

# THE CONNECTION

Weekly Newsletter

April 26, 2026

**65**  
ANNIVERSARY  
OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH



*Our Savior celebrates 65 years of faith and service to God with Pastor Tony and Rev. Arndt on Sunday, April 19, 2026.*



**SUN. 4/26**

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

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

Birthday Club—12:30 p.m.

**MON. 4/27–TUES. 4/28**

*Schedule open*

**WED. 4/29**

**65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Savior Lutheran Church**

Discussion Group—10 a.m.

Handbells Practice—6:30 p.m.

**THURS. 4/30**

*Schedule open*



**FRI. 5/1–SAT. 5/2**

*Church office closed*

**SUN. 5/3**

**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—12 p.m.

### TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

**MON. 5/4–TUES. 5/5**

*Schedule open*

**TUES. 5/5**

Property Board Meeting—6:30 p.m.

**WED. 5/6**

Discussion Group—10 a.m.

Handbells Practice—6:30 p.m.

**THURS. 5/7**

*Schedule open*

**FRI. 5/8–SAT. 5/9**

*Church office closed*

# PRAY

**Prayers for the following OSL church members:**

Haroldo Camacho, Carol Chaddock, Marianne DeMinck, Roger Detwiler, Junko Durante, Claire Edwards, Howard Fischer, Sue Franjione, Betty Hea, Bob Johnson, Prentis Johnson, Robert Latimer, James Leone, Les Mellott, Mary Ann O'Keefe, Carol Ross, Malcolm Sears, Jennifer Sird-De La Horra, Robert Spencer, Linda Verdi, Jodi Waldron, John Wheeler, and Jan Withers.

**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.

**Rehabilitation Home:** Ron Holub

*If you have prayer requests, please let us know by filling out a **Connect Card** or **colored prayer card** found in the pews. Our Prayer Team (Debi Bauer, Norma Miller, Robert Spencer, and John and Jodi Waldron) will gather the cards and pray for those needs. For personal prayers and/or additional spiritual guidance, please contact Pastor Tony at (954) 473-6888.*



FLGA District, LCMS  
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**James H. Rockey**  
*President*

**Eric Sahlberg**  
*Mission and Outreach*

**Jennifer M. Tanner**  
*School & Youth Ministries*

**Jay P. Wendland**  
*Lutheran Church Extension Fund*

**Laura Zirbel**  
*Finance & Administration*

April 16, 2026

Our Savior Lutheran Church  
8001 NW 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Plantation, FL 33324

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen! Greetings of joy as we continue to celebrate our Lord's victory over Satan, Sin and Death through the cross and empty grave. Alleluia! Indeed, this is a time where we remember not only our need but that our neighbors have the same need and the Lord desires to provide for them the very same gift of grace and life. This is especially important as you celebrate 65 amazing years of laboring in the Lord's Harvest fields!

I wish I could be with you to celebrate, yet I give thanks for all the seeds that have been planted and the harvest that has resulted through the ministries and saints of Our Savior!

Please know that you will be in my prayers as you celebrate. Although this is a wonderful opportunity to consider the work and fruit over the past 65 years, I pray that this is also a time of renewed commitment to living as Christ's Church, His "Called-Out ones". Our Savior, like most congregations, may have had challenges at times, but the Lord has blessed and equipped you to live as His witnesses and share the wonderful message of God's grace through Christ alone!

May the Lord bless you as you look forward to the future with anticipation and hope. Jesus is at work among you as you continue to grow in His Word and Sacrament and personally reach into your community with the transformational message of peace and hope through ours and the world's only true Savior!

On behalf of your brothers and sisters in Christ across the Florida Georgia District, Happy 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

Serving our Lord and His people with joy,

Rev. James H. Rockey  
President, Florida-Georgia District LCMS\

Our family has been part of Our Savior for five generations. My grandparents, Walter and Doris Wilkins, came from Michigan and joined the church approximately 1975. We would come down to attend a Tupperware convention in August every year and visit my grandparents. We loved it so much that we made the move ourselves in 1980. That was the same time Pastor Volz became the new pastor.

