar Joseph Bender



"Show hospitality to one another"
1 Peter 4:9

It's been almost a year now since Alyssa and I arrived at OSL. Recently, we have been reminiscing on the ways in which you welcomed us with open arms. From the very first day we arrived, you have welcomed us and

shown us hospitality that was beyond our imagination. Hospitality is simply showing love to a stranger or a guest. When we arrived, we were strangers to Lansing, but by your hospitality, we have felt right at home.

Perhaps it was from that first Sunday, when so many of you welcomed and introduced yourselves to us. There was excitement in the air, and although we had only been here days, we knew that this would be a special place. Whether it was during the coffee hour in between services, being greeted at the door, or through your kind words after the service, Alyssa and I have felt the love from you and your families.

But it also went beyond the physical walls of Our Savior and out into many homes. So many of you welcomed us with a warm meal around the dinner table and shared pieces of your life with us. It's one thing to feel welcomed on Sunday morning at church, but it's another to feel welcomed in the comfort of a home. This hospitality goes a long way. This hospitality is what makes Our Savior Lansing a special place.

Of course, this is simply modeling the way of Jesus: He welcomed all kinds of people. Jesus showed hospitality to those who didn't fit in. Jesus is the perfect model of what it means to welcome the stranger. For all strangers find their place in Jesus.

It's hard to leave a place when it feels like home. Because of your hospitality, what once was new has become familiar to us. So, continue showing hospitality -- to vicars, to one another, to new people, to all people. It really is an incredible quality here at OSL. To feel welcomed and comfortable when you're new somewhere is a gift. It is a gift that Alyssa and I will cherish and take with us. Hospitality loves the stranger and makes the stranger feel right at home. Thank you for making us feel right at home.



Our Savior Lutheran School Launches Exciting K-8 Curriculum Initiatives

By: Matthew Couser, Principal

At Our Savior Lutheran School, the 2024-25 academic year has marked a period of dynamic curriculum advancements focused on deeper engagement and student-centered learning. A significant highlight was the implementation of a new PBL-STEM (Project-Based Learning) science curriculum for grades 1-8, following a successful pilot through the CREATE for STEM Institute at Michigan State University. Teachers received hands-on professional development, instructional modeling, and unit kits to bring high-quality, inquiry-driven science lessons into their classrooms. This initiative, supported by school

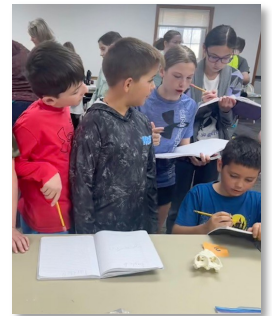


leadership and specialists, reinforces Our Savior's commitment to academic excellence and innovation in science instruction.

The school is also making strides in instructional practice and administrative systems. A dedicated committee of educators has been exploring standards-based grading, with an eye on a three-year rollout that will better reflect individual student mastery and guide differentiated instruction. Simultaneously, the adoption of Rooted in Reading and Orton-Gillingham strategies for K-3 has enhanced early literacy instruction, while a future partnership with The Literacy Lady is helping transform classroom reading experiences and improve reading engagement. Meanwhile, the

transition to a new Blackbaud Student Management System is underway for 2025-26, promising to streamline communication, grading, and school operations, including admissions and tuition management.

These initiatives support our ongoing accreditation action plan, which emphasizes the continual improvement of instructional practices and the importance of professional development. Additional curriculum growth includes renewed emphasis on health education, civics, and technology integration. Age-appropriate health instruction has been updated across key grades, while eighth-grade students are experiencing a robust civics education through the We the People program, culminating in mock Congressional hearings held at the school. Our Savior is also developing an AI Use Policy to support authentic learning in the digital age. Lastly, with the rollout of the IXL Learning platform in late 2025, thanks to a special school donation, students now have access to engaging, personalized practice in mathematics.



Through all these developments, we remain committed to integrating faith and learning in every aspect of curriculum and instruction. At Our Savior, Christian education is more than academic growth—it's about building relationships, loving God, and loving others in all we do.

