

LEARN LIVE SHARE

Fall 2025



Our Savior Lutheran Church and School
Quarterly Newsletter

Vision Bridge 2025

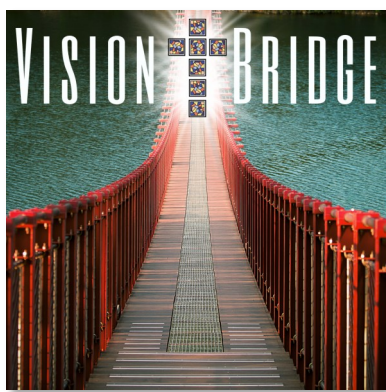
By: Pastor Bill Wangelin



"Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18) The founding families of Our Savior Lutheran Church and School had a



bold vision and launched a new church that would support a Lutheran grade school for the furthering of the Kingdom of God. In 2008, there was a new vision of a new church and school on 30 acres in a prime location. Today we continue the mission to learn, live, and share Christ. We do that in so many wonderful ways as a "churchschool."



This fall, our church leadership will be embarking on a journey to clarify and refine the vision for our church and school. This is building on the work that our Vision Team did last year, including the congregation survey. We are partnering with Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI) in a program

called the "Vision Bridge." It is a 9-month process that helps refine and clarify a church's mission, vision, and values, and leads to a strategic plan for 5-10 years out.

A team of five leaders will attend two immersive sessions in Chicago with other congregations participating in the program. The leaders are Senior Pastor Bill Wangelin, Associate Pastor Chris Deneen, Principal Matthew Couser, Chairman of the Congregation Jake Kasper, and Chairman of the Spiritual Life Team, Jim Sundstrom. The immersive training sessions take place in September and March. This team will then relay the information back to our congregation and involve as many people as possible in the discussions as we prayerfully seek God's will.

As our church and school prayerfully considers the vision for our future, each family is invited to do the same. Our school theme, "Joining Jesus as a Family" invites us to consider how we can all participate in the mission of God as a church family. No matter what kind of earthly family we have, each home can be a beacon of light and hope, grace and truth. We pray that Jesus would shine brightly in our church and school and in each home as we join Jesus on His mission. We have more to do, and a greater impact to make. Can you see it? Because Jesus holds us in His loving hands, our future looks bright!

In Christ,

Pastor Bill Wangelin <><

Joining Jesus as a Family

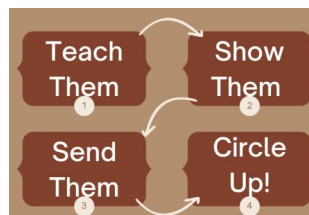
By: Pastor Chris Deneen



Our School theme this year, and a theme for much of our ministry focus this year, is "Joining Jesus as a Family". That is based on Greg Finke's book of the same name. In the book, he gives some great practical advice and keeps the focus on not just parenting, but discipline. You don't have to be a

mother or father to be a part of Joining Jesus as a Family! There are several levels and layers to the idea of "family." First of course, is the home. Mom, dad, and kids. But then take another step out, and think of our church family. Maybe you don't have kids, or are empty-nesters, but you can still be a mentor to another family, help kids, and just being visible in church helps others! And even beyond that, we are all part of God's family, which extends worldwide! We can all be a part of this amazing opportunity to Join Jesus as a Family.

One of the great things from the book, and even following Jesus' example, is the discipleship rhythm Finke talks about. Here it is, with my short hand:



Teach 'Em
Show 'Em
Send 'Em
Circle Up!

Teach 'Em—Before your children, or disciples, can go out they need to know what

they need to know! Jesus didn't immediately send His disciples out into the world. He taught them! He worked with them. He explained what they would be doing. That's how parents and other mentors and family members can be!

Show 'Em—Your disciples (or children) need to see what they need to do. Jesus showed His disciples how to care for people and what His ministry looked like. He showed them what it was like to be a disciple of Jesus. Parents and mentors, you have the opportunity to show your family what it means to be on Team Jesus!

