

THE CONNECTION

Weekly Newsletter

August 9, 2026



Our Savior Lutheran School Sports Camp 2026 (p.4-7)

AUGUST



SUN. 8/9

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

Blood Drive —9 a.m. | Bible Study—9:15 a.m.

Kids Connect—10:30 a.m.

Backpacks & Blessings—10:30 a.m.

Staff & Teacher Installation—10:30 a.m.

MON. 8/10–TUES. 8/11

Schedule open

WED. 8/12 | FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Discussion Group—11 a.m.*

Handbells Practice—6:30 p.m.

THURS. 8/13

Schedule open

FRI. 8/14– SAT. 8/15

Church office closed

SUN. 8/16

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

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

Kids Connect—10:30 a.m.

MON. 8/17

Women's Group Meeting—6:30 p.m.

TUES. 8/18

Schedule open

WED. 8/19

Discussion Group—11 a.m.

Handbells Practice—6:30 p.m.

THURS. 8/20

Church Planning Council Meeting—6 p.m.

FRI. 8/21– SAT. 8/22

Church office closed

Please note that Discussion Group starting time has moved to 11 a.m., an hour later than before. (This is to resolve the parking situations during school hours.)

PRAYERS

Prayers for the following OSL church members:

Haroldo Camacho, Carol Chaddock, Marianne DeMinck, Roger Detwiler, Howard Fischer, Sue Franjione, Desiree Gaffley, Susan George-Kenyon, Karen Goth, Gerry Gruenbaum, Betty Hea, Bob Johnson, Prentis Johnson, Robert Latimer, James Leone, Les Mellott, Carol (Coram) Ross, Malcolm Sears, Victor Smith, Robert Spencer, Linda Verdi, Nancy Volz, Jodi Waldron, Judy Watson, and Jan and Steve 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; **Brock Van Sant** at Officer Candidate School in Quantico Bay, VA.

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 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.*



BELLE, DOG OF THE WEEK (P.8-9)

GROWING AS A LEADER: DANIELLE DURHAM COMPLETES LCMS SLED PROGRAM

Our Savior Lutheran School's assistant principal, Danielle Durham, graduated from the LCMS SLED program on June 10, 2026 in St. Louis, Missouri. She was also selected to present her final project "Our Savior: Expanding our Vibrant Christian Community" to the staff and graduates of the SLED program.

Since 1996, The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod has conducted School Leadership Recruitment and Training processes through the School Leadership Development Project (SLED). Its purpose is "To identify and recruit thirty leadership participants serving in Lutheran schools and train them through two national SLED events conducted by LCMS School Ministry." As a result, over 450 potential administrative candidates have been prepared for leadership in Lutheran schools.

District Education Executives identify and nominate outstanding educators currently serving in Lutheran schools for participation in SLED. Candidates are then selected by the SLED Project Management Team and trained over the course of a year at two national SLED events with an online component throughout the year. At these events, candidates receive leadership training



designed specifically for school leaders serving in Lutheran schools, are mentored by well-respected, experienced administrators, and complete a major project that will benefit the schools where they currently serve. At the conclusion of the year, participants receive the School Leadership Endorsement from the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, enhancing their eligibility for placement as Lutheran school administrators. Additionally, participants can select the option to complete SLED for three hours of graduate credit from Concordia University.

SPORTS CAMP 2026: SIX WEEKS OF FUN, FITNESS, & FAITH



As another six wonderful weeks of OSL Summer Sports Camp come to a close, our coaching staff finds ourselves looking back with grateful hearts. Every summer over the past 18 years has been special in its own way, but if we're being truthful, this year felt just a little different.

Sports camp has always been about far more than learning how to score a goal, throw a perfect pass, or win a game. Of course, we love watching our campers grow as athletes, but our greatest joy has always been watching them grow as young people.

This summer, God reminded us once again that He has a purpose for every child who walks through our gates.

While we continued to focus on sports skills, teamwork, confidence, leadership, and personal development, many of the children who came to camp this year needed something even greater. Some needed encouragement. Some needed patience. Some needed guidance with their emotions, self-control, resilience, and believing in themselves. They came for sports, but the Lord had a bigger plan waiting for them.

One of the remarkable things about sports is that it has a way of revealing what's hidden in the heart. Victory brings excitement. Defeat brings disappointment. Competition tests patience. Pressure exposes emotions. In just a matter of days—and repeated over and over throughout camp—children experience situations that might otherwise take months to unfold. Sports ask them to persevere, to work together, to fail, to try again, to celebrate others, and to learn that mistakes are not the end of the story.

It isn't always easy, but witnessing that growth is a truly beautiful thing.

