

ANNUAL REPORT

2025- 2026

Know Jesus and make Jesus known



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God Works

by the Rev. Dr. Brian Wise, Senior Pastor

*“For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”
Ephesians 2:10*



Dear Our Saviour's Lutheran Church,

This year's congregational theme invited us into something both simple and powerful: Life Together. Inspired by the early church in Acts 2, we focused on gathering, praying, eating, and living generously. What we discovered is that when we make space for one another, God shows up in real, relational, and transformative ways.

We saw this come alive on Wednesday evenings, where intergenerational meals and conversations brought people together at the same time and in the same place. We invested in caring for the whole person through new leadership, including a Wellness Coordinator and a full-time Children, Youth, and Family Ministry role. We also witnessed our congregation finding its voice beyond these walls, showing up for our immigrant neighbors in vulnerable moments and public witness as we lived out our values as followers of Jesus.

In worship, we continue to navigate changing patterns. While we are not at pre-pandemic numbers, we are seeing encouraging signs of stability and growth. Attendance has slightly increased, and after a year of intentional investment in the 11:00 service, we are seeing new life and energy. Across all services, new members and visitors continue to walk through our doors on any weekend, reminding us that God is still drawing new people into community, and we are so thrilled to get to welcome them and the gifts they bring.

Some of this year's defining moments reflect who we are becoming. Our Life Together Summit equipped our community with tools for hospitality, care, and connection. Our service day with Loaves & Fishes Community Services alongside St. Timothy Lutheran Church reminded us that faith is lived out in service. Our Stewardship Trivia Night showed that generosity can be joyful, communal, and deeply meaningful. Behind all of this, we are blessed to have over 150 worship volunteers throughout our church who make ministry possible through their time, gifts, and hospitality.

This year also brought some transitions. We gave thanks for the ministries of Kim Walker, Karen Lindflott, Vicar Emily, Chris Brown, and Christy LaFave Grace. We welcomed Tracy Jackway, Cam Green, Brittany Sheldon, Alexandra Colliani, and Matthew Felbein. Each person has shaped who we are, and I remain deeply grateful for our staff and volunteers who serve faithfully every day. We are church first, and I give thanks for your prayers and support as we continue to know Jesus and make Jesus known.

God Works

(Continued)

As we look forward, our next theme is God Works. We believe God Works through the Word, shaping our story from generation to generation. We believe God Works in us, calling us to love our neighbor and live out the Gospel in real and tangible ways. And we believe God Works in the world, beyond our walls, inviting us to listen, to serve, and to welcome the voices of those around us.

In 2027, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church will celebrate its 70th birthday! This milestone reminds us that God Works across generations, shaping our story, and inviting us now to be open, to dream boldly, and to prepare for the future God is inviting us to live in the next 70 years and beyond. I look forward to celebrating with you.

I look forward to celebrating with you as we continue our Life Together!

God's Peace,

The Rev. Dr. Brian Wise
Senior Pastor



A Message From Kathy Ewald

OSLC council chair



This past year was a big one for my family. My daughter, an only child, headed to college – one that is over a 12-hour car ride away and in a different time zone. Dropping her off in August felt like a huge portion of my heart had been severed and left behind. Knowing that our family was no longer going to be together created an almost physical pain. Even my husband, during our long and somewhat quiet drive home, said, “I’ve just been feeling off all day, and I wasn’t sure what it was. Now I realize it’s just that she isn’t with us.”

The more we all became used to the new situation, the more I’ve come to understand that there are so many ways we as a family can be together. Of course, there’s no substitution for physical proximity, but the weekly Zoom calls, text check ins, and knowing that we all have a common purpose in this – giving her room to spread her wings and fly on her own – keeps us feeling like a full and complete family.

This gets me thinking about OSLC and this past year’s theme of Life Together. Being a church with two campuses and 4 four weekly services can pose challenges to physically being in the same room with each other. There are so many ways, though, that our community has coalesced this year. Just a few of those MANY ways that come to mind for me are:

- Together in our Welcome Statement: From welcoming in 48 new members, to having Wednesday Midweek Meet Up dinners, to the broad range of programs and groups for youth and adults, we grew in our welcome.
- Together in new initiatives: From the wellness programs, to Caring for Creation, to updated flooring, to a pop-up choir, we expanded our offerings.
- Together in our community: From ensuring our neighbors at another congregation felt safe going to church services, to providing meals for the Loaves & Fishes Moving Up program, to offering financial assistance to our mission partners, to showing support for social justice at various events, we stepped out and stepped up in the community.

There are so many exciting and beautiful ways Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church grew in our Life Together this past year, way too many to name in this letter. While we’re not always present in the same space, we can remember that we are all united in one mission to know Jesus and make Jesus known.

Wishing you God’s peace!

Kathy Ewald, Council President

Reflections from Pastor Elisabeth

by Pastor Elisabeth Pynn Himmelman

The Holy Spirit has been busy at Our Saviour's, helping us deepen our love for God, our neighbors, and the world around us! Last summer, the pastoral team discerned a need for some shifting of responsibilities, and my area of engagement shifted to include supervision of Children, Youth and Family Ministries, Wellness, and of Nicholas Davis prior to his new role in 2026 as Director of Worship.

