

Our Savior's Lutheran Church



A Continuing Story of Ministry and Mission

Mid-Year Report 2018





Stories, Updates, and More

All of us at Our Savior's are called to carry out our mission of proclaiming Christ and nurturing faith that connects with everyday life. While each of us do that in our own way, it's important to be aware of the collective progress we are making so that we make sure we're all headed in the same direction and working toward the same goal.

That's what this mid-year meeting is all about, a kind of checkpoint that allows us to tell stories from the mission field, recognize the amazing things God is accomplishing through this congregation, and orient ourselves around a common mission trajectory.

You will hear some of those stories at the meeting. You may read more of them in this brief report. As we encounter these real-life examples of how God is working through the ministry of this community of faith, let us give thanks to God without whom none of this would be possible. Let us also resolve to continue working together using the resources and gifts God has given us to proclaim Christ near and far and to always strive with every ounce of our beings to find ways to connect faith with everyday life.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you and the mission we share.



Anne Rieck McFarland
President



Randall E. Gehring
Senior Pastor



OUTREACH

Ashes to Go

We fought against our frozen fingers to tie the banner onto the cold metal frame. We dropped sandbags down to anchor the sign against the wind. Jetty, Steve, and I stood back to admire our work. The banner—advertising our first Ashes to Go event for Ash Wednesday—looked pretty slick. But would the people come?

On Ash Wednesday morning, the Outreach board assembled early to rub sleep from their eyes and make pot after pot of coffee. Pr. Randy and I stood watch at the south entrance. Pr. Sami and Pr. Tim camped elsewhere around the building and on Summit Avenue facing Augustana. It was so early the church building's automatic lights had not activated. Randy admitted he could not turn them on. We waited in the early morning dark.

And then the people arrived. Some drove under the canopy, two or three cars at a time. Randy and I brought them coffee; they brought their concerns and hopes and routine daily challenges. We prayed together; remembered our mortality with a sign of ash; and then they were gone. Sami and Tim brought back similar stories from students passing by; professors and staff rushing to work; others braving a chilly February morning on foot.

Some have derided Ashes to Go events—the church ceding ground to a convenience-driven age. This year I saw something different: I saw our congregation share a symbol of hope with people willing to serve a busy world while marked as Christ's own.

—Pr. Justin Kosec

Strategic Plan Engagement Focus #4 (Service to Our Neighbor), Action #2 (Develop a ministry of service to OS�'s immediate neighborhood).

OSL TV Ministry

On Sunday mornings, our musicians and readers and preachers stand before the congregation, using every ounce of their significant gifts to share the Gospel. But below the kitchen, in an unnoticed room, another small team of dedicated volunteers uses their own mighty talents to spread that message even further.

The volunteers who run our television cameras, the complicated production gear, and sound boards often huddle unnoticed. But because of their work, our pastors often meet shut-ins or hospital patients who experience worship at Our Savior's every Sunday via our television broadcasts.



OSL members and friends who are comfortable with the internet have for some years now enjoyed the opportunity to view Festive and Celebrate worship services online at oslchurch.com—but those videos aren't available till Monday morning. So, earlier this year, the TV Ministry team applied its significant know-how to stream our worship services on YouTube. They tried week after week, but technical issues always prevented things from working smoothly. Then, in a fit of inspiration, they decided to shift gears and attempt streaming on Facebook Live. After a short pilot, we

officially launched our Facebook Live streaming. Now people far beyond the range of local television watch Our Savior's every Sunday at [facebook.com/oslchurchsf](https://www.facebook.com/oslchurchsf).

This summer our television broadcasts were preempted by World Cup coverage. Some Sundays we run a bit long for our television

hour, and the telecast cuts off. But now, people can watch every minute of these services live, and return to them again and again on our website—even from bed.

—Pr. Justin Kosec

*Strategic Plan Engagement Focus #3 (Outreach Ministry),
Action #3 (Further develop OSL's TV Ministry).*



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Last year, Pr. Randy gave the Congregational Life board a significant challenge.

He saw the good work they had done with the bags they send to our homebound friends. A great project, but he had in mind something a bit more... ambitious. Could they deliver the bags to every shut-in we know?

The board swallowed the lump in its collective throat and got to work. Mapped out the shut-ins. Checked the list twice. And then they called on the entire congregation to deliver the bags.

