



Our Savior Lutheran Ministries

January 21, 2025

To the Members of Our Savior Lutheran Ministries,

What an incredible half of the fiscal year it has been. The Lord is certainly at work here at OSLM. Having recently concluded my first year as the pastor in this place, I can report that the excitement of being able to lead this community of believers remains as high as it was when I accepted the call. While the excitement remains just as high, my confidence in the potential direction of this ministry is growing. Part of that confidence is driven from a better familiarity of people, systems, and processes. OSLM is a relatively large organization by church standards with over 70 employees and a budget north of \$6.2 Million, so it takes some time to learn how and why things work. The real reason why I have great hope is that the people who the Lord has gathered here are dedicated to see the Kingdom grow as they live out their faith in various ways.

Each aspect of the ministry is blessed to have high quality people of character and competency involved in the work. Alongside of those two very important qualities, there is a desire to be more effective and efficient in making sure that the mission of God can be carried out through this place. I would like to give a brief update on a few specific groups of people.

Board of Directors

- Beth Goodell Frick, Chair
- Heather Crawford, Vice Chair
- Randy Hall, Secretary
- Linda Patel, Treasurer
- Leland Tam, Director
- Glenna Sanlis, Director
- Andy Young, Director

This group of directors is a wonderful diverse group of people who share a common vision: that OSLM would continue to thrive and be an outpost for the work of the Gospel for many years to come. They have invested many hours studying the inner workings of policy based governance and developing strategic plans and initiatives to allow our ministry to blossom even more. Elected by you, the members of Our Savior, you have entrusted some wonderful people to make sure that the ministry drives forward into the future.

Senior Staff

- Sara Agee, Director of Christian Education
- Jenny Cid, Vice-Principal
- Julie Knight, School Principal
- Pastor Joe Robb, Senior Pastor
- Dr. Dave Rueter, Director of Discipleship
- Karen Schroeder, Director of Music
- Angela Westphal, Director of Communications and Marketing
- Brittani Young, Preschool Director
- Don Young, Executive Director

The senior staff is responsible for helping the Senior Pastor carry out the operations of the ministry. Each of them has a vital role in making sure that Board's directives are carried out. Below, you will find a report from each of the areas that they oversee. I'd be remiss if I did not mention what an incredible team we have in leadership. They each do a wonderful job making sure that each aspect of our ministry is moving together in a direction that makes Jesus' love more accessible and prevalent. They are a group grounded in a grace and love. They are able to challenge one other, speak the truth in love, they have boldness and confidence, but day to day they show great humility. I can take no credit for bringing in any of these leaders, and I am thankful for the leaders who brought these individuals to be part of OSLM.

Board of Elders

- Joe Ryno, Head Elder
- Norm Back
- Robin Cleary
- Scott Futral
- Ken Gong
- Jeff Greenhagen
- Bob Greenwalt
- Ted Sanlis
- Wayne Shotts
- Jesse Yow

These men are appointed to the Board of Elders because of their commitment to Christ and His church, they are spiritually strong and in have a reputation for being in the Word. The elders assist the Pastor in carrying out the office of the ministry. They each are assigned a portion of the congregation to pray for, meet with, and keep the pastor informed of any needs or issues. At the monthly elders meeting, the elders have concluded a multi-year study of the Lutheran Confessions (Augsburg Confession) and are constantly finding ways to deepen their faith in conversations with one another. They serve an amazing role in caring for our sick and homebound, assisting with worship, and taking an active interest in classrooms at the school. As a pastor, it is great to know that everything spiritual does not rest solely on my shoulders.

Faculty & Staff

We are blessed to have some incredible people who work here at OSLM. The school, led by Julie Knight and the preschool, led by Brittani Young are providing Christian education to over 500 kids and their families each day. We are currently utilizing every inch of our property to teach a near capacity of students and their families about the love of Jesus. The faculty and staff reflect the love of Christ as they help our students grow in every aspect of their lives. As a staff, we strive to make this a special place rooted in Christ, as we exhibit the fruits of the spirit. This is reflected in our school theme this year, as well as each week in chapel.

