

# ANNUAL REPORT

— 2020 —



**FIRST LUTHERAN  
CHURCH** of Columbia Heights



## LIVING CONNECTED FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

### 2020 Annual Report

FLC Mission Narrative,  
Church Staff, Luther  
Story fall 2020..... 2

Annual Report Agenda /  
Council & Board  
Members..... 3

2019 Meeting Minutes 4

Bishop Reports..... 5,6

Council President, Pastor  
Reports & Stats..... 7-10

Staff, Council & Board  
Reports..... 11-21

Memorial/Endowment  
Finance Reports.... 22,23

2020 Photos..... 24

### First Lutheran's Mission Narrative

*At First Lutheran Church, we are called to connection with God, each other, and our neighbors in and beyond Columbia Heights. God connects with us through the reconciling act of Jesus Christ and the daily ministry of God's Spirit.*

*We connect to God as a spiritual community through worship and prayer, study and the sacraments, and mutual support and service. This sacred connection calls us into relationship with our neighbors with whom God's love has knit us together. We connect especially to the neighborhood and its youth who have been an essential part of our story from the very beginning when a rural ministry to immigrant children evolved into a long-standing and ever-present calling to love, nurture and mentor young people in our community.*

*As our neighborhood and world changes we commit to adjust as well, making space for growth, healing, generosity and community-building. We will honor each other's diverse stories and continue living connected to God and to each other. We rely on God's Spirit to guide us.*

### Church Leadership—Staff

#### Pastoral Staff:

Rev. Bonnie Wilcox, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Jill Bergman, Associate Pastor

#### Music Department:

Jeffrey Patry, Director of Music  
Ministries

#### Children, Youth & Family

Rachel James, Director of Children,  
Youth and Family Ministries

#### Hospitality & Outreach:

Nathan Roberts, Director of  
Community Engagement

#### Faith Community Nurse:

Jane Bugbee

#### Operations & Finance Manager:

Julie Wilson

#### Office Staff:

Joyce Weaver, Administrative  
Assistant

#### Building & Grounds:

Roger Johnson, Lead Custodian  
Derek Sabot-Borgan  
Paul Eddy

#### Wedding Coordinator:

Sonja Super

#### CYF Intern 2020:

Alexis Mattson

#### Director of Food Services:

Rock Hauser

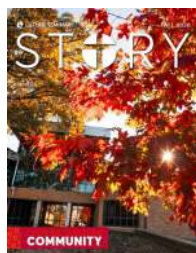
#### Security:

Joe Stinson

#### After School:

Shanequa Cook  
Debbie Grisco  
Vivian Johnson

*“And nobody would question Bonnie Wilcox '97 M.Div., senior pastor at First Lutheran Church, who witnessed something more than refracting light.”*



Luther Seminary featured our church's help with the public rally in Heights to listen to leaders of color tell their stories of racism: **“Necessary conversations on race and racism,”** by Lisa Renze-Rhodes. If you'd like to download or view this beautiful publication from our website, follow this link: [Luther Story fall 2020](#). Or, contact the church office to request a printed copy of the article.



## Virtual Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda First Lutheran Church of Columbia Heights, Minnesota Sunday, January 24, 2021

- I. Call to Order/Establish Quorum
- II. Opening Prayer
- III. Approve Agenda pg. 3
- IV. Approval of Minutes of 2020 Annual Meeting pg. 4
- V. New Business
  - a. Acceptance of the Annual Report
  - b. Presentation & Approval of the 2020 Budget
  - c. Nomination Committee Report; Election of Boards & Council members
- VI. Prayer Break
- VII. Elections
- VIII. Please note:
  - a. Outgoing & Incoming Boards & Council members meet virtually on **Saturday, February 6, 9 - 11:30 AM** for a planning retreat.
  - b. Installation of all Boards & Council members is **Sunday, February 7, 10 AM**
- IX. Closing Prayer/Benediction
- X. Adjournment

### Thank you to our 2020 Council & Board Members!

#### Executive

Jeff Beck, President  
David Hagen, Vice President  
Chris Larson, Treasurer  
Ruth Craft, Secretary

#### Board of Spiritual Growth

(Rev. Jill Bergman, Staff)  
Jay Craft (Chair)  
Char Zarich (Vice Chair)  
Randy Bergman  
Ronell Benson  
Michelle Edwards  
Janet Zarich

#### Board of Worship

(Jeffrey Patry, Staff)  
Jan Meyen (Chair)  
Faith White (Vice Chair)  
Cheryl Ballingrud (Altar Guild & Enhancement Team)  
DJ Ferrise  
Carol O'Brien  
Wendy Ramirez

