

Our Savior's Voice

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

359 Leonard Street N - West Salem, WI 54669

www.oursaviorswestsalem.org

608-786-0030

September 2026



Vision Statement:

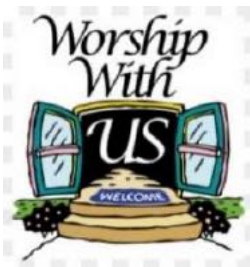
***We are a church centered in Christ,
inviting all into a community of worship,
nurturing all to be disciples of Jesus.
Together we reach out to make a difference
here and throughout the world.***

Our Savior's Voice

September 2026

Table of Contents

Worship Opportunities	Page 3
YouTube/Facebook/Instagram	Page 3
Pastor's Page	Pages 4-7
Guiding Principles	Page 7
Faith Formation	Pages 8-12
Adult Bible Study	Page 13
Senior Connections	Page 13
College Connection	Page 14
Young Adults/Families Gathering	Page 14
Prayer Time	Page 14
Music Ministry/Choir/Handbells	Page 15
Scavenger Hunt	Page 16
Quilt Transporting	Page 16
Feed Our Children	Page 17
Golf Outing	Page 17
Hungry Jar	Page 18
School Kits	Page 19
Thank You	Page 20
Council Review	Page 21
By the Numbers	Page 22
Financial Support Ministry	Page 23
Worship Leaders Schedule	Pages 24-25
Tech Invite	Page 25
Thrivent/Scrip Cards/Food Pantry	Page 26
Scam Alert	Page 27



Worship Opportunities

Saturday 6 PM
Sunday 8 & 10/10:30 AM

Return to 10:30 AM September 13

10/10:30 AM worship livestreamed!

Find the Livestreaming link on the home page of our web site (www.oursaviorswestsalem.org) or directly to YouTube at youtube.com/@techoslclstreams. Click on “live” to access the livestream.

Livestreams remain on the YouTube page as recordings for later viewing.



YouTube

We invite you to subscribe to our YouTube channel to keep up to date with our online worship. Thank you for your support of our virtual ministry!

Check it out ...



Facebook Page –
Our Savior’s ELCA – West Salem



Instagram Page –
[oursaviors_ws](https://www.instagram.com/oursaviors_ws)



Pastor's Reflections ...

The word is out!

So, the word is out. Our retirement is now on the calendar. June 30, 2027. And given that we will have some vacation time accrued, June 20 looks like our last Sunday. Long time to go, that will fly by quickly!



As we look forward to a new stage in our lives, we plan to remain in West Salem, and why not? It's a great place to live, and it has become our home. Besides, I really don't want to pack it all up again!

Until then, we're not checking out early. We will continue to be diligent and attentive to our work.

Still, there are three things that need to be clearly understood as this time of transition begins.

- After June 30 we cannot and will not be available for funerals, weddings, or anything else in the context of Our Savior's. For the sake of Our Savior's, we must stay out of it. So, quite simply, don't ask!
- We must and will stay out of the call process as it begins to unfold. We cannot influence the call of new pastoral leadership here. That is your task.
- When you call new pastoral leadership, we will be their biggest supporters. Don't come and tell us all they are doing wrong. If you do, our response will be – "Hey, they are great!"



But what about the process? Bishop Malpica will be meeting with the Congregation Council on September 14 to outline the process for calling new pastoral leadership. That will include, in the near future, appointing a Call Committee.

That is the responsibility of the Congregation Council, and I am confident they will do a superb job in bringing the Call Committee into being.

Why are we doing this so early, if we aren't leaving for another ten months? The usual practice is to bring in an interim pastor, who will "hold down the fort" during the process, until new pastoral leadership is in place. Like Pastor Rog did prior to our coming to Our Savior's.



However ... interims are hard to find these days, and the Bishop does not want to run the risk that when we leave, there is ... no one! So, he proposes that Our Savior's start the process while we are still here. A bit awkward, perhaps, but two other congregations are doing the same, and it's working.



