

The *intercom*

In Church and Community



From the Senior Pastor Easter Grace



Dear OSL family,

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

With these words and one voice, the church around the world declares the great glad tidings of Easter. The One whom the world crucified has been raised. Death has been defeated once and for all. In him, sins are forgiven and grace abounds. God has kept God's promise, again.

Throughout Lent we have remembered God's promises to God's people, to us, and we have also brought to mind the ways that we are not faithful to the promises we make to God, to one another, and to ourselves. It's been a long and arduous journey of reflection, prayer, and sitting with the truth about ourselves for longer than what may feel comfortable.

But Easter is a time for us to revel in and celebrate God's grace, which God offers freely regardless of how many times we break promises. Not only is this God's nature—to be giving and gracious—but it is the very thing that heals the brokenness that binds us and makes it possible for us to live and serve as people who share this grace with the world.

In this issue of *The Intercom*, you will read about some of the ways that our Spiritual Care Ministry Team has been a conveyor of grace and comfort during this time of pandemic.

Not many of us anticipated that we would be living as we have for over a year, but as Pr. Tim points out in the feature article inside, the limitations imposed upon us by the coronavirus provided opportunities for us to reimagine how we as a church might continue to share God's grace with folks who were isolated, lonely, hospitalized, grieving, and anxious.

As you encounter these real-life accounts of how the ministry we share is making an impact in our community, I invite you to reflect on how God is calling *you* to share the grace of Easter within your circles of influence. For you, maybe it means reaching out to a neighbor you know lives alone; maybe it means paying the tab for the vehicle behind you in the drive-thru; maybe it means wearing a mask as a visible sign of your love for your neighbor; maybe it means making a meal or two for the family who is grieving the loss of a loved one; maybe it means giving a thank offering in gratitude for God's amazing grace; maybe...

The possibilities are endless but the point is this: grace is too good to keep to ourselves, so have fun sharing it as broadly as you can and as you do, know that God is using you to love and bless this broken world.

Grateful for grace and for you,

Randy

Pr. Randy Gehring

Ministry Spotlight

Supporting Those in Need in a Time of Pandemic

By Pr. Tim Lemme

It has been a year now since the COVID-19 pandemic changed things for the world, our nation, and the ministry of Our Savior's. Never before have we been through a time quite like this. In March 2020,



in-person worship, ministry programs, groups, and activities taking place in the church building came to a halt, and we began to wonder just how ministry would continue to happen around here.

Then, as always, God began to open new doors, and new possibilities for doing ministry.

Technology blessed us with the ability to come together remotely in spite of not being physically present at church. New opportunities, expanded ministries, and support systems of all kinds began to blossom within our community, and God's hope once again showed us a way through this trying time.

This past year, each ministry area of OSL has been a beacon of light to our members and our community, through the power of God's amazing love. This month, we celebrate OSL's Spiritual Care Ministry Team, and their work to support

those in need throughout this time of pandemic. Through the efforts of our Caring Ministries Coordinator, Deb Harlan; our Faith Community Nurse, Michelle Anderson; our visitation team, Pr. Don Lehmann, Pr. Ray Heidenson, and Maribeth Anderson; plus other teams and volunteers, ministry efforts have not only continued but thrived during this past year. Here are just a few examples of the many ways we have continued to reach out in service to our community:

- ◆ Although visits to nursing homes and care facilities have been restricted due to the pandemic, our visitation team continued to reach out to homebound members through telephone calls, postcards and letters, and, as things began to open up a bit, through limited in-person visits once again. Along with the visitation team, our Stephen Ministers also reached out in support to those isolating at home through a phone call ministry program that provided additional monthly contact. As time went by, a Pen Pal Program also began, which connected members of the OSL community with older folks at home to provide additional care. Through these outreach opportunities, we continued and continue to be the Body of Christ to each other through this difficult time.

