



*Affirming Baptism
&
Making Disciples*

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

oursaviorswetsalem.org

Grades 7-8

2026-2027

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We live in an ever changing world. Yet, with all the change around us, there are two things that have remained constant – our calling to be disciples of Jesus, and the embrace of a loving God who renews and restores us.



That is what our baptism is about – living out our calling, while being empowered by God’s promises of grace. Long ago, at the baptism of your child, you entered into a covenant that is built on the calling and the promise. And in return you promised to share your faith, nurture discipleship, and connect your child with the community of God’s people.

The confirmation program at Our Savior’s seeks to assist you in your ongoing faithfulness to your promises. We can’t take your place – you are the parent! We can, however, support your work and join you in this journey.

Our Savior’s confirmation ministry focusses on creating disciples. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus directs us to baptize...teach...and make disciples. For 2000 years that is what the church has done. And we continue that task in 2026...and into the future. We seek to make disciples of our young people, disciples ready to make a difference in a hurting, broken world. How we do that has changed over the centuries, but the calling and the presence of God’s Holy Spirit, the dynamic of baptism, remains the same.

So, in a sense, our program itself becomes an exercise in living out our baptism! We are, therefore, excited to have you join us in our journey of faithful living as we not only learn about discipleship, but as we live it out in our gathering, exploring, learning, and growing in faith!

General Program Outline

WORSHIP PARTICIPATION

Worship is essential to our lives as disciples of Jesus. In worship we take intentional time to bring praise and adoration to the God who has given us everything. At the same time, we receive the blessings of a good and gracious God through Word and Sacrament, given in the midst of the gathered Body of Christ. Can't beat it...and you can't get it anywhere else! Being off by yourself just isn't the same!

Over the past years, however, we have also discovered the opportunity of worshiping online, and many have made use of that avenue of worship. Either way, worship is not about us, but about a good and gracious God who gathers us together, in person or virtually, and nourishes us with life!

All of our families are encouraged to worship together. Even secular experts list “worshiping together” as one way families can remain strong and connected.

7-8th graders are to complete “worship notes” for each service. **20 worship notes are expected** from September to the end of May. Worship includes Saturday/Sunday, but also special services – Christmas, Lent, etc. If you attend another church, bring a bulletin from the church, signed by the pastor to document your attendance. You can also watch the video and submit a “worship note” online, but online notes will be counted as ½ value, only worship videos from the current year may be used. We will post updates periodically in the hallway by the pastors’ offices, but in the end, it is the confirmand’s responsibility to keep track of their participation in worship.

Finally, we ask our 7th graders and 8th graders to participate more deeply in worship by serving as worship assistants. We also encourage families to sign up to usher – *it's not that hard* – and it is both a great service and a great experience connecting with others in the community of faith!

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

All kids are welcome to “after school” on Wednesday. Come and hang out right after school is done, around 3 PM. Loosely structured activities, fellowship with other kids, and time for homework are all a part of “after school.” Dinner is included at 5:30, followed by class time for 6-7th graders at 6 PM.

Parents take one week to provide the meal. Guidance is available on good menu items, quantities, etc. It's a great time to connect with the kids of this congregation, and best of all – *clean-up of eating space and dishes is NOT your responsibility!*

Kids who participate in “after school” sign in upon arriving. For security and safety reasons, after they sign in they are required to remain in the building or outside on the church grounds.

Note...There is no “after school” on early release Wednesdays (October 7, February 3, May 12), during Lent (February 10-March 24), or whenever West Salem Schools close or are closed (weather or other reasons). On these dates no dinner is served, and we begin with classes at 6 PM.

Although 8th graders do not normally have class until 7 PM, they are always welcome to “after school” and dinner...and then hangout until their class time.

