

# *6.1.25 OSLM Voters' Meeting - Pastor's Report Ministry Update*

Dear Members of Our Savior Lutheran Ministries,

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we come to the end of the 2023-2024 fiscal year and our school year it is important to look back on the year that was, but also to look with new hope and excitement on the year to come. This year our theme was "Rooted in Christ" and our efforts centered around being grounded in Jesus so that Spirit might move in us and produce good fruits and growth. We prayed fervently that God would bless this effort and grant us growth and deeper relationships, and that is what he did.

This coming year we are excited to celebrate God's Faithfulness for the 60<sup>th</sup> year of Lutheran Education through Our Savior. It is a wonderful time to look back in gratitude for so many lives that have contributed to the spiritual formation of thousands. It is also a time to work hard in the present to address many underlying issues that will impact the opportunity to achieve the dreams of the future. We will work hard in the coming year to continue to shape culture and make this place welcoming, safe, and hospitable for anyone who is connected with our ministry. Together we will all strive for excellence in every aspect of our mission so that everyone knows that they are loved and valued by God and by us. Like the rest of the world, we are facing rising costs in every aspect of our ministry, in addition to carrying a debt load on our facilities. The age of our facilities range from 25 to 100 years old, which means systems need repair and replacement.

Amid growing ministries and growing costs, we remain Rooted in Christ and thank God for His faithfulness toward us, and we will respond with faithfulness toward Him, as has been the case here for over 70 years. Your commitment to prayer and our collective commitment to supporting and carrying out the work together for this season is vital for the generations that are yet to come. As we work together, we pray that God will bless our efforts and give us provision for the work that we are called to carry out. None of us do it alone, but we walk together in making sure the Gospel is proclaimed today and into the future. As the old proverb says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." It is a joy to be together with each of you.

We are blessed with amazing people that make up all facets of our ministry, and leadership is no exception.

## **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

The Board has gone above and beyond in the last year. Beginning in September, the board began studying and learning about how Policy Based Governance (our church governance model) is intended to work. We brought in an instructor, Rev. Vince Parks from the greater Houston area to lead a seminar on PBG. Over the course of the year, the Board has put in many additional hours cleaning up the Board's Policy Manual, working on desired

outcomes, and striving to set directives for the Senior Pastor. It is a long process, but I am confident that the time dedicated to this process, will lead us forward into the future.

### **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 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. This year they have been an important support for me. They keep me informed on issues within the congregation and care for everyone, they provide help for teachers as each assigned to classrooms, they pray for many and for me on Sunday mornings and assist in worship. This year has seen more baptisms and funerals than the previous year, and they have been an incredible blessing in each of those circumstances. This summer we are reading and discussing “The Reluctant Witness,” a book commissioned by Lutheran Hour Ministry and the Barna Group, in effort to make us bolder as individuals and a congregation to be more focused on outreach.

### **Senior Staff**

- Sara Agee, Director of Christian Education
- Julie Cha, HR/ Business Administrator
- 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/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. They are a remarkable group of people, who are each uniquely gifted. Don Young will be retiring in July, and Julie Cha was hired as his replacement. She brings unique perspective and

experience to our team. Dr. Dave Rueter is currently considering a Divine Call to serve as a Theology Teacher at Lutheran High School in Parker, CO.

### **Faculty & Staff**

We have a tremendous Faculty and Staff, who are deeply committed to the Lord and ensuring that our culture is carried throughout the ministry and instilled in everyone who is part of it. We have been extremely grateful to have consistency among our staff and little turnover. In the past year we have made changes to our staff when they are not a great fit with our culture. We always look to hire faithful people, who work hard and exhibit the love and forgiveness of Christ in their lives. We continue to strive for unity in what we do across all areas of our ministry with multiple in-services and consistent messaging. We attempt to live our ministry values of loving, forgiving, hospitable, welcoming, and safe while we strive for clear communication with one another and with all that we serve. With a growing school, we will also be adding four new teachers to our staff for the coming year.