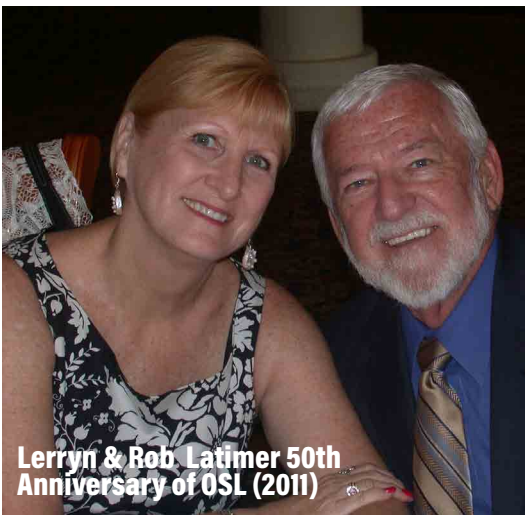
At the time, our children, Jamie and Suzie, were 10 and 8 years old. Jamie was confirmed by Pastor Volz in 1983, and Suzie in 1985. My parents, Donald and Renee Wilkins, decided they liked it and moved down in 1983. My grandfather died in 1984, and his funeral was here at Our Savior. My parents decided to move back to Michigan in 1986.

Our son, Jamie, was married here by Pastor Volz in 1994, and Suzie following in 1995. Our granddaughter, Kayla, was baptized here in 1998, then our grandson, Craig, was baptized here in 2002 by Pastor Nicklas. Craig was confirmed here in 2017, but Kayla when to a church closer to their home to be confirmed due to date conflicts with the classes. Jamie's boys were baptized at a church in Boynton Beach.

To God be the glory—for the past 65 years, and for all the years to come.  
—Lerryn Latimer



**Lerryn Latimer 65th Anniversary of OSL (2026)**



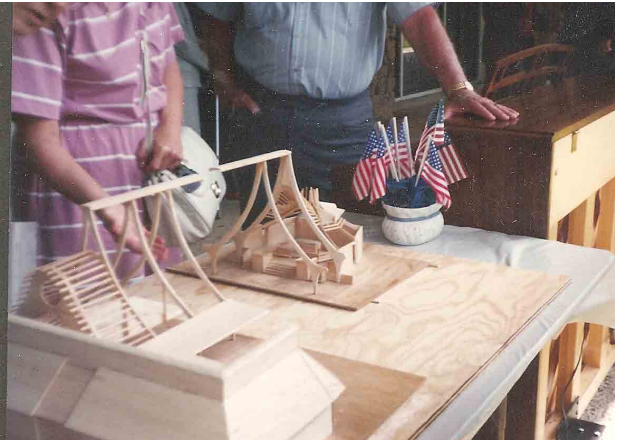
**Lerryn & Rob Latimer 50th Anniversary of OSL (2011)**



**Suzie Latimer (1989)**



*June 28, 1964*







**1993 New Members**  
*Nancy Volz (center in navy blazer)*



**10:30 AM New Members (March 31, 1996)**  
*Duane Srot and Carol Reynolds-Srot with Zack and Kelly (Left beside Rev. Volz)*



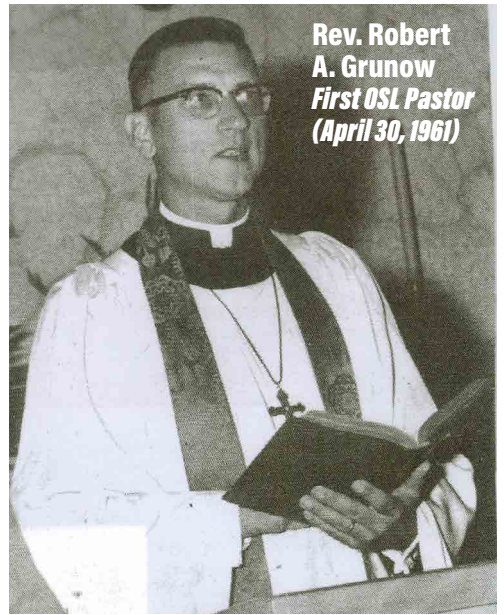
*Shelly Faulkner (née Detwiler)  
with parents Roger (member since  
1989) and Judy Detwiler (member  
since 1974).*



*John and Glenda Strang  
(members since 1990) with  
their 3 sons.*



Evangelism Movie "Like a Mighty Army," sponsored by Adult Classes



Rev. Robert A. Grunow  
First OSL Pastor  
(April 30, 1961)



Ellen Clark with her son Drew  
(OSL 50th Anniversary)



Carol Tucek with Lynn Diamond (OSL 65th Anniversary)



Rev. Elmer Medley with his wife Barbara  
(OSL 50th Anniversary)

## A Historical Summary of the Last 65 Years at Our Savior Lutheran Church

### Pastors and Installation Dates

<b>Robert Grunow</b>	April 30, 1961 (2 ½ years)
<b>Arthur Machinske</b>	September 15, 1963 (5 years)
<b>Richard Arndt</b>	September 8, 1968 (86, wife-Pam, 84, sons Jeff and Paul)
Larry Raudenbaugh	Interim
<b>Walter Volz</b>	September 7, 1980 (21 years)

