



# Share

# Joy!

## Stories of Our Savior's

**Annual Report to  
the Congregation  
for 2018**

**Mission** 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.



## It's All about the Mission!

Dear Partners in Ministry,

To us, 2018 feels like it was a year of growing momentum. Nearly every memory of ministry happening at Our Savior's over the past 12 months fills us with joy and leaves us leaning into the new year with great anticipation. The Holy Spirit is clearly on the move in ways that are helping others hear the Good News and connect faith with everyday life. To be a part of that is both humbling and exciting.

Now that we have reached a position of strength and stability, we are poised to realign how we are structured for ministry. For over two years, the Executive Committee has engaged in a process of review, evaluation, research, and development as a way of assessing OSL's governance structure and identifying changes we thought would help us be more effective in carrying out our mission. Through it all, we have learned how important it is to keep the main thing the main thing. That is, it's all about our mission. Everything we do must be guided by the mission we share.

We are grateful for input received from the pastors, staff, and members of the congregation as we have moved through this process. Together we have envisioned a more helpful way of ordering and managing this ministry God has entrusted to us. *Thank you!*

Based on feedback we have received, we are anticipating that we will vote to adopt Interim Bylaws at the annual meeting. During this time of transition, we ask that you will hold your congregational leaders and staff members in prayer, and we ask that you will do what you can to support and give life to this new governance structure so that our mission will be faithfully served and that God may be glorified.

Grateful for your partnership,

Anne Rieck McFarland  
Congregational President

Randall E. Gehring  
Senior Pastor

## Sharing Joy: With Ministry Partners

In November Pr. Randy and I attended a conference for large churches partnering with smaller congregations to provide administrative and pastoral support. One person compared the smaller church to a dinghy at the mercy of a turbulent sea—until the larger church pulled alongside like a battleship.

Our presenters fought that metaphor, but it proved inescapable. Larger churches described bringing people *onboard*, but none could describe being *changed* by smaller churches. What can starving lifeboat survivors offer a well-fed battleship crew?

Here at Our Savior's, our partnerships chart a different course through turbulent seas. We owe it to sharing joyful relationships.

In 2018, Jennifer Lunder concluded her excellent ministry with Ayuda—our bridge-building partnership between majority-white Lutheran churches and the Latino/a/x congregation Pueblo de Dios. Ayuda means “help.” Often that was what people *expected* the organization to provide. Unintentionally, larger churches treated the Latino/a/x community like that dinghy tossed by the waves; we were the battleships, ready to solve problems with our big guns and our big money.

As we talked with our partners at Pueblo de Dios, we learned that “ayuda” sent the wrong message. The Pueblo community did not expect other Christians to rescue them with money or food or jobs. Nobody likes being the dinghy. Instead, Pr. Maria said her people needed something we never expected. They needed *spiritual* help.

Don't we all?

In conversation, a new vision for the organization emerged: we were *Vecinos Unidos*, “Neighbors United.” We would build bridges as equal partners in faith, service, and love. When we hired a new coordinator, two of our candidates came from Pueblo de Dios. We began to see a new possibility: that one day, when larger churches gather to hear stories of God's power, or when we seek leaders most familiar with the power of the Holy Spirit, we would find them in communities like Pueblo de Dios.

Once, we supported Pueblo, and the vision for Ayuda was born. Now, we renew this partnership with Vecinos Unidos. We are sisters and brothers in Christ, the wealthy and powerful and weak and lowly alike—with no battleships in sight.

—Pr. Justin Kosec





## Statistics

### Membership

#### Baptized

2017.....3,581  
2018.....3,548

#### Confirmed

2017.....3,276  
2018.....3,313

### Sunday/Wednesday School Enrollment

2017.....275  
2018.....290

### Ministerial Acts

#### Baptisms

2017.....35  
2018.....42

#### Confirmations

2017.....28  
2018.....29

#### Weddings

2017.....9  
2018.....12

#### Funerals.....

2017.....47  
2018.....52

#### Ordinations

2017.....0  
2018.....0

### Average Weekly Attendance

2017.....817  
2018.....796

## Sharing Joy: With OSL Youth

In my first year of ministry at OSL, our youth have shared joy through service at Week of Hope, visits to Luther Manor, and at the VOA Youth Center. But the time they shared joy in a way that I will never forget was at the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, my hometown.

On our “service day,” we had the opportunity to share joy through service by helping to clean up a neighborhood still recovering from Hurricane Harvey. Each day 10,000 youth were sent out to the city to serve. We were able to join a group of over 100 youth to pick up trash left from the flooding and to give hope to a community still hurting. It was difficult to imagine the neighborhood covered by 30-plus inches of flood waters, but the day helped the youth understand how their actions make a difference.

