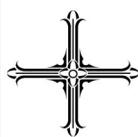


Relationships



Christ Our Savior
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

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Relationships. Relationships. Relationships.

This article is about the state of youth ministry here at Christ Our Savior, but as soon as you read that title, you probably thought about the saying, *only three things matter in real estate: location; location; location*. If you didn't, it's probably only because you've never heard the saying before that only three things matter in real estate: location; location; location. When it comes to being disciples of Jesus, in many ways, there are only three things that matter: relationships; relationships; relationships.

With respect to your life as a disciple of Jesus, you could say it comes down to three relationships: your relationship with Jesus; your relationship with the church; and your relationship with other disciples. God brings you into relationship with him through the work of the Holy Spirit through the good news of Jesus and he places you into a

body of people who relate to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Each day, you are to learn more of Jesus, rely on him more, turn to him more, and obey him more as you learn directly from God's word, from the church, and from the individual disciples that are part of your daily life.

Our youth ministry here at Christ Our Savior could be summed up as a way to build these daily discipling relationships that are rooted in our baptisms and that teach us to obey everything that Jesus has commanded us. We have two Sr. High Youth Group leaders who have each served in that role for more than 25 years as dedicated and excellent disciplers of the youth of COS, and we have very recently added two long-term Jr. High Youth Group leaders who will help bring stability and direction to that age group, as well. Last summer (2020), we began a

[cont. on next page]

new way to provide even more opportunities for our youth to connect with and be discipled by adults who love Jesus: each year, in each Youth Group, we are asking two parents to serve a one-year term as an adult leader along with the long-term leaders that are in place. This provides ample support for event planning and the like but, more importantly, it provides even more opportunities for these crucial relationships for all involved.

This past year of COVID has been a year with very different relationships and very different ways of relating. For people of all ages, relationships have been disrupted, interrupted, and troubled in many ways. Jesus has remained faithful to us the whole time, though, and it is a joy to continue to direct our youth and their families to our beautiful savior and God! As we continue forward, we will continue to focus on fostering relationships between our youth and those who are fellow disciples of Jesus. May God grant that we faithfully follow him all our days!



As the Father has
loved me, so have
I loved you.
Abide in my love.

John 15:9 (ESV)

2020 Thank Offering

Dispersal of funds

At the end of 2020, Christ Our Savior was blessed with a surplus in the budget; our income exceeded our expenses by almost \$60,000. Praise be to God! As good stewards, the staff at COS considered how this money might benefit others and build up the Kingdom of God.

As the staff and council considered where this money could go, we looked at our mission statement, “to make disciples who share the love of Jesus Christ in these communities and with people everywhere.” You’ll see that many of the recipients are schools and educational institutions—what better way to make disciples than to promote Christian education? We will also be supporting two South African seminary students who will, Lord willing, share the love of Jesus in their country among their countrymen.

These recommendations were brought before the Church Council, and the Council approved the following distribution of gifts:

\$59,925.15— Total amount to gift

\$15,000 – will go into a fund to re-do our church parking lot.

\$15,000 – will be held for unforeseen challenges in 2021 for Christ Our Savior’s Early Childhood Program (ECP). If at the end of 2021 there was no need to use this money then it will be gifted as a thank offering to another designated ministry.

\$10,000 – will be granted to Concordia Lutheran School, Farmington and Redford (Pat Schultz, principal).

\$5,000 – will be gifted to Martin Luther High School, Lansing, Michigan (Traci Backus, Superintendent).

\$5,000 – to support Open Arms Lutheran Church and Daycare in Belleville, Michigan.

\$7,000 – to the Confessional Lutheran Church of South Africa (CLCSA), for the purpose of sending two seminary students to seminary in Pretoria for 1 year (\$3,500 each). This is the church body where Rev. Khumalo was the bishop. Money will be sent to Christian Outreach for Africa (COFA) and designated for the seminary students.

\$2,925.15 – the remaining funds will go to our continued support of Family of God Lutheran Church in southwest Detroit.

Praise be to God for the opportunity to serve these people and programs!

Mark Your Calendars!

Vacation Bible School at Christ Our Savior



We will be holding VBS this year! Our VBS is scheduled for **June 21-25**. Each day will start at 9:00 a.m. and end at noon. Vacation Bible School is for children starting at age 3 and continuing to those finishing 5th grade.