SPORTS CAMP 2026 (CONT.) Over these six weeks, we were blessed to watch life-changing moments unfold. More than at any other camp in our eighteen-year history, we saw children grow in ways that had little to do with the scoreboard.

Sometimes families bring their children to sports camp hoping they'll become better athletes. This year, many families came seeking something much deeper. Whether they realized it or not, they were searching for a place where their child could be loved, challenged, encouraged, and given the opportunity to grow in areas where they had struggled in other environments.

What an incredible blessing this summer has been, not only for those families, but for our coaching staff as well. There is no greater reward than watching a child begin to believe in themselves again, seeing relationships restored, and witnessing smiles replace frustration. Those moments reminded every one of us why God called us to serve through sport.

Children who struggled at the beginning of camp were encouraged by their teammates. Campers learned to forgive one another after disagreements, to celebrate each other's successes instead of comparing themselves, and to lift each other up after mistakes. They learned that everyone has difficult days, everyone deserves another chance, and everyone grows at a different pace.



We truly believe the Lord placed each child exactly where they needed to be. Our coaches had the privilege of speaking truth into young lives, setting high expectations while showing grace, and creating an environment where children felt safe enough to struggle, learn, and ultimately succeed. We watched friendships form, confidence bloom, fears overcome, and hearts soften.

These are the moments that remind us why OSL Summer Sports Camp exists.

Yes, we teach sports.

But more importantly, we teach perseverance, respect, humility, courage, self-control, compassion, forgiveness, community, and faith. Those are victories that cannot be measured with medals or trophies.



As Scripture reminds us in Galatians 6:9, "Let us not grow weary of doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." This summer, we were blessed to witness a glimpse of that harvest.

To every family who entrusted us with your children—thank you. It has been an incredible privilege to share this journey with you.

To our amazing coaching staff, thank you for pouring your hearts into every child, every game, every conversation, every challenge, and every difficult moment. Your patience, consistency, and Christ-like love have made an eternal difference.

As we close another unforgettable summer, our hearts are full. We are reminded that sometimes God uses a football, a basketball, a relay race, or simply a conversation on the sidelines to change the direction of a child's life. This summer reminded us that His greatest work often happens not in the big, dramatic moments, but quietly—in a word of encouragement, an act of forgiveness, a child choosing self-control, a teammate showing kindness, or a family finding renewed hope.



This year, we were also incredibly blessed to welcome campers from 22 different schools across our community. What an amazing testimony to the campers and coaches of OSL Summer Sports Camp, whose kindness, character, sportsmanship, and Christ-centered example helped create an environment where every child felt welcomed, encouraged, and valued. It has been a privilege to share Christ's love with children and families from so many different schools and backgrounds, and we are grateful that God continues to use our camp as a place where lives are strengthened both on and off the field.

For that, we give God all the glory.

Until next summer, may God bless each of our OSL families, along with our extended sports camp family from those twenty-two schools. May He continue to guide these wonderful young athletes as they grow in wisdom, character, faith, and love.

Thank you for another unforgettable summer. We cannot wait to welcome everyone back next year.



Ages 4+

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2026



KICKOFF



☆Bounce House☆
☆Water Slides☆Snow Cones☆

(Bring your bathing suits & towels!)

Sun. 8/23

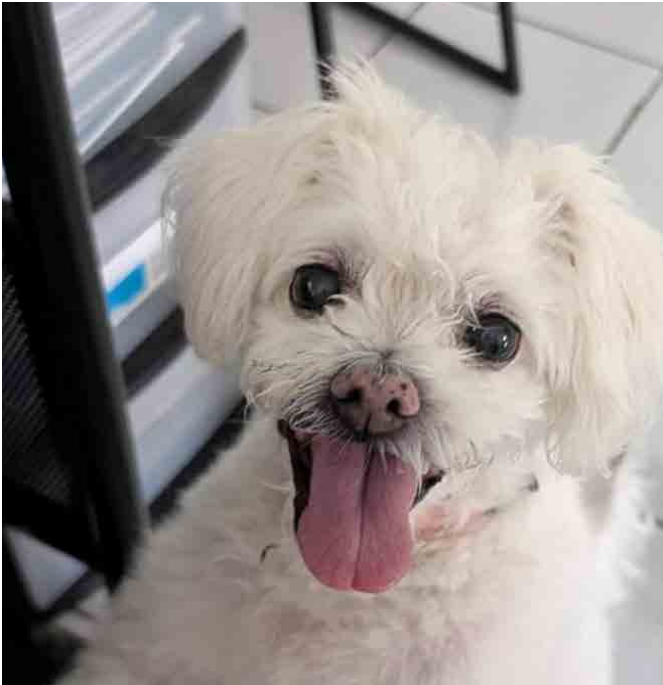
10:30~11:45 a.m.