### **Our Membership and Worshipping Community**

Our worshipping community, like our school is seeing wonderful growth. We have increased in numbers and diversity, especially in our age demographics. WE are not only growing numerically up last year's average of 205 people per Sunday to 228 people on average this year (an increase of 11%), but we are also growing younger as we welcome more people into worship and membership.

### **Highlights of the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year**

- 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 11% increase in weekly worship attendance
- Increased Christmas (2023: 353; 2024: 385) and Easter (2023: 478; 2024: 533) attendance
- Congregational giving is up 5% year to date over last year
- Campus Improvements: Gutters, Cameras, Fire Panel
- A growing number of school families connecting in worship
- Budget met and exceeded year to date
- Transitioning backend church management system (Realm)
- In-services from Concordia Plans and on Policy Based Governance
- Asynchronistic Confirmation for students
- Reworked LCEF loans for mortgage
- Navigated increased costs for health and retirement
- Trainings about Salary and Benefits for employees (increased)
- Reevaluation of Policy Manual, Strategic Ministry Plan, and Goals
- Conducted two pilot groups for Rooted, a discipleship tool

## Looking ahead in 2025

- School enrollment is projected for 430, up from 407 in 2023-2024
- Creating a roadmap for navigating rising costs and near capacity enrollment
- Stewardship drive/ Capital campaign for debt reduction and facility care
- Repairing and resealing blacktop (Please see Don Young's report for more facility updates)
- Increased costs for health and retirement benefits
- Likely increase in Mortgage Rates on existing loans
- Ministry-wide launch of Rooted, a small group discipleship tool
- Continuing to transition to REALM and utilize more features
- Working with the Board of Director to set and execute Senior Pastor Goals
- Celebrating 60 Years in Lutheran Education

## Senior Staff Reporting:

### Sara Agee – DCE

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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, bi-monthly after-school Youth Group for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, bi-monthly after-school youth group for middle school, teaching 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

### Recap since July 1, 2024

- 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 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Bible class.
- Plan Oktoberfest fundraiser.
- Provide Joshua Tree Advent devotions to church and school.

### Looking Ahead:

- 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.

## **Julie Knight- Principal:**

### Recap:

#### *Academic Excellence:*

Successfully introduced a new Common Core-aligned math curriculum for grades 2–8. Early results are very encouraging, with NWEA MAP test scores now above the 80th percentile in achievement, reflecting a 19% increase over last year, well above national averages.

#### *Accreditation Milestone:*

We completed our WASC/NLSA mid-year cycle with highly positive feedback. The visiting committee affirmed our school as, "A distinguished Lutheran school of excellence," recognizing our strong academic and spiritual environment.

#### *Building Community:*

Our athletic program, led by Amanda Gaglardi, remains a cornerstone of middle school student life at OSLS: 96% of middle school students participated in at least one team sport. 100% of 8th graders engaged in one of our seven offered sports. These numbers showcase a deeply engaged student body and the vital role athletics play in character development and community building.

#### *Ministry Collaboration:*

Continued to strengthen ties across campus by partnering with both the church and preschool on various service projects and community events, cultivating a deeper sense of shared mission and unity within our ministry.

### Vision:

#### *Strengthening Ministry Partnerships:*

We will continue to build bridges with the church and preschool, nurturing unity across our campus and aligning our efforts in service, worship, and shared values.

#### *Advancing Academic Rigor:*

With the strong gains we've seen in math, we aim to further develop and enrich our math program, ensuring students not only meet, but exceed, national standards. In addition, we are excited to invest in our science labs, expanding opportunities for hands-on learning, experimentation, and STEM-based exploration.

#### *Sustaining Growth through Student-Centered Support:*

We remain dedicated to serving the diverse needs of our students through differentiated instruction, personalized support, and holistic development—academically, spiritually, and socially.

#### *Honoring Our Legacy:*

As we celebrate 60 years of educational ministry, we do so with deep gratitude for the blessings that have brought us here—and with bold confidence in the work ahead. Together, we will continue to grow, serve, and lead as a Lutheran school of excellence.

