

THE CONNECTION

Weekly Newsletter

May 10, 2026



Rev. Walter Volz 21-year ministry at Our Savior Lutheran Church started in 1980 (p. 8-10).



MAY

MOTHER'S DAY—SUN. 5/10

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

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

MON. 5/11– TUES. 5/12

Schedule open

WED. 5/13

Discussion Group—10 a.m.

Handbells Practice—6:30 p.m.

THURS. 5/14

Schedule open

FRI. 5/15–SAT. 5/16

Church office closed

SUN. 5/17

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

Bible Study—9:15 a.m. | Bake Sale—9 a.m.

Kids Connect—10:30 a.m.

MON. 5/18

Women's Group Meeting—6:30 p.m.

TUES. 5/19

OSLS Spring Arts Festival—6 p.m.

WED. 5/20

Discussion Group—10 a.m.

Handbells Practice—6:30 p.m.

THURS. 5/21

Schedule open

FRI. 5/22–SAT. 5/23

Church office closed

PRAY

Prayers for the following OSL church members:

Haroldo Camacho, Carol Chaddock, Marianne DeMinck, Roger Detwiler, Claire Edwards, Howard Fischer, Sue Franjione, Gerry Gruenbaum, 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.*

I thank everyone for the beautiful cards, messages and texts I have been receiving during my beginning journey with Leukemia. Your prayers bring me such comfort as I am awaiting the day I can again hug and greet you.

I love you all!!

Jan



Loved Through It All: A Hug from God and a Grateful Heart

by Belinda Aguilar

This is my story on how I became part of the Our Savior Lutheran Church and School Family.

I was working for a title company that was on Broward and 70th and when we purchased our home in 2002, I would always take 5th Street to go home. I would drive by the church and say to myself “I really have to get back to church”. However, I was too shy to go by myself.

The next year, I gave birth to Stephanie, my mom moved down from New Jersey to help me, and the first thing she said was she needed to find a church. I told her I knew of one and I would drive her, but she would go alone because I was still too shy to attend with her. March of 2004, Mom finally convinces me to attend, and I take Stephanie with me—she’s 4 months old. As I walk in carrying Stephanie, sitting in the front pew by the entrance is Marie Shanahan, Arlene Blumm, Dorothy Schawk, Ed and Helene Craft. We sit behind them, and Arlene takes Stephanie from my arms. It was that day Stephanie received a few more grandparents. A few months later, we became members of Our Savior Lutheran. Every Sunday, I would attend, bringing Stephanie along, and Pastor Nicklas’ sermons always helped put Stephanie to sleep.



When Stephanie was 3 years old, she became very ill and was in the hospital for 3 weeks. Pastor Nicklas, Judy Detwiler, and Marie Shanahan came by to pray and spend some time with us. When I needed emergency surgery, Pastor Nicklas showed up pre-op and prayed over me. I always knew that in my time of need, I would have my church family.

Stephanie was a student at OSL from 3 years old to 8th grade. I loved going to all the school functions and the class trips to the zoo, St. Augustine, Kennedy Space Center, and Washington DC. There was a time when I lost my job and was having a hard time finding work. It was also getting hard to pay for Stephanie to attend school. I received a call from Linda Root, and she told me that someone was going to take care of the tuition for the remainder of the school year. I still don’t know who my angel was; but I thank you every day, even now because Stephanie was able to stay attending OSL. Thank you to all the OSL teachers. You will always have a special place in my heart.

Now, 2022 to 2024 were the years that challenged my faith. 2022 was Stephanie’s senior year of high school and that meant college tours, prom and graduation; so, it was supposed to be a happy milestone. However, at the beginning of the year, my dad and my brother’s health took a turn for the worse, and mom’s dementia was starting to ramp up. In April 2022, my dad passes, so I go up to New Jersey for the funeral and to pick up mom as my brother can no longer take care of her.

(Continued on the next page.)

A month later, my brother passes and it's me taking care of Mom alone. I questioned many times why God took my brother so young and left me to take care of Mom who was becoming more forgetful and erratic so quickly. I felt like, "Why am I being punished?" I never did anything wrong to anyone and I have my faith, so why would I be going through all of this? I got angry and questioned, "What's the point of going to church if my prayers aren't answered?" So, I stopped going. Then, I got really sick and was in the hospital for 4 days. Pastor Tony visited me and helped me realize that this will pass and God is listening; so, I did go back to church. Stephanie was doing well in college, and I eventually found the perfect place for Mom.

All was starting to finally get better until 2024, when Mom started to slow down drastically. I visited her every day after work, and my only free time was Saturdays and Sunday mornings for church. It was really taking a toll on me, and I was getting burned out; so, my husband and I planned this big family road trip in July. But Mom took a turn for the worse. She passed two days before our trip, and we were going to cancel it. During the planning of the funeral, I told Pastor Tony we were going to cancel our trip and he said don't. He told me that I should take the trip and reassured me there's a reason for everything. I'm so glad we went because I believed I saw Heaven on Earth. I sent pictures to Pastor and told him I feel like I was being hugged by God.