Learning for Grade 7

Grade 7 includes a variety of learning experiences, including out of classroom activities. Course work consists of core sessions, electives, and other activities. All are designed to strengthen faith and discipleship learning, and building community. Classes generally meet from 6-7 PM on Wednesdays. Some parental assistance will be needed during the course of the year,

- **Core courses cover foundational aspects of our life of faith.** Core courses meet 15 times, and attendance is expected of all students.
- **Each student takes five electives** – Four of the electives are on Wednesday evenings; one elective is taken from a list of three that occur other times. *Unless otherwise noted, there is a limit of eight in each elective course.*
- **Servant leadership classes** (October 28, November 4 and April 14,) and a **“Servant Leadership” project** allow us to learn and live our discipleship, reflecting on what it means.
- The **Food Pantry Scavenger Hunt** is September 9. In smaller groups we go out into the community to gather donations for the food pantry.
- Two times – October 7 and January 13 will feature **activities with Wendy Amundson**, our Director of Youth Ministry. They are an important part of the year!
- **Confest, sponsored by the La Crosse Area Synod**, Wednesday, October 21, at Journey Lutheran Church, Onalaska. We will leave at 4:45 and return close to 9:00. We will be looking for parents to help with transportation!
- 7th graders are encouraged to be a part of the **Norwegian Dinner** on November 7, serving, busing tables, or other tasks. And there are two worship notes at stake!

- **Lenten Soup Suppers and Easter Breakfast** are other ways for 7th graders to share and serve.
- 7th graders will close out the year with an **Outdoor Gathering** on May 12 during class time. Bring a chair!

CORE COURSES

The Sacraments – September 23 & 30, December 2

Prayer and the Lord's Prayer –December 9, January 6 & 20

The Ten Commandments – April 7, 21 & 28

Servant Leadership – October 28, November 4, April 14

Back and Forth Across the Stage – Sept 16, Feb 3, March 31

ELECTIVE COURSES

oursaviorswestsalem.org/discipleship-building-for-pre-teens-and-teens/

GROUP ONE	WORSHIP STUFF	OCTOBER 14
<i>Each workshop this week is limited to four participants</i>		

Musical Extravaganza!

Explore – and even try – some different musical experiences!

- **Check out your pipes!** Explore the organ, what it does, and how it plays. If you've done some keyboarding (piano, etc.) give it a try and see how it's similar...and different! *Led by Linda Berg, Music Director.*
- **Be a Dingaling!** Spend some time learning how handbells work, how they add to worship, and even give them a test

run. Maybe there's a little bellringer in you? *Led by Laurie Noelke, Handbell Director.*

- **Brassy, Brassy!** Bring your brass instrument and see how you can be a part of a makeshift band. Maybe even play in worship sometime? *Led by Mike Larson.*

Working the System

Worship includes some “behind the scenes” work on audio and video. Learn how our new tech system works, and how to operate it. Maybe...you can be one of our “techies?” *Led by Dean Olson.*

GROUP TWO LIVING FAITHFULLY NOVEMBER 18

Grief and Faith

Losing a loved one is really tough. But...there is hope...for healing and for life. Find out how to cope with the loss of someone special, and how to help others with their grief. *Taught by Pastor Kris Bjerke-Ulliman, Hospice Chaplain.*

Using Art to Express Faith

Art can be a powerful way to speak – so how can art be used to express our faith – to others, and to our ourselves? A simple art project is included. *Taught by Angie Hemker, Middle School art instructor. This course will be offered twice – BUT YOU CAN ONLY SIGN UP ONCE!*

GROUP THREE MORE FAITHFUL LIVING JANUARY 27

Using Art to Express Faith

Art can be a powerful way to speak – so how can art be used to express our faith – to others, and to our ourselves? A simple art project is included. *Taught by Angie Hemker, Middle School art*

instructor. This course will be offered twice – BUT YOU CAN ONLY SIGN UP ONCE!

The End Times...or Just Another Day?

Read the news – lots of tragedies and bad things going in. Is the end of time approaching or just life in fast lane? Let's see what the Bible tells us – you might be surprised! *Taught by Pastor Jon.*

GROUP FOUR

INSIDE AND OUT

MAY 5

If Only the Leaves Could Talk...Oh Wait, They Can!

