



This months Pastors Page is my annual report

*Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ*

This is the greeting that Paul begins his letters to the first followers of Jesus. They needed to hear these words of comfort and hope as they were trying to figure out how to be “Followers of the Way”, which is what they called themselves before they were known as Christians.

They lived in a time of change and uncertainty as they formed a faith community that connected people to Jesus and his way of living. Through Paul’s writings and Book of Acts we are given a glimpse of their joys and struggles in creating the church. They worked through complicated issues such as: what do you have to do to become a “Follower of the Way”, who is the church for, how to worship, where to meet, what is the structure of the community of faith and even what can they eat!

At times it appears that they were united in some areas while conflicted in others. That is why Paul begins each letter with those words of grace and peace. The focus is upon Gods Love and Jesus’ presence in the life of a Follower of the Way

I believe we can learn a great deal from the early Church. While far from perfect they provide us with some basic guides of how to be the Church today.

1. Began with the Grace and Peace of God which kept the focus on Jesus not upon themselves.
2. Acknowledged the uncertainties and opportunities of being the church.
3. Treated each other with respect and love.
4. Were open to being lead by the Holy Spirit into ways of doing things.

These are just a few of the insights I glean from reading scripture, but they are the ones that speak to me today.

The saying “the more things change, the more they stay the same” seems spot on as we grapple with many of the same issues the early church faced. What’s it mean to be a Follower of the Way, what does church membership mean, who is the church for, how do we do things such as worship, education, service, and how are we structured.

We know and feel that much has changed over the past few years: worship attendance, participation in groups such as Women of the ELCA, Sunday school, the overall aging of our congregation and lack of young people and families. We are not alone in this as virtually every church in our community and around the country are faced with this new reality. For me, the question isn't if it is happening but rather how to use this opportunity to be the church today.

We could “wring our hands” with worry and be immobilized by fear and uncertainty or embrace this new reality like the early Followers of the Way and be open to the Grace and Peace that Jesus gives us.

The church council of Our Savior's has embraced the Grace and Peace of Jesus Christ in creating a Holy Experiment that involves the entire congregation in discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit. As this is an experiment, we do not know where it will lead us nor how we will exactly do it! I do know that it will be exciting, challenging, hopeful, scary, life-giving, and so much more.

The first part of the experiment is to adjust how Our Savior's is structured for a period of one year. A memorandum of understanding will be voted on that will allow the council to be composed of current members and any other member of the congregation.

The second part involves the entire congregation in our Lenten worships. For the six weeks of Lent, we will be using scripture to guide us in asking four important questions: Who do I say that Jesus is? Who does Jesus say that I am? Who do I say the church is? Who does Jesus say the church is?

When we have a clearer understanding of our relationship with Jesus and His Church, I believe we are more open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we work together to be the Followers of the Way at Our Saviors!

The third part is yet to be created! That's the wonderment of a Holy Experiment!

The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Guidance of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Pastor John

4 Questions

4 Us

4 Lent

Who do I say Jesus  
is?



Who does Jesus say I am?

Who do I say the  
church is?

Who does Jesus say the  
church is?

Our Lenten theme: 4 Questions-4 Us-4 Lent will begin with the question that Jesus asks Peter and us “Who do YOU say I am?” Each week will build upon this question to guide us in our understanding and discernment of Jesus ministry among us today. In addition to our Sunday and mid-week worships there will be a number of resources for you to continue to engage in with the weekly question.

- Lenten devotionals will be available in a paper booklet, on our Facebook page and via daily e-mail.
- Lenten mosaic pieces will be given out at worship each week. The mosaic is designed to be a visual reminder of our 4 questions that can be used during Lent and through out the year.

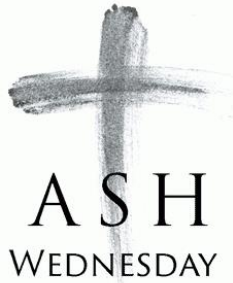
Sundays  
Our Saviors  
8:00 and 10:30

Skogdalen

Midweek  
Our Saviors  
Wednesdays 10:00 and 7:00

Skogdalen

OSLC  
Wednesday February 14  
10:00 am  
7:00 pm



Skogdalen  
Thursday February 15  
6:00 pm

**Time for GOD and COD**

Wednesdays 5:30-6:30 OSLC Begins February 14



Come and enjoy the great Lenten tradition of Wednesday Night Fish at OSLC. Proceeds send kids to camp and youth gatherings! Did you know that a recent study discovered that one of the most important indicators of high school and college youth staying connected to the church is if they attended a Bible Camp! A week at camp is truly transformative!

