

THE CONNECTION

Our Savior Lutheran Church Newsletter | January 25, 2026



OUR SAVIOR
LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL
PLANTATION, FLORIDA

Pastor Tony prays for Matt Mondo who gave a testimony at Our Savior on Sunday, January 11, 2026 (p. 5-6).



WHAT TO EXPECT FOR TITHES, OFFERINGS, & YEAR-END STATEMENTS IN 2026

Dearest brothers and sisters in Christ,

Starting January 2026, Our Savior Lutheran Church will start a new method of recording your monetary gifts, tithes, and offerings.

Offering envelopes were originally designed to provide financial records for registered members, primarily for tax deduction purposes. Due to changes in tax deductions, this accounting is no longer necessary for your tax returns.

Following current tax law guidelines, **Our Savior will no longer track individual offerings.** It will now be your personal responsibility to keep records of your gifts, tithes, and offerings. Hence, **the church office will no longer provide any year-end giving print outs for your taxes.** Any donation receipts, if required, will be handled as per the tax law guidelines.

After careful review and consultation with our finance team, we confirmed that **the church is legally required to provide written receipts only for single, undivided contributions of \$250 or more.** Therefore, going forward, if you wish to receive a paper receipt, contributions must be made as a single, bulk donation of the aforementioned amount. These receipts will be generic and simple in nature in consideration of our volunteer-based and limited staffing. Please expect only the date of deposit, total contribution amount, the church's EIN, and a statement confirming that no goods or services were provided in exchange for the generous donation.

Please be assured that Our Savior Lutheran Church will continue to maintain a system of internal checks and balances when collecting, counting, depositing and documenting service collections, as required by tax law.

Thank you for your continued faithfulness and generosity.

In Christ,
Your Office Staff & Volunteers
Our Savior Lutheran Church

✦ **SIMPLIFY YOUR GIVING WITH** **vanco** ✦

(NO TECH SKILLS REQUIRED!)

Tired of rising check costs?

There's an easier way to contribute—**secure, scheduled giving through VANCO.**

Why Make the Switch?

- Checks are getting expensive
- Scheduled bank transfers are **FREE**
- You stay in full control of your giving
- Helps reduce envelope costs and paper waste

Did you know?

Offering envelopes were originally created when most people gave cash and loose change. Today, many contributors give by check or electronically, which helps us cut down on printing costs and minimize waste.

If you're still giving by check and are concerned about privacy, **you can simply fold it and place it in the offering plate—no envelope needed!**

Need Help Setting It Up?

We understand that setting up online giving can feel intimidating—but we're here to help every step of the way.

Contact **Mika** at **(954) 473-6888** or **stop by the church office** during business hours. She'll walk you through the setup—or take care of it for you!

What You'll Need:

- Your **bank account and routing number** (preferred)
 - Or your **credit/debit card details**
- (Note: Credit card donations include a ~3% processing fee)*

Choose the Giving Schedule That Works for You:

You can set your donations to recur:

one-time, weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually.

You pick the start and end date.

Need to make changes later? Just call or email—we'll handle it.

Real Support. Real People.

Don't worry if you're "not techy." Our staff is here to help, and you'll only need to set this up once. After that, it's automatic and stress-free.

 Still not sure? Ask your bank about their **Bill Pay** or **ACH transfer** services—these can be free or lower-cost alternatives to giving by personal checks or credit card.



JANUARY

SUN. 1/25

8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Services

Bible Study—9:15 a.m. | Kids Connect—10:30 a.m.
Open House—12 p.m. | Birthday Club—12:30 p.m.

MON. 1/26–TUES. 1/27

Schedule open

WED. 1/28

Discussion Group—10 a.m.
Handbells Practice—6:30 p.m.

THURS. 1/29

Schedule open

FRI. 1/30–SAT. 1/31

Church office closed

SAT. 1/31

Treasures of Your Trunk Sale—8 a.m.

**Please keep the following
OSL church members in prayer:**

Haroldo Camacho, Marianne DeMinck, Roger Detwiler, Janice Evans, Howard Fischer, Sue Franjione, Betty Hea, Bob Johnson, Prentis Johnson, Robert Latimer, James Leone, Anthony Linley, Les Mellott, Malcolm Sears, Jennifer Sird-De La Horra, Robert Spencer, Linda Verdi, and Jodi Waldron.

Rehabilitation Home: Ron Holub

Members & Family in the Armed Services:

Dustin Douglas (son-in-law of Les and Juli Mellott) at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Tacoma, WA; **Scott Tucek** (son of Carol Tucek) at Yokota Air Base in Japan.



FEBRUARY

SUN. 2/1

8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Services

Bible Study—9:15 a.m. | Kids Connect—10:30 a.m.

Board of Lay Ministry Meeting

MON. 2/2–TUES. 2/3

Schedule open

WED. 2/4

Discussion Group—10 a.m.
Handbells Practice—6:30 p.m.