But back to the process. The Call Committee, once it is established, will begin to develop the

documents needed, called an MSP, and that involves more than just filling in forms. It means doing some serious reflection on who Our Savior's is, and what God is calling Our Savior's to be in the years to come. And with that, what kind of pastoral leadership is needed to make that happen. That reflection, however, is not the Call Committee's – it is yours! The Call Committee will work to find ways to include you in discerning what God is up to, and what is God's calling to both congregation and new pastoral leadership.

This document, called an MSP, is vital to the process, and needs to be done well and right. So, when you have the opportunity, make sure you are a part of that discernment!

After the MSP is developed, then the synod office will seek out candidates who match up with the MSP. The Bishop will present their information to the Call Committee who will do the work of interviewing candidates. And when will that be? That ... is up to God!

Finally ... when all is right ... and God is ready ... the Call Committee will recommend a candidate. In our polity the congregation calls the pastor – and that means you have the final say! So, watch and be ready to engage the process and be a part of God at work in this place.

Until then, the Congregation Council will work with Pastor Jean and myself to develop some plans to ensure that our ministries continue, even if after June 30 the process is not yet complete. Because remember? God's timing, not ours!



And that too involves you. As we look to ensure that ministries continue, you can be a part of God's work, maybe in ways you never have, or have never even imagined. And there is nothing

better than knowing that God is at work in you!

What this all means is that the next year will be a busy one, filled with moments of uncertainty, apprehension, and maybe even some fear. But also, moments of excitement and anticipation as we await God making new things happen in our midst.

In the meantime, Pastor Jean and I will continue to do our thing, but also begin to look ahead to those transitions. We will mark the next months with some sadness, with both excitement and a bit of unease as we enter a new phase of life, but also with gratitude to you and to God for the blessings the past years have been for us!



Finally, as these months unfold, we have confidence in the leadership of Congregation Council, the support of the Bishop and the synod office, and the swirling power of the Holy Spirit in our midst.



Oh, and one more thing ... **thank you!**

Pastor Jon



- ♥ Jesus is Lord and Savior.
- ♥ All are welcome, and we are intentional about that welcome.
- ♥ God gifts and calls every one of every age to be a difference maker in the world.
- ♥ We treasure the gift of creation and embrace the call to protect God's world.
- ♥ We value the gathering of God's people in worship and all our ministries.
- ♥ We seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in a world that has changed dramatically.



Faith Formation ... Sunday School

Join us ...

September 13

Gather in the Sanctuary
at 9:15 AM



Our Sunday School Classroom Grandparents have
been invited to join us, too ...

**Mark your calendars ... invite a friend ...
and join us!**



Note: Sunday School registration forms for all
grades have been mailed home and are also
available on the church website
(www.oursaviorswestsalem.org).

Backpack Blessing September 13



If you are a **student (of any age!)**
attending school, bring your backpacks, laptop bags, or
whatever else you use. We will share a blessing and a
reminder of God's love and presence as we begin another
year of learning.

Important Dates

Sunday, September 20 - PreK children receive Bibles in worship

Sunday, September 27 - 1:30-3 PM - 3rd Grade Bible Class

Sunday, October 11 - 3rd graders receive Bibles in worship

Sunday, October 18 - Kids sing at 10:30AM worship

Sunday, December 13 - Christmas Program - 10:30AM

3rd Grade Bible Workshop

Sunday, September 27

1:30-3:00 PM

Parents and students gather for class.
Students will receive their Bibles in worship on Sunday, October 11





Sunday School Offering for 2026-2027

God's Global Barnyard

An animal can make a world of difference for a family in need. Animals provide food to eat, fertilizer to grow crops, and offspring to sell at the market. With our gifts, we can help a family escape the cycle of hunger and poverty for good.

A **cow's** milk, meat, fertilizer, and calves can quickly strengthen a family's financial security. Fresh milk from a **goat** is very nutritious and can be used to make products like yogurt and cheese to sell at the market. Within months after birth, **piglets** grow to weigh over 200 pounds - bringing a big payoff at the market. **Chicks** begin laying eggs at just a few months old, offering nutritious, protein rich meals for families who are hungry. **Honeybees** pollinate plants and boost crop growth - helping the wider community. Soaps and candles can be made from their wax and sold at the local market.