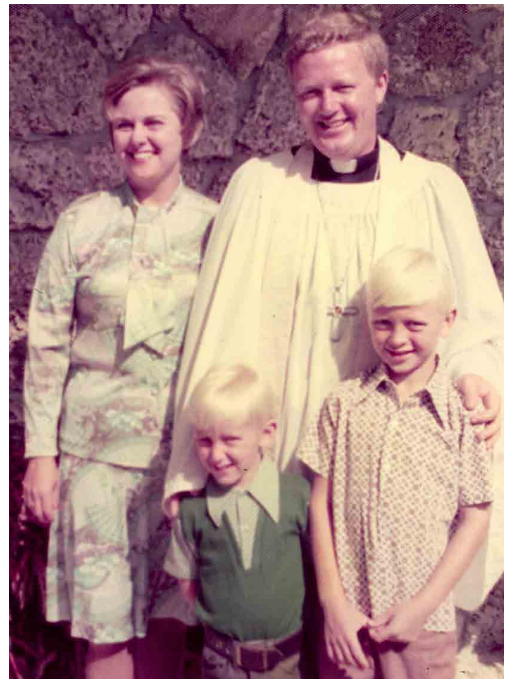
Retired Pastoral Assistants include:

George Loose, Martin Dienst, Eugene Krug, David Schmid and Luther Anderson, along with nine vicars

Dan Czaplewski	Assistant Pastor and Principal (Fall 1990)
<b>Edwin Nicklas</b>	September 9, 2001 (13 years)

Retired Pastoral Assistants include: Elmer Medley, Jay Rader

Al Kirk	Intentional Interim
Mark Abrams	8 months
Jeff Moore	Intentional Interim
<b>Tony Durante</b>	April 15, 2018 (8 years and counting!)



## OSL Historical Summary (Cont.)

### 1960s

The idea of mission outreach to Plantation was first discussed in 1960. At that time, the Florida-Georgia District had already purchased land and was in the process of calling a pastor to serve the new mission.

The first worship service was held on April 9, 1961, in the cafeteria of Peters Elementary School, with 90 people in attendance. Robert Grunow was installed as the congregation's first pastor on April 30, 1961.

Within one year, a church building was completed and dedicated on April 8, 1962. The dedication featured Oswald Hoffman as guest speaker. The original church, built at a cost of \$125,000, seated 300 people and was fully air-conditioned.

Early childhood education began with a kindergarten program led by Addie Baurer. In 1962, the Lutheran School Association was formed in partnership with OSL, Grace, Peace, and Trinity. Orlyn Schlie served as the first principal of Lutheran Central, located at Trinity.

### 1970s

During the 1970s, the church experienced significant growth in both membership and spiritual life. In 1972, an education building was constructed, featuring 12 classrooms, a kitchen, and a large open space for events.

The early childhood program expanded to include 3- and 4-year-olds. Joan Brumbaum served as director, followed by Barbara Fischer in 1978.

Also in 1972, the first Vacation Bible School (VBS) was held over two weeks, with 200 children from the church and surrounding community attending.

Music and fellowship ministries flourished under choir director Gerry Gruenbaum. New groups included the Couples Club, a senior group known as the "Keenagers," and youth ministries—OSLY (high school) and JOSLY (junior high).

In 1973, voting rights within the congregation were expanded to include 18-year-old males and all women of the church.

### 1980s

In the 1980s, Pastor Volz established a vicarage program, through which nine vicars eventually served the congregation.

In 1982, the Lutheran School Association determined that OSL should begin the Lutheran Central West Campus. Groundbreaking for a new education building took place in January 1984, and the building was dedicated just seven months later in time for the 1984–1985 school year.

## OSL Historical Summary (Cont.)

Children's choir and handbell choir programs were also established during this decade. Marvin Oestmann became principal of Lutheran Central and served as the church organist.

By the late 1980s, OSL's early childhood program and Lutheran Central West Campus were unified as Our Savior Lutheran School. Dolores Bethmann began serving as church secretary in 1986.

### 1990s

The congregation stepped forward boldly in faith during the 1990s, expanding the sanctuary and adding Luther Hall as part of a major building program. During construction, Sunday services were held in the education building.

The new sanctuary was dedicated on December 12, 1993. Several meaningful elements from the original church were incorporated, including the marble altar top and the Risen Jesus figure placed on the cross. Furnishings and woodwork were handcrafted in the Bahamas by John Mitchell.

A two-story classroom and office addition was also completed. Dan Czaplewski was called as the first Assistant Pastor and School Principal.