This included interviewing and hiring Brittany Sheldon in August as our full-time Children, Youth and Family Ministries Coordinator; and Alexandra Colaianni in September as our part-time Congregational Wellness Manager. Both are growing their ministry areas and continue to flourish as they deepen relationships with God and one another, and proclaim the Good News through their leadership.

In addition to these areas of responsibility, my call continues to include preaching, teaching, visiting, and community engagement. Two highlights of my year were being invited to speak at the October "No Kings" rally in Naperville, where I shared my hopes and dreams for our community in the midst of societal and political division, and leading worship (on a monthly rotation with the pastoral team) at Tabor Hills Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living facilities – leading these worship services and communing our elders always bring me great joy!

This is just a brief glimpse into the ways we know Jesus and make Jesus known at OSLC. I am grateful to be on this journey with you as we continue to be surprised by the ways God promises to show up, make us new, and send us out to proclaim the Good News.

In hope,

Pastor Elisabeth



Reflections from Pastor Ben

by Pastor Ben Sloss

This past year has been a busy one at Our Saviour's! Our Summer 2025 Mission Trip to Anchorage, Alaska, took 37 of us, over half of which were our OSLC college students, on an amazing experience that reminded us of the vastness of God's creation and our call to serve far beyond our own doors. Hiring Brittany Sheldon as our full-time Children, Youth and Family Director then gave me space to work in new areas at OSLC.

Over the summer, I was able to work with some key volunteers to update our network infrastructure at both campuses, which allowed us to transition to a new internet service that is saving OSLC \$12,000 annually—funds that can instead be used for our ministries and missions.

I've been able to work closely with our worship volunteers and our worship and arts team to more fully utilize the Planning Center software for volunteer organizing and communication. We now have 150 regular volunteers using this new system, with volunteers serving an average of once per month, ensuring our services are vibrant and welcoming.

Our online worship continues to be a "digital front door." Worship services on YouTube received over 22,000 views and more than 100 new subscribers just in the past year. Our dedicated group of tech volunteers work hard to make sure each and every worship service at Our Saviour's is accessible to all, whether in person, at home, or abroad. It has been exciting to watch this group grow, and we have recently added about half a dozen middle and high school youth to our trained and dedicated tech team.

In the past year, my responsibilities have shifted to include working with our Caring for Creation Team. This team has been hard at work implementing new recycling initiatives and installing motion-detection lighting to reduce our footprint. Beyond our walls, we've taken our faith into the public square, advocating at the Naperville City Council for the "Say No to Coal" campaign and, more recently, speaking out against proposed data centers in the western suburbs.

Closer to home, I've been able to work with our Friends Visiting Friends Team. This wonderful group of volunteers helps care for members and friends of OSLC through phone calls, cards, and regular visits. In the past year, we also began a monthly "Lunch with a Pastor" gathering for members and friends at Monarch Landing.

These are just a few of the ways we are doing ministry together at Our Saviour's. It is an honor to be part of this inspiring community.

Blessings,

Pastor Ben

Music Ministry

by Nicholas Davis, Director of Worship



Our Saviour's continues to be blessed with outstanding music ministries. This year brought many changes; however, the joy and love shared each week by our many ensembles remained strong.

The Sanctuary Choir moved its rehearsal time to Wednesday evenings to align with our Midweek Meet-Up. This change resulted in increased participation, and the choir continues to provide high-quality music at the 9:00 a.m. services as well as special services, including Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Women's Chorale has also experienced growth in membership. While the ensemble most often sings at the 5:00 p.m. Saturday service, they also share their music at Celebration and at the 11:00 a.m. service. This year they also sang at Tabor Hills.

In February, Chris Brown stepped down from his position as Director of Worship and Contemporary Worship Leader. We thank Chris for his many years of faithful service to OSLC and wish him well in his new ministry. Matthew Felbein stepped forward as Interim Director while the search began for a new Contemporary Worship Leader. The Celebration Band continues to provide moving and inspiring music each weekend.

Shelley May Hutchison continues to bring fun and innovative music to our Bach Ringers. This dedicated group shared their music at various services throughout the year. In May, they were joined by our Mini-Ringers. In addition, Shelley directs our Children's Choir. The choir continues to grow, and we look forward to watching these children blossom musically within our church.

Our 11:00 a.m. service is led by an ensemble team made up of Greg Hooper, Lee Ann Nasman, and me. This blended service features both traditional and contemporary music. Over the past year, we have seen increased attendance at this service.

We were blessed to have the OSLC Brass and the Saxophone Ensemble providing special music throughout the year at all services. These musicians bring such energy and excitement to our services and we thank them for their continued dedication.

Music Ministry

(continued)

We were also pleased to welcome Cam Green to our staff as the Sanctuary Choir Accompanist. Cam also serves as pianist at the 5:00 p.m. service.

