



# Our Savior

Lutheran Church & Preschool

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Dear Members of Our Savior Lutheran Church,

Greetings in the name of Jesus! As Christmas approaches, we have also begun a new church year and wanted to let you know about a focus for this coming year. The Board of Elders and the pastors have established this as a great year of jubilee for our congregation. We want to make sure the blessings of God reach all of our households this year. This means that the pastors and elders will be focusing on encouraging the whole congregation to attend church on a more and more regular basis (the best practice for a Christian is weekly attendance). Services are offered on Sundays at 8:00 & 10:45 am and Mondays at 7:00 pm (Advent and Lent midweeks are on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm)

In order to achieve this goal, we have been prayerfully working to set up a plan which we hope our God would use to bless our congregation, but most especially we pray that it would be a blessing to your household. No matter if you are already a regular attending member or maybe have come upon harder times or even failed in listening to your new nature created by Jesus in Holy Baptism and followed the sinful flesh— no matter who you are – the services of Our Savior are meant to be a source of replenishment for your faith in Jesus. We want that blessing to come to you this year more and more.

Why? Because it's why Christ created His Church and it's why our congregation exists – to bring God's Word to bear on your life and be the blessing that the only the Word of our God is.

God has commanded church attendance:

- **The Third Commandment - Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.** *What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it. (Small Catechism)

God has also promised His gracious presence under the preached word:

- Romans 10:14 (ESV) <sup>14</sup> How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
- Luke 24:46–47 (ESV) <sup>46</sup> and [Jesus] said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.
- Isaiah 55:10–11 (ESV) <sup>10</sup> “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, <sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

God has also attached great promises to the reception of the Lord's Supper (offered at every Sunday and Monday service):

- 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (ESV) <sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.
- Matthew 26:26–28 (ESV) <sup>26</sup> Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” <sup>27</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, <sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

We have God’s command and promise about our services. We want that blessing to come to you in your hearing and receiving as well.

- Hebrews 10:23–25 (ESV) <sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

So here is our plan to stir us up to love and good works. For the next six months we are going to be happily gathering and making sure to keep track of those whose actions have shown they want to be a part of our congregation. We will be taking attendance and encouraging it. We will be doing this through letters, phone calls, words of mouth, and special events and even a challenge. We want our members to benefit from the services that go on at Our Savior each and every week. The pastors are committing to this in their prayers, study, care of souls, and preparations for each service at Our Savior. The elders are also helping to encourage our members as well. We are all in this together. Come and be a part of the sacred things that go on here at Our Savior.

Here is a rough outline of what we plan to be doing in next while at Our Savior:

- **December** – encouraging letters from pastors and elders – get to know each other and your elders.
- **January** – continued encouragement as well as a special Bible Study in between Sunday services titled “*CONNECTED TO CHRIST – Why Membership Matters*”. This study will take place each week (January 6, 13, 20, 27, and Feb 3). What does it mean to be a member? Why bother with membership? What is the purpose of the church anyways?
- **February** – introduction to the “Every week in Lent” challenge. We need encouragement and challenges in this life. Here we hope to have our members spur one another on to greater attendance to show all of us that the idea of every week attendance is not unachievable. We will even find the benefit and blessing of it.
- **March-April** – Every week challenge. Come and see how God’s Word and Sacrament can be a blessing in your week to week life. Develop a good and godly habit that has eternal blessing for you. Join with all of us in hearing more of the Word and making church attendance a priority.
- **April** – Further communication from elders and pastors.
- **June-October** – there will be continued encouragement and special efforts to reach out to those who have not heeded the command or promise of Christ about attending church at Our Savior. We hope this leads to more people coming back to the congregation they belong to by their membership. If someone does not come back, we will have to recognize that they have left our fellowship, not honoring their vows to attend church services here and heed Christ’s Word on

the topic. If necessary, this will happen at our Fall Congregational meeting. We pray that number will be small and that the vast majority of our membership would realize the blessing that church is in their lives and attend services.

This year is a jubilee year. We want our membership to thrive in their hearing of the Word of God. The Word of God is good for every one of us. The Sacrament of the Altar is offered at every service to be the blessing for you that Jesus has promised it to be. None of us are without sin, but Christians know where to find the forgiveness of those sins – where Christ has promised it to be found – in His Church, hidden under things like Baptism, Absolution, Preaching, and the Sacrament of the Altar. Even if you haven't been here for a while, come and receive these gifts that Jesus gives to be eternal blessings for you. You are members here. You belong here, and we want you to be here with us.

If some situation in life has made you unable to attend our normal services we want to know so that we can come and visit you. Otherwise, let's all gather as God's baptized children to hear the Word of Christ that is may dwell in us richly.

*Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. Joel 2:13b (ESV)*

Blessings in Christ,

Pastors...