#### Board of Hospitality & Outreach

(Nathan Roberts, Staff)  
Meagan Ferrise (Chair)  
Chris Dansby (Vice Chair)  
Phil Mattison  
Julie Wilson  
Larry Bugbee  
John Miller

#### Board of Children, Youth & Family

(Rachel James, Staff)  
Doug Zamora (Chair)  
Katie Schweiger (Vice Chair)  
Paula Million  
Edward O'Brien  
Michelle Young  
Ava Ericson

#### Memorial & Endowment

(Dave Reilly & Julie Wilson, Staff)  
Chad Habeck (Chair)  
Chris Larson (Treasurer)  
Bob Nelson (Secretary)  
Paul Turner  
Drew Stolba

#### Personnel Committee

(Rev. Bonnie Wilcox, Staff)  
Dorothy Markowitz (Chair)  
Beth Tapp  
Ruth Dodson  
David Hagen (Finance Rep)  
Jeff Beck, (Council)

#### Finance

(Dave Reilly & Julie Wilson, Staff)  
Chad Habeck (Chair)  
Rock Hauser (Vice Chair)  
David Hagen  
Rebecca Dodson  
Blaine Barnhart  
Wendy Watson

#### Nominating Committee

Jill Presseller

#### Synod Assembly Representatives

Rev. Bonnie Wilcox & Rev. Jill Bergman (canceled in 2020)

**First Lutheran Church Columbia Heights  
Annual Congregational Meeting  
January 19, 2020**

A quorum of more than 50 voting members was established and the meeting was called to order.

Congregation was led in a table prayer by Pastor Bonnie.

2019 Annual Meeting Agenda was approved.

2019 Annual Meeting minutes were approved.

**Highlights of 2019:**

Children, Youth and Family-Camp Wapo, All Ages VBS, CYF Intern, FLY youth Hospitality and Outreach-After School program, Community Lunch, Storytelling Worship and Music- Music Director, Jeffery Patry  
Spiritual Growth-Compost program, Self Defense classes, Responsible Adult forum, Financial Peace, Little Free Library

**Looking to 2020:**

Healthier Wednesday meals  
Resettle refugee family  
"Every Table an Altar" (Dinner Church-worship with dinner) for Lent  
Deepening relations within the Community  
Rain Garden at FLC and future projects with Capital Campaign proceeds

**New Business:**

The 2019 Annual Report was approved  
2020 budget was presented to congregation and approved  
Board and Council reports were presented and approved  
Nomination of Memorial and Endowment Committee Members approved  
Approved nomination of delegates to the Minneapolis Synod Assembly  
Nomination of 2020 Nominating Committee

**Informational items:**

The annual planning retreat is January 25, 2019. New Board and Council members will meet with outgoing members from 9am until lunch. Council will meet 12:30-2pm. Breakfast, lunch and snacks will be served. The Installation of all Board and Council members is Sunday, February 9, 2020 at 10:00am service.

Closing prayer

Meeting was adjourned

Respectfully submitted by Judie Opheim

## Report from Bishop Ann Svennungsen, Minneapolis Area Synod



God's grace, peace, and hope be with you through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

In a normal year, I would use this report to highlight the many ways the Synod partners with your congregation to bring good news to your communities. 2020 was hardly a normal year.

Like your congregation, the synod needed to adapt quickly due to the threat of COVID-19, to cancel some programs, introduce new events, and modify most everything else. I have been amazed by the innovation and hard work of congregational leaders. I want – and encourage you as well – to speak a word of deep thanks to leaders for all that has been asked of them to hold our communities together and foster their flourishing.

Shortly after lockdown restrictions began in March, synod leaders led training sessions on online worship and pastoral care, as well as conversations on the question of Holy Communion as part of distance worship. In April, our Synod Treasurer and Secretary led two sessions on applying for PPP loans. In May, we were privileged to host Dr. Michael Osterholm for a presentation which drew 400 pastors, bishops, and leaders; as well as 100,000 viewers afterwards. We gave over \$46,000 in Imagination Grants to 25 congregations to strengthen their online worship presence. This fall, we gathered leaders for a well-received conversation on creative ways to celebrate Christmas. The synod staff provided worship services in May, July, and December, giving congregational leaders a much-needed respite.