### **Dave Rueter – Director of Discipleship:**

Thus far in 2025, the second **Rooted** pilot group was conducted with 6 participants, bringing the total trained to 20. The rollout of **Realm** continued. We now have 109 people who have logged in, Sunday volunteer scheduling is fully on Realm, and bible study attendance is recorded weekly. Activity groups are gradually moving onto Realm as well. Additionally, I have continued to teach the middle school AV class, Sunday middle school youth group, as well as supporting school chapel and preschool chapel (especially when in the sanctuary).

In May, I received a call to teach theology at Lutheran High School in Parker, CO. I am currently deliberating my calls to Our Savior and Lutheran High, seeking God's guidance.

Rooted will be launched this fall. We have commitments for up to six Sunday morning groups, three Wednesday evening groups at church, and one at-home group. Registration will take place via Realm. Additionally, we should be ready to launch a few initial online discipleship/bible study courses.

### **Karen Schroeder – Music Director**

#### *Accomplishments since January 1:*

Planning of all Sunday morning worship services is an on-going process. During weekly planning meetings, upcoming services are finalized. Midweek Lenten Services for 2025 revolved around the theme of "Rooted in Christ, Guided to the Cross" and culminated in the Holy Week services and Easter celebration.

The Music Department Budget for the coming fiscal year 2025 – 2026 was reviewed, adjusted and submitted for inclusion in the overall ministry budget formation.

Concordia Concert Choir, Irvine presented a late afternoon concert on Saturday February 22, 2025. Our Savior Lutheran School Middle School Handbell Ensembles opened the concert with several selections. Concordia Concert Choir students were housed overnight by many congregational members. This was a wonderful experience for all involved.

The School Spring Music Concert took place on May 8<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM in the sanctuary. All grades attended as well as many parents, grandparents and friends of the band and handbell players. The Spring Concert was a positive experience for all involved. An end of the year root beer float/ice cream sundae party was held for the band and handbell students on May 21<sup>st</sup> in celebration of their accomplishments this year.

Service music was prepared for 8<sup>th</sup> grade promotion held on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

The final choir Sunday for the 2024 – 2025 season is June 8<sup>th</sup>. All choirs are preparing special anthems to close out the season.

#### *Work through December 2025:*

Service planning takes place year-round. Summer planning includes scheduling all choir participation for the 2025 – 2026 season from September through June. Anthems and musical selections are reviewed and/or purchased for the new season. Review of anthem selections includes browsing through all newly composed music from various mainstream publishers. Since publishers now rarely send out hard copies of new selections for the season, this all must be done online.

Review of all necessary copyright licenses will take place to ensure the ministry is in copyright compliance. Attendance of the Worship service must be monitored as licensing fees are based on weekly attendance. As attendance continues to grow, licensing fees will increase.

The annual Christmas Concert is scheduled for Sunday, December 7 at 3 PM. Planning of the concert, theme and musical selections take place during the summer.

Middle School Handbell Ensembles will resume in the new school year. 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students may again choose to remain in general music class with Mrs. Parks or apply their music skills in handbell class. 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Middle School Bell Ensembles allow 22 students to participate. Tentative plans are also in the works to offer an additional Honors Elective for 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who are ready to move forward with more difficult music. This would be an auditioned group of 11 students, allowing these ringers the opportunity to ring as an independent (single) group and tackle more advanced music in line with their technical abilities.

### **Angela Westphal – Director of Communications/Marketing**

Management of all ministry-wide communications on behalf of the school, preschool, and church has a primary goal - connection of church members, parents, staff, students, and visitors to our ministry, and ultimately to our Lord. Communication channels:

- Weekly electronic newsletters
- Social media
- Event management
- Weekly handouts of important announcements and events
- Software/database management

The move from Church 360 to Realm (church management system) last year is still an ongoing and long-term effort, but we continue to make headway with the adoption of the solution. The administrative side of Realm has been fully adopted by key staff and most all leaders. Work remains to be done with the goal of 75% adoption of members by the end of the year

Management of all church, school, preschool, and community events in our master calendar solution (FMX). This management/communication is vital for executing on the needs of each event, thus allowing us to maximize use of our space, and increase accessibility of our facility for the goal of being a resource to the community, as well as providing an additional revenue source for our ministry. Pleased that new Facility Manager, Kevin Giselsbach, and I work more closely than was possible with his predecessor. Already seeing improved execution on events.