Additional highlights from the year include:

- The Beatles Service held at Celebration
- The Christmas Cantata featuring a choir of more than 50 singers, a 25-piece orchestra, and participation from all our ensembles
- A jazz-infused service at the 5:00 p.m. service
- The creation of the Life Together Ensemble
- Lent Concert Services
- Men Sing providing special music

We continue to seek volunteers to serve as Assisting Ministers, Readers, Ushers, Greeters, Celebration Hospitality hosts, and Communion Assistants. If you are interested in serving, please reach out. We will work with you to find the role that best fits your gifts and schedule.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for sharing their gifts and talents. I am excited to see where the Holy Spirit will lead us musically in the coming year. With your continued love and support, I believe even more exciting days lie ahead.



Administrative and Operational Team Updates

by Jean Jepson, Senior Director of Church Operations

Our Administrative Team works behind the scenes to keep the church running smoothly and with care. They support staff and members while overseeing facilities, communications, finances, events, and daily operations. We are grateful for their stewardship, coordination, and the essential support they provide each week.

Membership Statistics: As of the 2025–2026 fiscal year, Our Saviour’s Church continues to grow and thrive as a vibrant spiritual community. Key statistics include:

- Total active membership: 2,123
- New members (through baptism, confirmation, new membership, and transfers): 48
- Members who passed away this past year: 12

Community Partnerships and Rental Income: Our Saviour’s Church is proud to partner with local nonprofit organizations by providing space within our campus. These partnerships are an important way we live out our mission by supporting and strengthening the broader community.

Current partners include:

- Ray Graham Association
- How and Why
- Edward Hospital Cradle Talk
- Local baseball league
- Thursday discussion group
- Young Naperville Singers
- Edward Hospital (parking lot use)

Total income from community rental partnerships for the 2025–2026 fiscal year was \$292,000.

Volunteer Teams: Volunteer teams are essential to the church's operations. We are particularly thankful for those volunteer teams that help support the church’s day-to-day functions. These include:

- HR committee
- Property committee
- DIY team
- Landscape committee
- Story-writing team
- Grant-writing team

I am deeply grateful to the hardworking staff who manage the operational side of our ministry. Their commitment and efforts help ensure that Our Saviour’s Church continues to serve our congregation and community effectively. Special thanks to the following team members:

- Accounting Manager: Kathy Clolinger
- Communications Manager: Tracy Jackway
- Facilities Manager: Greg Nasman
- Special Events Coordinator: Donna Reed
- Life Events Coordinator: Diane Greisbach
- Volunteer and Care Coordinator: Debbie Montrose
- Administrative Coordinator: Susan Gere
- Evening Hosts: Edward Thomas, Michelle Hamilton, Robyn Carlson

The Children's Center Preschool

by Kelly Gilligan, Celebration Children's Center Director



- We kicked off the school year with a visit from the Little Red Donut Truck at our Teacher Meet & Greet in August!
- A self-supported ministry of Our Saviour's, The Children's Center provided a \$214,780 benevolence to Our Saviour's Operating and Capital Funds.
- Opened the 2025/2026 school year with all classes fully enrolled! We had nearly 200 children, and 26 staff members. Each preschool and PDO class had 16-18 students.
- Nine preschool classes, and five Parents Day Out (PDO) classes were carried out in our seven classrooms.
- Five sessions of Friday enrichment classes were offered, running in 2-, 3-, or 6-week sessions throughout the school year.
- The preschool Christmas program was carried out in December as the Bethlehem story was told by costumed preschoolers. The three programs had over 600 parents and grandparents in attendance.
- Throughout the year, we collected items for our local mission partner, Loaves & Fishes Community Services. In October, we collected over 300 cans of soup as part of our "Picture Us Giving Back" event. Children received complimentary school pictures in exchange for soup cans collected. In December, we collected diapers and formula, and in March, during Lutheran Schools Week, we collected over 300 boxes of cereal to share. The cereal box domino rally down the hallway was an added treat! All proceeds from our Lou Malnati's and Portillo's fundraisers were used to purchase additional donation items for Loaves & Fishes.
- We had a Dad's Day Chapel in January and a Mother's Day Chapel in May where we honored our preschool parents with a blessing, a gift, and a photo booth picture.
- In February, we celebrated "Happy Healthy Me" with a focus on healthy food and bodies. We had Dr. Bryce Larson talk to the kids about dental health and ended the month with a ½ K Olympic Fun Run and Olympic games. Parents cheered on children as they completed their laps in the gym. Children received ribbons for their efforts!

The Children's Center Preschool

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- Beginner Bibles were given to the 78 PreK students heading to kindergarten in the fall.
- We celebrated the last days of school with our annual Last Slide for our preschoolers. Each preschooler took their last slide of the year down the twisty slide on the playground with parents watching and were presented with a pinwheel from their teachers as we kicked off summer.
- Four Thrivent Grants were received for preschool ministry events: Picture Us Giving Back in October, Celebration Fun Run in February, Mother's Day Chapels in May, and JOY Mission Camp in June.
- We had 17 Summer Camps during five weeks in June and July for preschoolers registered during the school year. We filled over 300 camp spots.
- Special thanks to the Celebration Preschool Board consisting of Terese Jackway, Allison Block, Liz Sandborn, Mary Beth Satvedi, Allison Kellogg, Stuart Vance, Elida Vandenberg, Nancy Couch, Christopher Maass, Kelly Gilligan and Pastor Brian Wise.



