

Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church

January 2023

Call Process & Update

A congregation's Call Process contains several "mile markers" by which the journey is charted:

- A pastor announces that they are leaving the congregation.
- An interim pastor is identified, merges with congregational life, and begins to develop a sense of the congregation and a familiarity with the parishioners.
- A Mission Exploration Team (MET) is formed and works to engage the congregation in the self-learning and investigation that reveals a thorough understanding of the congregation's history and journey, the present reality of the congregation, where the congregation believes God is calling them, and what kind of pastoral leadership might best partner with them in pursuing that mission. This is the meat and potatoes of the Call Process.
 - ⇒ Surveys and Focus Groups have been conducted to gather congregational input on perceived needs, values, and mission.
 - ⇒ The MET has completed its work, having drafted COS's Ministry Site Profile. The congregational profile was shared with the congregation at a Town Hall meeting on December 11, 2022.
- The church council is at work forming the call committee.
- The Church Council receives the Call Committee's pastoral candidate recommendation...
- and at long last...The congregation votes on the Church Council's recommended pastoral candidate and a call is issued.



Good Tidings in Times of Transition

I am so thrilled for Christ Our Savior that it continues along its path of working through the Call Process to call a new senior pastor. The Mission Exploration Team (MET) worked hard on your behalf to listen to the congregation and produce a document to guide the Call Committee that reflects the church. But just because the work of the MET is effectively complete, this doesn't mean that congregational support is no longer required in the process. More than ever the people of your church in positions of leadership – your Church Council and the Call Committee need your prayers.



Serving the church during a time of transition is important, rewarding, hard work. While questions about the duration and pace of the Call Process are suitable for status updates those who serve you are doing what they are asked to do for the sake of the gospel and of Christ Our Savior. They truly need your support, and prayer is a great way to offer your support. Prayer is talking to God. It nurtures relationship with God, it builds up those prayed for, it unburdens our souls, and it is an act of relinquishing our urge for control to the One who is most certainly in control. Seek out your congregational leaders to tell them that you are praying for them (you might even ask them if you can pray with them!). Their spirits need to hear that their fellow siblings in Christ support them in their work.

When the waters of congregational change are choppy (cf. Genesis 1:1-2; Exodus 14; Jonah 1-2; and Mark 4:35-41), it's good to know that we've got tools we can rely on as people of faith to steady us and draw us into contemplating Jesus' Good News and how the Holy Spirit might be at work in the midst of our discomfort (cf. Acts 2:1-13). We can turn to scripture and its examples of God's faithfulness to God's people throughout time, asking those stories to spark our imaginations on how God is speaking to us in the present. We can turn to prayer in order to address God, naming how God has been active in the lives of God's people throughout history and asking that God might do the same for us in our present need. Christ Our Savior continues through an important time of transition and seeks your prayers and participation in living into the future God is unfolding.

In Christ,
Pastor Michael

From the Associate Pastor

As we enter into this new year together, I find myself thinking about our call process and how the lack of congregational conversation around receiving LGBTQ candidates means that we are moving forward asking the Synod to screen out best fit candidates who are queer. I sat in our MSP Townhall meeting and heard people speak passionately from both sides. For all the different opinions that folks in our congregation may hold about this matter, let us agree the most important voice we should be listening to is God's. At the end of the day, the greatest guide for our decisions as a Christian church ought be to embody as fully as we can the Way of Christ and to let the Word of God be the final word.

I am fond of saying, "If what we believe to be true is indeed True, then it will stand up to our questions and our doubts." And, of the precious few convictions that I cling to with absolute certainty, one of the top is that 'God is God, and I am not'. As Christians, we share the journey of faith, recognizing our own capacity to screw up, to get things wrong, to need to repent and realign ourselves with the Way of Christ, rather than our own ways of operating. Some Christian communities believe that a fuller embodiment of the body of Christ means restricting or rejecting the presence of our queer siblings within the church. Other Christian communities embrace queer folks and say doing so is aligned with a fuller expression of the body of Christ.

I hope it isn't a surprise to anyone reading this that I firmly believe that queerness is not a sin, and believe that our communities more fully reflect God's beloved community when we embrace our LGBTQIA+ siblings. God's Word calls the people of God again and again to disrupt the expectations around who is welcome and understood as beloved by God in order to expand the family of God to include all creation. It is the witness of scripture which compels me to speak boldly about the giftedness and leadership of queer ELCA clergy. 2023 will see Christ Our Savior working to host some congregational conversations and studies about how the Bible speaks to this matter, and also how we as a congregation ought best live out our calling to welcome all people to the gospel movement. I strongly encourage you to make being a part of this conversation a priority for the coming year. God has called all of us to the mission of this congregation, and to the work of building up the beloved community on this Earth through our words and our actions. Learning how to support and encourage one another even as we engage in challenging conversations is a critical skill for us in our development as a community of faith.

Blessings,
Pastor Joe

Announcing Christ Our Savior's 2023 Council:

President – Maria Liedtke
Vice-president – Jason Schiller
Treasurer – Hope Ingle
Secretary – Emma Oppermann
At-large – Mike Singer
Paul Markwald

Save the Date! Annual Budget Meeting

Sunday, January 29, at 11:00 a.m.
Christ Our Savior will hold the second of two meetings to address Christ Our Savior's proposed budget. The budget will be available two weeks before the meeting.