Marketing of our church, school, and preschool by increasing visibility and building relationships within the community is an ongoing effort. Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce member – attending monthly mixers and meetings on behalf of OSLM. Intentional partnership with local community groups will continue going forward.

Serving as primary point of contact for cradle-grave care and support for our church and school families, as well as the community, and liaison with Pastor Robb.

## **Brittani Young – Preschool Director:**

### *Recap*

#### *Academic Excellence*

Our preschool continues to provide a high-quality curriculum that promotes a seamless transition into our grade school programs. For the 2025–2026 school year, we are preparing to transition 82% of 4-year-old students into our Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes.

#### *Building Community*

We continue to strengthen our outreach through monthly chapel offerings. This year, we partnered with several community organizations, including:

- Tri-Valley Animal Rescue – pet supply donations
- Carmen Avenue Apartments – coat drive
- Shepherd’s Gate – diaper donations
- Samaritan’s Purse – Christmas gift drive
- OSLM Shut-in Ministry – Easter baskets

We also emphasized building an internal community through family-centered events such as our Advent Service, Milk and Cookies Night, Spring Program, and Art Show.

#### *Ministry Collaboration*

Our connection between church and school continues to grow through the support of our Preschool Elder, Norman Back. Highlights include:

- Preschool students singing in family worship services
- Middle school students reading to preschoolers during National Lutheran Schools Week (NLSW) and joining them for chapel
- Reintroduction of our TK and Kindergarten reading field trip, familiarizing preschoolers with the teachers and classrooms they’ll transition into next year

### *Vision for 2025–2026*

#### *Strengthening Ministry Partnerships*

We will continue our efforts to foster a unified ministry through deeper collaboration between the preschool, church, and grade school.

#### *Advancing Academic Rigor*

Building on our strong academic foundation, we aim to enhance and enrich our curriculum to ensure continued alignment with our grade school programs.

#### *Sustaining Growth through Academic and Spiritual Development*

We remain dedicated to serving our youngest learners by fostering academic excellence and nurturing spiritual growth in a Christ-centered environment.



## Don Young and Julie Cha - Executive Director/HR and Business Administrator

### Highlights of current Fiscal Year:

- **Hiring and onboarding/training of three new key members of our team:** Erik Tom (IT System Administrator) joined in November, Kevin Giselbach (Facilities Manager) in February and Julie Cha (HR & Business Administrator) in March.
- **Facility improvements:** converted PE Teacher office into PE Changing Room for Middle School students, new gutters installed on primary school buildings (A & C), new sand for Preschool playground, installed several new hydration stations t/o campus, new lighting in Courtyard, installed segregated water shutoffs for buildings A/B/C, and security cameras being installed in May. This summer a brand-new Fire Alarm System will be installed and our entire asphalt parking lot will be repaired, sealed and striped.
- **Finances:** restructuring our loans a year earlier than scheduled to minimize the impact of increased interest rates and operating to budget monthly.
- **Information Technology:** taking advantage of available governmental programs such as E-Rate Program and CA Teleconnect Fund to save on our HSIA (High Speed Internet Access) costs and installing or relocating WAPs (Wireless Access Points) for improved connectivity.

### Aspirations/Plans for this next year:

- **Facility:** hire professional firm to conduct inventory/assessment of existing capital assets equipping us for better planning in the future. Refurbish main cross on the front of our sanctuary. Update various appliances in our Ministry Kitchen. Enhance campus signage. Catch up on several needed lingering items (repair/replace gym door crash bars, replace lightbulbs in sanctuary, replace lightbulbs in parking lots, etc.). Bring back Campus Cleanup days providing opportunity for OSLM community to help restore our campus.
- **Finances:** Per Policy Manual, hire outside firm to conduct an audit. Kickoff a Capital Stewardship Campaign with the goal to increase giving. Conduct Lifetime Plan for Giving workshop. Continue to operate the ministry to our approved budget.
- **Information Technology:** incorporate a new Bell System for our school.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report, and for sharing in the efforts of this ministry. Please know you are Loved and Valued!



Pastor Joe Robb  
Senior Pastor