For more info,
contact **Ellen** at
(954) 226-2823.



☆OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH☆

☆8001 NW 5th Street, Plantation, FL 33324☆



DOG OF THE WEEK: BELLE (WHO OWNS HUMANS NANCY & DAVID VOLZ)

"Good Morning, Belle!" These words echo through our home every morning as I greet our dog and then launch into the song "Belle" from Beauty and the Beast.

It was 2015. I was battling breast cancer, and my mother had just died. Carol Reynolds-Srot posted about a friend who needed to rehome her dog. I thought, what a great idea for my stepdad, Bob, who was going to continue to live with us.

I was not a dog lover, per se, and my parents' dog who came to visit for several months a year was just enough dog for me. Then along came Belle, a four-year-old, 15-pound bundle of white fur with a big heart.

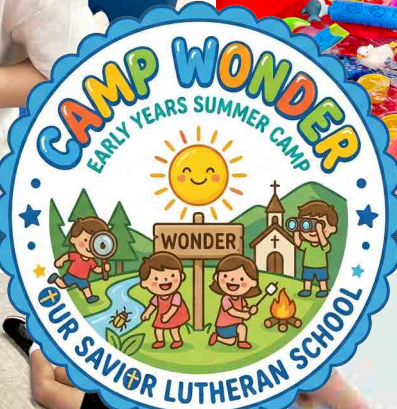
DOG OF THE WEEK (CONT.)

There's a reason that "God" and "dog" contain the same letters in English; both offer unconditional love. She has crawled into my heart, and I can't imagine life without her. David says that her job is to be our professional best friend, and she has earned that title. She'll soon be 15. Thank you, God, for the blessings of pets!



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David Volz napping with Belle.





ADMINISTRATION/SCHOOL OFFICE

Linda Root—Principal/Preschool Director
Danielle Durham—Asst. Principal
Paulette Marshall—Office Administrator
Nicole Moulton—Extended Care/Summer Camp Director
Debra Keim—Morning Office Asst./Receptionist
Angela Candage—Afternoon Receptionist

PRESCHOOL

Elizabeth Sandigo—18 Months Lead
Brandy Merizier—18 Months Asst./Floater
Esther Cadet—18 Months Asst./Floater/Lunch
Kristin Espeut—Twos Lead
Anette Olsson-Zenchak—Twos Asst./ Extended Care
Eliza Manuel—Threes Lead
Kerime Gaynair—Threes Asst./ Extended Care
Brittany Grant—Threes Lead
Gabrielle Liebertz—VPK Lead/Preschool Facilitator
Eunice Benjamin—VPK Asst./Extended Care
Nadege Gerestan—VPK Lead
Loricia Finch—VPK Asst./Extended Care

ELEMENTARY

Trisha DePasquale—Kindergarten
Jocelyn Richardson—K Asst./Lunch/Extended Care
Mia Montealegre—1st Grade
Ann Marie Smith—1st Grade Asst./Lunch/ Extended Care
Jenay Cavallancia—2nd Grade

ELEMENTARY (CONT.)

Shera Resch—2nd Grade Asst.
Maya Filio—3rd Grade
Carisa Meier—4th Grade
Kristin Iannarone—5th Grade

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Kristin Becker—7th/ MS Language Arts
Debra Kraft—8th/MS Science
Regina Hawkins—6th/ MS Math

SPECIALS

Dawn Banford—Network Administrator/MS PE
Michael McDermott—Music
Denis Cruz—Art
Coach Jonathan Jimenez—Elementary PE
Virginia Pozzo—K-8th Spanish/Lunch/ Elementary Asst.

OTHER DUTIES

Erica Betz—Lunch
Brad Heine—Facility Manager
Rainford Rodney—Security
Carmen Suarez—Custodian
Petagaye Benjamin—Title 1

CHURCH OFFICE

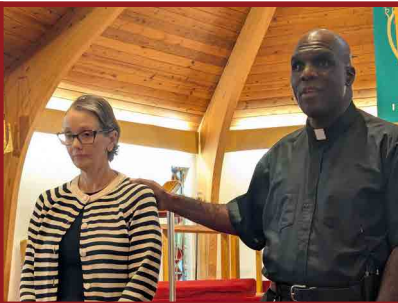
Rev. Tony Durante—Pastor
Jade Cruz—Ministry Leaders Advisor
Mika Durante—Administrative Asst.