The theme this year is *Rainforest Explorers: Jesus Leads the Way*, published by Concordia Publishing House. The theme takes the kids deep into the jungle, and teaches them that even though the world surrounding them is unknown or scary, they have a guide who keeps them on the right path. Crafts, music and games integrate with the daily lessons and reinforce that Jesus is their ultimate guide throughout their lives. The theme verse for the week is Romans 11:33, *Oh, the depth of the riches . . . of God!* We hope your kids are able to join us on this adventure!

As we look forward to serving the kids in our congregation and community, we are in need of youth (those finishing 6th grade and up) and all ages of adults to join the fun in leading the children. We know there may be some who have volunteered in the past who will not be able to help this year. Therefore, we need everyone to pray about this opportunity to serve!

Watch the E-Update for information about registering and volunteering.

If you can't wait to begin the fun and are interested in helping, contact Karla, karlas@christoursavior.org or 734-522-6830, to get started!



Family of God

From the Front Line: **Lord, Help Me Get One More**

Desmond Doss is one of my heroes. He joined the United States Army in April 1942 after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He couldn't stand by while his loved ones went off to war. He was compelled to do something. But he didn't want to fight, shoot, or kill. In fact, convicted by his religious beliefs, he was a pacifist. So why on earth would a pacifist join the U.S. Army?

To be a medic. To save people.



In the movie *Hacksaw Ridge*, there is a scene etched into my memory that I can recall flawlessly. In May of 1945, Japanese troops were defending the last barrier preventing a potential allied invasion of their homeland. The United States, at Okinawa, were

ferociously attempting to take the Maeda Escarpment, an intimidating rock face that they called "Hacksaw Ridge." Soldiers would climb up an enormous rope ladder, go to war with the Japanese soldiers, many of them not making it out alive. It was on May 5th that the United States secured the top of the ridge, only to be shocked by a Japanese counterattack. An attack that forced the United States to retreat down the ridge to the bottom.

As less than a third of the soldiers made it down the ridge, there was one soldier that refused to go: Desmond Doss. Without a weapon, he trudged back across the ridge, looking for fallen soldiers. A soldier with no legs, he carried them back to the ridge, lowering him down to the bottom. Another soldier shot in the knee, he dragged to the ridge, lowering him as well. After each rescue he would pray:

"Lord, help me get one more."

One by one, Desmond Doss rescued 75 men that had been left for dead at the top of Hacksaw Ridge. His relentless courage, his passionate love for his fellow man, and sacrificial perseverance helped the Americans to take Hacksaw Ridge and capture Okinawa. Days later, Doss was severely wounded, ending his time in the United States Army.

Family of God often feels like Hacksaw Ridge. Our neighborhood is littered with people who have been, by every definition of the phrase, left for dead. Rats are picking at their skin, their intestines are spilled out over the ground, people are severely bleeding with several missing limbs. Of course, I don't mean this literally, but it is often the way that

Pastor Hill and I see the neighborhood, a warzone as I have called it before.

One of these injured soldiers was a young man named Jesse. About two and a half years ago he came to Pastor Hill and I in tears with the desire to leave his life of addiction. He had been at war with heroin for the majority of his teenage and adult life. It cost him relationships, friendships, and even seeing his children. But that's what addiction does. It slowly takes everything, causing one to slowly bleed out on the field, with no hope for rescue.

But Jesse had an out, a hope for rescue. His girlfriend at the time was living in Livonia, where Pastor Hill and I regularly drive for staff meetings. She had a rehab facility set up for Jesse and we would be able to visit with him. She called him, begging him to "come home." A better life awaited him.

Unfortunately, his addiction had almost completely consumed every ounce of his being. He chose not to take the out, and he became worse. He would lurk around our church building, looking for any spare change he could find. It seemed like every day he was losing more weight, developing more scabs on his face from picking at it (a habit that drug

addiction can cause), nodding off at the table where he would routinely sip his coffee. We continued to talk with him, listen to him, clothe him, pray for and with him, and above all, love him. But even then, it was about as hopeless as it could get. Maybe this was one of the soldiers that wouldn't make it down the ridge.

Jesse stopped coming to Family of God in June of 2020. When people stop coming to our little church, it usually means one of three things: they either moved, became incarcerated, or died. As we continued to pray for him, weren't sure where he was and had no way of knowing for sure unless we saw his name on a news report. We assumed his addiction had devoured him and spit up his bones.