Children, Youth and Families Ministry

by Brittany Sheldon, Children, Youth, and Family Director

I began my position in August, alongside the fall kickoff for Children, Youth, and Family Ministries. Throughout the year, we have worked to strengthen key events and experiences while reshaping our ministry to be more efficient, intentional, and meaningful.

We implemented updated Safe Haven policies and training requirements for all CYFM volunteers. In addition, we are pursuing further training, tools, and resources to better support safe, welcoming spaces that reflect our RIC commitment and overall mission. We also launched Kids' Club Ministry at Celebration Campus, creating a space for all ages to gather. This environment allows parents and children to rest, connect, and engage in both active and quiet experiences, including games, movement, art, music, and building activities such as puzzles, Legos, and sensory bins.

In Sunday School, we introduced a new curriculum from Illustrated Ministries called Mini Revolutions. This resource aligns with our theology and encourages students to engage with thoughtful, faith-based questions. It also offers a variety of activities and literature that affirm all participants as children of God. We enhanced the experience further by incorporating weekly music selections and secular literature tied to monthly themes. Sensory bins are now available from pre-K through 5th grade, as well as in the nurseries and playground. We also increased nursery staffing and made more frequent updates to the playground to strengthen our hospitality efforts.

In our confirmation program, Surge, Pastor Brian, Pastor Elisabeth, and I began developing a new three-year curriculum. Teaching responsibilities were shared, allowing students to build relationships not only with mentors and the CYFM Director, but also with their pastors. This year's theme, Being Lutheran, focused on core elements of Lutheran identity and vocation. Surge also became part of Midweek Meetup, an intergenerational gathering centered around shared meals. Students participated in meaningful events, including assembling hygiene kits, leading a Christmas caroling event, hosting a bake sale to support chosen charities, and preparing for an upcoming field trip to a funeral home to explore connections between baptism and death.



Children, Youth & Families Ministry

(continued)

In our high school program, Ignition, we hosted a joint fall kickoff for Surge and Ignition families, as well as junior and senior high retreats at LOMC. Students helped shape the year's focus areas, including self-love, creative expression, spiritual practices, and world religions. We welcomed incoming 8th graders through two transition events, including a fellowship outing at Slick City Slide Park. Ignition also reconnected with the MCS Synod YMNet, participating in a fall event with Just Move, a racial justice education movement that visited OSLC on May 3. On April 26, we celebrated our graduating seniors at Baccalaureate, followed by a reception.



Looking ahead, we are excited to host Vacation Bible School in June and to send our youth on service and learning trips to Slovakia in June and Milwaukee in July.



Wellness Ministry

by Alexandra Colaianni, Congregational Wellness Manager

A Year of Beginning and Becoming

The Wellness Ministry at Our Saviour's began in the fall of 2025—not with a grand launch, but with a quiet and intentional step forward. What started as a vision for whole-person care quickly revealed itself to be something more: a needed and deeply resonant response to the lives people are actually living.

From the beginning, it was clear this ministry was not simply about adding programs. It was about cultivating a different kind of space within the church—one where people could bring their full selves and be met with care, compassion, and presence. In a short time, what was planted in the fall has already begun to take root.

Grounded in Wholeness

The ministry has been shaped by the Eight Dimensions of Wellness—a framework that honors the complexity of being human. Rather than separating spiritual life from emotional health or physical wellbeing from relational connection, this approach invites integration.

This has allowed the ministry to feel both structured and spacious—clear in purpose, yet flexible enough to meet people where they are.

Marking the Beginning: *Renewed by Grace*

One of the first expressions of this ministry came on New Year's Eve with *Renewed by Grace*. This gathering invited participants to reflect on healing, transformation, and renewal—not through resolutions, but through intentional pause.

Through guided reflection, prayer, and connection, individuals were invited to look inward with honesty and outward with hope. It set the tone for what this ministry would become: grounded, meaningful, and deeply human.

A Ministry Taking Shape

As winter moved into spring, the ministry unfolded in both visible and quiet ways. *Thrive* has become a steady weekly rhythm—a space where individuals of all abilities gather in a way that fosters connection and belonging. Smaller group experiences like *The Well* and *Common Ground* have created space for deeper conversation, reflection, and shared life.

Alongside these communal spaces, another essential layer of the ministry has emerged through the offering of therapy to individuals and couples. This work has provided a more private setting for people to process anxiety, relationship dynamics, and life transitions. Integrating clinical care with a whole-person perspective, these sessions have supported healing, clarity, and reconnection—meeting people not only broadly, but deeply.

Wellness Ministry

(continued)

One-on-one support has also quietly woven through the ministry, offering presence during moments of overwhelm, transition, and uncertainty. At the same time, early integration with youth and families has begun to build a shared language around emotional awareness, identity, and connection.