Our Membership and Worshipping Community

Our growing community of worshippers has been a wonderful way to see the Lord's hand and provision. The commitment of our people here to service and to one another is Christ-like. The list of people who volunteer and lend a hand in helping facilitate ministry in this place, it what I believe allows this ministry to be as vibrant as it is. The countless hours that are spent on this campus by people lending a hand is amazing. From landscaping to music, decorating to hospitality, quilting to serving in worship, the people of Our Savior are what makes this place go. Rudyard Kipling, poem the 'Eathern' states what I feel about our laity here at Our Savior, "The backbone of the Army is the noncommissioned man!" To that end, we are working hard to make worship and discipleship pathways easier to access and trying to meet more people where they are at, in hopes of growing more, and better, followers of Jesus.

Highlights of the first 6 Months

- An emphasis on Unity, Culture, and Community among staff
- Over 400 students in the Elementary and Middle School
- Over 100 students in the Preschool
- A 8.1% increase in weekly worship attendance
- Campus Improvements
- Trainings about Salary and Benefits for employees (increased)
- A growing number of school families connecting in worship
- Balanced budget year to date
- Transitioning backend church management system
- In-services from Concordia Plans and on Policy Based Governance
- Asynchronistic Confirmation for students

Looking ahead in 2025

- Creating a roadmap for navigating rising costs and near capacity enrollment
- School reenrollment is now open, with open enrollment beginning in February
- Increased costs for health and retirement benefits
- Likely increase in Mortgage Rates on existing loans
- Reevaluation of Strategic Ministry Plan and Goals
- Launching more intentional discipleship opportunities
- Continuing to transition to REALM and utilize more features
- Preparing for additional campus improvements

There is much to celebrate this year, and we thank the Lord for that. There are also challenges that will likely arise, like many years. I am confident that the Spirit is guiding us, and that we have the right people involved in our work to move us forward. We pray for more individuals and families that may come along to join us in our efforts to bring the Gospel to our community. I am so thankful that the Lord has called me to serve among you in this place!

You are loved and valued!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Robb', written in a cursive style.

Pastor Joe Robb

Senior Staff Reporting:

Don Young, Executive Director

Areas of Responsibilities: HR, Finance, Facilities and IT

Highlights from first 6 months of 2024-2025 FY:

- New IT System Administrator (Erik Tom) started 11/18/2024 and has been very well received by staff.
- New part-time Custodian (Rob Singh) started 12/10/2024.
- Gutters on Buildings A and C (school buildings), as well as on the C-side of Building B/gym have all been replaced.
- To minimize the financial impact of huge cost increases on our 2024 Healthcare (25.3% increase for 2025), we offered two Kaiser options this year, resulting in our overall healthcare costs increasing around 15%. Had Brad James (Concordia Account Manager) out to present the options to interested employees in November during Open Enrollment period.
- Emphasis on increasing our employees' knowledge and understanding of their benefits. Had a Certified Financial Planner from Concordia in town for 2 days in October for one-on-one consulting sessions covering Pensions, 403 B plans and other financial topics. Around 20 employees (often with their spouse) took advantage of this.
- Added a second Retirement Plan (versus just the standard Traditional Option) to our Concordia Pension program. This is ONLY for new hourly employees (20 hours/week) hired after 1/1/2025. Less expensive option to our Ministry and has a shorter vesting period (3 vs. 5 years) which is beneficial to the qualified employees.
- Rolled out and trained employees on IIPP (Injury and Illness Prevention Plan) and WVPP (Workplace Violence Prevention Plan), required policies from CA.
- I facilitated a business oriented Breakout Session titled "Business Intelligence to Accelerate Ministry" at the CNH District's All Workers Conference in November.
- New Property Advisory Committee formed. Kickoff meeting held in Oct.
- Sidewalk out front was repaired on 12/9/2024.

Goals for remainder of Fiscal Year:

- Progress next prioritized items on the Property Advisory Committee list.
- Explore earlier than scheduled restructuring of our Loans (depending on interest rate adjustment impacts)?