Send 'Em—Once you've taught, and once you've shown, it is time to let them on the loose! Still with some supervision, depending on what exactly the task is, but let them try it out! Jesus' disciples came back with some interesting results and stories. I'm guessing those you send will too.

Circle up!—Once they go, don't forget to talk about it! It is important to review what happened, what went well, what went not so well, and how you can improve next time.

This rhythm that Jesus used, is a practical way that we can Join Jesus as a Family here in this place and to the ends of the world!

Let's join Him.

Getting to Know You:

Jill Berends, Food Bank Director

Jill has been a faithful volunteer at the Food Bank and has now joined the Our Savior staff as the Food Bank Director.



1. Where did you grow up? I grew up in Dearborn, MI, where I attended Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. After graduating from MSU, Russ and I got married and moved to the Grand Ledge area.

2. What are your favorite hobbies? My favorite hobbies are: reading, baking, camping and hiking.

3. What is your favorite bible verse? My favorite Bible verses are Romans 8:35-39. These words give me such comfort! No matter what happens in this world or comes my way in life, NOTHING can separate me from God's love.

4. What is your favorite food? Lasagna and Chicken Fajitas

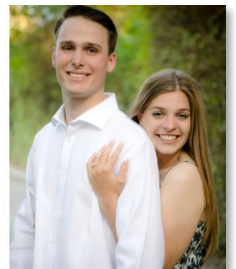
5. What led you to seek a career in church/school ministry? I never set out to get a job in a church ministry, but God led me to this position. I've been volunteering at the different churches I've attended all my life, including helping with VBS, playing handbells, Altar Guild and a quilting ministry. Once both of my children moved off to college, I started volunteering at the OSL foodbank. Over the years, Sharon Miller asked me to take on different roles at the foodbank and I was eventually asked to take over the director position upon Sharon's retirement. I am honored that OSL has entrusted me with this position and pray that I and all the other volunteers at the foodbank will be a blessing to the people we serve.

6. One fun fact about you: I was "Bashful" the clown in my college church's clown ministry.

Getting to Know You:

Vicar Paul & Bekah Engelhardt

Please welcome Paul and Bekah as they join us for Paul's vicarage!



1. Where did you grow up?

Paul: Kingwood, TX

Bekah: Decatur, IN and Pensacola, FL

2. What are your favorite hobbies?

Paul: Gaming, playing guitar, sports

Bekah: Reading, baking, playing guitar and singing, running

3. What is your favorite bible verse?

Paul: Matthew 22:37 because it is my confirmation verse and because there is nothing more important that you can do in your life than love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

Bekah: Proverbs 3:5-6. This verse reminds me to trust God in all things. His way is better than my own and He will lead me closer to Him.

4. What is your favorite food?

Paul: Burritos / Mexican food. Taco Bell

Bekah: Mexican food

5. What led you to seek a career in church/school ministry?

Paul: I worked at camp Lone Star in college and worked with youth and kids and through that God led me to want to serve Him and His church as a pastor.

Bekah: I want to serve God by teaching others about him, nurturing their faith, and equipping parents to teach about God at home.

6. One fun fact about you:

Paul: I played collegiate video games for Concordia TX.

Bekah: I play guitar and sing.

Mission Middelburg 2025



Time Management

By: Dave Wright, Minister of Family Life



Have you ever had the opportunity to choose from a variety of activities on a vacation – maybe an all-inclusive resort or a cruise? Or can you recall a time when you were at an excellent food buffet with numerous options from which to choose? Those types of opportunities are fun!

Each day that we live is very similar to those two examples. We get to choose not only several activities for that day, but we also get to choose how we will approach each and every aspect of the day, each activity, each experience.

Recently I had the opportunity to hear from the Rev Dr Ryan Peterson at the Best Practices Heartland Conference in Frankenmuth. Dr. Peterson is a high energy and highly organized person. I've heard him speak a few times about time management, and according to Dr. Peterson, there are five things to consider as we live out and manage each day.