Held by Grace

On May 9, the ministry hosted *Held by Grace*, a restorative gathering designed to support women across all seasons of motherhood. This event reflected a deepening awareness of the needs within our community and a commitment to creating spaces where people are invited not to give, but to receive.

Building with Intention

This year has also been about building a sustainable foundation. The formation of the Wellness Board has created a shared leadership model aligned with the Eight Dimensions of Wellness. Through listening, collaboration, and discernment, this group is helping shape both the present and future of the ministry.

What We Are Discovering

Even in its early stages, the ministry is already teaching us something important. People are longing for spaces where they do not have to perform. They are seeking connection that feels real and growth that feels supported.

We are learning that wellness must be offered as an invitation, not an expectation. And we are being reminded that the church has a unique role to play—offering integration in a world that often feels fragmented.

Continuing Forward

Looking ahead, the focus is not on doing more, but on deepening what has begun. The goal is to continue weaving wellness into the life of the church through consistent rhythms, accessible care, and expanded pathways for both community connection and therapeutic support.

Closing Reflection

The Wellness Ministry is still new. Still growing. Still becoming.

And yet, even now, it is clear: something has begun.

Something rooted in faith.

Something shaped by compassion.

Something gently guiding us toward wholeness.

Faith. Compassion. Wholeness for All.

OSLC Ministries



Caring 4 Creation:

As people of God, we are called to care for God's creation and be in relationship with the earth, using its resources wisely, and being mindful of the interdependence and connectedness of the human community with all of God's creation. Some of our events:

- Host Site for annual Faith in Place Environment and Spirituality Summit; Robin Wall Kimmerer (Braiding Sweetgrass) as Keynote Speaker
- Hosted Wednesday night dinner at Main Campus
- Provided “Have a Greener Christmas” workshop with sustainable holiday season tips and ideas
- Attended climate-advocacy events
- Christmas light recycling; collected seven boxes of lights for SCARCE
- Invited Ben Mjolsness, Naperville City Sustainability Manager, to speak to OSLC staff about recycling
- Collaboration with OSLC Property and Facilities teams on caring for our buildings
- Small item recycling at both campuses
- BYOM during Lent to encourage less waste in landfills
- Contribute environment tips and resources in SHINE on C4C Corner page
- Exploring food composting options with Urban Canopy and Groot for church and home
- Partner with Bonfire to bring environmental author Diane Osgood to OSLC
- Participate in DuPage River Cleanup
- Help Sunday School kiddos plant church pots and grounds

The Banned Book Club

The Banned Book Club met four times in 2025 to discuss banned, challenged and thought-provoking books. Book themes shared last year included guns, disabilities, and Palestine and Gaza. Our community often starts with books but the conversation and fellowship ebbed into so many other waters centered around inclusion and knowledge. We sadly lost our daring leader, Ann Ahlman, and we hope she is surrounded by family, friends and books in heaven. She quietly pushed us to be vulnerable, to share our findings and experiences and to challenge our beliefs. We are all better for knowing Ann.

OSLC Ministries

(continued)

Memorial Committee:

The Memorial Ministry receives, cares for, and disperses memorial gifts given to the congregation and supervises the Our Saviour's Main Campus Columbarium and the Celebration Memorial Garden. In the last fiscal year, the Memorial Ministry Committee has dispersed funds for several projects such as the furniture remodel, new banners, the labyrinth project, and books for the library.

Altar Guild:

Volunteer teams at both campuses faithfully prepare the altar at the Our Saviour's Campus for each worship service. Working quietly behind the scenes, they ensure that everything needed is in place, including for special services such as Easter and Christmas Eve. Following each service, these teams also take care to clean up, allowing the space to be ready for future worship.



Senior Lunch:

This year, Senior Lunch has been Dining Through the Decades! We have had a fabulous time each month enjoying meals, learning decade highlights, and talking about memories from 1930-2020's. We have 35-60+ guests the first Monday of each month from September-June join us for a home cooked meal. It is fun for the team to find and prepare recipes from scratch and exciting for our guest to experience nostalgic foods from days gone by!

Women's Ministry:

Women's Ministry continues to be an active and vital part of the Our Saviour's community. A variety of activities and events for women of all ages and stages of life are offered so women can deepen relationships with each other and with God. This year's activities included making Divine Desserts, a mindful forest walk, a book discussion, a book folding craft, a one day retreat "Free to Feel," providing a Lenten Soup Supper, making a garden stepping stone, our annual Women's Tea "Sipping on Serenity," and a tour of Fabyan House. Typically the events are attended by 15-60 women.

OSLC Ministries

(continued)



Our Saviour's Library

The summer of 2025 brought a bright new look to the library. New carpeting, fresh paint, new arrangement of shelving, all made possible by the help of volunteers, who love the printed word. Over 150 items were weeded at this time. Moving forward, 53 titles have been donated or purchased to update the collection. Suggestions of "good reads" are always welcome. Donations will be reviewed by the committee, we ask that they are not more than six years old, from publication date. If interested in volunteering, please let us know.

A special thanks to "BoB," who wishes to remain anonymous, aka "The Banksy of the Bench," who tirelessly used his professional woodworking skills to bring to life a beautiful corner bench in the library.