Angela Westphal, Director of Communications and Marketing

Marketing/Communications:

- Full transition from Church 360 to Realm for ChMS. Actively taking steps to walk people through adoption and assimilation for increased engagement
- Attended 6 of 7 Chamber Mixers with the city on behalf of the church and schools; still on list to host a mixer at OSL
- Joined the Rotary Club of Pleasanton on behalf of the church and Schools
- Completed application and waiting for approval for booth at Farmer's Market –but since school is almost at full enrollment, I may not take action on this
- Intentional efforts with social media has increased engagement; it's up month over month based on the Meta's metrics for business
- Constant Contact stats show email campaigns open-rate is at 78%, industry averages are less than 50% for a church and 70% for a school

Facility Usage:

- Revenue from usage fees as of July are approximately \$23K
- Intentionally working more with nonprofit groups to support them in their mission – NCL, YMSL, CYO, etc.
- No longer scheduling social events, other than those that church-organized or at member request – too much liability and not always in alignment with our mission/ministry
- Increased facility usage fees 10-15% from 2024 after review of thorough market analysis

Columbarium Management:

- Thorough Columbarium cost analysis has resulted in our decision to increase fees to \$5K for a niche for two person
- 25% of niches have been sold
- Organizing an End of life planning/giving seminar with information about the OSLM Columbarium

All Church Admin (cradle-grave) duties executed as necessary. Current projects include:

- Building/leading an Event Hospitality Team to better serve or congregation
- Promotion of and database building for Opportunities to Serve. Where is God calling others to serve? How do we better engage them?

School Updates

Julie Knight, Principal

Current Enrollment as of 1/13: 402

Tuition for next year:

- Transitional Kindergarten – 5th Grade: 3.5% increase in tuition. (TK - \$8,528,

K-5 - \$10,603)

- 6th – 8th Grade: 5% increase in tuition. (6-8 - \$10,756)

Integration of the New Math Curriculum

This year, we've introduced a common core math curriculum aimed at enhancing students' problem-solving skills and conceptual understanding. While the transition is still underway, we are actively identifying effective ways to support both students and teachers through this process. A special acknowledgement goes to Vice-Principal, Jenny Cid, who has been instrumental in ensuring a smooth rollout. Her leadership and dedication have been key to the curriculum's early success.

Soft Launch of the New SEL Curriculum: Friendly

We are excited to introduce Friendly, our new Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum, which we are soft-launching this year. The curriculum integrates scripture-based lessons and themes, emphasizing Christian values such as kindness, forgiveness, empathy, and unity. Through engaging activities, collaborative discussions, and real-life applications, Friendly equips students with the tools to navigate social challenges while growing in their faith and understanding of God's word. Early feedback has been very encouraging, with teachers noting its practical and meaningful impact on classroom culture. We look forward to a broader implementation in the coming months as we continue to refine and adapt the program to our community's needs.

WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) and NLSA (National Lutheran Schools Accreditation) mid-cycle accreditation visit is scheduled for this Spring. This visit is an integral part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining high standards of academic excellence and organizational effectiveness. The accreditation team will review our progress in implementing the recommendations provided during our last accreditation cycle, as well as assess how we continue to meet the established standards. We are confident in our current progress for our 4 goals/action plan and are excited with the continued trajectory of our school wide learning outcomes.

Mark your calendars for March 14th - 16th as the OSLS students showcase their Science Fair projects!

Jenny Cid, Vice Principal

- Curriculum and program development
 - Since July have adopted a new math curriculum in grades 2-8
 - Updated our middle school language arts curriculum
 - 2nd successful year of the Race for Education fundraiser
 - Development of middle school elective
 - Parent education nights

Jenny Cid - Continued

- Whole school scheduling
- Support the Principal
 - Teacher support and mentoring
 - Student discipline
 - Lead division meetings
 - Day-to-day needs and decisions
- Word towards continued partnership as a whole ministry
 - Ministry outreach to gather supplies for relief kits through Lutheran World Relief
 - Advent materials – Jesse Tree
 - Purposeful chapel rotation – combination of called workers – church and school staff

I also serve as the chair of the CNH District School Ministry Team and was the program coordinator and emcee for the CNH All Workers' Conference in Monterey last November.