Something from that trip made us realize we needed a change and we knew that our time in Florida has come to an end. It's time for our next chapter. Last year, we were trying to figure out where we were planning on moving to and did our research. We decided and took a trip to check out the area—Minnesota. And yes, we know it's cold. January of this year, we went back up and the highs for those days were in the negatives, but we picked out our lot anyway. Now, the rush is to get our house ready to sell here and start packing. Through this process, I felt the Spirit and a sense of knowing we are doing the right thing.

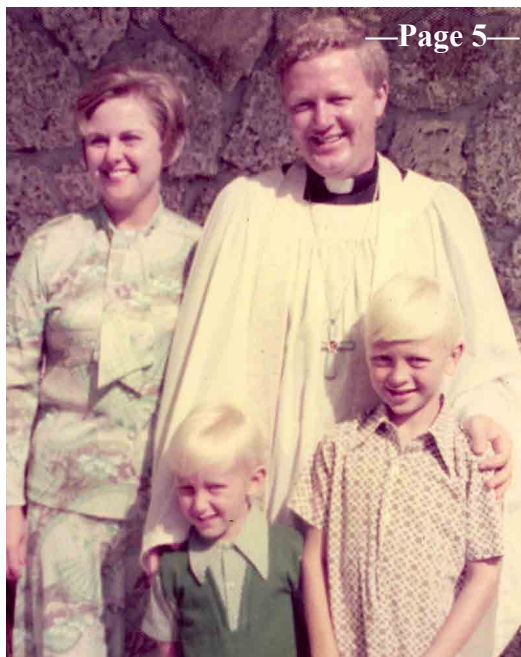
I knew the first day driving by the church in 2002, this was going to be my church home, but now I say goodbye to Florida and goodbye to my Our Savior family. Thank you all for welcoming me and my family to this wonderful congregation. I'm going to miss you all, especially my hugs from Gloria and Nancy. Thank you again, I love you all, and God bless.

Remembering Those Who Served

by Rev. Dick Arndt

The first pastor was Robert Grunow. The president of the congregation at the time was President [Larry Ziebarth](#), who was the head of AAL (Aid Association for Lutherans). Thanks to Nancy, we know he lived a nice, full life, going on to be with the Lord at the age of 105 in 2024. I mention him because he supported the church fervently and bought our first pews, which covered half the worship area at the time.

After Pastor Arthur Machinske, came me (Pastor Dick Arndt). This was a great time of growth because of all the new families who moved in. They came from different businesses and different parts of the US, mostly from the Midwest. We had lots of transfers. It wasn't just us; all the neighboring churches, like St. Benedict's and St. Gregory, grew and built new buildings. With the growth came kids—and a lack of space to accommodate them. Because there were too many kids, I had to host bible studies at my home between services. So, we built the education center (currently the one-storied preschool bays) to hold Sunday School.



There are some notable members during my time, whom I would like to highlight:

- *Orlyn & Dorothy (wife) Schlie—Orlyn was the principal of Lutheran Central. For those unfamiliar with this, Lutheran Central School (LCS) took off during the 1970s and 80s and was located where Trinity Lutheran Church of Ft. Lauderdale stands today. 1st to 8th graders could attend. Five Missouri Synod Lutheran churches in the area sponsored it.*



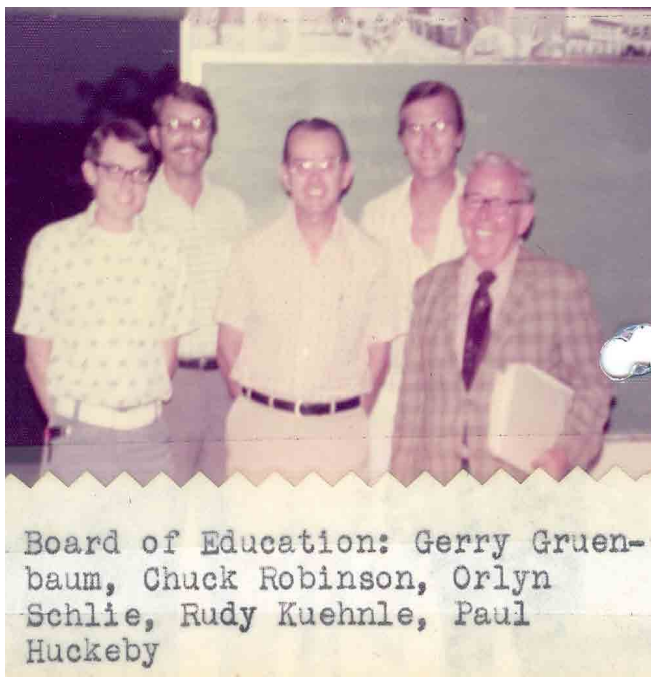
- *Marge Freeman—The organist and choir director. She also played the organ for LCS.*
- *Herb Seegers—He cut the grass for us all the time.*
- *Herman Askren—He had a house in Everglades City, where the church council once went on a retreat. We prayed, planned, and taught a lot—and fished a lot, too. A particularly fond memory I have was when the wives of all the church council members called me during this retreat to remind the husbands to take their pills.*
- *Karl & Evelyn Dorn (pictured left) gave a generous donation to start Our Savior's building fund for the first education building, which was primarily used for Sunday School.*
- *Rev. Walter Storm—He transferred to us and took over our VBS program. He got horses for the kids to ride.*
- *Howard & Barbara Fischer—They were very active in every way. Barbara was especially active in education.*
- *And so many more.*