THURS. 2/5

Schedule open

FRI. 2/6

Church office closed

SAT. 2/7

Chili Cook-Off—6 p.m.



FEBRUARY 2026

S M T W T F S

25 26 27 28 29 30 31

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8 9 10 11 12 13 14

15 16 17 18 19 20 21

22 23 24 25 26 27 28



MATT MONDO TESTIMONY (1. 11. 2026)

I'm grateful for the opportunity to stand here today and share what God has been doing in my life—because the truth is, I'm only here by His grace.

I grew up knowing about God, but for a long time my faith was something I kept at arm's length. I trusted Him when life felt good, but when things became uncomfortable or painful, I leaned on myself instead. I tried to control outcomes, relationships, and even my own growth. And along the way, I hurt people I love and fell short of the man God was calling me to be.

There were seasons marked by pride, impatience, and selfishness—especially in how I loved. I confused desire with love, control with leadership, and strength with stubbornness. But God, in His mercy, didn't give up on me.

Then my life changed in a way I never expected.

I was diagnosed with a terminal illness.

There's no way to prepare yourself for words like that. It shakes everything—your plans, your confidence, your sense of control. I won't stand here and tell you I handled it perfectly. I didn't. There were moments I was angry. Moments I questioned God. Moments I asked, "Why me?" and "Why now?"

But even in my anger—even when my faith felt fragile—I never stopped trusting God.

John 15:4 says, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me." That verse became real to me in a new way.

MATT MONDO TESTIMONY (CONT.)

God showed me that I was trying to live, love, and lead in my own strength. But when everything else was stripped away—my health, my certainty, my control—I realized that abiding in Him wasn't optional. It was everything.

I've learned that trusting God doesn't mean you never feel anger or fear. It means you bring those emotions to Him instead of letting them pull you away from Him. It means saying, "Lord, I don't understand this, but I trust You with where You're taking me."

And I do. I trust Him with my future. I trust Him with my marriage. I trust Him with my life—however long or short it may be. Because my hope isn't rooted in an outcome. My hope is rooted in Christ.

God has been reshaping my heart—teaching me humility, patience, and what real love looks like. He's shown me that faith isn't about having all the answers. It's about surrender. It's about waking up every day and choosing to rely on Him.

I'm still growing. I'm still learning. But I can say this with confidence: God is faithful. Even in the hardest seasons. Even in the unknown. Even when the road ahead looks different than what we imagined.

If you're here today carrying pain, fear, or uncertainty, I want you to know you're not alone. God is near. He is working. And He can be trusted.

Thank you for letting me share.



A NEW WAY TO DONATE TO YOUR CHURCH!

Treasures From Your Trunk

SALE

OSL PARKING LOT

SATURDAY, JAN. 31, 2025

8 AM - 11 AM



Have unwanted items collecting dust? Instead of donating them to Goodwill, Salvation Army, or elsewhere, turn them into treasures! **Gather and sell your items directly from your trunk, and help support our church!** It's fun, easy, and a great way to give your items a second life—all while supporting a good cause. Don't miss out! Call **Judy Watson** at (954) 473-6888 for more information.



ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS



- If you would like to direct your contribution toward our general flower fund, please write "Flower Fund" on the memo line or envelope.
- For personal orders, kindly fill out the **Chancel Flower Sign-Up** slip and include it with your payment. This can be found on the back of the newsletter and in the pews. We currently only accept checks, cash, or VANCO payments*.

**Please notify the church office when giving through the VANCO app or website. If you choose to give by credit card, please consider including the processing fee so the church receives the full amount of your gift.*



JANUARY FLOWERS



The flowers adorning the chancel this Sunday were graciously provided by

- [1/18] **Ray Long:** *"Congratulations and Happy birthday to my granddaughter, Josephine."*
- [1/25] **Arlene Lyth:** *"In honor and love of my son, Timothy."*

As of this Sunday, we now have **\$2,457** in our flower fund. That is enough to cover two bouquets for **49 Sundays**.

CHILI COOK-OFF

THINK YOU MAKE A GREAT CHILI?
BRING A POT AND SHOW US

Hot Prizes for the best chili

Feb 7th 6:00 PM

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School
8001 NW 5th St, Plantation, FL 33324



Hot dogs available for kids

TICKETS
ADULTS \$10
KIDS \$5
(UNDER 10)

CONTESTANTS GET IN FREE

Contact Juli Mellott at (954) 473-6888 for more information.

K-9 BLESSING 1. 4. 2026

On Sunday, January 4, 2026, our church had the joy of offering a special blessing for the K-9 Peer Support Team, honoring Boulton and K-9 partner Chris Muller as they begin their service as a fully certified Peer Support Team for the Plantation Fire Department. The team will support local fire and police personnel during especially difficult moments, while also joining community, school, and church events along the way.



MELISSA VAZQUEZ TESTIMONY (1. 4. 2026)



I want to talk to you today about God's provision—but I need to be honest from the start.

I'm not sharing this from a place of abundance. I'm sharing it from a place of need.