With our offering, we can make a difference in the lives of hungry people. Let's see if we can fill our barnyard this year!



Faith Formation ... Confirmation Ministry

Ready to rock and roll!

Confirmation classes begin again in September ... and you don't want to miss it!

September 2 – Parent and Kids Orientation

- At 6 PM...
 - 6th grade in the sanctuary with Corey Sjoquist
 - 7th grade in the fellowship hall with Pastor Jon
- At 7 PM...8th grade in the fellowship hall with Pastor Jon

September 9 – classes begin for all three grades at 6 PM

- 6th graders begin their journey through the Old Testament
- 7th and 8th graders engage in scavenger hunt to stock the food pantry. NOTE 8th graders are here at 6 PM!

September 16-23-30 – classes move ahead...

- At 6 PM
 - 6th graders continue the OT journey
 - 7th graders “set the stage” and explore the Sacraments
- At 7 PM 8th graders work through the Apostle's Creed

Remember that we always have room for more disciples!
See Pastor Jon for more information.

Faith Formation ...

(Wendy Amundson)



Welcome back confirmation students! I'm looking forward to reconnecting with you this year!

It's Coming ... the ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis! ...



June 28-July 2, 2027. Watch your emails for information from Wendy about how to be a part of this exciting, life-changing event!

Shoe Box Christmas Project ...

This project will start with the Confirmation kids in the fall. Our goal is to collect personal care items, put them into a shoe box, and deliver them to the Boys & Girls Club and/or the West Salem Schools to give a young adult a little something for Christmas.



The continued request is for: shoe boxes, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, socks, shampoo, and body wash. Items can be placed in the basket in the Gathering Area.

If you would like to give a monetary donation, please write the check out to *Our Savior's* and on the memo line put "*Shoe Box Christmas*". We will do the shopping for you!



Adult Bible Study

*Wednesdays, 9:30-11 AM
In the Library*

Bible study continues to meet – and we are always digging away to find new nuggets and hear God speak anew to us. YOU are always welcome. NO prior knowledge expected, just a bit of curiosity and excitement to encounter God's word ... and live as faithful disciples.

See Pastor Jon for more information.

**Coffee & Conversation
at Linda's Bakery
9:30 AM on Tuesday, September 8**



Pastoral Arts:

Funeral – Scott "Aiden" Clark – August 2
Funeral - Paul Ranum - August 29
Wedding - Adam Helgeson & Madison Garbers -
August 8



college
connection

It's that time of year again ... already!
Whether you're going to WTC and living
at home or traveling to the far ends of the country, we need
your **campus address** and your **email address**!

You are important to us, and we want to keep in touch –
Please get the information to the office or to Pastor Jean.

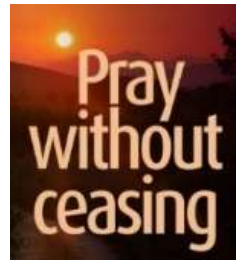
Young Adult/Family...

September Gathering
Watch for details!



Don't forget ... we are praying...

- ♥ Prayer time on Mondays at 6 PM ...
outdoors by the prayer labyrinth or if the
weather dictates, in the Koinonia Room.
35 minutes of sharing and praying.
- ♥ Use the prayer box in the Gathering Area to share your
prayer concerns. We will lift up you and your concerns
in our prayers!





Thank You ...

A big thank you to the musicians that provided special music during the summer months: Naoko Giblin, Jen Linse, Bonny Goodenough, Ruby Kerkman, Melissa Haldeman, Dean Olson, the Men's Choir, and the SOS Band. We appreciate your dedication and thank you for sharing your talents with us.



Choir Members
Welcome!