Let's take a walk in the neighborhood and explore the wonders of an "urban forest." What are we seeing as the world returns to life after a long winter? And how is this part of God's renewal of the earth? *Taught by Jim Kerkman, retired forester.*

Christian Symbols

We use lots of symbols in church. We will learn a bit about symbols and then venture into the sanctuary to look at the symbols used in our own church building. *Taught by Pastor Jean.*

GROUP FIVE

SERVICE PACK

VARIES

Quilts for Jesus

**Early Release Wednesdays, 1-3 PM
October 7 or February 3 or May 5**

Come on an early release day and work with the quilting group as they assemble quilts that go around the world. See how the work can be fun as we work together for the sake of God's people.

Limited to two participants each session.

Christmas Tree Prep

November 29, 11:30 AM

Stay after worship and help decorate the Christmas trees in the sanctuary, and other decorations in the building. Get the season

started – and get yourself into the spirit of the season! *Limited to seven participants.*

Christmas Tree “Takedown”

January 3, 11:30 AM

Time to take it all down! Come and help pack the trappings of Christmas away for another year. *Limited to seven participants.*

Learning for Grade 8

8th grade confirmands use a different schedule than the 7th graders. The 8th grade year completes the “faith learning” and expands the discipleship experiences, Included are several interactive experiences.

Classes are generally Wednesday evenings from 7-8 PM, though there are several sessions at 6 PM – these are noted on the calendar. Parents will be asked to assist in several activities.

- **Core courses cover foundational aspects of our life of faith.** Core courses meet 10 times, and attendance is expected of all students.
- The **Food Pantry Scavenger Hunt** is September 9 at 6 PM. We go out to gather donations for the food pantry.
- Two sessions – October 7 and January 27 – will feature **activities with Wendy Amundson**, our Director of Youth Ministry. They are an important part of the year!
- **Confest, sponsored by the La Crosse Area Synod**, and designed for confirmation students, will be held on Wednesday, October 21, at Journey Lutheran Church, Onalaska. We will leave Our Savior’s at 4:45 and return close to 9:00. We need help with transportation!

- Again, this year we will learn more about **servant leadership** on November 4 and April 14. A servant leadership project will help us live out what we are learning.
- 8th graders are encouraged to be a part of the **Norwegian Dinner** on November 7, serving, busing tables, or other tasks. And a bonus – two worship notes!
- 8th graders will lead the **Hanging of the Greens**, on December 2. Prep time will be November 18 at 6 PM.
- Jen Linse will join us on February 3 to explore what's deep down inside us, and **how we can be healthier and happier**, even in stressed and difficult days.
- During Lent 8th graders will work with Angie Hemker on an **art project** in preparation for the Confirmation, following Lenten worship on February 17 and March 3.
- **Dinners with seniors** – as part of our learning, we will divide into smaller groups, and then prepare, deliver, and share a meal with a senior or senior couple in February and March. See the dates on the calendar. Kids will be a part of one group, not all three!
- **Lenten Soup Suppers** and **Easter Breakfast** are another way for 8th graders to share and serve. More on that later in the year.
- April 7 we **prepare for the Affirmation of Baptism service**. Make sure you are here!
- April 21 we end the class time with an **Outdoor Gathering** at 6 PM, with snacks as we gather around the firepit. Bring a chair and appropriate clothing.
- **Affirmation of Baptism** will be Sunday, April 25, at 10:30 AM. Invite sponsors and family to join us!

The Cost of Confirmation

Confirmation has a cost! Staff time investment is significant, and we use a variety of resources to make things happen, all of which have a cost. 8th graders have a cost of \$15 for flowers and cleaning the robes. In general, however, Our Savior's offers our confirmation ministry without charging participants as part of our ministry to the community around us!

So, how do we make it work? Through our regular offerings and gifts that support the ministry of this congregation, we make this discipleship ministry a reality. ***Your support of Our Savior's regular ministries is an important part of making a difference in the lives of your children, children around us, and those who will enter this ministry in years to come.***

Finally, don't forget to pray for us! Confirmation is an exciting, exhilarating ministry, but it is also sometimes daunting and even a bit tiring. Pray for leaders, group guides, and for kids too!

Things You Need to Know

- We have worked hard to craft an engaging ministry that raises up disciples. We cannot, however, do it without parents. See page 13 for more on parent's role in this ministry.
- When West Salem schools have a snow day (or no school due to other reasons), or school dismisses early, confirmation will also be canceled that day. When in doubt, call the office!
- We know that electronics, including phones, are a big part of kids' lives, but not in class! Best to leave them home, but if

they are here phones and other devices are to be turned off while class is in session. Devices not turned off will be “relocated” until class is ended.

