

The *intercom* In Church and Community



From the Senior Pastor Adapting for the Sake of Mission



My Dear Friends,

By the time you read this, we will have held our annual meeting here at church, a time of celebrating the good work we have been able to do and dreaming together about where God might be leading us next.

It is certainly good to celebrate, especially in these times when nearly everything we do seems more difficult than normal. Despite the pandemic, Our Savior's continues to serve as a beacon of hope for folks both near and far as we stay laser focused on our mission of proclaiming Christ and nurturing faith that connects to everyday life. We regularly receive words of gratitude and appreciation for the ministry we are providing, which makes all the hard work worth celebrating.

It is also good to dream, to never be content with where we are or what we have accomplished. God continues to call us to the frontier, to the margins, where some have never heard the gospel good news or felt the freedom of forgiveness that Christ gives to all. There will always be work to do as a church

and it is our duty and delight to discern together where the Holy Spirit is leading us next.

It is true, however, that the way we do ministry these days is necessarily different than just a year ago. The pandemic has forced us to adapt in order to do what God calls us to do.

As a result, fewer of you are attending worship in person, which has contributed to a decrease in offerings received. It's simply a direct correlation in the church: a decrease in worship attendance almost always leads to a decrease in offerings.

One way to provide greater stability to the operations side of our ministry is to take fuller advantage of several convenient electronic giving options here at Our Savior's.

- ♦ **First Fruits** – a recurring electronic funds transfer from a bank account and at a frequency of your choosing. This secure option ensures that your offering will continue making ministry possible even when you're not able to attend worship. To sign up to become one of over 250 households that use this convenient way to give an offering, contact Barb Haugan, bhaugan@oslchurch.com.

- ♦ **Giving online** – use your debit or credit card to make a secure donation anytime. Simply go to oslchurch.com/giving and follow the prompts to give your offering.
- ♦ **Text-to-Give** – use your smart phone to send a contribution via text message. Simply text *sharing* to 73256 and follow the prompts to give a gift securely using your debit or credit card.

Member Deb Ver Steeg has this to say about online giving: “[It] is secure, relatively easy, contains a broad selection of categories from which to choose, and the person gets an emailed receipt.” Ben and Leah Weins agree with Deb: “We keep track of our budget monthly, so this is most convenient, ensures we don’t forget, and saves us the stress of writing checks or withdrawing cash. We are thankful for the option to give online.”

Beth and Scott Boyens offer this perspective: “First Fruits giving makes planned giving easy and consistent. During the pandemic, for example, it has helped us keep up with our offering, even while we worship from home.” Dave and Karen Zimbeck add, “Especially now with the pandemic, we don’t worry about having to remember to mail in our offering. We would recommend anyone considering the program to realize it also helps OSL with its own budget in continuing support of operations and benevolences.”

The times in which we are living and doing ministry are requiring us to adapt in order to continue to serve our mission faithfully. I invite you to prayerfully consider how you might adapt your offering practices to best support the ministry God has entrusted to us.

With abundant gratitude for you,



Pr. Randy Gehring

The Lenten Season at Our Savior’s

Ash Wednesday, February 17

- ♦ Ashes to Go, 7:00–8:00 A.M., Imposition of Ashes and a blessing
- ♦ In-person worship, 12:00 and 6:30 P.M., including individual Imposition of Ashes
- ♦ Live-stream worship, 6:30 P.M., on OSL’s Facebook page

Midweek Worship, Wednesdays, February 24–March 24

- ♦ In-person worship, 6:30 P.M., Sanctuary
- ♦ Pre-recorded online worship, 6:30 P.M., on OSL’s Facebook page

Palm Sunday – March 28

Ministry Spotlight Susan B. Anthony Elementary School

“...why do you stand looking at the sky?”

Jesus’ friends were staring after their leader. Some, perhaps, shielded their eyes against the sun as Jesus rose into the sky.

As Jesus rose toward heaven—wherever that is—they watched their guide, their purpose, faded from view.

For years, the people swarmed Jesus; their job was to feed and to listen and to follow. Jesus died, leaving them bereft. But then he rose again, and he resurrected their sense of purpose.

For years, Jesus had brought the people to them. What would they do now?

The answer came with a question:

“...why do you stand looking at the sky?”

The angels pointed them toward the ground beneath their feet. The angels told them to go out into the world. If they were to find Jesus again, they wouldn’t find him staring up to heaven.

