

The *intercom* In Church and Community



From the Senior Pastor You Are Amazing, Our Savior's!



Dear partners in ministry,

Stewardship season is wrapping up here at Our Savior's. Thank you to all who have committed to supporting financially the mission we share to proclaim Christ and nurture faith that connects to everyday life.

If you haven't yet returned an Estimate of Giving card stating your intent to provide financial support in the next fiscal year (July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023), there's still time. Simply return the card that was sent to you to the Church Office at your earliest convenience. Stating your intention will give your leadership team the information they need to plan for another exciting and fruitful year of ministry.

This year's stewardship appeal included something we have not done in the time that I have been serving as your pastor. We called it the *Mustard Seed Mission Project*, which was essentially an exercise in our core value of Generosity. We made available to anyone who wanted to participate envelopes that contained \$50 of seed money and some pretty basic instruc-

tions: Talk and pray about what you would like to do with the money as an extension of our mission; listen for the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit; and *Rise Up* as people on a mission from God to love and bless the world.

I have been humbled and encouraged by the stories we have received from those who participated. Some of those stories are included in this edition of *The Intercom*. I hope you enjoy reading and hearing them as much as I have.

To me the real story in all of this is that this congregation is comprised of people who thoughtfully live out their faith in ways that truly make a difference in other people's lives and they expect God to show up and bless their work. You all inspire me and it makes me feel proud to serve as your pastor.

Grateful for each of you,

Randy

Pr. Randy Gehring

Ministry Spotlight

The Mustard Seed Mission Project: Stories from the Field

What did you do with your Mustard Seed Project seed money?

♦ I took the \$50 and added to it a bit to make bags that Tom and I can keep in our vehicles to give to folks we see frequently standing on the Interstate exits. I am hesitant to give them money as so often it is used for alcohol, so instead I made bags for them. My plan was to have everything fit inside a large water jug, but apparently I had too



much stuff so some of it ended up in the bottle and the rest of it I put in a bag. It included a large water jug, Kleenex, socks, jerky sticks, hand sanitizer, ChapStick, toothbrush, toothpaste, wipes, comb, mints, gum, Band-Aids, Advil, and a \$10 McDonald's gift card. I also included a copy of the devotional *Christ in Our Home*. In addition, I put a brochure in the bag with info about services and offerings at OSL. Lastly, I put a scripture card and a personal note to remind them they are special and loved. I hope these bags bless the individuals that receive them and help them remember they are loved by our church community and God.

♦ Brian and I decided to give to a charity that we had not donated to in the past and one which doesn't receive any other state, federal, or United Way funding. We matched the mustard seed money with our own, then CNA Surety matched that gift, so our total donation to Special Olympics South Dakota was \$200. We hope this will help enrich the lives of those in our community with intellectual disabilities. Now that we are donors, we will likely be presented with more volunteer opportunities within this organization, so watch that mustard plant grow!

♦ I met with David O'Hara (Full Professor and Director of Sustainability and Environmental Studies at Augustana University) to discuss the joint gardening project being planned between Our Savior's and Augustana. The garden beds will be raised beds to make them easier to care for and protect the plants from munchers (like rabbits). Depending on when plants are ready, this project could begin yet this summer or in the fall. A quick way to begin would be to use stock bins, at \$50 apiece. Custom-built beds would be more attractive, more expensive. David has seed money for this project and I added my \$50.

♦ A co-worker struggling with life asked for stuffed animals for Ava's House as a way we could thank her for her service as she resigned. So I gave her a couple of stuffed animals along with a card encouraging her on her life's journey as well as explaining that with this Mustard Seed Project, I saw it as an opportunity to be a double blessing—for Ava's House (\$50) and as an encouragement and support to her in her life's journey.



♦ I am a special education teacher, and I was able to use the money to fund a research and writing project about elephants. The amazing gift from OSL helped me to be able to schedule a Zoom meeting with Becca Wyatt from Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo. We were able to learn about elephants firsthand from Becca and she even virtually introduced us to Clarie and Sonny, two elephants at the zoo! The kids absolutely loved it! After the students completed their writing project, they each received an elephant plush as a souvenir of our virtual field trip.

My students struggle with social skills and are all working to develop the necessary skills to get back to their home school. This project engaged them so much and made them so excited to learn and practice.

Thank you so much, OSL! You made the end of our school year so special and amazing!

♦ Food donation to Ronald McDonald House.

♦ We decided to make pillows and donate them to the Ronald McDonald House as a little "cozy" reminder that God loves everyone.

♦ Pajamas donated to Children's Inn.



How is your project an extension of our congregational mission to proclaim Christ and nurture faith that connects to everyday life?

♦ As part of our church mission, we are to focus on generosity and community. Providing these bags to the homeless encouraged us to act as stewards of our resources that God has entrusted us with. We are also reaching out to the community by providing necessary items for these individuals as well as info on how to be a part of the OSL community.

♦ Through Special Olympics South Dakota, disabled people are accepted and given opportunities to participate in sports, demonstrate courage, and develop relationships. Lifting others up is one way we can shine Christ's light.

♦ Feeding hungry people is a powerful way to share God's love and concern for our neighbors and certainly fits into our congregational mission.

♦ Another human being was encouraged—life is hard! Stuffed animals were provided for terminally ill people to hold as they are dying.

♦ In times of trial, a physical reminder of God's love is helpful. We thought that the people staying at our local Ronald McDonald House might be in need of that physical reminder.

In what ways did this project empower you to Let Go, Trust God, and Rise Up in faith?

♦ In John 16:33, Jesus assures us of His victory: "In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." For me (and struggling community members), I am always entering new seasons in my life. Some are positive, some negative; some wanted, some unwanted; some exciting and some terrifying. But regardless of the new that lies before me, I choose to look at and think about these seasons of newness and determine I will walk through them with peace, hope, joy, and trust. That is what I pray for everyone at OSL and in our community (especially those who have little). I need to trust God in all ways and with my whole heart! I trust God is holding everyone in His hands and caring for them.

Thanks for this great project and letting us be a part of it! I hope many are blessed with this idea.



♦ We talked about what we'd like to do with the money, I prayed about it, and then I saw a commercial about the Special Olympics on TV. Sometimes "Letting Go" and "Trusting God" just means recognizing the tiny nudges the Holy Spirit provides.

♦ This experience gave me an opportunity to be part of something I could not do alone. It gave me the chance to display my faith in God and in David O'Hara to bring this great idea to fruition.

♦ I really appreciated the opportunity to open my heart and mind to what God was speaking to me to do with this money. I took my time and listened. And I heard. Thank you for doing this!



909 West 33rd St.,
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

605-336-2942
www.oslchurch.com

INTERCOM (USPS311210)
Published monthly by:
Our Savior's Lutheran Congregation
909 West 33rd Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105
Periodicals Postage Paid at Sioux Falls, South Dakota
POSTMASTER:
Please send address change to INTERCOM,
909 West 33rd Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105

The *intercom* Summer 2022

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A Publication of Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Summer Worship Services

Saturday Evening – 5:00 P.M., Sanctuary
Sunday Morning
Celebrate Worship – 8:45 and 10:30 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.
Website: oslchurch.com

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Your Offering Makes a Difference!

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 for your generosity!

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