(Rev. Arndt's Testimonial Cont.)

After me came Pastor Walter Volz, who was a “dynamo”. You’ll have to ask his daughter-in-law, Nancy Volz to get close to the full breadth and scope of his ministry, but what I know is that he was mostly known for 3 big things:

- He served the US Navy as a chaplain on a ship.
- He served many churches.
- He headed up Food for the Poor. Not only was he active, he went overseas, and by his efforts, he helped build and establish a building to feed the people there.

After Volz was Pastor Niklas, whom I unfortunately don’t know much about. And now, “You have God’s man for this time and place here. And you know the pastor’s name.” May the Lord who has been faithful in the past continue to guide and keep us in Christ.





A Legacy of Faith: Reflections from the Volz Family

written and compiled by Kristin Iannarone (née) Volz

Reflections from Gloria

*Remembering Milestones, Ministry, & Moments
From 21 Years of Faithful Service*

When my mother (Gloria) was asked about her memories looking back over the years at OSL, she shared the following things that Dad, Pastor Walter Volz, treasured during his 21 years here as pastor:

- *The Mayor's Prayer Breakfast: He started this event in Plantation with Rabbi Haar, with whom Dad developed a long-lasting friendship over the years.*



- *The 1984 Building Program, which included the construction of the elementary school.*
- *The 1993 Church Renovation: This project included turning the church around, adding the current chancel and balcony, and building Luther Hall.*
- *During this time, the church offices were located in a satellite facility (affectionately called the SO, which stood for Satellite Office).*
- *He especially loved working with the city and Mayor Frank Veltri; occasional friendly bickering over building codes often occurred.*
- *Hurricane Andrew changed the building codes mid-project, and many things had to be changed, completed, and rebuilt.*
- *He had nine years of working with nine vicars, and the team of Pastor Volz, Barbara Fischer, and Jan Withers was known as "The Trifecta".*
- *Mom loved teaching Sunday School and VBS, serving on the altar guild, singing in the choir, and ringing bells.*

Reflections from Kristin

Personal Stories of Faith, Family, & Growing Up in a Life of Ministry

Dad loved building churches...that was a huge part of his ministry. I never imagined as a child “running through” those renovations that I would be teaching in those buildings today. I can definitely say I know these buildings inside and out. During this same period, he also helped to build a school and remodel the chapel on the AUTECH Navy base on Andros Island in the Bahamas. This led to meeting the artist that designed our current windows, altar, pulpit, and lectern. The inspiration for all those things came from chapel on that Navy base.

Another part of his ministry here was visiting shut-ins...elderly or those who, for whatever reason, could not come to church. I was fascinated by this and his “to go” as I called it—a communion kit and his “pastors’ companion”, a small version of the Lutheran book of worship. So, I asked to go along. I was somewhere around 9 or 10. It was then I saw how dad interacted away from church with people. Those were special times we spent together. It was probably then that he planted the seed that eventually led me to teaching and how I learned to interact with and talk to all kinds of people. I went on calls with him all the way through middle and high school.

There are so many things I could talk about. Dad was very involved in the Plantation Clergy Association and also participated in the 3-hour service on Good Friday held at Plantation United Methodists each year. He, along with other clergy from various churches, would come and go throughout the service and read the story of Christ’s crucifixion. It is important to note that Dad ALWAYS read the last word. If you knew dad...He always had the last word in most things...church and home.

I was asked about funny things and/or stories. There are so many with me, this church, dad, and others throughout my childhood here. Dad always put me to work.