All are welcome to come sit, read, enjoy, items chosen just for you. We are fortunate to have an online database that will allow you to search at your leisure. No online holds available at this time.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry creates shawls for those in need of love, comfort, and a hug during either joyful or difficult times in their lives. Those creating the shawls pray for those who will receive the shawls. Currently, there are 13 members who meet monthly to knit and crochet, while praying and enjoying fellowship. In 2025-2026, between 75 and 100 shawls were created with love. We are always looking for more people to join this quiet and meaningful ministry.

OSLC Ministries

(continued)

Dialogues in Faith

We started our 2025-2026 season with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's "Life Together," the inspiration for this year's theme, and finished with Elaine Pagels' "Miracles and Wonder." In between, we explored "A Cartoonist's Guide to Acts," created our own green Christmas, learned about Bonhoeffer's theology and what it means for us today, and heard about creation justice. We met several times in the art gallery to see how art and artists help us better understand our world. Of all the topics we approached, the heart of our ministry is the discussions we have—growing in faith and with each other.

C.A.R.E. Moms

Established in 2005, CARE (College Age Requires Embracing) Moms is devoted to supporting college-age students by helping them stay connected to their church community while encouraging and uplifting their parents through monthly gatherings during the school year. During the 2025–2026 school year, 23 moms assembled two themed CARE packages and coordinated two mailings for their students, each featuring a monetary origami surprise, for 39 students. These students are enrolled in 24 colleges and universities, as well as programs such as AmeriCorps and the Culinary Institute of America, spanning 18 states. This meaningful ministry reminds our incredible students to keep shining brightly and reassures them that CARE Moms, OSLC, and God, love and support them unconditionally.



Mission Highlights

**Slovakia Ministry:
"Bringing Christ back to the
Slovak people after Communism"**



Major organizations that we have helped build and now support: Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Nitra, Slovakia, and The Center for Christian Education, Martin, Slovakia

In 2025, we held our annual fundraising dinner in April. Bohdan Hrobon, President of the CCE, prepared a delicious traditional Slovak goulash dinner. He was assisted by Adrian Kacian, Director of Development, and Sisa Schudichova, Partner Relations and CFO. We raised over \$30,000, to continue their work building out additional classrooms to accommodate the growing list of applicants that wish to attend the school. Student enrollment is now near 800. Thank you to all who came to the dinner. Bohdan and Sisa provided Slovak songs on piano and viola, and singing. Our Saviour's Director of Worship, Nicholas Davis, provided piano background music during the evening.

We also appreciate the support of the Mega Garage Sale committee and the Mission Board in supporting this important ministry.

In June, Pastor Brian, along with his family, is leading a group of 5 students from OSLC to meet and experience the CCE in Martin, Holy Spirit Church in Nitra, and the Lutheran General Bishop in Bratislava. We are also sponsoring six CCE youth to visit OSLC and assist with VBS this summer. We are looking to build our connections through high schoolers and restart our group choir tours/leadership camps with Martin and Nitra.

Our dinner this year will be May 16 with Bohdan, Adrian and Sisa cooking another traditional Slovak Schnitzel dinner for our enjoyment. We hope to see you there in May.

Slovakia Ministry Committee



Mission Highlights

(continued)

Report on the Dusek Childcare and Primary School, Ibanda, Uganda

Last year, OSLC congregants continued to work with Educating Africa's Children to provide specific ongoing support to the school in Uganda.

The school is fundamentally self-sufficient, but cash flow can be challenging. The priority is to ensure that teachers are paid well and on time. This has resulted in the successful retention of excellent teachers. Additionally, donations continue to provide satellite internet access to the school (the only internet in the village) which directly supports annual national testing of sixth-term students, curriculum enrichment and the only computer lab within an elementary school in the region.

While the school is operationally stable, raising capital for buildings and improvements remains challenging. This was the primary focus in 2025 and will continue in 2026. After purchasing an adjacent plot of land in 2023, the school, parents, and community are building a three-story structure that will expand classrooms for 1,300 students and provide dorm rooms for sixth-term boys and girls. This will allow existing classrooms, currently used as dorms, to open, and will provide better facilities, such as a study center, an improved computer lab, and an indoor kitchen.



Mission Highlights

(continued)

Haiti Scholars

With the dire situation in Haiti—marked by an unstable government, political unrest, and gang occupation—Haiti Scholars has had to pivot to meet the urgent needs of students. Before the unrest, many families were able to help support their child’s tuition. Now, it is almost impossible for families to both feed their children and send them to school.



We help support two schools, one in Mariani and one in Léogâne, Haiti, by providing teacher support as well as educational and classroom materials. Together, these schools serve over 350 children. All students and staff receive a daily nutritious meal, access to a full-time nurse, and deworming and Vitamin A treatments.

After gang attacks, many of our original scholarship students relocated to rural areas. We remain committed to these students and continue to fully support their tuition, ensuring they can continue their education despite the challenges they face.