- 1. Know the Why.** We have to know the “why” when it comes to doing things. Why do we work where we work? Why do we maintain the daily schedule that we have? Why do we have or not have hobbies? If we do not have a good reason for why we do things, we might not have great motivation or enjoyment from doing them. Sometimes I feel like I need to stop and reevaluate why I am doing something. Is it helpful, necessary, stressful? These are real questions to consider as we go about our day to day activities. Knowing the “why” helps us determine if the things we occupy our days with are all necessary and fulfilling.
- 2. Know What Drains Me and What Fills Me.** Hopefully you know yourself well enough to know what you enjoy and what you do not enjoy. Everyone certainly has to do things that they do not always enjoy (cleaning the bathroom, folding laundry, fixing something that is broken in the house, etc), but what about bigger things? Do you find yourself immersed in things each day or week that drains you too much? Consider changing that. Or at least consider balancing those things out with activities that “fill” you. For example, if you are more of an introverted person and you must spend each day talking to and dealing with people, that can certainly be draining. So what are you doing to get filled up again? Are you spending some time in solitude and quiet in order to recharge and fill up? Are you carving out time for activities and hobbies so that you can be filled?
- 3. Embrace Your Season.** Are you a student? Enjoy being a student. Go to class, work hard, enjoy your social life, embrace high school or college or post graduate work. Embrace learning. Are you in the young family stage? Embrace seeing your children take their first steps. Embrace having young children at home (they seriously do grow up fast). Embrace soccer and t-ball, dance lessons, and kids sleepovers. Are you nearing empty nest stage? Embrace conversations and activities with your almost-adult children.

Embrace a few more free hours in your schedule. Embrace perhaps more responsibilities at work. Are you retired? Embrace more time to choose things that you want to do. Embrace a slower pace. Bottom line, don't anxiously wait for the current season to be over. Embrace where God has you and enjoy each season of life as it unfolds.
- 4. Budget Your Energy for the Day, Week, and Season.** Set priorities. Fill out a daily and weekly calendar. Coordinate with your spouse or friend so that what truly needs to be accomplished that day or week gets done. Consider this: What are your “Big 3 things” each day? What are those things that absolutely must get done that day? Maybe it is a celebration dinner, a meeting at work, or stopping by your child's school for a classroom presentation. Figure out how to manage your time so that you can devote your energy to the important things. Prioritize your day so that you have time and energy for the really important stuff!
- 5. Create Rhythms and Establish Rituals.** This has to do with discipline. Disciple yourself to maintain routines. Be consistent with a wake up time and morning routine. Perhaps you could consider getting up 20 or 30 minutes earlier if you are a morning person. Start the day with reading or exercise, a brief walk, or sitting quietly some place gathering your thoughts. Establish healthy routines. Maybe you're more of a night person. What are some things you can do late at night each day before bed? Maybe you need to establish one or two things that help you have consistency in your day. Perhaps more consistent meal times or a mid-day activity. For families, I would suggest setting aside time each day for conversation and a meal. Worship together weekly. Study God's word. Memorize God's word. Keep it simple. You don't need to start running 10 miles each day or reading 10 chapters of the bible each day – simply set aside some small blocks of time for doing consistent daily activities.

God gives us each day as a gift. Budget your time effectively so as to honor God and His good gifts.





National Youth Gathering Thoughts

"Show hospitality to one another"

Arriving at the Gathering I knew I was going to have a good time, but many things still surprised me. (in a good way) The sessions were very insightful and were such a blessing, but what stuck out to me most was the sheer force of community. We were told there would be so many people, but when I got there, and especially when we were all together in the Super Dome, I really felt the power in it. Just standing in the Dome at the Mass Event was just eye opening. Being surrounded by people who love Jesus as much as I do was amazing! In truth, it made me feel small, but not insignificant, like I was just one star, apart of a whole night sky. And I will always remember that.