Until January 25th, 2021. A young man, holding the hand of a beautiful young woman, with teenager close behind them walked through our doors. As he walked closer to Pastor Hill and me, as we looked in his eyes, we finally recognized who this was: it was Jesse. Clean, sober, healthy Jesse.

He proceeded to tell us that he finally took the out in June. He reconnected with his girlfriend (now wife), his fifteen-year-old son, and was even getting custody of his little girl that week. He was elated as he told us about Christmas in their new home, showing us pictures of their families around the Christmas tree. He is working a full-time job and to quote Jesse, "Life is finally good, guys." He got some coffee, gave hugs to a couple of the people that were there and then came back over to us and said, "We aren't going to stay, I can't stay here. But I just wanted to say 'thank you.'" And this "thank you" is for you as well. This is why we crave your support. For people like Jesse.

I gave him a big hug and told him how proud I was of him. Pastor Hill did the same and with a smile delivered his famous line, "We love you, and we never want to see you in this neighborhood again." Jesse laughed and confirmed. Their car started up, the sweet sound of new beginnings, and they pulled away from the church. Pastor Hill and I smiled, discussed how it was time to get back to work, and then we prayed together:

"Lord, help us get one more."

Blessings, *Rev Tylee R. Cronkright*





in all things
JULY 9-13, 2022
LCMS YOUTH GATHERING

Colossians 1:15-20

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Christ Our Savior staff are already planning for the LCMS National Youth Gathering (NYG) which will take place July 9-13, 2022, in Houston, TX. The LCMS National Youth Gathering (NYG) has been held every three years since its inception in 1980. We are planning to take a group of youth and leaders to participate.

Christ Our Savior has been collaborating with sister congregations in recent years and enjoys these times to fellowship and connect with other Lutherans, grow in faith and be encouraged in our walk with Jesus Christ.

NYG typically lasts for five days, but the impact of the event reaches far beyond that. The time preparing for the event helps to build relationships that will last long after the event is over, and support and encourage both youth and leaders in their baptismal identity.

The theme for this NYG is "In All Things." The theme verses, Colossians 1:15-20, remind us that the Christian story, a story written by God, encompasses all things. Every part of our lives is included in this story, and each one of us has a role. As you read Paul's epistle to the Colossians, you see that Christ is the main idea that he keeps returning to, and Christ will be the single big idea at the 2022 LCMS Youth Gathering.

Our first information meeting will be in May, but it's not too early to talk to Pastor Eden (pastore@christoursavior.org) for more information about participating in this event. NYG is open to all students who will be ages 14-19 as of July 9, 2022.

Continue Steadfastly In Prayer

Prayer Planner

Be sure to pick up your copy of the **COS Prayer Planner at the Welcome Center each month!** This helpful resource provides daily prayers for our congregation members, our staff, and many others.

I Thessalonians tells us:

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (5:16-18).

Many thanks to Nikki Hammer for preparing these for us to use!

Missionary Support

We continue to support our **foreign missionaries and their families through prayer and financial means** as they boldly share the Gospel message around the world. May Jesus bless Rev. Dr. David & Joyce Erber in Ghana, West Africa; Rev. Charles & Cheryl Ferry in Indonesia; Rev. Steve & Martha Mahlburg in Sri Lanka, and Rev. James and Deaconess Christel Neuendorf in Puerto Rico.

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring the good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation. (Isaiah 52:7).

COS Mission Trip

Eyeglass Service in Guatemala



GUATEMALA

Capital:
Guatemala
City

Population:
995,393

*Official
Language:*
Spanish

*Dominant
Religion:*
Roman
Catholicism
and
Protestantism

Currency:
Quetzal

Since 1989, MOST Ministries has been organizing and leading groups of lay Christians to other countries for short-term mission work. The teams work alongside local pastors and missionaries, learning about the work they do and supporting them in it. For MOST Ministries, the goal is to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) while addressing humanitarian needs in every land.

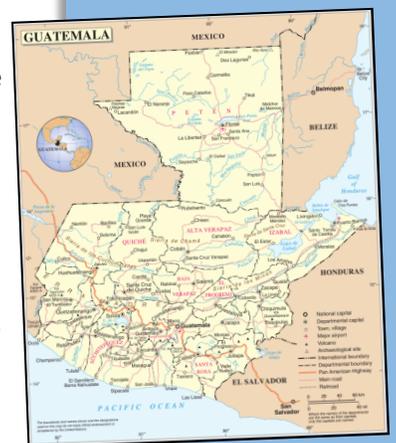
One of the trips they plan and organize is for eyeglass ministry. Eyeglass drives around the USA are held to collect used eyeglasses, which are then sorted, tested and repackaged by the MOST staff before being distributed on the mission field. We often take for granted the expense involved in owning a pair of glasses, an expense which is prohibitive for many people around the globe. This is an opportunity to share God's love in a practical way—by giving people access to eyeglasses and improving their lives at work, home and/or school.