Annual Report--Mozambique Mission

The Mozambique mission continued in its strong partnership with the Lutheran Church in Chimoio, Mozambique. Though separated by many miles, we walk side by side with our partners in Christ and the patient advocates who walk many miles each week to care for and minister to people suffering from chronic illnesses.

- We have sent two shipments of EPap nutritional porridge at a cost of \$23,000 (cost for each shipment has gone up \$3000, which means we will need to raise more money in the coming year).
- The mission supported the Aka Power school by paying the annual rent for the facility and also providing 20 computers- the first opportunity students have had to learn computer technology.
- New to the mission last year was our sponsor program, enabling us to send a small monthly stipend to unpaid patient advocates and teachers.
- The annual dinner in February gave us the joyful opportunity to share the good news of this life-saving and life-changing mission with our fellow congregants.
- Twelve people, led by Pastor Elisabeth, will travel to Mozambique in July to connect, celebrate, collaborate, and worship with our partners in Chimoio.



One goal that we have is to expand and strengthen connections between OSLC and the church community in Chimoio as we work together to know Jesus and make Jesus known.



Mission Highlights

(continued)



Baby Care

For the year 2025, the Baby Care group had our kickoff luncheon in February, collected clothing from four consignment sales in the area, and had seven workshops where we sorted and folded all the clothing collected. We manned the Infants booth at the Mega Garage Sale. We had a raffle of four baby quilts during the Assembly in September, and raised \$340. We hosted our Assembly on Sunday, September 14 where, with the help of many parishioners, made 500 Babycare Bundles for LWR.



Holy Family School

The school is located on the west side of Chicago and serves the students of North Lawndale, Garfield Park, and Austin communities. This is an area of high violent crime, high unemployment, low performing public schools, low family incomes, and high rates of single-parent homes. A startling statistic is 97% of the students at Holy Family School have witnessed a shooting.



The Little Learners Academy is a preschool. 250 students attend grades K-8 at the school. But Holy Family Ministries actually serves about a total of 600 students because of their afterschool programs, their Saturday program, their summer school, and their award winning Peace Academy for older students. They also sponsor a Parent University which gives guidance to individuals who want to develop good parenting skills.



During our “Season of Sharing” 125 books and 85 Target gift cards were collected to be given as Christmas presents to the students of The Little Learners Academy. Each child received at least one book and their family received a \$25 gift card. This was all accomplished through the generosity of the Our Saviour’s congregants!

Mission Highlights

(continued)



Feed My Starving Children

On March 7 and 8, Our Saviour's volunteers continued a years-long tradition of packing meals for Feed My Starving Children (FMSC). Spearheaded by Les and Laurie May and Ken and Sharon Voltava, a total of 1731 volunteers packed 412,344 meals in just two days. That means that 1,130 children will have a meal to eat every day for an entire year because of our combined efforts with other Naperville churches.



What many may not know, however, is that OSLC volunteers play a critical role in the event's logistics. Not only do Les, Sharon, and Ken provide representation from OSLC to the local "Feed the Need" team, which oversees the local event, but OSLC also stores many of the event's supplies (the displays, tables, and signs) in the Celebration basement. And OSLC volunteers play a critical role in setting up and breaking down the event space.

In addition to the number of meals packed, OSLC has pledged \$15,000 to help FMSC defray the direct cost of the meals. Doing so enables FMSC to buy more food for global distribution to partner organizations feeding starving children worldwide.

If you missed the annual mobile-pack event, there is a permanent FMSC packing location at 555 Exchange Court, Aurora, Illinois 60504. Phone: 630-851-0404. Individuals, families, and groups are encouraged to sign up for any of the many available packing slots.

LSSI and Our Saviours: Helping Neighbors in Need

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) was established in 1867 when Lutheran neighbors founded an orphanage for children whose parents died in a cholera epidemic. Today, Our Saviour's continues that legacy.

Our Saviour's annually supports Good Shepherd Sunday where congregations lift up LSSI programs, learning of its impact and opportunities to financially support its programs that served over 62,000 people in 2025—one of every 203 people in Illinois.



Our Saviour's Season of Sharing provided Christmas presents for children served in LSSI's foster care program. The congregation has also supported seniors and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities. All these programs are based in nearby Aurora. One foster parent shared insight into her work with LSSI, which applies to the support of Our Saviour's congregants, "I've always told my kids that success is measured not by what you have but the people that you help along the way."

Mission Highlights

(continued)

Refugee Ministry 2026 Annual Report for Chicago Synod

2026 was very different for OSLC as Federal policies suspended most historic immigration channels. Resettlements with our World Relief partners have ground to a near halt. The annual coat drive was suspended as was furniture collection for new-family setups. As such, OSLC is reevaluating how it will move forward with refugee engagement in the future.

- Much will depend on the upcoming mid-term elections, changes in immigration legislation, or Executive Branch actions.
- We are exploring new partnerships with agencies that may allow directed cash gifts targeted to specific refugee programs (e.g., English as a Second Language or job training).

As we move into the new fiscal year, we will continue to evaluate options, await election outcomes, and monitor policy changes.