The next day they had another opportunity to share joy and learned that words can be just as powerful as actions. We gave the kids a choice: they could continue to play, learn, and hang out in the Interactive Learning Center, or they could walk to a local burrito joint to meet my father. Much to my surprise and delight, each one decided to come along. I had shared how my father had lost his home in Hurricane Harvey and how he was living in a trailer until his home was repaired. When we arrived, my father, who only expected a few to come along, was blown away by the turnout. As we sat to eat, the youth shared what they had learned and how they had been able to serve. In turn, they then listened as my father shared his experience with Harvey. The joy those youth shared with my father has carried with him to this day, as have the lessons learned by our youth at OSL this year.

— John Schomberg,  
Director of Youth Ministry



## Sharing Joy: In Worship

Without a doubt, worship is the number one way that Our Savior's has reached the most people each week for the last 73 years. Worship, rightfully so, is central to our mission and our identity, core values, and physical footprint. Under Gene LeVasseur's Worship and Music leadership, Matthew Tylutki, Deanna Wehrspann, Denny Gale, and many, many volunteers Share Joy in worship every weekend.

Without taking all of this for granted, 2018 was a year that stands out for its remarkable worship opportunities.

With Pr. Justin's arrival, we have enjoyed thought-provoking and entertaining dramatic performances on Maundy Thursday, Pentecost, and Kick-Off Sunday. Everyone present in worship has benefited from these meaningful experiences, but what not everyone might know is what takes place behind the scenes. Before the script is written, the players gather to collaborate on the themes in the scripture readings, the theme of the day, and what they hope to accomplish through the drama. This process builds relationships, forms faith, and elicits investment in the final product that is offered to the congregation. From start to finish, these worship offerings have done much to Share Joy.

Through a collaborative effort between the Youth and Family and Worship teams, 2018 also saw the return of the lapsed tradition of an intergenerational, interactive Good Friday Service. In order to share the heavy themes of Holy Week in an age-appropriate way, worshipers began in the Sanctuary, moved to The Gathering Place for some caring conversation, and finished in the Celebrate Center, where the altar was converted into a garden tomb. Adapting based on this experience, the second Christmas GIFT service at 2:00 P.M. on Christmas Eve was just as interactive and progressive.

Some other highlights in our worship life together include the August 12 outdoor service at McKennan Park, Summer Blasts, "Pursuing the Heart of Jesus" Lenten Midweek Worship in the Sanctuary, and Advent worship in the round in the Celebrate Center for "Treasures of Darkness."

—Pr. Sami Johnson

## In 2018...

Between Sunday breakfasts, Wednesday suppers, and special occasions, some 15,000 individual meals were served.

OSL members and guests consumed approximately 900 donut holes every Sunday.

Everybody loved bacon.

Communion was served at five care facilities each month.

Over the course of the year, the OSL website saw some 16,000 visits (up 27.5% from 2017). The most popular pages on the website were Worship (4,335 views), Calendar (3,266), Staff Directory (3,044), Events (2,460), and Videos (1,750).

