

ANNUAL REPORT

— 2020 —



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



the Pastor's Letter

The future, however, is finer than any past. —Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Making of a Mind*

If you are anything like me, there is some part of you that was relieved to turn the calendar over to 2021. The new year puts at least some symbolic distance between ourselves and 2020, a year that brought so much chaos, heartbreak, and uncertainty to so many people throughout the world. I dare say that no one lived through the past year without experiencing some level of disruption and loss of freedom, of health, of loved ones, and especially our cherished notions of how things “ought” to be.

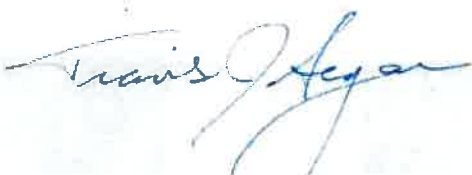
It is in times like these that things are being revealed. I’m convinced we are living in such a time—when reality is being revealed as it is. Systems of evil have become both more brazen and ordinary, our sense of “normal” has been upended, and yet in the midst of it, God continues to invite us to deeper transformation. A few weeks into the pandemic, some people even began to use the word “apocalyptic” to describe what was taking place. Often, this word is used to scare people into some kind of fearful, exclusive, or reactionary behavior, all in expectation of the “end times.” But the word “apocalyptic,” from the Greek *apokálupsis*, really just means “unveiling.”

The beginning of the new year seems like a good time to pause, “pull back the veil,” and ask, “Where is this all going? What is the end goal for all of us, and—for that matter—for the cosmos itself? In these fractious, unmoored, and disillusioned times, I can hardly think of more relevant concerns.

No matter what is going on around us, it’s important to remember that God keeps transforming creation into something both good and new. Instead of hurtling us towards catastrophe, God always wants to bring us somewhere even better. A helpful word here is “evolution.” God keeps creating things from the inside out, so they are forever yearning, developing, growing, and changing for the good. That might be hard to see sometimes in the moment, but it’s nevertheless true.

While more and more people seem to believe that the universe has no form, direction, or final purpose, as Christians, we can be confident that the final goal does have shape and meaning. The biblical symbol of the Universal and Eternal Christ (Alpha and Omega) stands at both ends of cosmic time. This assures us that the clear and full trajectory of the world we know is an unfolding of consciousness with “all creation groaning in this one great act of giving birth” (Romans 8:22). Why do I think this is such an important image to remember? Frankly, because without it we become very impatient with ourselves and others, particularly when we encounter setbacks (both personal and communal).

We are headed into the future. This year is a year of discovery and visioning. This is a year of seeking God and discovering God’s plan for Good Shepherd. This is a year for continuing to join with God in the ministries that we have and to find new ways to reach out to the world and share God’s love with the neighborhood that we have been planted in and reaching out from there. The best part of all of that? God is with us.



Travis Hegan

Note from the Council President

What a blessing to be able to worship in person again! This past year has really been a challenge, but it has definitely shown me that my faith in the Lord can get me through so much! The Church Council met on zoom for many months to continue moving Good Shepherd forward. Early on in 2020, we were meeting weekly. Hoping that the pandemic would lessen it's grip on the country so that we could get back to meeting in person. It soon became apparent that was not going to happen on our timetable.

One of the hardest decisions we had to make, of course, was gathering in person again. That decision was not taken lightly but was made with thoughtful optimism. I'd like to say a big thank you to Pastor Travis for quickly adjusting and putting together a weekly online service. I look forward to life getting back to a semblance of normal and continuing God's work in our beautiful church.

In Christ,

Mya Solem

Worship Report

Many things happened during the year called 2020. It was a tough year for all of us. Some of us found ourselves worshipping in our own living rooms instead of our normal sanctuary space. The pandemic made that possible for us. Well, that change was forced upon us. But we willingly accepted that change because we decided the best way for us to love our neighbor was to be apart so that we could stop the spread of the deadly disease called COVID-19.

Only one time in 2020 did we not have a Sunday service. ONE TIME. Many congregations went weeks before being able to figure out how to worship online. Other congregations never had worship online at all. We quickly were able to move online and we stayed online. We are still online in 2021, even though we have started to gather in person again.