The board advertised aggressively, unsure whether they would get the help they needed.

And then the congregation overwhelmed them with eagerness. On delivery day we announced the event at both services, but by the time folks left the 11 o'clock service all the bags were gone!

Some of you have delivered these bags for years. You take them to friends you know, or family members. In this way, one person becomes an emissary of love from the entire congregation.

But this time we also heard many powerful stories from strangers delivering bags to strangers. The uneasy dance at the door. Uncertainty on both sides.

It's awkward to love a stranger. You have to remember, sometimes love—and not knowing—leads the way.

Both instances show how God loves us, and how we love God. God knows us intimately, so God reaches out to us even when we cannot even open our door. Once God comes knocking, we find ourselves loved by people we hardly recognize.

—Pr. Justin Kosec



CARING MINISTRIES

Grief Support: Reaching Beyond the Walls

OSL's Caring Ministries Program has long been known within the community as a ministry that reaches into the lives of those who are in need of compassionate Christian care. For close to 14 years now, our Good Grief Group, meeting on Thursday mornings, has provided care and support to our members, and to those within our community who have gone through loss and grief. Referrals to our group have come from area churches, hospitals, and funeral homes, reaching beyond our walls out into the larger community.

In a similar fashion, our Recent Loss Group, which meets for a four-week series several times throughout the year, has touched the lives of members and non-members alike who have recently gone through the death of someone they love. Many Recent Loss Group attendees later transition into the Good Grief Group.

Care for those who are grieving is just one of the ways that OSL continues to "Connect Faith to Everyday Life," with all who walk through our doors.

—Pr. Tim Lemme

Communities Facing Addiction Partnership

Addiction has many faces, many stories. At one point or another addiction has touched the lives of almost every family within our communities of faith, it is an issue that all of us face.

For over a year now, area congregations have been partnering in their addiction awareness programs to come together in their mission to provide care and support to individuals and families struggling with the issues of addiction. Under the umbrella of the South Dakota Synod, these partners have worked together with Face It

TOGETHER of Sioux Falls to develop programs, worship services, and Bible studies that pertain directly to the issues of addiction. By facing addiction together, we are able to offer compassionate Christian care to those within our congregations—and beyond our walls. As communities of faith, we offer a Christlike response to a huge issue that affects us all.

For more information, contact Caring Ministries, 336-2942.

—Pr. Tim Lemme

Rosebud/Hospitality Meetings at OSL

This year, OSL began hosting conversations with local hospital chaplains, social workers, Faith Community Nurses, Native spiritual leaders, and others, to uncover needs that "fall through the cracks" when Native families come to Sioux Falls for medical care. One example: a chaplain accompanied a Native mother and child to a homeless shelters when the reservation van did not come as expected at the time of discharge. Our discussions are exploring ways in which our faith and medical communities may improve expressions of care for these neighbors—seeking opportunities to connect faith to everyday life.

—Michelle Anderson, RN, FCN

Sanford Footcare Clinics

We are seeing an increase in attendance at these clinics at OSL, and may need to increase our clinical hours. Some new attendees are from the community/neighborhood who happened to catch the announcements during televised services. This ministry provides an important service for those who need assistance with footcare as well as an opportunity to connect on a spiritual/human level. The artwork in our Treatment Room features Jesus washing the disciples' feet.

—Michelle Anderson, RN, FCN



FAITH FORMATION

Eager children poured into the room, their little bodies finding workspace for today's craft. Atop the tables, markers, stickers, and wooden frames piqued curiosity for their final day's activity.

I was serving a volunteer for Vacation Bible School in 2016. During the week, I had also interviewed for the Director of Faith Formation position. The excitement of the children, combined with my dedication to bringing faith alive, led me to say, "I want kids to be so comfortable in this church it feels their second home."

In 2016, we had 101 kids in VBS. In 2018, we welcomed 131 students, reflecting a 30% growth in only two years. Fifty-five volunteers, including 28 youth, fulfilled different roles to keep student groups learning, safe, and busy. A family worshiped with us the following Sunday because of their children's positive experience at VBS. And one student checked in saying, "I wish I could live here."

I wish I could live here.

This space? It is more than a second home. It is home in the hearts of students who come expecting fun and leave transformed—wishing to always be here—thanks to their face-to-face encounters with the God of love who offers Life found no place else.