LAST WEEK'S DOG SPOTLIGHT: BOULTON (CHRIS MULLER)

Many members of Our Savior have already met Boulton, who received a special blessing with his handler, member Chris Muller, during worship at the beginning of the year and returned to help raise awareness of the Peer Support K-9 Program during the school's Fall Festival in November. Alongside Chris, Boulton completed training in December 2025 and is now a fully certified Peer Support Team with the Plantation Fire Department.

Together, the team serve firefighters, law enforcement officers, and our community by offering comfort and support following critical incidents and emergencies. As they begin this important work, Chris asks for your prayers, sharing, "I really need the Lord's guidance and strength to hopefully be able to help others." We pray God will continue to bless Boulton and Chris as they bring Christ's compassion and comfort to those facing life's most difficult moments.





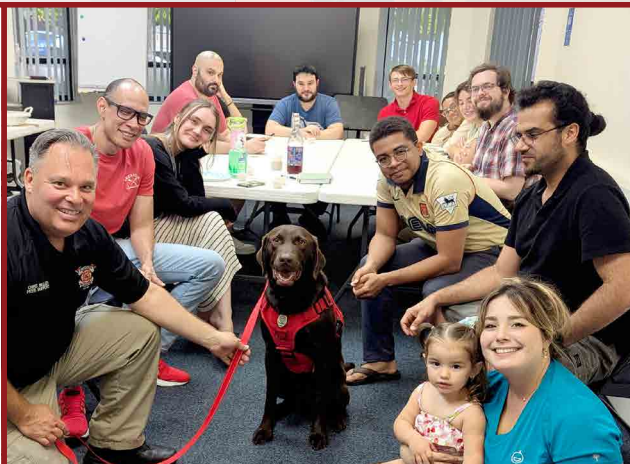
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING (SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2026) At the meeting headed by our new president Chris Presson, we recognized Our Savior's fruitful year of Christ-like ministry highlighted by various forms of fellowship, discipleship, and faithfulness which involved both new members and members of the community. Special thank yous to the enthusiastic and exceptional leadership from new members our new Ministry Leaders Advisor Jade Cruz (center) and OSL mom Erica Betz (right) in our youth and outreach ministries. If you were unable to attend but wish to learn more, please feel free to request a digital copy or take the annual meeting report booklet from the church narthex—we have plenty, left over so no need to worry about returning it.

SNACK DONATIONS FOR

KIDS connect



The Children and Youth Board needs your help. It provides refreshments for every Sunday and youth event it hosts. Donations can include healthy snacks (such as Goldfish crackers or granola bars) and juice pouches, etc. We greatly appreciate your support. Please properly label your donations with "Youth Ministry Snacks". You may hand your donations to ushers on Sunday or drop them off at the church office during office hours. If you have any questions, please contact **Ellen Clark** at **(954) 473-6888**.

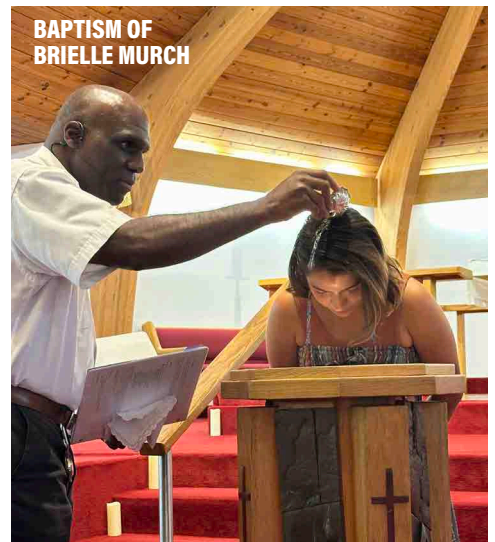


YOUNG ADULTS NIGHT (7.28.2026) Several young adults met at Our Savior Lutheran Church on July 28 for some conversation over dinner. During the gathering OSL Member and Plantation Firefighter Chris Muller visited with his service dog, Boulton. Chris explained to the group how the K-9 is used by the fire department to provide comfort to those who have been exposed to tragedy. One of the participants in the gathering, who had recently lost loved ones in the Venezuela earthquake, was able to spend sometime with Boulton that evening.