2020 revealed to us that our sound system is very much out of date and in need of a serious upgrade. As we move into 2021, we will be considering what a new system means for us as a worshipping community and how the new system (whatever that may be) will help us welcome the newcomer and how it will help us to worship God who loves us.

Many things have changed, but one thing stayed the same. The God we worship stayed the same. We will continue to worship God, whether that is in person or online, we will worship God and God alone.

Virgil Olson

Treasurer's Report – December 31, 2021

FUND BALANCES

Operating	\$29,255.19
Homeless Shelter/St. J's Meals	\$3,049.45
Thrivent Choice Dollars	\$5,921.76
Fixing God's House	\$140.86
Thursday Morn Bible Study	\$431.33
Memorials	\$47,584.54
Meals from the Heartland	\$995.00
Good Samaritan Fund	\$1,550.39
Howe School	\$2,061.31
World Relief	\$182.00
Food Pantry	\$560.00
Scholarship Fund	\$15,455.08
TOTAL	\$107,186.91

ACCOUNT BALANCES

Checking	\$24,740.37
Money Market	\$31,170.36
MIF Demand Acct	\$51,276.18
Mission Investment Fund	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$107,186.91

BENEVOLENCE CONTRIBUTIONS

Food Pantry	\$1,000.00
Homeless Shelter/St. Josephs	\$2,230.15
Howe School	\$149.04
World Relief	\$500.00
Meals from the Heartland	\$1,000.00
Good Samaritan	\$0.00
ELCA Goodgifts	\$0.00
Southside Thanksgiving Dinner	\$0.00

MEMORIALS

	December	Year-T-Date
Gifts	-	7,606.02
Disbursements	-	7,524.43
	\$0.00	\$81.59

CASH FLOW

	June-T-Date	Year-T-Date
Receipts	\$23,567.75	\$152,775.29
Disbursements	\$13,831.04	\$152,673.24
Net Inc/(Dec)	\$9,736.71	\$102.05

Women of the ELCA

\$2,101.93

Education Report

2020 was a difficult year. It is hard to learn when you aren't in person. While the pandemic presented challenges, it also presented opportunities. We were able to see that the mission of God cannot be halted by a pandemic. We quickly moved into an online mode of learning.

Sunday Children's sermons were quickly filmed and brought back into online worship. Sunday School transitioned to online learning. While it was not ideal, it did give parents the opportunity to help steward their own children's faith journey. Which is exactly what we do when it is in person. Sunday School does not replace the role of parents in the faith lives of their children. And 2020 was an opportunity to see that in action.

Confirmation transitioned into online learning and was conducted online only throughout this last academic year. We have one student who will be confirmed in the Fall and another student who will continue to learn next year.

Adult learning didn't stop either. Midweek worship transitioned into a Midweek bible study. The goal of this study was to slow down. It wasn't about getting through the Bible, but getting the Bible through us. We took it slow and were able to get through half of the Gospel of Mark by the end of 2020.

Adult learning also offered a new study called Good and Beautiful God by James Bryan Smith. This was the first in a series of studies that then continued through 2021.

The Men's Bible study also figured out how to move to online sessions. The pandemic didn't stop them from finding a way to gather (online) and be in community with each other as they studied God's Word.

Sincerely,

Scott Decker

Stewardship Report

I am sure it is of no surprise when I say that this past year has been a challenge for everyone due to COVID. It has also been a challenge for Good Shepherd. It was a balance between how to maintain in person services and how to protect the health of our congregation. In March, following the advice of health officials, the council decided to move all services online.

But while we moved online for services, we were still able to conduct the ministry of Good Shepherd. Ministry did not stop. We formulated a plan to protect those individuals that had a reason to be in the building. We created a sanitizing plan to minimize chances of the virus affecting anyone with a need to be in the building.

The business of Good Shepherd still had to go on. Thanks to the volunteers that have stepped up to keep our church going on a limited basis. That's what stewardship is all about.

Without in-person services tithes, offerings, and giving has been down. Thanks to those who signed up for "Simply Giving" and all who helped us meet our financial obligations and keep us 'in the black' for most of the year. Not only that, we were able to ensure that the core ministries of this congregation continue.