Work Day at Youth Haven Ranch

By: John Horak, Minister of Music

Youth Haven Ranch is a camp for kids in Rives Junction. These kids are from all over Michigan and come from very rough and tough situations. They enter a safe place where they learn about Jesus for a weekend or a week. The kids attend camp for free.

Mark your calendars now for Saturday, September 20. All (high school age and up) are welcome to come and work on projects at Youth Haven Ranch. Join us for a great day of fellowship, food and sweat to help the camp who helps these kids.

Starting at 7 a.m. with breakfast and prayer time, we will begin work at 8 a.m. on various projects at the ranch. After a break for a lunch, we will resume work. The work day will end at 4:30 p.m. with clean up and prayer.

An email will be sent to all working which will include the list of projects to be worked on and what to bring.

Youth Haven Ranch is located at 3796 Perrine Road in Rives Junction.

Check out their web site: www.youthhaven.org to find out more about their ministry.

If you have any questions or would like to sign up, call me at (517)882-8665 ext. 107, e-mail jhorak@oursaviorlansing.org or talk to me before or after worship.



Food Bank Update

On May 18th, our congregation had the opportunity to thank Sharon Miller for 27 years of dedicated service to the Our Savior Food Bank. After many years of faithful and loving service to the community, Sharon will retire at the end of June. Jill Berends will take over as the Food Bank Director on July 1st. We thank Sharon, Jill and all of the volunteers who not only provide food but clothing, personal care items and most of all, the love of Jesus to the greater Lansing community.

Donations of non-perishable food and personal care items are always needed and appreciated. They can be dropped off in the Food Bank bin in the Church Lobby.



Connect 2.0! 2 Years of Connect!

"Connect has been an incredible blessing for our family." "I love that it is kid friendly and that there are different hands-on stations offered." "I appreciate the noise the kids make and that the pastors just keep speaking."

What an incredible year of Connect. On May 11th, we concluded our second full year of Connect. The service runs from after Labor Day to before Memorial Day. This year we averaged right around 50 worshippers a service. What a blessing! We continue to think about and dream about what Connect year 3 will look like! But before we get there, we look back on an awesome year 2!

This year we added in a "no-cleanup corner." That means there's a corner with Magnatiles, a nugget couch, and a place where kids can get wiggles out and move around. We continue to do a confession and absolution station, a visual faith station, and of course, a snack station! One family said about the stations, "The activities (especially the take home ones) help me keep the message going throughout the week with my kids."

There was one family who wasn't sure about the Connect Service. This was their response, "We had heard about it from my dad. He explained it the best he could, and we were skeptical. After we came one time, we loved it. This is our service!"

If you've not had a chance to check out the Connect service, whether you have a 3-year-old or are an 83-year-old, we encourage you to join us! It may not be your cup of tea, it may be exactly where you need to be, you might have someone you want to invite, but you'll never know until you take the first step.

Connect will start back up again in September on September 14th, at 10ish a.m. Invite a friend, invite a neighbor, come check it out!



SUMMER WORSHIP TIMES

Begins Sunday, June 15th

Sundays: 9:30am
online & in-person

Mondays: 7:00pm
in-person

Summer Basketball Camp

July 21-24 | 6-8pm

Open to all
entering 2-8
Graders

Includes:
camp t-shirt,
basketball skills
instruction,
beverages, and fun!

register today at
oursaviorlansing.org/events



SUMMER EVENTS CALENDAR

June

- 1 Congregation Meeting 9:30am
- 8 Graduation Sunday
- 9 Summer Camp Begins
- 15 Summer Worship Time Begins: 9:30am
Father's Day
- 16 Monday Evening Worship Begins: 7pm
- 18 Family Adventure Night: 5:30pm
- 29 Freedom Appreciation Worship Service

July

- 3-8 Offices Closed & No Summer Camp
- 21-24 Summer Basketball Camp

August

- 8 Last Day of Summer Camp
- 14 Youth Group Kick-Off: 7pm
- 16 OSL Clean-Up Day: 8:30am
- 18 School Meet & Greet: 5-7pm
- 20 First Day of School

Our Savior Lansing Church & School

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