Brittani Young, Preschool Director

It is a blessing to serve as the Preschool Director providing leadership and decision making, curriculum development, parent communication, student discipline and general management of preschool including staff, budget. Facilities, safety and security, as well as licensing compliance. As a member of the Senior Staff Team, I provide communication between the preschool and other areas of the ministry helping to make decisions along the way.

Our current enrollment as of 1/15/2025 is 102 in the preschool, including 41 full day students. We have a team of 13 people including new member Tami Farro, our afternoon head teacher.

2025/2026 Preschool tuition will increase 4%. We are forecasting a strong preschool enrollment with 30+ preschool students feeding into the grade school.

This school year we have focused on developing relationships and building community with parents and caregivers. We brought back a Preschool Open House that was very well attended in addition to hosting a Preschool Parents Night Out via zoom.

In the Fall we were blessed to participate in Race for Education, Scholastic Book Fair and Preschool Advent Service.

Offering collection partnerships include Shepherd's Gate, Samaritan's Purse, Tri-Valley Haven, Livermore Homeless Community, Next Step, and a campus service project for OSLM Shut-in Community.

Upcoming Events:

- Week of April 6th- Week of the Young Child
- Milk and Cookies event April 10
- Preschool will sing at family service on April 13
- Spring Program in conjunction with our Preschool Art Show on May 7
- Preschool Graduation on May 29

Worship and Discipleship

Karen Schroeder, Director of Music

The Music Department of Our Savior Ministries has much to be thankful for in spreading the Gospel message of Jesus. Musical talent abounds at Our Savior and so many share their gift of music with the congregation through the leading of worship services. Choirs, Cantors, Instrumentalists, and Soloists lead and offer special music in weekly services. Behind the scenes, accompanists and instrumentalists diligently prepare to support the choirs, and our librarian continually catalogues, distributes, and files our music.

Weekly worship services are prepared in conjunction with Pastor Robb to reflect the themes of each Sunday. Currently we follow the 3-Year Lectionary. Service preparation includes Selecting hymns, songs and liturgy fitting the theme of the day, preparing printed bulletins, worship slides and children's bulletins.

The Music Department is also responsible for copyright compliance. This includes weekly documenting and reporting of all music printed and streamed in addition to securing licensing for selections that do not fall under one of the 9 licenses we currently hold. Planning for choirs takes place during the summer. This planning includes the selection of service dates choirs/instrumentalists participate in and the selection of the music for the Season (September – June). The Christmas Concert theme is selected, and appropriate music picked out that supports the theme. All choir rehearsals are then scheduled for the season.

Students in Our Savior School share their love of Jesus in Worship Services, Chapels, and the School's Spring Music Concert. Students assist in song leadership and Scripture reading in the 11:15 AM service. They also present chapel messages throughout the school year. Amanda Parks assists in coordinating music in both the 11:15 AM worship service and school chapels. The Elementary school and Pre School lead the midweek Advent services. Each spring the Beginning Band, Jr. High Band and all the handbell ensembles present a Spring Concert which helps to develop performance skills and highlights musical growth and development.

Christmas brings three opportunities to share the birth of Christ in distinctive ways. All the choirs of Our Savior present a beautiful afternoon Christmas Concert. Both the Preschool and the Elementary school lead age-appropriate Advent Worship Services. Members of Our Savior also spend a Sunday afternoon sharing Christmas Carols and cookies with those who are no longer able to leave their homes. Carolers and listeners always find this to be a special experience sharing the love of Jesus.

God continues to bless Our Savior with talented members willing to share their love of the Lord through music. What a powerful journey we take singing, playing, ringing, and making music to our God!