The school received its first National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) in 1993. A Worship and Praise service was introduced in 1995.



Barbara Fischer was honored as OSL's first Educator of the Year in 1991. Outreach efforts included support for the Cooperative Feeding Program, Project Angel Tree, the Lippman Shelter, and Seafarers' House at Port Everglades.

Jan Withers became church secretary in 1997.

### 2000s

Pastor Volz retired in August 2001. After a brief interim period with Elmer Medley, Ed Nicklas was installed as pastor.

The Praise Service evolved into a contemporary worship service with communion, known as Shout for Joy. The Crossways two-year Bible study was offered multiple times, each with new insights and learning opportunities.

A Visioning Day was held in November 2003. Nancy Volz joined the staff as Finance Director in 2000. Heather Bleier was called as Director of Christian Education (DCE) in 2006 after completing her internship in 2005.

Members who entered pastoral ministry included Michael Wentzel (2002), Lisa Barry (2002), Roy Olsen (2005), and Shane McCoy (2013).

Dorothy Schawk reorganized the Church Properties Board, introducing a system for members to sponsor care zones around the church. The congregation received Plantation's P.L.A.N.T. Award and developed a church logo.

Jane Nicklas became principal in 2002. The Swing for Scholars Golf Tournament was established in 2003.

Donna Swift (2004) and Linda Root (2009) were named Educator of the Year. The school expanded with a 2-year-old program (2005) and middle school (2006), with its first eighth-grade graduation in 2007. The School Annual Fund was established in 2006.

In 2009, participation in the Transforming Churches Network (TCN) led to the adoption of the vision statement: Serving Christ – Serving Others – Changing Lives.

The church became an active mentoring partner with Mirror Lake Elementary School and supported organizations such as LifeNet4Families, Mission: Haiti, and Food for the Poor. Music groups regularly served in the community through singing and handbell performances.

### 2010s

In 2010, OSL received the Exemplary Congregation Award from the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), with Ed Nicklas addressing the national convention.

The 50th Anniversary was celebrated in 2011 with three major events held in January, March, and May.



## 2010s

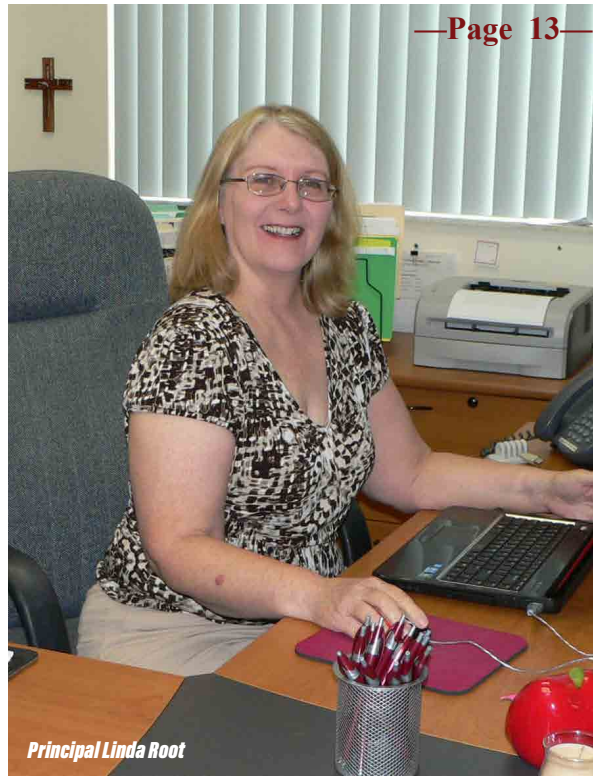
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Pastor Walter D Volz celebrated 50 years of ordained ministry. In his honor, the Reverend Walter D. Volz Servant of Christ Award was established, with Libby Martino as its first recipient. To date, 15 individuals have received this recognition.

Ed Nicklas retired in 2013, followed by Jane Nicklas in 2014. Linda Root became School Principal in 2014.

Tony Durante was called to serve as shepherd in 2018.