- ◆ Special outreach events also took place during this past year. A Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange (leave one, take one) provides members with wintertime fun. And recently we completed the Cabin Fever Bags for Grown-Ups project, where activity bags were prepared and sent out to anyone who was social-isolating at home during the winter months. Through crafts, devotionals, games, cooking ideas, and cookies, we connected those alone at home with others so that all would feel the warmth of God's presence and love. Around 100 bags were distributed to individuals and families through this project! We are so grateful for our creative volunteers who made this possible.

- ◆ As we all know, this year has also taken a toll on all of us emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Although the pandemic restricted some of the traditional ways we have offered support to grieving families, the Bereavement Ministry Program at OSL also found new ways of offering support to families in difficult times. Through continued pastoral care, Stephen Ministry support, Faith Community Nurse outreach, and Caring Friends team members' concern, God's love has accompanied grieving families and individuals through times of grief and loss. Funeral services were adapted due to pandemic safety concerns, but continued to be an important part of the grieving process for families. Hospital visitation continued through daily





telephone contact and cards. Support groups that had been on hold began to meet again to provide care. Zoom classes were held for our Memory Care Group, while some even met in person, at a distance, in the parking lot when weather permitted. Through it all, God's love continued to bring healing and peace.

- ♦ Once again, OSL members demonstrated beautifully what it means to be part of the ministry of all believers, by offering support to our community through the sharing of their gifts and talents. OSL's quilting ministry team, Peace by Piece, provided literally thousands of masks to adults and children within our church and the surrounding community. Quilts, prayer shawls, baptismal shawls, baby blankets, and many other wonderful items continued to be made by quilters, knitters, and sewers—mostly in their own homes, given limited access to the church building. Their ministry not only continued but thrived during this past year.
- ♦ Speaking of crafters, OSL's woodworking ministry team continued to use their hands to create Faith Chests and to complete other projects for our congregation. Their skills not only benefit Our Savior's, but also others within the community who come to us with requests to help with various projects. What a blessing it is to have this specialized ministry available within our church. (Remember, we are always looking for crafty folks to join our woodworking team!)
- ♦ In addition to offering emotional and spiritual care to our community, OSL is blessed to offer physical care opportunities to our elderly community as well. The SIGH Foot Care Program has been able to provide much-needed footcare help to those who benefit from it—not only OSL

members, but also to those within the surrounding community. This, along with our Faith Community Nurse Program, continues to be a blessing to people in so many ways, especially during this time of pandemic and social isolation, when many people have been limited to their homes. Our Faith Community Nurse, Michelle Anderson, is always available to offer support to those in need of healing, in body, mind, and soul.

- ♦ Lastly, who can forget our two great Honks and Hugs outings to local care facilities? OSL members gathered in a "caravan of love" to offer a ray of sunshine and a friendly honk and wave to our members last April and October. Decorated cars and lots of smiles made this a special outreach opportunity indeed!

Together with our entire congregation, the Spiritual Care Ministry Team proclaimed the message of God's love in innovative and meaningful ways throughout this time of pandemic. Although the year has been difficult for us all, we continued to nurture faith that connects to everyday life—even in a time when life was anything but everyday normal—and for that we say, "Thanks be to God!" ♦

Holy Week at Our Savior's

Maundy Thursday – 6:30 p.m., Celebrate Center. In-car worship via AM radio, south parking lot. Holy Communion in both locations.

Good Friday – 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary. Live-streamed on Facebook at 6:30, televised on FOX at 10:00.

Holy Saturday – "Stations in the Street" by Scott Erickson, a self-guided devotional meditation, will be in The Gathering Place all day on April 3, and online on Facebook and the OSL website.

Easter Sunday – 7:00 a.m., Sanctuary; 8:45, Celebrate Center; 10:15, Sanctuary. The 8:45 and 10:15 services will be streamed live on Facebook and broadcast on FOX (9:00) and KSCB (1:00) respectively. Should attendance exceeds COVID-19 room capacity of 175, The Gathering Place will be used as overflow.

Photos: *opposite page:* Trish Syverson, one of the volunteers assembling Cabin Fever Bags for Grown-Ups; *this page:* Seth and Koni Sims work on new-baby tag blankets; Honks = Hugs caravan.



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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

Holy Week Schedule on Page 3

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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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.

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