Senior Choir Invite

"All God's creatures got a place in the choir, some sing low, some sing higher, some sing out loud on the telephone wire (we'll just meet in the balcony), and some just clap their hands, or paws, or anything they got now." Join the choir! Talk to Eric Sorenson or Linda Berg if you have any questions.

Fall rehearsals begin Wednesday, September 9
Choir at 7PM in the balcony
Handbells at 5:45 PM in the Music Room
Come and join us!



Handbells

Whether you're "new" or "seasoned", we'd love to have you join us! If you would like to get more information or would like a trial run to see if bells is a good fit for you, please reach out to Laurie Noelke (laurienoeke@gmail.com - or - 608-317-241- (call or text)).



Food Pantry “Scavenger Hunt”

Get ready ... here they come! The 7-8th grade confirmation students will be out in the neighborhood scouring for goodies for the Food Pantry on Wednesday, September 9, from 6-7 PM. Non-perishable food items will be gathered to meet the needs of those who are finding times a bit tougher.

If you live in the area of the church, be prepared! And if you don't, bring a contribution when you come to worship, or just drop it off during the week.

As we gather, we thank you for your generosity, and we thank the many pantry workers who volunteer to make this ministry happen!

We've Got Quilts and Kits... You've Got Wheels???



Our quilts and school kits are almost ready to hit the road – but we need some help. If you have a pickup or van that can help us transport our boxes to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in La Crosse on Saturday morning, **October 10**, see Pastor Jon or Pastor Jean. This is a great way to be a part of an important ministry!



Feed Our Children Summer Lunch

From Angie Hemker

We have had a fantastic season of summer lunch. Our biggest day of serving was 161, averaging around 145 each day we served. Prince of Peace, the Presbyterian Church, Saint Teresa of Kolkata, and the West Salem Lions Club all participated in helping with a week or two in addition to several weeks of Our Savior's members and volunteers. We received donations from Linda's Bakery, Hanson's IGA, and numerous in town businesses which we will share with you at a later date. At the time that I write this, we still have two days left of serving. As always, I am able to see some of the best of our community each week we serve in both people who receive the lunches, who make, serve, and deliver the lunches, and the general community that supports us through giving. I look forward to giving a full report next month. Thank you to all of our members for supporting, and providing a place for us to provide this ministry.



LET'S TEE UP

9-Hole Golf Outing

Sunday, September 13
Tee times begin at 3 PM

Watch for details! There's a sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area. If you have questions, please contact Dennis or Ann Sprain 608-317-1803. ***All are welcome to join us!***



Hungry Jar Offering for September – Lutheran Disaster Response

Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is the ELCA's ministry to accompany disaster survivors, as they work with congregations, synods, and local partners in affected communities. When families are displaced by floodwater, your support helps meet immediate needs such as food, shelter and clean water, and makes recovery assistance possible. When extreme heat creates life-threatening conditions, your generosity helps provide safe and welcoming cooling spaces that support vulnerable neighbors. When wildfires force evacuations and leave devastation behind, your gifts help sustain relief and recovery ministries long after media attention fades. One of the unique strengths of LDR is their commitment to accompany communities for the long haul. They do not simply arrive in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and then move on. They walk alongside affected communities as they rebuild homes, restore stability, and find hope again.



Thank you for your generous donations to the Hungry Jar ...

♥ July – Food Pantry – \$688.18



It's School Kit Time!

We are collecting school supplies through September for the school kits we assemble and send, literally around the world, through Lutheran World Relief!

Each School kit contains the following:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 – 30 cm ruler/12 inch | 1 – pencil sharpener |
| 1 – BLUNT scissors | 5 – UN sharpened pencils |
| 1 – box 24 crayons | 1 – 2-1/2-inch eraser |
| 4 – 70 sheet notebooks (no loose-leaf paper) | |
| 5 – blue or black ball point pens (no gel ink) | |

At this time, our greatest needs are: **notebooks, pens, blunt scissors, and rulers**. We are well supplied with pencils, *thank you*, and do **NOT** need any more. Our goal is to create 200 kits this year!