- I was the Murphy’s Oil Soap Girl in the old church in the summer. I cleaned. Every. Single. Pew. I waxed and cleaned all the floors under the pews. It took hours!
- If Dad could have David or me do a task, we did it. David was always saving for something, and I was always paying something off. So, I was “free labor”.
- There are two particularly funny and well-known ones. The first is the story of when our Confirmation class (that he taught) got into trouble and Dad wrote letters to the class. Mine arrived addressed “to the parents of Kristin Volz”. The other is, once, when I was in a hurry to pick Dad up on time, I misjudged the distance—and was probably distracted pulling into Dad’s parking space. I took a few chunks of concrete out of the wall as well as Dad’s “Pastor’s Parking” sign. At the time, we shared a large, yellow, beastly, 72 Cadillac.





(Kristin's 65th Anniversary Testimonial Cont.)

- Both David and I would sit in Dad's office at home or church and, of course, he always had an answer or comment. Neither of us really got to complain or lament about too much. He always had an answer, and his answers and comments usually came in the form of a story. I can remember telling him about a particularly hard professor I had in graduate school and his response was, "You can't change the professor, so do what they want and pass the class."

Dad did many things and rarely sat still for long, and therefore Our Savior did not sit still either.

Dad loved the festival services of Christmas Eve and Easter morning, but he especially treasured Christmas morning...He would say this almost every year to the Christmas morning worshipers even into his 80's: "While I love the festive services, I love the quiet, small Christmas morning with just a few who have taken time away from the frenzy to come to worship". He would go on to reference his Navy days and add he could have a service in the field with 30 marines or with just one on the fantail of a ship; it was about bringing the word of Christ and hope in Jesus to the people.

Dad talked to everyone, everywhere, all the time. For 21 years he loved and served Our Savior Lutheran Church. His ministry was about faith, community, building, and bringing the Word of Christ to people. From its beginnings to what lies ahead, this church stands on Christ—and will continue to grow in His love.



Kristin and Joe's Wedding (May 5, 2024)

Celebrating 5 Generations at Our Savior Lutheran

by Lerryn Latimer

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.

August 1978
Florida Vacation

—Page 10—



Rob Lerryn, Grandma Doris Wilkins
Grandpa Wallace Wilkins
Suzie & Jamie

Jamie & Patti's Wedding (1994)

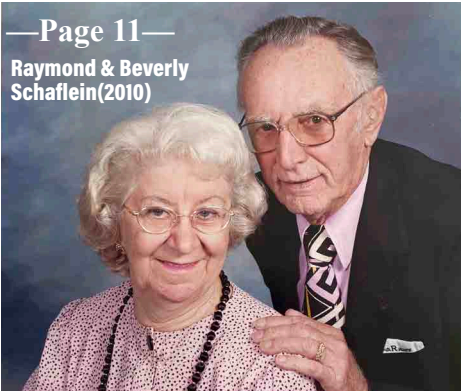


Baby Kayla's Baptism (Nov. 1998)

Pictured from left to right: Jamie & Patti, baby Kayla, Suzie, Pastor Volz, and Doug.



Raymond & Beverly Schaflein (2010)



Celebrating 65 Years—And Our Place in the Story

by Juli Mellott

My family's connection to Our Savior Lutheran Church began in 1982, when my parents, Raymond and Beverly Schaflein, moved to North Lauderdale and started building their home. As they settled into the area, they began visiting the church because it was the only LCMS congregation in western Broward County at the time.

When they came to the church office to transfer their membership, they were surprised and delighted to discover a familiar face. Dolores Bethmann, the church secretary,

had gone to grade school with my mom at Bethlehem and later attended Bowen High School with her in Chicago. It felt like an immediate connection and confirmation that this church would become home.

My mom became actively involved, serving on the Altar Guild and delivering for Meals on Wheels. My dad also found his place, especially enjoying serving as an usher—his favorite service being the 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Over the years, he also dedicated much of his time to the Properties Board.

I moved here and joined the church in 1984. The following year, in August 1985, Les and I were married here by Pastor Walter Volz, beginning our own family's journey within this church community.

Our daughters both received the blessings of baptism here. Jenna was baptized on Christmas Day in 1991, and Jessica in July 1996, both by Pastor Volz. They also grew up in the church's school, attending from preschool through fifth grade.



Les & Juli's Wedding (1986)



Raymond Schaflein's sign made from the old sanctuary wall (pictured left).

(Juli's 65th Anniversary Testimonial Cont.) Jenna was part of Mrs. Jan Wither's final preschool class before she decided to work in the church office, something we still laugh and joke about today. Both girls continued their faith journeys here, with Jenna being confirmed in April 2006 and Jessica in May 2010 by Pastor Ed Niklas.

My dad also left a lasting physical mark on the church. As a bricklayer by trade, he built the stone sign out front using materials from the remodeling of the sanctuary wall. It was a meaningful way for him to contribute his skills to a place he loved.

The church has also been a place of comfort in times of loss. Funeral services for both of my parents were held here in 2007 and 2011, officiated by Pastor Nicklas. He and my dad shared a special bond, as Pastor Niklas's father was also a bricklayer. That shared connection made their relationship even more meaningful.

