

May 12, 2023

To: Faith Lutheran Church Members

From: Jim and Marilyn Magnuson

Re: New Lutheran School Start Study (Genesis Project) Report

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Project Background -

The opening page of the South Wisconsin District web site contains the following banner. It provides inspiration and direction for congregations to think and act boldly to advance the Gospel message.

“This is our time to be distinctly Lutheran, to plant new congregations and new schools, to honor Christ-centered vocations, to embrace our communities.”

Proverbs 22:6 - *Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it.*

Martin Luther, on youth and education: *“When schools flourish, matters stand well, and the church is saved. We are compelled to have schools in the church. God preserves the church through schools.”*

Michael Newman, President of the Texas District of LCMS writes in *Gospel DNA – Five Markers for a Flourishing Church*: *“School classrooms are places where the love of Christ can be seen for the very first time, where the truth of the Gospel can embrace hearts that need hope, and where that calling to make Christ’s difference in a broken world can be heard and followed.”*

A Christian School is consistent with our Lord’s command to us in Matthew 28. *“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

The Vision -

- Provide a superior education and learning opportunity based on Christian principles, high academic standards, respect for others and family engagement under the guidance and direction of the Education Department of the South Wisconsin District of LCMS.
- Provide a natural and ongoing outreach path to meet and develop relationships with young families leading to opportunities introduce them to the Gospel message.
- Provide a positive and exciting opportunity for members of all area LCMS congregations to rally around. What better way to leave a legacy than to positively affect the lives of area young people and to introduce and strengthen them with Christian faith and values?
- Provide ‘common ground’ for the four congregations to join in ministry opportunities that may be beyond the reach of individual congregations. We (our four congregations) are not competitors, we are collaborators and companions in reaching the lost with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Process –

Four area LCMS congregations including Faith Lutheran Church - LaCrosse, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church – Onalaska, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church – West Salem and Gift of Grace Lutheran Church – Holmen have agreed to work together to investigate the potential and possibilities associated with the formation of a new Lutheran school. The Voters Assemblies of each congregation approved a Resolution authorizing “establishment of an association for the expressed purpose of determining the feasibility of starting a new Lutheran School.” And to, “...approve application for the "Readiness Study" facilitated by the Genesis Project of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.”

We are pleased to report that all the required project application forms have been completed including a School Readiness evaluation completed by each Pastor and Congregation President and identification of a preliminary Study Team including members and Pastors from each congregation. All documents have been forwarded to Dr. Chris Cody, Education Executive, South Wisconsin District LCMS. He will assemble the final packet for review by LCMS School Ministry, St Louis. If the application is approved, an experienced Project Consultant will be assigned to our Association and the process will begin.

The Study Team includes 14 lay members and our four Pastors. Lay members from Faith Lutheran Church include: Kim Eggerstedt, Jane Sawall, Ginny Shulka, Eva Weston and John Jaeger. Jim Magnuson has agreed to act as the Local Project Coordinator.

The responsibilities of the Study Team, working under the direction of the Consultant, are:

- Enlist and schedule individual interviewees and focus group participants.
- Supply geographical information in preparation for a demographic study.
- Gather and report information about local schools, both nonpublic and public.
- Develop preliminary data for the Case for Support.
- Distribute, Collect and record survey data.
- Create a basic, trial business plan of anticipated operational costs and income.

In Summary –

A unique opportunity for a new Lutheran Christian School initiative exists in the LaCrosse, Onalaska, Holmen and West Salem area. **Now** is the time to begin these efforts in earnest. We invite you to join us through your prayerful support.