Donations can be placed in the box in the Gathering Area. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of children!



Thank you ...

... to the August newsletter mailing crew:
Connie & Larry Blunck, Bev Bockenbauer,
Corrine Hanson, Renee Herman, Carolyn Karl,
Carol Thompson, and Vernetta Moe.

... to all who helped make National Night Out a great event!

those who helped serve food ... Lynette Ender, Dick Erickson, Gloria Fennigkoh, Corrine Hanson, Bill & Dori Jensen, Carolyn Karl, Mary Molstad, and Ilene Pavelko. It was a great group working seamlessly together along with our friends from the Presbyterian Church!

those who helped host Our Savior's table ... Mike Larson, Amy Rasmussen, Jane Reinl, Brenda Skittone.

those who helped prepare the treat bags that were distributed that night ... Connie & Larry Blunck, Bev Bockenbauer, Gloria Fennigkoh, Janie Gullickson, Carolyn Karl, Brenda Skittone, and Carol Westpfahl.

... to all those, *too many to count*, who helped with the Corn Roast from prep work to clean up and everything in between - setting up, cooking, bringing desserts, and serving! And, thanks to all who came to feast and fellowship!

... to Eric & Jill Iliff for hosting Beer & Hymns Campfire! ... to the musicians - Dan Backhaus, Linda Berg, Carla Burkhardt, Jon Hetland, Dean Olson, Rich Westpfahl ... and to all who came to sing and feast!

... to all who helped with Gospel on the Green ... the SOS Band, special choir, those who set up/cleaned up, those who brought food, and all who came to worship and enjoy a time of fellowship.

... to Wendy Amundson for using her Thrivent action team dollars to donate various sized brooms and handheld vacuums, along with curtain rods to go with the curtains her mother made, to Sugar Creek Bible Camp on behalf of Our Savior's!



Congregation Council

The Congregation Council met on Monday, August 10, with President Brenda Skittone presiding.

At this meeting the council:

- Considered change in the world around us, but also the faithfulness of God from generation to generation (Psalm 119:90.)
- Approved minutes from the June meeting; received June and July financial reports, and the pastors' reports.
- Heard of the pastors' plans to retire June 30, 2027, and spent some time considering what this will mean for Our Savior's over the next 12-18 months.
- Heard that Bishop Malpica will meet with the council at the September meeting to outline the process for calling new pastoral leadership.
- Heard updates on visitors in worship, Feed Our Children, the Engaging Children Initiative, the new Administrative Assistant, the updated rental agreement for Johnson South, and several building projects.
- Received into membership:
 - Roy and Caroline Peregrine
 - Karen Bennion-Smith
 - Tony Osland
 - Kenley Smith
 - As Associate Members ...
 - ✓ Karen Nauman and Pat Nelson

The council next meets on Monday, September 14 at 7 PM. If you have questions or ideas for enhancing the ministry of Our Savior's, contact Brenda Skittone or one of the pastors.

By the numbers...



Ministry is not a numbers game, but numbers can help us get a feel for what is happening as we carry out our part of God's work in the world! Numbers help us

measure our faithful response to God's call, both in our financial support and our worship life. So ... here is a snapshot of our ministry ... by the numbers!

2026 Ministry at Work			
	Actual-July	Actual-YTD	Budget-YTD
Income	\$23,396.17	\$212,738.69	\$209,212.50
Prepaid		\$23,968.36	\$23,968.36
Expense	\$22,635.29	\$209,942.63	\$223,783.70
Net	\$760.88	\$26,764.42	
2026 Worship Life – Weekly average			
	In-building Actual	Online Estimate	TOTAL
July	146	43	189
Year to Date	174	53	227



**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

Financial Support Ministry

THANK YOU!!! *Thank you for your continued financial support of our ministry together!* You make a difference in the lives of children and adults, in those across the globe, and those right here in our midst.

Like Sunday School, about to restart, teaching faith to children as they discover what it means to be a follower of Jesus and a faithful disciple. And last year a Sunday School that grew as the year went on – new disciples for Jesus!