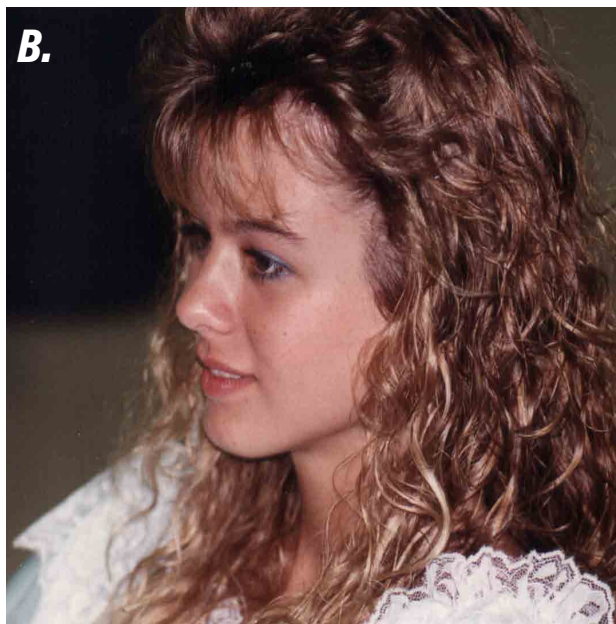
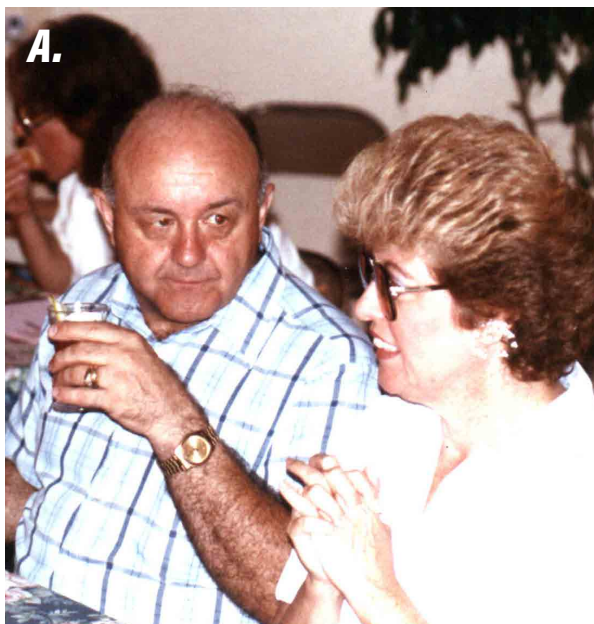
Our Savior Lutheran Church has been woven into every chapter of my family's life—through beginnings, milestones, service, and remembrance. It is more than a church to us; it is home.



Mellott Family Alaskan Family Cruise (2001)

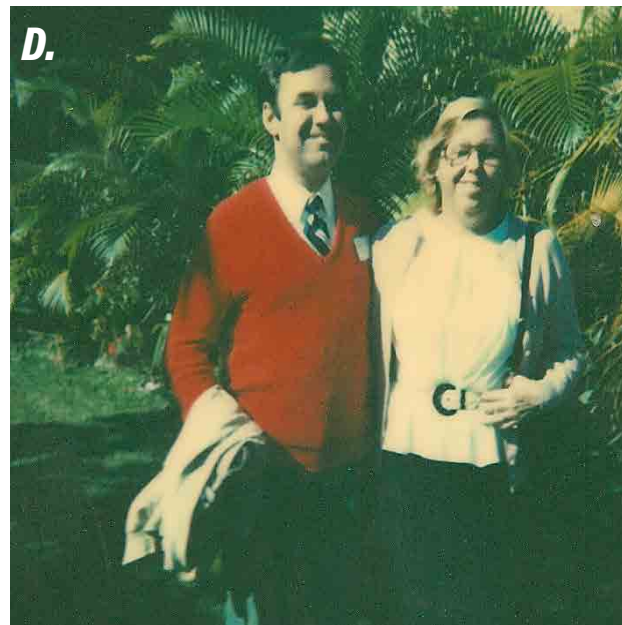
Can You Guess These Members?

(Answers on [p. 27!](#))



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(Answers on [p. 27!](#))

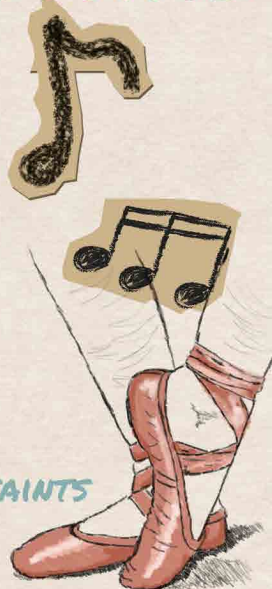


OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL SPRING FINE ARTS FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING ART,
MUSIC, + EXPRESSION



May
19
6PM TO 8PM



FEATURING
PERFORMANCES (CHURCH):
JUDO, TIPPI-TOES, SOMERSAULT GYM, SINGING SAINTS
FOLLOWED BY A STUDENT ART EXHIBIT (BAYS)

Celebrating 65 Years of Faith: A Letter from Our District President

FLGA District, LCMS
5850 T. G. Lee Blvd, Suite 500
Orlando, FL 32822-4410

(407) 857-5556
(407) 857-5665 fax
(877) 457-5556 toll free
<http://flgadistrict.org>



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 5th 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 65th Anniversary!