We are planning on putting a team of COS members together to take part in a MOST Ministries mission trip this year. The destination is Guatemala, where our team will work with local Lutheran pastors to perform basic eye exams and distribute used eyeglasses. Depending on the number of team members, an eyeglass mission team can serve 100-300 people daily. Additionally, each eyeglass clinic includes a witnessing station where the Gospel message is shared unless it is prohibited by the host country. The dates for the trip are August 28-September 4, 2021.

MOST Ministries explains the daily work:

“Using a very simple testing system created specifically for MOST Ministries, members of this team will distribute eyeglasses to those in need. During the daily clinics, team members will test vision, fit and distribute eyeglasses all while sharing the gospel through words and actions. Depending on the number of team members, 100-300 people can be served daily. A Team Leader will be assigned to prepare, train, and lead the team on this mission.”

Contact our Outreach Director, Linda Hollman (lindah@choursavior.org) soon if you are interested in joining on this opportunity. A \$100 deposit is needed by the end of April if you want to join the group.





Mother's Day to Father's Day Baby Bottle Campaign

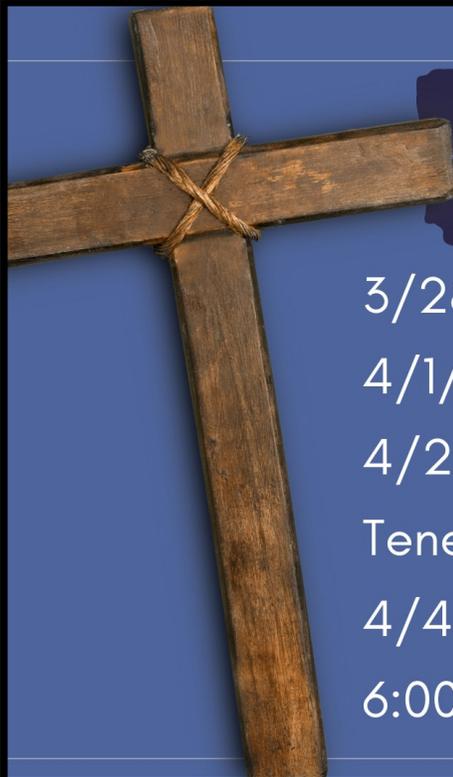
The AAA Pregnancy Resource Center in Livonia has been helping families for over 45 years. They provide FREE services, including pregnancy tests & ultrasounds. The AAAPRC shares God's truth with young moms & dads, helping them to understand God's plan for their lives & their baby.

This year, we will be supporting them through a Baby Bottle Campaign once again! From **Mother's Day, May 9, to Father's Day, June 20**, empty baby bottles will be available for you to pick up in the narthex. Do your best to fill the bottle up over the next few weeks with spare change, bills or checks (made out to AAAPRC). Bring back your filled, partially filled or even

empty bottles (so that the AAAPRC doesn't have to replace them!) on Father's Day. You can return them in the narthex.

Get the kids involved – search the van, under the couch cushions, the bottom of Mom's purse, on the top of Dad's dresser, raid the piggy bank. Have fun! It may not seem like much, but these coins add up and they all make a difference for LIFE.

The AAA Pregnancy Resource Center (32080 Schoolcraft, Livonia) will be hosting an Open House on Tuesday, April 13 from 10 a.m. to noon. You are welcome to drop in to meet the staff, take a tour, and see what a client experiences.



Holy Week Services

3/28/21 **Palm Sunday** 8:30, 11:00 a.m.

4/1/21 **Maundy Thursday** 7:00 p.m.

4/2/21 **Good Friday** 12:30 p.m.

Tenebrae 7:00 p.m.

4/4/21 **Easter Sunday**

6:00, 8:00, 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

Let Us Know How You'd Like to Receive the Disciplegram

If you would like to receive an electronic version of the Disciplegram, email Alyssa Anders at alysaa@christoursavior.org. Include your preferred email address and the current mailing address where you receive the Disciplegram.