- Marie DeYarmond, OSL Alumni



The many service opportunities were the most meaningful takeaways for me from the Gathering. Lord was at work through the 20,000 attendees in a number of service projects.

Collectively, we donated 652 inches of hair for wigs, assembled 320 braille book, sewed 450 diapers, packed 6,700 resource kits and 2,000 health kits. Additionally, 568 pints of blood were donated, many from first time donors like me. Just like Jesus served us, we must go and serve others. It was truly remarkable to see just how many ways we can serve the community.

- Alexander Stahl, OSL Alumni

Backpack Thank You

We were able to provide 75 backpacks full of supplies to be distributed through the OSL Food Bank. A big thank you to all who donated and the Panther Camp kiddos who helped put them together. What an amazing experience and we are so glad OSL is able to give back to our community in this way.





Thanksgiving Baskets

Our Savior Lutheran will be supporting 200 families in need at Thanksgiving again this year. Donations of non-perishable items can be made starting October 1st.

Boxed Mashed Potatoes	Boxed Stuffing
Cans of Corn	Cans of Green Beans
Boxes of Jell-O	Cake Mix Frosting

Do not have time to go to the store you can use our Amazon link: <https://a.co/diUHxze> to support our ministry, items ship directly to OSL.

Monetary Donations to purchase Turkeys, Gallons of Milk, Rolls, and Margarine are needed or donate \$25 to pay for 1 whole meal. Give online or in the offering basket on Sundays.

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.

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

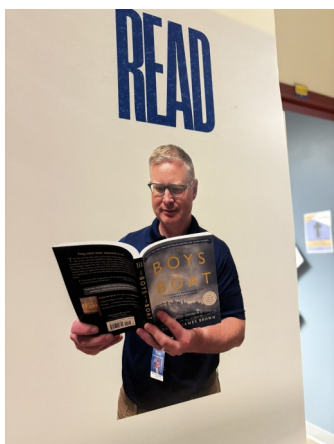


Nurturing a Love for Reading at Our Savior Lutheran School

By: Matthew Couser, Principal

This school year, we are celebrating the joy and blessing of reading—not just as a skill, but also as a blessing from the Lord that shapes minds, warms hearts, and draws us closer to the truth of God’s Word.

Our faculty has embraced this vision wholeheartedly. During our professional development, guided by literacy consultant Katie Davis, The Literacy Lady, we reflected on the importance of modeling reading for our students and teaching the sheer enjoyment of it. Together, we shared our personal reading passions and the books that have shaped us—reminding each other that when children see adults reading with joy, they begin to understand reading as a lifelong blessing, not a school assignment. Our teachers have also been busy updating their classroom libraries, giving them a fresh look to spark curiosity and draw students in to explore them throughout the school day.



I’ve personally been blessed by the encouragement of Pastor Wangelin and Pastor Chris, who invited me to read “Joining Jesus as a Family” by Greg Finke—a book that beautifully illustrates how faith conversations, Scripture, and acts of love can be woven into the ordinary rhythms of family life. I also recently read “Faith and Flourishing” by Dr. Bernard Bull, President of Concordia University, Nebraska, which offers rich, Christ-centered strategies for leading Christian schools with both excellence and purpose, challenging leaders to root every decision in the mission of the Gospel. Both books reminded me that reading can be more than informational—it can be transformational, shaping how we live, lead, and love in Jesus’ name.

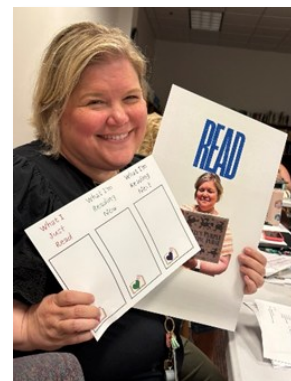
As a school, we want to pass this joy on to our students. With Davis’ guidance, we are finding ways to keep reading accessible, enjoyable, and woven into daily life. Whether it is reading Scripture aloud as a family, getting lost in a good novel, or simply discussing a book at the dinner table, every moment with a book can become a moment to connect—with God, with

each other, and with the world, He created.