Serving our Lord and His people with joy,

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

OSL 65th Anniversary Reception
Colony West Golf Course | Sunday, April 19, 2026



Howard Fischer



Jane Nicklas, former OSL pastor's wife (2001-2013) and OSLS principal (2002-2014).



Rev. Arndt



OSL 65th Anniversary Reception

Colony West Golf Course | Sunday, April 19, 2026

From left to right: Judy Watson, Daniel and Heather Bleier with their children (Wade and Stacy), Pastor Tony, John Strang



Julio Sarmiento with James and Pamela Leone



From left to right: Pam Mills, Thomas Boatwright, Pam King, John Strang, Andy Clark



Our Savior Lutheran Church Marks 65 Years of God's Grace & Blessings: Highlights from the Anniversary Celebration

by David Volz

Longtime members of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Plantation, and those who have joined more recently, came together on April 19 to celebrate 65 wonderful years of God's blessings, worship, and friendships.

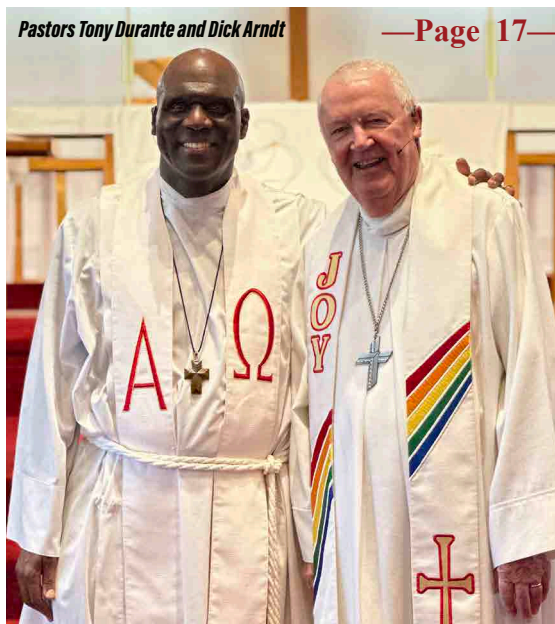
Some former members traveled long distances to attend a special celebratory service. Pastor Richard Arndt was the liturgist, and current Pastor Tony Durante preached. Greetings from District President James Rockey were shared at both morning services.

After the service, people gathered at Colony West Golf Club in Tamarac for dinner and shared stories. Former pastors and church leaders shared memories and experiences from their time at Our Savior. Nancy Volz, the emcee, called it "The Good, the Bad and the Funny."

Pastor Richard Arndt, the church's third pastor, described the church's early history. He told the audience about the congregation's first meeting at Peter's Elementary School in 1961, and how the first church was built in less than a year by 1962 for \$125,000 and was fully air-conditioned. Lutheran Hour speaker, Dr. Oswald Hoffman, was the dedication preacher.

Longtime member Howard Fischer spoke of his late wife, Barbara, who was the Early Childhood Director for the church's preschool for 28 years.

Two members, Juli Mellott and Lerryn Latimer, described how their families had been blessed by Our Savior for four and five generations respectively, a rarity for a South Florida church.



Pastors Tony Durante and Dick Arndt



Kristin Volz Iannarone, daughter of the late Pastor Walter Volz who served at OSL for 21 years, spoke on behalf of her mother, Gloria, and shared memories of growing up at the church along with two building programs.

Jane Nicklas, wife of the late Pastor Edwin Nicklas, traveled from Virginia and shared some of their experiences. Pastor Nicklas' first day in the church office was 9/11. The school's golf tournament was also begun during his ministry, as Jane served as the school's principal.

Pastor Tony Durante, the sixth pastor who celebrated his eighth year at OSL on April 15, wrapped up the afternoon by sharing some Covid experiences as well as the church's recovery and growth.

Our Savior has been richly blessed by God's grace. Soli Deo Gloria!