Right now, I'm trying to figure out how to make money stretch when it clearly doesn't. I'm trying to find a place to live that I can actually afford. I've prayed prayers that didn't get answered the way I hoped—and some that haven't been answered yet at all.

So when I say God provides, I don't mean everything is solved. I mean **I'm still standing**.

There were moments when I thought, I can't do this anymore. Moments when the numbers didn't add up. Moments when fear crept in late at night and asked, What if it doesn't work out?

So when I say God provides, I don't mean everything is solved. I mean I'm still standing.

There were moments when I thought, I can't do this anymore. Moments when the numbers didn't add up. Moments when fear crept in late at night and asked, What if it doesn't work out?

But somehow—day after day—I had what I needed to get through that day.

So if you're here today and you're struggling—financially, emotionally, spiritually—please hear me:

MELISSA VAZQUEZ TESTIMONY (CONT.)

If you're still breathing, still praying, still getting up—**God is providing.**

Not always how we expect.

Not always on our timeline.

But always with faithfulness.

I'm still waiting. But I'm also still trusting.

And that, in itself, is a testimony.



BETTY HEA REV. VOLZ SERVANT OF CHRIST AWARD 2025 RECIPIENT

"Well Done Good and Faithful Servant"

—*Matthew 25:23*

This passage highlights God's approval for us using our God-given abilities and talents. The "Walter D. Volz Servant of Christ Award" gives us the opportunity to name a special volunteer each year who leaves their foot print at Our Savior Lutheran Church. This year a true servant of Christ is Betty Hea.



As far as I can remember.

Betty Hea, along with her late husband Michael, came to Our Savior in 2014 from her previous church, Our Savior of St. Louis, Missouri.

Betty has been involved with the women's group, LWML, and Bible Study. In her previous church, Betty worked with the Missionary Board, coordinating trips to Africa, Guatemala, and Hong Kong.

Every Christmas and Easter, Betty makes designer chocolate—the funds from which go to a project of her choice. You can see the results from the Altar to the outside of the church.

Betty is also a crafter. She has made artificial bouquets and diorama to decorate our visual displays.

Betty, we know you would never seek recognition. We understand and we respect you for that. But, sometimes it is not the person who seeks the award but the award that seeks the person.

John Waldron

Our Savior Lutheran Congregational Vice President

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

JAN 26

Wayne & Marie Shaw

(8)

JAN 31

Garnet & Nan Bhalai

(34)

FEB 2

James & Jodi Hurst

(6)

FEB 24

Michael & Desireé Gaffley

(47)

FEB 29

Robert & Rosemary Johnson

(62)

*Please help us update
our computer
databases!*

If you are a member and have not seen your birthday or anniversary listed in our newsletter, kindly contact Mika at, (954) 473-6888 or mdurante@oursaviorplantation.org.

Not sure if you're a member? Contact us. We'd love to help you find out!



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

JAN 2

Viv Mills

JAN 3

Jennifer Sird-De La Horra

JAN 4

Roger Detwiler, Greg Goth

JAN 5

Mary Ann O'Keefe

JAN 6

Carol Ross

JAN 7

Heston Curry, Parker Strickman

JAN 12

Jennifer Strickman

JAN 13

Beth Albrecht, Kristian Liebig

JAN 15

Jade Cruz

JAN 17

Aya Durante

JAN 18

Christine Khan

JAN 19

Agnes Karabetsos

JAN 22

Baron Betz, Drew Clark

JAN 23

Hayden Hewitt

JAN 25

Joyce Auran

JAN 27

Beverly Embrack, Norma Miller

JAN 30

Annette Burn, Josie Rivera-Abdo

JAN 31

Brock Van Sant



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

FEB 1

Connor Brangan

FEB 2

Janice Evans

FEB 4

Denis Cruz

FEB 5

Patricia Jablansky

Preston Strickman

FEB 7

Timothy Brangan

FEB 9

Erica Betz

FEB 10

Edith Southerton

FEB 12

Ingrid Pisasik

FEB 14

Tammy Weidner

FEB 15

Cary Ehrenfeld

FEB 18

Bradley Bhalai

Dolor Ginchereau

FEB 19

David Volz

FEB 25

Pastor Tony Durante

FEB 26

Linda Verdi

FEB 28

Maureen Burrows

FEB 29

Olga Gotting



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CHANCEL FLOWERS SIGN-UP



If you would like to have flowers on the altar on a given Sunday in honor of someone, in memory of a loved one, or to commemorate a birthday, etc., all you need to do is fill out this form and put it in the offering plate. The cost is \$25.00 per order; two pieces would cost \$50.00. Call the church office if you have any questions, (954) 473-6888.

Name: _____

Date you would like flowers: _____

In Honor, Memory, Celebration, or Thanksgiving of _____

*Check this box if you would like to collect your flowers after the 10:30 a.m. service.
Any unclaimed flowers will be donated to a local nursing home. Thank you.*

FOR OFFICE:

of bouquets _____

\$ _____

Paid ____ / ____ / ____