After all, they had met Jesus on the road. That was where they’d find him once again.

The mural in the Sanctuary at Our Savior’s is an ever-present reminder of the angels’ question. Why stare up at heaven, when there is work to do in the world?

In 2021, we summarize this mission with a simple phrase: At OSL we connect faith to everyday life. We know that if our congregation is to find Jesus in Sioux Falls, we cannot merely stare at heaven. We must go into the community.

And if you want to really know a community—its vitality and challenges, the health of its families, how it balances care for the wealthy and for the poor—you talk to its teachers.

Our Savior’s has a decades-old history of school-church partnerships. For ages, OSL had worked alongside Hawthorne elementary school, and OSL’s Women of the ELCA (WELCA) chapter has generously given to Hayward, Garfield, and Susan B. Anthony (SBA).

About a year ago, your Love in Action Core Ministry Team began researching how we could reinvest in these partnerships. Could we find one school where we could establish

relationships with the staff, support the teachers, and provide encouragement and resources for the students?

We found an eager partner in Nancy Krueger, a retired principal and OSL member. Nancy wedged her toe in the door at SBA, where she and Pr. Justin met with the staff to begin forming relationships.

In October's The Intercom we shared some of our early efforts to support SBA: "seat sacks" (seatback bags) for kindergarten classrooms; test-time snacks for students; masks for every student at SBA; conference meals for teachers.

We entered 2021 with a vision to expand this partnership beyond just a small team. So we began this year with a challenge to the staff: Can your ministries each commit to sponsoring a classroom for a book drive? Together, the women's circles, WELCA, Stephen Ministry, Children's Ministry,

"[A school-church partnership] allows the school to connect with the larger community and creates a neighborhood partnership. It also allows the staff and students to realize that there are others that care about them besides the staff at school. Another benefit is that it helps to take the whole volunteer/event burden off the shoulders of the few parents attempting to continue a PTO/PTA group." —Nancy Krueger, OSL member and retired educator

the Love in Action Core Ministry Team, the governing board, and the staff raised enough to gift each classroom with books for every child.

Throughout all this work, staff member Debbie Theis has provided leadership and cooked meals. The Love in Action Core Ministry Team continues to brainstorm strategy. And Nancy Krueger remains a one-woman expert and leader for this project.

As we move into the next stage of this work, we want to expand these relationships. We want to get to know the teachers as individuals. When in-person mentoring continues at SBA,



we want to expand to provide mentors from our congregation. We need one or two people to represent OSL during

"We have appreciated how eager and open OSL has been in walking alongside us in whatever capacity that arises. Here are just a few ways we have benefited from our partnership thus far: donating a variety of items for students, including clothing, masks, and chair bags for supplies, partnering with our PTO, creating prizes for a positive staff morale activity, starting the process for Adopt-a-Classroom, making delicious meals for staff on conference nights, and meeting with administration to see how we can continue to grow our partnership."

—Laura Siebenborn and Jeff Sheets,
Susan B. Anthony Elementary

monthly PTO meetings. Gifts of money will provide even more opportunities to support children and their teachers.

We want to pace ourselves in this work. We want to listen to our partners and build our relationships. We want to know whom to pray for at SBA and how we can ask God to support them. We want to know, and to love, our neighbors in that school; and to understand the challenges faced by the students they serve.

Certainly, then, we will meet the God who is already at work in that place.

—Pr. Justin Kosec



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Worship Services

Saturday Evening – 5:00 P.M., Sanctuary

Sunday Morning

Celebrate Worship – 8:45 A.M., Celebrate Center

Festive Worship – 10:15 A.M., Sanctuary

Television and Internet

Celebrate: 9:00 A.M., KTTW (cable channel 9; channel 7.1)

Festive: 1:00 P.M., KSCB (cable channel 30; channel 53),

Facebook Live, 8:45 and 10:15 A.M.

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Faithful, Hopeful, Loving Generosity

Your support of OSL's mission to proclaim Christ and nurture faith that connects to everyday life is life-changing, both for you and for those whom our ministry reaches. Thank you! May God bless your faithful, hopeful, loving generosity.

Ways to Give

First Fruits Giving –

electronic contributions

Text Giving – text *sharing* to

73256 and follow the link

My OSL – keep current, and

quickly set up scheduled and
one-time giving

Learn more at oslchurch.com/giving