Let’s join together in making this a year where books open minds, touch hearts, and strengthen our calling to “serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

Here’s how you can join the journey:

- **Model joy in reading.** Let your children see you cherish a book—whether it’s a novel, a devotional, or a story you share aloud.
- **Create moments of literary connection.** Even five minutes of shared reading before bed becomes sacred space to pause, reflect, and connect.
- **Lean into simplicity.** Katie’s resources often provide easy-to-use printables or booklists that make reading approachable and delightful: <https://www.theliteracylady.co/>
- **Celebrate curiosity.** Ask open-ended questions: “What did you wonder about today?” or “What part made you smile?” Let reading spark conversation, not just comprehension.



Just as Katie Davies, the Literacy Lady, inspires families to nurture reading naturally, we hope Our Savior becomes a place where children come to know that each page turned is an invitation into wonder, faith, and a lifelong love for God’s Word. May this year be one where reading doesn’t feel like school—it feels like home.



OKTOBERFEST

GERMAN FAMILY FESTIVAL

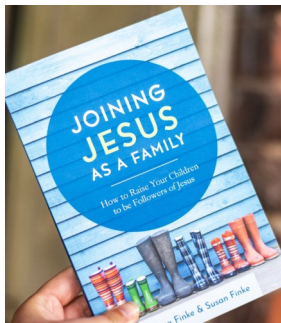
OCTOBER 4, 2025
3 - 7 PM

FOOD
DRINKS
MUSIC
FAMILY
ACTIVITIES

About Our School Theme: Joining Jesus as a Family

As we begin this new school year under the theme, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15b), we are reminded that the home is a powerful place of faith formation. At Our Savior, we are grateful to walk alongside you in the sacred calling of raising children who know and follow Jesus.

This year, we are lifting up resources that support your family in this mission. One such resource is Greg Finke's book, "Joining Jesus as a



moments at home.

When Greg Finke gave us permission to use this theme, he responded, "How exciting! What a fun and fulfilling adventure your families will have!" His words capture the very heart of what we hope for this year.

Here are a few key encouragements as we begin the year together:

- **Jesus is already at work in your home.** Our role as parents and educators is to help children recognize and respond to His presence and invitation.
- **Discipleship is not a program—it is a lifestyle.** Faith is caught as much as it is taught, especially when it is woven into daily rhythms like meals, car rides, and bedtime.
- **We are in this together.** Our Savior is more than a school—it is a Christ-centered community where homes and classrooms collaborate to nurture faith, character, and love.
- **Small moments matter.** A question at dinner, a verse in the car, listening to the Christian radio station, or praying with your child before school—these are the seeds that grow lasting faith. We are praying for your family and are excited for all that God has in store this year. Together, let us walk in faith, rooted in Jesus, and confident in His promises.

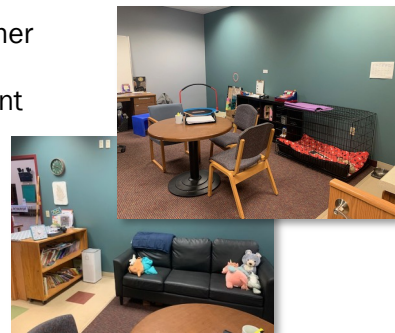
We are praying for your family and are excited for all that God has in store this year. Together, let us walk in faith, rooted in Jesus, and confident in His promises.



One year anniversary of the Student Support Center

By: Sara DeYarmond, Education Specialist

Did you know that the former church nursery has been repurposed into the Student Support Center? In the summer of 2024, the space formerly used as a nursery space during church services was remodeled so that it could be used on a daily basis as a support center for Our Savior students.