I've heard it often over the past year, someone says that they just want to get back to normal. I want that too. The reality is that what was normal isn't normal anymore. We all want something that is unchanging in our life. Those unchanging things can be a life saver in the tumultuous sea of life.

I don't know of anything in creation that is unchanging. Not even El Capitan in Yosemite is unchanging. God is though. God is our life saver in this world. However things change around Good Shepherd, we shall cling to God.

As we begin to work to get back to a somewhat normal life and in-person services we look forward to building our stewardship efforts back up with some new and exciting ideas.

Stewardship Committee

Joe Solem-Chair

Plant and Property Report

We started out the year with a remodel of the Main Church office. While there are still some things left to touch up, it now has a welcoming and open feel to it.

The pandemic of 2020 (and 2021) did not stop the need for upkeep on the building. There have been many things that needed updated. We spent a significant amount of money ensuring the elevator was up to code. We did all that we could to minimize the impact to the budget in regard to maintaining the building that God has given to us to care for. It is our Good Shepherd Home.

The building is our base of operations. It is imperative that we maintain it, just like we do with our own houses. Most repairs this past year were cosmetic in nature. Moving forward, we have some other issues that will need to be addressed that carry significant costs.

One item that is needing to be addressed is the sound system. It has long since passed its serviceable life.

Thank you to the team of volunteers that have kept the grounds neat and looking nice, you know who you are. Thank you to all who have showed up for service days to help clean and get the little things done.

We have a great need for people to help maintain our building. If you know how to vacuum, we need you. If you know how to dust, we need you. If you know how to paint, we need you. If you know how to use a hammer or tools, we need you.

This building is our home away from home. We need all of us to help maintain it so we continue to use it as our base of operations for years to come as we reach out to the Southside of Des Moines to share God's love.

Ken Horner & Shelley Wauters

Evangelism Report

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd Care Team

Goal: To be alert to the needs of our church members and to respond to those needs.

Members: Helen Randall, Linda Sulgrove, Carol Olson, Becky Decker, Shelley Wauters and Denise Loll
Established: 2-17-2021 by Evangelism Committee
First Project: Reaching out to 65 individuals without e-mail address on file with church. Care team called members to chat about how they were managing through Covid times and to share about Easter Service sign up. We again reached out to many members via phone and cards to pass along the good news that regular worship services would be resuming in May.

Other Projects: The Care Team also prepared and delivered means and restaurant gift cards to an individual who had major surgery. The Care Team also provided visits and phone calls to persons needing support or comfort.

Carla Horner developed a design for notecards, which Helen Randall arranged to make into beautiful cards for corresponding with members.

Efforts are ongoing for getting the word out that the Care Team is here to lend a helping hand.

Congregational Meeting – June 27, 2021 - Agenda

Prayer

Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes from previous congregational meeting

Treasure's Report

Worship Committee Report

Education Committee Report

Stewardship Committee Report

Plant and Property Committee Report

Evangelism Committee Report

Election of Council members –

Nominations from the floor

Proposed Slate

President – Mya Solem – 1 yr

Treasurer – Robert Frits – 1 yr

Secretary – Linda Sulgrove – 1 yr.

Vice President – Joe Solem – 1 yr.

Education – Stefanie Strum – 2 yr.

Stewardship – Helen Randall – 2 yr.

Worship – Virgil Olson – 2 yr.

Evangelism – Shelley Wauters 1 yr. (Switching from P & P to Evangelism for remainder of term)

Plant and Property – Co Chair - Lew Olson 1 yr. (Switching from Evangelism

to P & P for remainder of term)

Plant and Property – Co Chair – Ken Horner 2 Yr.

Adjournment

**Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
Congregational Meeting December 6, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by Mya Solem at 11:00 am and opened with prayer. A quorum was present.

A motion was made and seconded to add November 17, 2019 and August 16, 2020 minutes to the agenda; approved.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda; approved.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the November 17, 2019 and August 16, 2020 minutes; approved.

The 2021 proposed budget was discussed.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed 2021 budget; approved.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn; approved. The meeting adjourned at 11:53 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Tutten