—Melissa Nesdahl



In the intersection of everyday life and Christ's love, passion for the church is born. VBS offers unique space to do this because it engages students' faith beyond the academic year programming, allows youth to be congregational leaders, and purposefully opens OSJ's doors to families outside our congregational walls.





HOSPITALITY

Here in this Place

Our Savior's—the congregation—is "a people forgiven in Christ whose mission is to proclaim Christ and nurture faith that connects with everyday life."

Our Savior's—the facility—is a place designed to make that happen.

It is a house of worship, this building—a place of fellowship, a second home for children, youth, and adults. It is a school, a library, a nursery, a gym, a workplace. It is a place for joy and a place for grief, for celebration and sorrow. It belongs to the members of the OSL congregation, and it belongs to the larger community.

Beyond the many and varied uses to which the Our Savior's family puts the facility, neighbors, friends, and partners across the Sioux Falls community also utilize this beautiful facility, accepting OSL's open invitation to use the space for events and activities that support the mission of connecting faith with everyday life.

The South Dakota Synod of the ELCA has frequently made use of OSL's facility for its annual assembly. In years past, the assembly's opening worship service was held in the Sanctuary; more recently, the entirety of the weekend-long gathering has fairly taken over the building. In a typical year, such as 2018, that means OSL puts out the welcome mat for some 500 to 525 voting members, visitors, guests, and displayers. In an atypical year—next year, for instance, when the synod will elect a new bishop—that number will swell to 600 or more. "The hospitality we experienced at Our Savior's from both the staff and the volunteers was five-star!" said Bishop David Zellmer after the 2018 assembly. "We really felt at home at OSL."

"We are grateful for the use of your facilities," echoes the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, which holds its annual Worship Service and Dinner at OSL. "You and your team always accommodate our needs with the use of the Sanctuary and The

Gathering Place. We hope you allow us to continue to use the space every year for our opening worship into the future." In 2018, Good Samaritan brought 425 people to Our Savior's for the event.

The Helpline Center held its suicide-prevention events, "Cracked Not Broken," in May and June this year. Each event was planned for 600 people. "We honestly couldn't be happier with how wonderful everything went for our event(s) at OSL!" the Helpline Center reports. "Every single person that helped us was so amaz-



ing to work with. If we host another large-scale event like, we will absolutely reach out to OSL to check on availability, because it was a first-rate experience!"

"Because we share 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all' (Ephesians 4:5), we cherish opportunities to build up the one body of Christ through fellowship, learning, service, and worship together." So says OSL's core value, Community. To open our doors to the local community is to seize that opportunity and share Christ's love through service and hospitality.

2018

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Revenue	\$1,075,968	Budget	\$1,065,893
Contributions	\$950,154		\$924,653
Board Income	\$45,654		\$69,240
Other Income	\$56,449		\$52,000
Festival Offerings	\$23,711		\$20,000

Expenditures	\$1,104,906	Budget	\$1,086,729
Benevolence	\$153,869		\$125,000
Personnel	\$584,428		\$619,767
Ministry Programs	\$87,894		\$112,875
Operations	\$195,376		\$153,587
Interest	\$41,014		\$40,000
Other	\$42,325		\$35,500

Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$28,938)	Budget	(\$20,836)*
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*The 2018 Ministry Plan incorporates \$41,472 from prior year surplus in projected revenues as a way to achieve a balanced budget. This amount is not reflected in the figures above.



Our Savior's is a people forgiven in Christ...

...whose mission is to proclaim Christ and nurture faith that connects with everyday life.

Our beliefs and mission shape our values and our values shape how we live. OSL has five Core Values: *Worship, Service, Learning, Generosity, and Community.*

Worship – Because worship is central to who we are, we provide a variety of worship experiences in which the Gospel is shared through word and sacraments.

Service – Because we are called to love all people, we encourage, equip, and provide opportunities to serve and reach out to all with God's love.

Learning – Because growth in faith is a lifelong endeavor, we provide, promote, and facilitate learning for Christian faith and living.

Generosity – Because we are created in the image of God, the giver of all things, we challenge and encourage one another and ourselves as a congregation to be faithful and generous stewards of the time, talent, and financial resources God entrusts to us.

Community – Because we share “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all” (Ephesians 4:5), we cherish opportunities to build up the one body of Christ through fellowship, learning, service, and worship together.



OUR SAVIOR'S

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Connecting Faith to Everyday Life.