From left to right: Carol Tucek (member since 1980), Andy Clark (member since 2002), Brad Heine (member since 1987), Howard Fischer (member since 1970), John Strang (member since 1980), Juli Mellott (member since 1984)

Special Thank You's From Nancy Volz

To all who participated in OSL's 65th Anniversary Celebration,

We last celebrated our congregation's anniversary 15 years ago. Since then, we have welcomed new members and friends, making now a perfect time to share our story.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

To all who participated in the Celebration Service: Pastor Tony, who served as Preacher; Pastor Dick Arndt, who was Liturgist; Juli Mellott, who shared her family testimony; John Waldron, who provided beautiful flowers; Carisa Meier and Glen Walters, who performed special music; the Praise Team and Tech Team, who enhanced the worship experience; Stanley Leonard, who contributed an original handbell composition; and the Handbell Choir, who performed this music for us.



Nancy Volz, emcee at the 65th Anniversary Reception (2026)



Nancy's New Member Reception (1993)

To those who made the dinner special: Committee members who coordinated the event; Debi Bauer, Ellen Clark, Agnes Karabetsos, Kim Marshall, Juli Mellott, Nancy Volz, and Jan Withers, who managed key tasks; Linda Root, who provided assistance; Andy Clark, who handled technical support; Juli Mellott, who designed the logo and merchandise; Jan Withers, who provided photos; Ellen Clark, who supplied the cake; the Fellowship Committee, who created the ornaments; and our speakers—Pastor Dick Arndt, Howard Fischer, Lerryn Latimer, Kristin Volz Iannarone, Jane Nicklas, and Pastor Tony Durante—who shared meaningful words.



Handbell Festival 2020

And to all who attended the service and dinner, your presence made it a grand celebration! Thank you for making the vision a reality!

Nancy Volz

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

Pastors and Installation Dates

Robert Grunow	April 30, 1961 (2 ½ years)
Arthur Machinske	September 15, 1963 (5 years)
Richard Arndt	September 8, 1968 (12 years)
Larry Raudenbaugh	Interim
Walter Volz	September 7, 1980 (21 years)

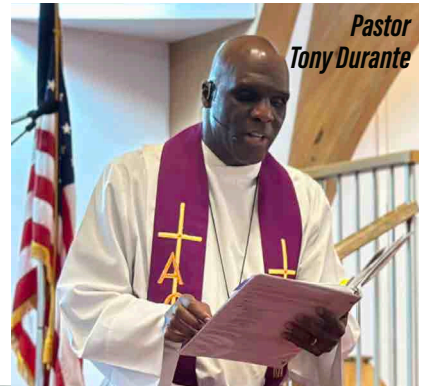
Retired Pastoral Assistants include:

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

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

Retired Pastoral Assistants include: Elmer Medley, Jay Rader

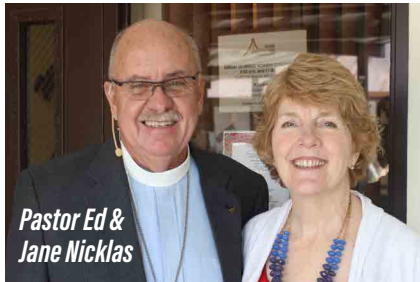
Al Kirk	Intentional Interim
Mark Abrams	8 months
Jeff Moore	Intentional Interim
Tony Durante	April 15, 2018 (8 years and counting!)



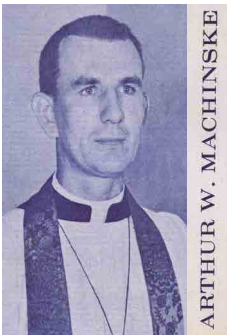
Pastor Tony Durante



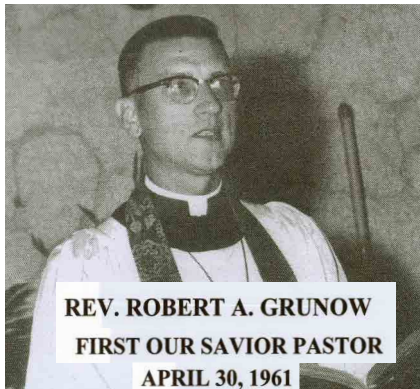
Pastor Arndt



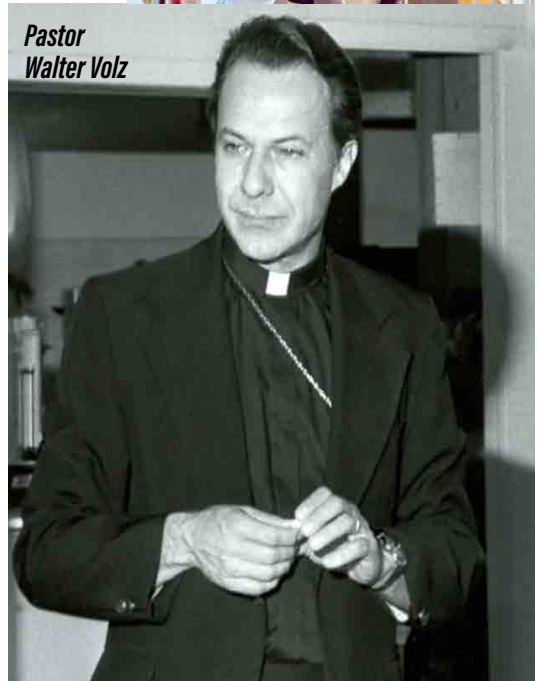
Pastor Ed & Jane Nicklas



ARTHUR W. MACHINSKE



REV. ROBERT A. GRUNOW
FIRST OUR SAVIOR PASTOR
APRIL 30, 1961



Pastor Walter Volz

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.