The Student Support Center houses a space with a couch, other soft comfort items, sensory stations and tools, a small library, extra snacks for students who've forgotten, a private bathroom with extra toiletry items, extra clothes for the days when the unexpected happens, our ministry dog (Onyx), and serves as an office space for Education Specialist, Sara DeYarmond. During a typical school day, several students visit the office for sensory breaks, which can involve deep pressure tools, exercise routines, and other activities meant to support self-regulation. Middle school and upper elementary students will have meetings with Mrs. DeYarmond to discuss situations they need support with emotionally and/or academically. Representatives from different classes will come "check out" our ministry dog, Onyx, so he can spend some time in classrooms. Additionally, teachers will meet with Mrs. DeYarmond for instructional coaching or curriculum support.

On Sundays or evenings, this space is open to any who would benefit from using it, including the accessible bathroom. We are blessed to have a space like this for our students!

Beginning September 14th



**2ND & 4TH SUNDAYS
10AM | COMMONS**

Now meeting year round!

FALL EVENTS CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Labor Day - Offices Closed
- 3 Wednesday Morning Bible Study Begins
- 4 Youth Group Begins
- 7 Back to Regular Worship Times
- 14 Connect Service Begins
- 17 Discover Our Savior & Lifelight Bible Study Begins
- 21 Infant Faith Chest Milestone
- 26 Mother Son Epic Adventure Night

OCTOBER

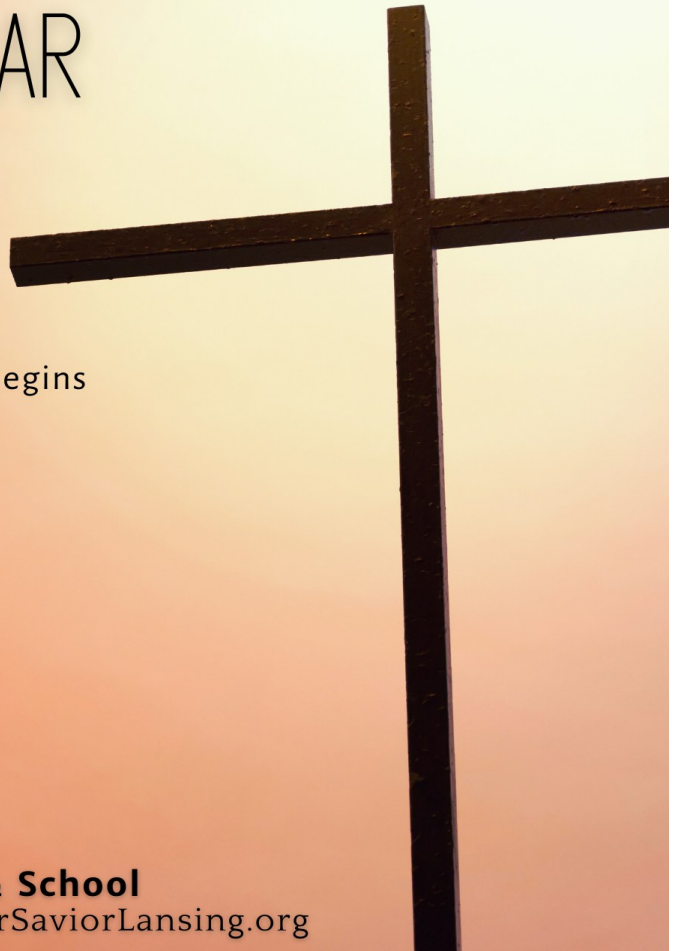
- 4 Oktoberfest
- 5 Fourth Grade Technology Milestone
- 26 Reformation & Confirmation Sunday

NOVEMBER

- 16 New Member Sunday
- 23 Family Service Sunday
- 26 Thanksgiving Eve Worship

Our Savior Lutheran Church & School

7910 E. St. Joe Hwy., Lansing, MI 48917 OurSaviorLansing.org



Our Savior Lutheran Church and School
7910 E. St. Joe Hwy
Lansing, MI 48917

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MAILED FROM ZIP CODE 48837
PERMIT NO. 3