Accomplishments since July 1

- Worship services continue to be planned and held at both 9 AM and 11:15 AM.
- Special services include:
 - January 14, 2024 Installation Service for Joe Robb
 - November 27, 2024 Thanksgiving Eve (with the pie social)
 - December 4, 11, 18, 2024 Midweek Advent Service
 - December 8, 2024 Christmas Concert
 - Christmas Eve/Christmas Day services

Karen Schroeder-Continued

- Music Ensembles Actively meeting
 - Our Savior Choir, Women's Ensemble, and Our Savior Ringers rehearse weekly
 - Development of small ensemble handbell ringing to include specific duet selections
- Middle School Handbells (rehearsals two times a week)
 - 8th Grade – 11 members (all returning members)
 - 7th Grade – 22 members (3 new members)
 - 6th Grade – 22 members (all new)

Work through June 30

- Continued planning of all Sunday morning worship services.
- Review and refine the Music Department Budget for the coming fiscal year.
- Concordia Concert Choir, Irvine presenting late afternoon concert on Saturday February 22, 2025. This includes housing students overnight.
- Planning of Special Lenten Midweek and Holy Week services.
- Assisting in coordinating and presenting the School Spring Music Concert on May 8, 2025
- Preparing music for 8th Grade promotion.
- Preparing music celebration Sunday for June 8, 2025.

Sara Agee, Director of Christian Education

As Director of Children and Youth Ministry, I oversee faith development programs in our church and school. My responsibilities include hosting weekly Lunch Bunch for 2nd and 3rd grade, bi-monthly after-school Youth Group for 4th and 5th grade, bi-monthly after-school youth group for middle school, teaching 7th grade Bible class, classroom visits, leading chapel and children's messages, overseeing Sunday school, teaching Sunday morning youth Bible Study and Confirmation, and leading Sunday evening youth group for middle school and high school. Fostering relationships is also a key part of my job. This is done by spending one-on-one time with students and parents outside of church and school, serving school lunch, attending sporting events, and spiritual counseling. The overall goal of our Children and Youth Ministry is to prepare students and their families for lifelong relationships with Jesus Christ.

Tasks that have been accomplished since July 1

- Provide curricula for all ages and teach youth during Big Wednesdays.
- Organized Bible Sponsorship.
- Launch education programs for the school year.
- Begin a new asynchronous Confirmation program.
- Introduce Faith Habits for families.
- Begin teaching 7th Grade Bible class.
- Plan Oktoberfest fundraiser.
- Provide Joshua Tree Advent devotions to church and school.

Sara Agee- Continued:

Upcoming Plans:

- Plan and run Vacation Bible School.
- Host Soup Suppers, Golf Fundraiser, and Easter Brunch.
- Teach First Communion Class.
- Prepare for National Youth Gathering.
- Recruit and equip more Children and Youth Ministry volunteers.
- Continue educational programs.

Dr. Dave Rueter, Director of Discipleship

- Change of Title to Director of Discipleship
- Gifted for More—Though the survey did not yield as helpful data as hoped for, the accompanying Bible study was still very fruitful in helping people learn more about how God has gifted them.
- Rooted Pilot – The first group of people took part in a pilot group for Rooted, a foundation we are using to build a discipleship ecosystem at Our Savior. Learn more here: <https://oslm.net/church/next-steps/discipleship/>
- Realm (Church Management System) – We are in the process of launching Realm and the Realm Connect app into full use for Our Savior. Rather than a church database that is only useful for church office staff, Realm Connect allows members to connect to one another through opportunities to serve and join in activities and groups with one another. Learn more here: <https://oslm.net/church/connect/realm/>
- AV Class – Friday afternoons I continue to teach a class for students interested in AV. In their class time on Monday and Friday they work on video projects and on Wednesday students rotate in serving as the AV crew for chapel.
- Middle School Youth Group – Sunday night youth ministry has grown to the point that high school and middle school youth have their own separate learning times. I have been leading the middle school group, teaching studies on “How to Survive Middle School”, Proverbs, and the Christmas story.

Goals for 2025

- Fully Implement Realm: Onboard members, add all current groups, develop a process for attendance and other data and activity tracking, establish pathways for member care, etc.
- Launch Rooted congregation-wide in the fall.
- Develop and pilot online discipleship learning opportunities.
- Revision or revitalize Ministry Action Teams to better suit current ministry needs and leadership.