The OSLC Singer

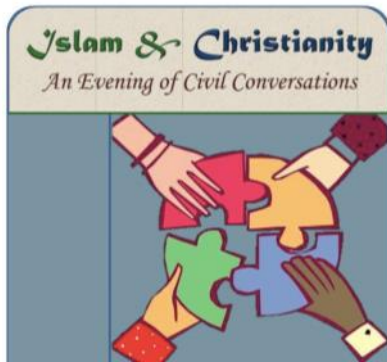


The OSLC singers will be practicing the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month at 9:15am. All voices welcome and needed. We sing for the joy of singing not for a performance, so if you have never sung in a choir this is a great opportunity to join

COME FOR SUPPER "CFS"  
Every Tuesday at OSLC  
Social Hour 4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.  
Meal Served 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

There is a  
place for  
you at  
our table...





Wednesday February 7th 6:00  
Simple Meal

6:30– 8:00  
A time for conversation

Join us on Wednesday February 7th for an evening of conversation centering around the Islamic and Jewish traditions. Members of Shoulder to Shoulder of La Crosse will lead the conversation concerning these two religions that are often in the news but for many of us we have no personal connection with a Muslim or Jew.

The format is an overview of both faiths followed by a time of questions and conversation. We begin with a simple meal at 6pm followed by listening, learning and responding to the presenters.



New Member Sunday  
March 25

Interested in joining Jesus' Ministry at Our Saviors? New member Sunday will be on Palm Sunday March 25. Contact Pastor John for more information!

**Sunday February 11** will be a special day as Tina Magner from Sugar Creek Bible Camp joins us for worship. Tina, the camps dynamic Program Director will share her passion about Jesus' Ministry at Sugar Creek .



A recent comprehensive study found that a week at Bible camp is one of the key factors in youth maintaining and



Lutheran Campus Ministry reaches college students in La Crosse by providing a safe place to gather at the Common Grounds Coffee area, weekly bible studies, Sunday evening worship, mission trips and pastoral care.

### FREE COOKIE WEDNESDAY

Last year we gave out almost 20,000 cookies! It was an amazing way for us to be on campus, show some love, and engage in conversations with students. It allowed us to be known for grace and generosity.

We hand them out at the clock tower, on a normal day, people are signing people up for something, or are selling something. On the bad days certain preacher types show up to condemn and yell at students.

But when Common Ground shows up we bring fresh homemade cookies made with love, for free. No sign ups. No yelling. No Cost. Students always seem to be joyfully perplexed.

### **Our Parish will be providing the cookies for Wednesday February 14**

We need bakers to make at least 500 cookies and due to school rules they have to be homemade and not store bought. Please have your cookies to church by Sunday February 11 so we can deliver them by Wednesday.

## Highlights of the OSLC January Annual Meeting

(full minutes are available in the church office and webpage)



### **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was unanimously passed.**

“We acknowledge that beginning January 21, 2018, our church council and committees will function outside the proscribed structure for a period of 12 months, during which time the congregation will discern the mission, ministry and organizational structure of Jesus’ Ministry at Our Saviors.”

The MOU aims to provide flexibility and freedom to explore the direction of OSLC ministry as well as transparency and more people involved in ministry. Meetings will be open to all members of the congregation. Meetings will be held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

### **Cemetery**

Concern about the finances as it costs \$275 for each mowing and only the interest on \$30,000 CD can be used for expenses. Legal fees of \$2,330

### Caring Card Ministry:

This is a reminder that we are continuing our caring card ministry to send cards to those needing a little extra support during challenging times to brighten their days. We would like to especially remember our friends and family in the military and students off to college. Please feel free to share names and addresses with the church office or on the back of the green welcome sheet on Sunday morning.