- We expect confirmands to act as children of God. Discipline is not generally an issue, but if it is we will work with parents.

Some things will not be tolerated:

- Alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.
- Bullying or endangering other students.
- Behavior disrespectful toward adults, or destructive of property.

A covenant regarding behavior and responsibilities has been developed and will be expected to be followed.

- If issues arise during the year please come and speak with us – we want what is best for all our confirmands, and we need your participation to make that happen!

Stuff for Parents

1. Show interest in your child’s faith development and especially in their work toward affirming their baptism.
2. We solicit and treasure your prayers and your insights. We are a team together.
3. Be a good example – you as parents have the greatest impact on the faith and life of your children. Believe it or not, they learn from you!
4. Worship with your child – they need it – and so do you. Studies show that families that worship together have a greater closeness and work better together, especially as kids get older.



5. Pray together as a family – maybe awkward at first, but you will grow into it!
6. Finally, *for parents...Wednesday, October 14, at 6 PM...* an important conversation with Pastor Al Erickson of ASK (Adults Saving Kids) on the dangers of human trafficking, and how you can empower our kids to be safe! Invite friends and neighbors to join us.

7th Grade Calendar

Date	Event
September 9	Scavenger hunt for food pantry
September 16	Setting the stage
September 23	Sacraments-1
September 30	Sacraments-2
October 7	Time with Wendy
October 14	Elective <i>Parent gathering on human trafficking</i>
October 21 (4:45-9:00)	Confest @ Journey Lutheran, Onalaska
October 28	Servant Leadership Intro
November 4	Servant Leadership
November 11	Have a very “Shoebox Christmas!”
November 18	Elective
November 25 (7 PM)	<i>Thanksgiving Eve worship</i>
December 2	Sacraments-3
December 9	Prayer-1
December 16 (7 PM)	<i>Advent worship</i>
December 23-30	<i>Christmas Break</i>

January 6	Prayer-2
January 13	Time with Wendy
January 20	Prayer-3
January 27	Elective
February 3	On Center Stage
February 10-March 24	<i>Lent and Holy Week worship</i>
March 31	Moving Off the Stage
April 7	Ten Commandments-1
April 14	Servant Leadership
April 21	Ten Commandments-2
April 28	Ten Commandments-3
May 5	Elective
May 12	Outdoor Gathering

8th Grade Calendar

Date	Event
September 9 (6 PM)	Scavenger hunt for food pantry
September 16	Apostle's Creed-1
September 23	Apostle's Creed-2
September 30	Apostle's Creed-3
October 7	Time with Wendy
October 14	Gifts and Stewardship-1 <i>Parents - human trafficking (6 pm)</i>
October 21 (4:45-9:00)	Confest @ Journey Lutheran, Onalaska
October 28	Jesus, Monsters and Me

November 4	Servant Leadership
November 11 (6 PM)	Have a very “Shoebox Christmas!”
November 18 (6 PM)	Hanging of the Greens prep
November 25	<i>Thanksgiving Eve worship</i>
December 2 (6:40)	Hanging of the Greens
December 9	Gifts and Stewardship-2
December 16	<i>Advent worship</i>
December 23-30	<i>Christmas Break</i>
January 6	Discovering the Word-1
January 13	Discovering the Word-2
January 20	Discovering the Word-3
January 27	Generations – Time with Wendy
February 3	Taking Care of Yourself – Down Deep!
February 10	<i>Ash Wednesday worship – 6:15 PM</i>
February 17	Art Project
February 24 (after school)	Dinner outing – group 1
March 3	Art Project
March 10 (after school)	Dinner outing – group 2
March 17 (after school)	Dinner outing – group 3
March 24	<i>Holy Week – NO CLASS</i>
March 31	Gifts and Stewardship-3
April 7	Last minute stuff – BE HERE!
April 14	Servant Leadership
April 21 (6 PM)	Outdoor Gathering
April 25 (Sunday)	Affirmation of Baptism – 10:30 AM