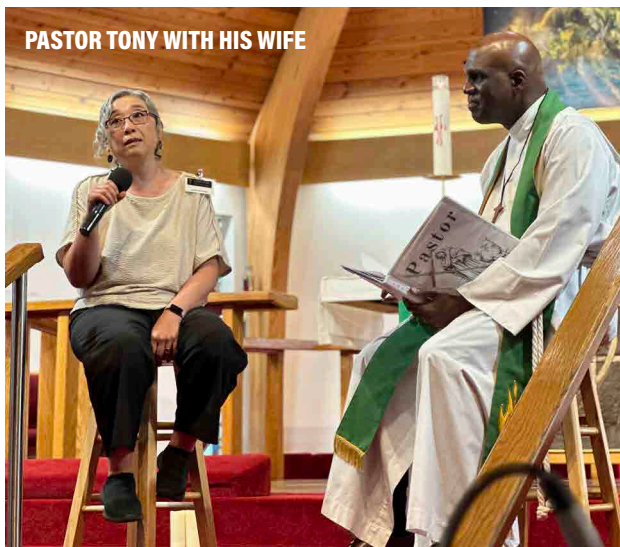


OSL praise team with special guest Ben Tino

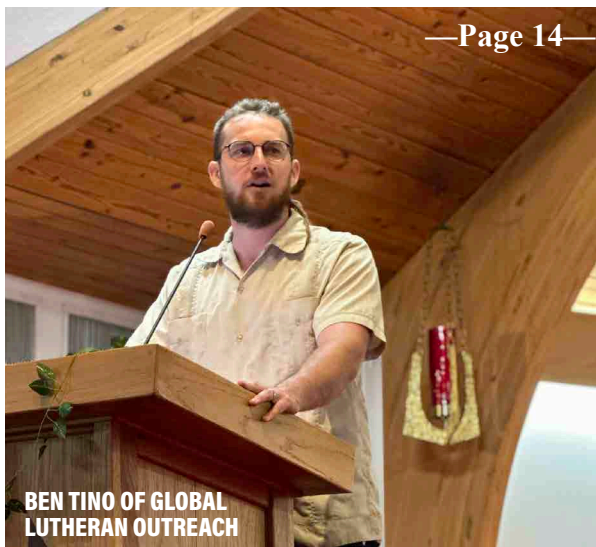
iMAGiFEST 2026 Last Sunday the 26th was an unforgettable day of faith, art, and community, kicking off with a powerful morning service led by Pastor Tony featuring two baptisms, an inspiring interview with his wife Junko, and a special presentation from Ben Tino, a guest missionary from Guatemala. The festivities rolled right into the afternoon with an open art gallery, hands-on workshops, a Kids' Song Circle, an energetic Capoeira performance, and a talent show showcasing local stars. By evening, live DJs, an infectious drum circle, and a mesmerizing Fire Flow Jam paved the way for an incredible concert led by the Holy Cross Praise Team, wrapping up an amazing 12-hour celebration with a late-night music jam! Special thanks to Denis and Jade Cruz who led, organized, and planned this event; to the school, Nicole Moulton, and Linda Root for supporting their outreach efforts with their expansive knowledge and resources; to the several church volunteers who came to supervise and assist in the various activity stations and parking situations; and all who came for this unique fellowship opportunity and enjoyed the festival!



PASTOR TONY WITH HIS WIFE



**BEN TINO OF GLOBAL
LUTHERAN OUTREACH**



**HOLY CROSS
PRAISE TEAM**





BIRTHDAYS

AUG 1

Marie Shaw

AUG 3

Orlando Camacho

Janis Seusarran

AUG 4

Scott Burkhardt

Harrison Haeseker

AUG 6

John Gonzalez

AUG 7

Phillip Edwards

AUG 9

Karen Goth

AUG 9

Mary Jane Neils

Aaron Seusarran

AUG 11

Desireé Gaffley

Yerusalem Tzeggai

AUG 16

Fran Fletcher

AUG 25

Ian Burke

Judy Detwiler

AUG 30

Joan Sears

AUG 31

Nicole Linley

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

AUG 4

Philip & Nanda Ramcharitar (37)

AUG 5

Roger & Edie Clavelli (48)

AUG 11

Alfred & Helen Balkie (59)

AUG 18

Bill & Christine Presson (43)

AUG 19

Andy & Ellen Clark (27)

AUG 24

Les & Juli Mellott (42)

AUG 27

Neil & Cheryl Topalian (39)

ALTAR FLOWERS UPDATES



Kindly fill out the **Chancel Flower Sign-Up slip** and include it with your payment. These are found on the **back of the newsletter** or in the pews (green slip). Please include it with your payment. Please notify us if you are paying via VANCO.

The flowers adorning the chancel this Sunday were graciously provided by:

- **[8/9] Greg Goth** in celebration of his wife, Karen's, birthday.
- **[8/9] Christine Khan** in thanksgiving of Jared and all teachers.

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!



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



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 _____

\$ _____

☐ 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.*