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.

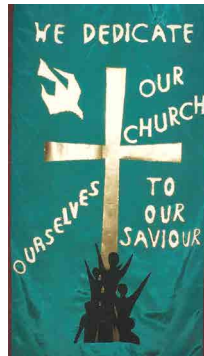
1990s

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.

Our Savior Lutheran Church Historical Summary (Cont.)

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.

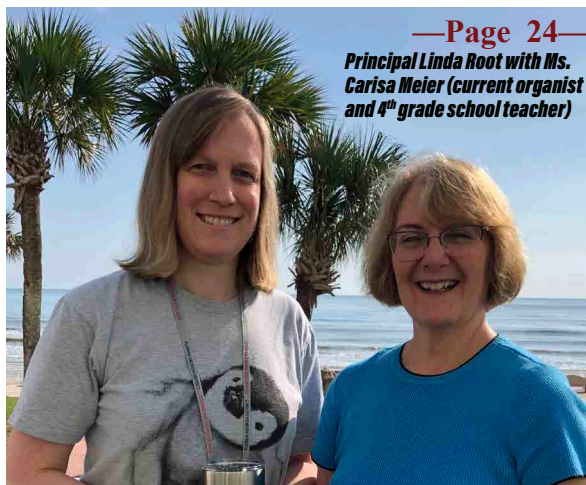
2020s

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 baptizing Jason Holbrook in 2020 during the pandemic.



—Page 24—

Principal Linda Root with Ms. Carisa Meier (current organist and 4th grade school teacher)



Pastor Tony blessing K-9 volunteers, member Chris Muller and Bolten (January 2026).

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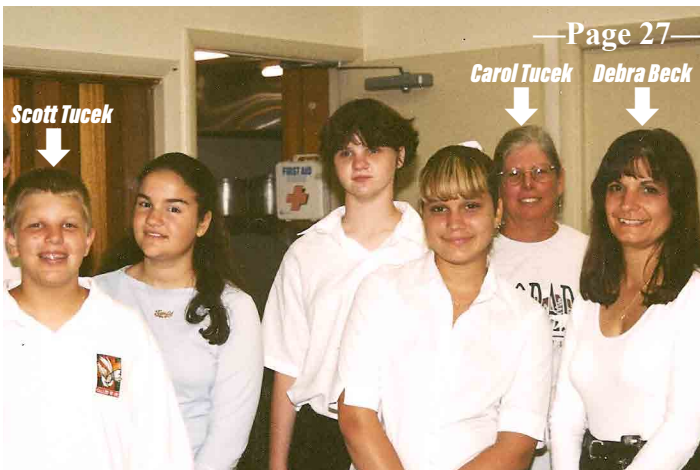
GUESS WHO? (P.12)

ANSWERS:

- A) Harriette Leslie with her late husband Warren.
 B) Gail Krieg (née Gruenbaum).



Harriette & Warren Leslie



Scott Tucek

Carol Tucek

Debra Beck

BIRTHDAYS

MAY 1

Cathy Koontz
 Kiara Westby

MAY 3

Prentiss 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

HELP US UPDATE OUR DATABASE

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

Not sure if you're a member? Contact us.

We'd love to help you find out!

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

MAY 4

Rob Losier & Wendi Miller (31)

MAY 5

Jerry & Alejandra Starner (29)
 Joseph & Kristin 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)
 Greg & Karen Goth (36)

MAY 24

Robert & Lerryn Latimer (58)
 John & Glenda Strang (52)



Brad Heine

GUESS WHO? (P.13)

ANSWERS:

- C) Brad Heine with his late wife Sandra, son Nick, & daughter Kimberly.

D) Mary & Dolor Ginchereau



Our Savior Lutheran Church & School

8001 NW 5th Street, Plantation, Florida 33324

CHURCH

(954) 473-6888

www.oslplantation.church

Tony Durante, Pastor

tdurante@oursaviorplantation.org

Mika Durante, Administrative Assistant

mdurante@oursaviorplantation.org

SCHOOL

(954) 370-2161

www.oslplantation.school

Linda Root, Principal

lroot@oursaviorplantation.org

Danielle Durham, Assistant Principal

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.



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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.