*Principal Linda Root*

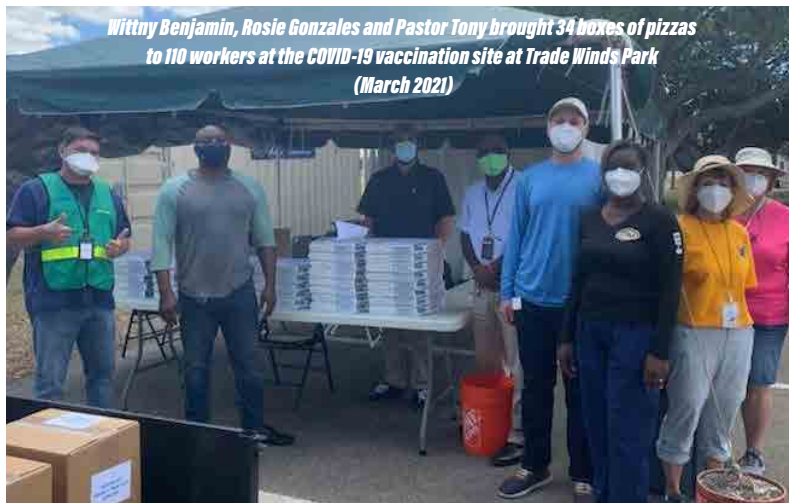
## 2020s

The decade began with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, followed by a period of recovery and restoration for both the church and school.

And the rest... is history!



*Pastor Tony praying with Brad Heine during a midweek Lent service (2024)*



*Witny Benjamin, Rosie Gonzales and Pastor Tony brought 34 boxes of pizzas to 110 workers at the COVID-19 vaccination site at Trade Winds Park (March 2021)*

# Brothers & Sisters in Christ

LWML Gold Coast Zone  
Spring Rally 2026  
May 2, 2026

Shepherd of the Coast Lutheran Church  
1901 East Commercial Boulevard

Registration begins at 8:30a.m.                      \$5.00 per person

Gifts from the Heart:                      **Covenant House**

For **Covenant House**:                      hygiene products: personal size shampoos,  
conditioner, soap, deodorant, razors, socks,  
T-shirts, new and gently used towels, baby needs,  
household cleaning products., paper towels, etc.

Colossians 3:14-15

And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.



**Please call Roberta Murphy at  
954-772-8010 or 954-806-5837  
no later than Monday April 28th  
with the number of attendees**



**Brothers and Sisters  
in Christ**



[Instagram](#)  
(@osl.church)



[YouTube](#)  
(Our Savior Lutheran  
Church Plantation)



[Online Offering](#)



[Facebook](#)  
(OSLSAINTS)

*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](mailto:mdurante@oursaviorplantation.org). Not sure if you're a member? Contact us. We'd love to help you find out!

## BIRTHDAYS

APR 26

Beth Ahrens

MAY 1

Cathy Koontz

Kiara Westby

MAY 3

Prentis Johnson

MAY 4

Kelly Srot

MAY 5

Carol Chaddock

Anthony Colburn

Rolf Fischer

Robert Latimer

MAY 9

Ian Johnson

Jan Withers

MAY 10

Mary Ginchereau

MAY 11

Noah Chang

MAY 12

Kim Schuh

MAY 13

Harriette Leslie

MAY 16

James Hurst

MAY 17

Pam Mills

MAY 20

Les Mellott

MAY 24

Christina Flahive

John Wheeler

MAY 26

James Leone

MAY 31

Heston Curry

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

APR 30

Colin & Ginette Orrett (10)

MAY 4

Rob Losier & Wendi Miller (31)

MAY 5

Jerry & Alejandra Starner (29)

Joseph & Kristen Iannarone (2)

MAY 7

Edward & Linda Stannard (21)

MAY 16

Michael & Tammy Weidner (34)

MAY 18

Michael & Donna McLeod (10)

MAY 19

Timothy & Caroline Brangan (14)

MAY 19

Greg & Karen Goth (36)

MAY 24

Robert & Lerryn Latimer (58)

MAY 24

John & Glenda Strang (52)



1975 Guild Officers Present:  
Judy Carto, Diana Gerrard (Pres.),  
Joyce Livermore



## Our Savior Lutheran Church & School

8001 NW 5th Street, Plantation, Florida 33324

### CHURCH

(954) 473-6888

[www.oslplantation.church](http://www.oslplantation.church)

*Tony Durante, Pastor*

[tdurante@oursaviorplantation.org](mailto:tdurante@oursaviorplantation.org)

*Mika Durante, Administrative Assistant*

[mdurante@oursaviorplantation.org](mailto:mdurante@oursaviorplantation.org)

### SCHOOL

(954) 370-2161

[www.oslplantation.school](http://www.oslplantation.school)

*Linda Root, Principal*

[lroot@oursaviorplantation.org](mailto:lroot@oursaviorplantation.org)

*Danielle Durham, Assistant Principal*

[ddurham@oursaviorplantation.org](mailto:ddurham@oursaviorplantation.org)



### 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. These are found below or 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.



## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE:
# of bouquets _____
\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Paid ____ / ____ / ____

*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.*