Loaves & Fishes:

Who can forget the wild Toilet Paper collection during Season of Sharing? Our congregation brought in 7,000 rolls of “TP” for the client-families of Loaves & Fishes. Every week, over 10,000 people from over 3,000 families rely on L&F for healthy food and other products to maintain health and dignity.

Many OSLC people stepped up to provide other necessities (diapers, wipes, formula, feminine hygiene products, cleaning and paper products) throughout the year.

The Children's Center joined the fun with book drives, canned food drives, and the legendary cereal collection. The cereal collection culminates with the largest domino rally in town!

We partnered with St. Tim's to have one worship service at the Loaves & Fishes location.

Many thanks to the OSLC community for financial and product support. You are helping to fulfill the mission of Loaves and Fishes - Ending Hunger and Transforming Lives.



Property Committee Report

by Jim Harms

This fiscal year, we continued to respond to failure issues while still managing projects designed to preclude mechanical or infrastructure breakdown or unsafe conditions.

We continue to be judicious about other major projects and large expenditures.

Our major focuses are:

1. Safety, good health, safe/ease use
2. Facilities or equipment needing repair or replacement
3. Air quality, sanitation, temperature control
4. Improvement in function and/or appearance

We have successfully completed several major and planned projects:

- Celebration RTU HVAC Replacement Project: This is the project to replace all Celebration rooftop HVAC units across three fiscal years. This year, as Phase 2, we contracted for and installed three of the seven Roof Top Units (RTU's). We chose those that had experienced operating and repair issues. In addition, with Council's approval, we contracted for the final two RTU's as Phase 3. These will be installed fiscal year 26/27 before the start of the Preschool's fall session. (\$99,702)
- Celebration Grease Trap Replacement Project: We replaced the grease trap in the Celebration kitchen, which was clogged and non-functional. (\$8,300)
- Celebration School Door Opener Motors Project: The motors for the school doors started failing, decision was made to replace them (\$5,500).
- OSLC & Celebration LED Conversion Project: We have nearly completed the conversion to LED lighting at the OSLC location. The conversion in the Sanctuary, Narthex, and Fellowship Hall will likely require new fixtures. (\$4,961).
- OSLC Fellowship Hall Acoustics Assessment: We engaged an Acoustics Engineering firm to test and advise what can be done to improve sound management in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. They said the Sanctuary was acoustically fine. The Fellowship needs sound management materials for improvement. Implementation is anticipated next fiscal year. (\$8,512)
- Celebration Memorial Garden Wall Repair: We found the Memorial Wall had multiple cracks and strong evidence of water intrusion. We engaged Harling and repaired the wall. (\$20,700).
- OSLC Emergency Exit Sidewalk: We installed a sidewalk from the Sanctuary emergency south east door exit to the parking lot sidewalk. There never had been one! (\$8,600)
- OSLC English Ivy Removal: We contracted with a licensed landscaper to kill and remove the English Ivy on the east and south side of the Sanctuary in anticipation of a refreshed landscape next fiscal year. (\$3,000)

Property Committee Report

(continued)

- OSLC Basement sewer pipe replacement: We engaged a contractor and replaced a damaged vent pipe that was leaking water on boiler controls (\$4,150)
- Overall, we still have a reasonable balance from the approved \$187,500 budget to work with, about \$20,000, for the balance of the fiscal year.
- We were joined with several new members this year bringing greatly appreciated expertise to the team. We now have the benefit of the current Facility Manager and two prior facility managers as team members!
- Property Committee: Jim Harms (Chair), Todd Freitag, Jacob Himmelman, Jim Hiner, Jean Jepson, Greg Nasman, Dave Mevis (Church Council Liaison), Dave Musial, Greg Norgaard (Co-Chair), Jeff Travis, Laura Weren, and Mark Witt.

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

Jim Harms and
Greg Norgaard
Co-Chairpersons for the Property Committee



Stewardship & Endowment Committee Report



Current data on giving:

Our current endowment is approximately \$292,000, up about 11% from the prior year. In addition, the congregation raised approximately \$400,000 for the first phase of the campus refresh campaign.

Unfortunately, we are still seeing a decline in family giving units with about 9% fewer donors than a year ago.

Recent events:

In October 2025, the Stewardship and Endowment Committee hosted Trivia Night—a free, fun-filled evening that brought nearly 100 people together for food, fellowship, and a little friendly competition. Along with plenty of laughs, we took time to share our church’s vision and talk about the importance of ongoing giving. It was a great way to kick off our annual giving campaign.

About the Committee

The committee includes eight elected congregation members, along with the senior pastor and accounting manager. In addition to events like Trivia Night, we’re continuing to look for meaningful ways to connect with members and spark conversations about stewardship—how we each share our time, talents, and resources, and how those gifts strengthen our church community. Your generosity makes a real difference. It helps keep our programs strong and ensures we have the resources and space to support opportunities for connection, faith formation, and outreach, in our wider community.

Looking Ahead

Our Saviour’s endowment fund is a long-term resource that helps sustain the church’s mission over time. We’re also working to highlight the impact of including OSLC in your estate plans—an intentional and lasting way to support the church and honor the community that means so much to all of us.