Un-Decorating **Sunday, January 8th**



It can't be that time already, but it is! It is time to take down the Christmas decorations. We need a few people to help take down the Christmas decorations after the 10:00 a.m. worship service on Sunday, January 8th. The more hands, the quicker the work! For more information contact Amy Berken at amy@coslc.com.

Winter/Spring In-Person Worship As- sign-Ups Now Available!

Calling YOU! If you are not already serving in some capacity on a worship team, please consider doing so. We need more helping hands serving as Communion Assistants, Bread Bakers, Altar Guild, Offering Counters, Hosts, Lectors, and Ushers. The roles are easy to do! Sign-up on our website under volunteers [HERE](#) to serve as a worship assistant. If you would like to serve but are new to the role, reach out to Amy Berken at amy@coslc.com



Join us for Fellowship Time!

Sundays 9:00-11:30 a.m.

After our worship services each Sunday, we have a time set aside to check in with our fellow church members to see what's been happening in each other's lives. It is one of the ways that we can build a supportive church community. It is a wonderful time to slow down to have a cup of coffee or goodie off our fellowship table. Hope you will join us for conversation this month!

If you are interested in bringing a goodie for fellowship time, sign-up [HERE](#). Please have them at church on Sunday mornings by 8:30 a.m. or drop them off on the table in the entryway on Saturday night. If you have questions, contact Marion Jaskulski at marjask5@wi.rr.com.)



Mac-n-More

This January, we'll be building another pallet of nutritious foods along with mac-n-cheese to donate to the Food Pantry at Cross Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. We can share God's love by ensuring that those experiencing food scarcity receive the support they need so they don't have to skip meals or go hungry.



Items:

- Fruit - Canned in 100% juice or dried (e.g. raisins)
- Canned beans, tuna, and chicken
- Vegetables - canned, low sodium
- Shelf stable dairy - such as boxed milk
- Whole grain, low sugar grain products like brown rice or non-sugary whole grain cereal
- Mac-n-cheese

Giving Tree – Thank You!!

We were able to be a blessing to many families this Christmas thanks to your generosity! We donated 100+ gifts to Sussex Outreach Services, such as superheroes, games, puzzles, arts & crafts, scooters, sporting equipment, and much more. We also collected 30+ gifts for Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, such as warm fuzzy blankets, hats/mittens, winter coats, kitchen/bath towels, and sewing supplies. In addition, we donated 74 gift cards to our ministry partners, including, 16-Serenity Inns, 11-Cross Lutheran Church, 3-Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, 9-Hephatha Lutheran Church, 24-Sussex Outreach Service, and 11-ERAS Senior Network (plus 5 books of stamps). A huge thank you to Pam and Neil Zimmerman and Kristi Klemencic for their help with the Giving Tree this year.



Serenity Inns

Tuesday, January 17th

Our next meal at Serenity Inns is on Tuesday, January 17th. There are approximately 15 residents, who depend on us for a meal this evening. If you would like to help with the meal, please contact Hank Wallenkamp at 262-525-1211 or signup on the outreach ministry board. Help support them in their recovery!



Bread of Healing Meal

Wednesday, January 11th

If you haven't helped in the past, this is the time to say "yes" in the new year. We would love to see some new faces! Our next BOH meal is on Wednesday, January 11th. Come join us in the COS kitchen on Wednesday morning at 9:00 a.m. as we prepare, make, and assemble the to-go chili meals. If you would like to become involved in this meal ministry to feed the hungry in Milwaukee, contact Chuck Liedtke at chuck.liedtke@sodexo.com or Larry & Edie Schaffner at elschaffner02@live.com



Community Banquet

The Community Banquet schedule for 2023 will be available soon. Watch for more information in our weekly announcements. If you are interested in learning more about this monthly meal ministry reach out to Diane Otto at diane.lee.otto@gmail.com.



Fellowship Meal

Food Pantry Delivery Needed

We are looking for volunteers to pick up and deliver donated items from church to the SOS Food Pantry in 2023. Select the month you would like to serve on SignUpGenius [HERE](#). The items need to be picked up once a week, but you can choose a time that works for you. Food Pantry Drop Off Times: Monday - Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.



Youth Ministry at COS

Happy New Year folks! Here are some updates to keep in mind for Youth Ministry at Christ Our Savior. Our Sunday School families made a short digital Christmas Story for the 2022 pageant, and it was very well received by the participating families. So much so, we might continue to put together digital shorts for other Bible stories as a part of our 2023 programming. If you have children in your family that would like to be involved with dressing up, narrating, or helping in some way, we'd love to get them included.

Our confirmation program is resuming January 8th, and continue through the end of April. I intend to connect with the other congregations of the Cooperating Churches of Sussex to see about coordinating the Youth Mission day this spring.

Plans for this summer's youth programming are still up in the air, and would benefit greatly from a few parents who are interested in committing to help with the preparation and implementation. The three big ticket items up for consideration are a youth mission trip, a week of Confirmation camp (possibly at Pine Lake in early June, and some form of Vacation Bible School summer children's programming (possibly end of June early July).

If there are additional ways that Christ Our Savior can be supporting our parents as they bring their children up in the Christian faith that you'd like to discuss the possibility instituting, let's get our heads together. It is a blessing and a privilege to share the journey of faith with our youth and see the gospel message of Jesus take root in their hearts and in their lives. I look forward to witnessing all the ways that God will reveal God's faithfulness to our young people in 2023.

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