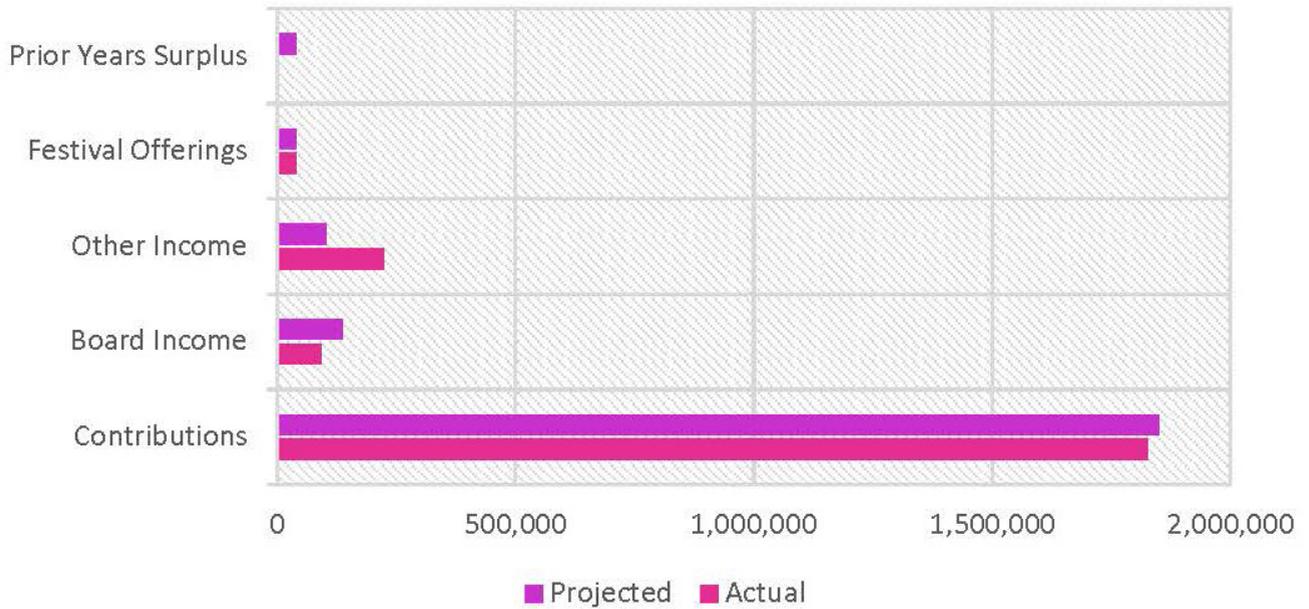
OSL volunteers include—

- 14 Caring Friends, who see OSL members in care facilities;
- 28 active Stephen Ministers
- 10 hospital visitors: five laypeople, one Faith Community Nurse, and three clergy.

Nearly 1,000 outside events took place at Our Savior's.

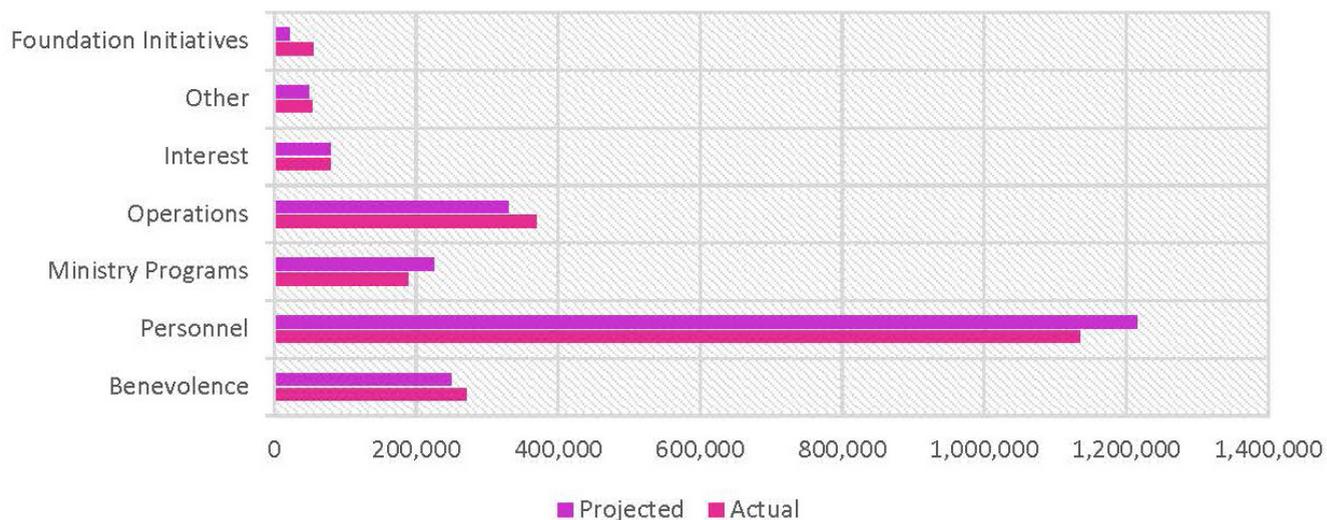


## 2018 Income



Income	Actual	Projected	+/-
Contributions	1,827,366	1,849,306	(21,940)
Board Income	93,940	138,480	(44,540)
Other Income	223,946	104,200	119,746
Festival Offerings	41,038	40,000	1,038
Prior Years Surplus	0	41,472	(41,472)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,186,290</b>	<b>2,173,458</b>	<b>12,832</b>

## 2018 Expenses



<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>+/-</b>
Benevolence	271,619	250,000	21,619
Personnel	1,135,469	1,216,033	(80,564)
Ministry Programs	188,205	225,750	(37,545)
Operations	369,951	330,675	39,276
Interest	79,762	80,000	(238)
Other	54,352	49,000	5,352
Foundation Initiatives	55,017	22,000	33,017
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,154,375</b>	<b>2,173,458</b>	<b>(19,083)</b>

# Connecting Faith to Everyday Life.



OUR SAVIOR'S  
LUTHERAN CHURCH