Your financial gifts make this, and all our ministries happen, and can be shared in worship, by mail, or placed in our locked mailbox. You can also make gifts electronically. Go to www.oursaviorswestsalem.org/giving, or use our QR Code.



Thank you for your support.

***We are grateful for your partnership as
we proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ!***

Worship Leaders - September



September 5-6

6 p.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Addison Inglett
Jill Iliff
Todd & Inger Michael

8 a.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Alise Jothen
Carolyn Karl
L & C Blunck

10 a.m.

Mason Knebes
Mya Koudelka
M & J Larson

Home Communion
Altar Guild September

Judy Gilbert
Wendy Amundson

September 12-13

6 p.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Macy Peterson
Dan Steele
Chad & Shannon Vick

8 a.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Kason Schulz
Eric Ender
J & T Janisch

*10:30 a.m.

Lainey Steinke
Steve Ahles
S & C Thompson

Home Communion

Carolyn Karl

September 19-20

6 p.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Riley Sullivan
Judy Morzinski
Dave & Angie Hemker

8 a.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Max Twite
Kyle Twite
Brenda Skittone

*10:30 a.m.

Autumn Amundson
Tiffany Janish
Trudy Drugg

Home Communion

Ilene Pavelko

September 26-27

6 p.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Owen Christianson
Trudy Drugg
Brady & Amanda Christianson Family

8 a.m.

Worship Assistant
Communion Assistant
Welcoming Team

Noah Evenson
Wendy Amundson
J Evenson Family

*10:30 a.m.

Kaelyn Hebrink
Corey Sjoquist
T & D Jones

Home Communion

Rasmussen Family



Tech System Invite

We continue to look for folk who are interested in “working the system” during worship, enabling us to use video resources and livestream the service. If you might be one of them, Dean Olson invites you to join him during worship and see how it all comes together – and maybe discover that it isn’t as overwhelming as it looks! See Dean or Pastor Jon for more information.



Thrivent Choice Dollars

Remember that if you are a Thrivent member you may have “Thrivent Choice Dollars” to direct. Our Savior’s is one of the many potential recipients of your choice dollars, but your direction needs to be made each time. A number of Our Savior’s folk direct their choice dollars to Our Savior’s – do you? See Thrivent’s web site for more information or stop by the office and we will help you out.

Scrip Cards

Scrip cards help support Our Savior’s Sugar Creek Bible Camp Camperships and World Hunger! You can’t beat that!!

KWIK TRIP



Culver’s, Kwik Trip, Kwik Trip car wash, Woodman’s.

WOODMAN'S

Available after worship services and in the office during the week.

Care and Share Food Pantry ...



is open Saturdays, 10 AM to Noon. The food pantry could use canned fruit, especially pineapple, mandarin oranges, and applesauce. Money, other non-perishable food items, and personal care items are always welcome. Thank you for being so supportive of the pantry!

Web Site: www.oursaviorswestsalem.org
OUR SAVIOR'S STAFF

Pastor Jonathan Schmidt, Senior Pastor (608) 612-0217
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Pastor Jean Schmidt, Associate Pastor (608) 612-0217
Email: pastorjean@oursaviorswestsalem.org
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Wendy Amundson, Youth Director (608) 518-9593
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Jill Iliff, Treasurer
Email: treasurer@oursaviorswestsalem.org
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Email: linda@oursaviorswestsalem.org
Laurie Noelke, Handbell Choir Director/Assistant Worship Musician
Email: laurienoelke@gmail.com
Eric Sorenson, Senior Choir Director (608) 397-1832
Karen DeSchepper, Financial Secretary
Josh Corning, Custodian



Newsletter Deadline – September 14

Just a reminder ... Scams love churches, so watch out for scam email that claims to be from Our Savior's or any of our staff. If you have **ANY** doubt, reach out and check with us - especially if it just doesn't sound right!



Our Savior's Lutheran Church
359 Leonard St N
West Salem, WI 54669

Non-Profit Org.
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Change Service Requested