Yes, 2020 was hardly a normal year. On May 25, 2020, the killing of George Floyd lifted the veil once again on the pandemic of systemic racism that infects our world. Churches near the killing and the uprising turned on a dime to address the immediate needs, supported by partner congregations throughout the synod. Clergy marched in silence led by AME Presiding Elder Stacy Smith. The Minnesota Council of Churches – which includes all six ELCA synods – voted unanimously to support a multi-year process “Dismantling the Structures and Repairing the Damage of Racism in Minnesota.” The synod’s new racial justice web page ([mpls-synod.org/](http://mpls-synod.org/)

outreach/racial-justice) provides key information for congregations to deepen their work for justice, including the new Center for Leadership and Neighborhood Engagement, led by Rev. Kelly Chatman.

In addition to these efforts, we continue our essential and ongoing work of supporting leaders and fostering congregational vitality. We are blessed with over 700 rostered leaders, 325 serving in calls and 377 retired. We work hard so the church has the loving, faithful, and theologically well-formed ministers it needs. In 2020, we supported 67 persons preparing to become deacons or pastors.

In September, we were honored to receive a Lilly Grant that will support congregational cohorts committed to deepening their faith and neighboring practices. This month, we welcome Rev. Norma Malfatti as Director of Evangelical Mission who will promote our work in starting new congregations and accompanying our strategic ministries.

Our monthly conference meetings and other synod gatherings have revealed a real hunger among leaders to stay connected, learn from each other, and discern best practices for ministry in these times. We are honored and humbled by the calling to serve as convener of such holy conversations.

It is the generosity of congregations like yours that make the synod’s work possible. Thank you! We seek to be careful stewards of every gift. With the PPP loan, which we pray will be forgiven, we hope to end our FY2020 year budget without dipping deeply into reserves.

I conclude this annual report with a word of deep gratitude for the privilege of serving as your bishop. And, I look forward to January 2022, when we can once again worship and gather *in person* – with hugs and handshakes and singing.

Bishop Ann Svennungsen



## A message from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Dear friends in Christ,

This year has been a challenging one! The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the church and society. We have had to shift the ways we engage in ministry from a focus on in-person worship and meetings to livestream worship, virtual meetings and gatherings in the parking lot. We have had to shift to teaching children at home and working from home. We have not been able to travel to see friends or relatives or to celebrate life events. This has also been a time to address economic and social justice issues, to shift our thinking and our way of life.

In times such as this, our baptism in Christ makes a difference and makes us different. Like Christians before us, we recall that God is faithful to God's promises and God's people. We see that God enables us to connect with one another even when we are separated. Shifts in the world invite us to be innovative in how we do God's work and reach out to all ages in making disciples. We see that God is at work not only in our buildings but beyond them as well. We have found new ways to serve our neighbors and reach those in need.

As we experience this time of uncertainty, we sense something new emerging. In many places there are new strategies and renewed energy for ministry, often generated by emerging leaders. We have developed a framework to build on, and now is the time to engage in hard work together. As you do in your congregation, we want our collaborative efforts to be both faithfully thoughtful and sustainable. We want to build up the body of Christ today and for the future. Looking across the church, I am grateful for your generous

giving of time, talents and resources. Yes, God does continue to bless us! God will provide both relief from life's struggles and hope for a stronger church, God's church. We do not need to know how the future will unfold. As members in the body of Christ, we need only trust that God is with us and will provide.

Building up the body of Christ together,

*Elizabeth A. Eaton*

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." —Ephesians 4:11-16*



## A letter from the Council President, Jeff Beck

**As** I reflect on last year, I want to express how grateful I am to the whole First Lutheran Church family. We started this year off excited to be trying new ideas such as dinner church for Lent. We really had a year full of new ideas and trying new things, while we had to react to major events throughout the year I saw us come together.

I want to thank all of you for coming together and adapting to the ever-changing situation with us.

We shifted to online worship; I know it was different and hard for everyone, but it has allowed us to continue to worship together while being physically separate. We have been able to take advantage of this new way of doing things in many fun ways. If you don't remember Holy Humor Sunday, go back and see the fun at the organ! This year's drama was done as a recording that allowed new ways to share the message. Even things as simple as being able to see the overwhelming number of knobs/keys/pedals that Jeffrey works on the organ has been exciting for my girls.

At the beginning of the lock downs we also had members who were able to give their yearly offerings upfront. With those gifts and the continued support of our congregation, we were able to continue our mission during these hard times. We have been very blessed to end the year in the position we have. While many congregations are struggling to think about how to just survive, I see our leaders looking for how to use our building and resources to continue our mission in new ways.

I also want to thank all the people who regularly use our facilities. Everyone has been understanding of our guidelines we have put into place. People

using our buildings are all following our guidelines in hope of keeping others safe.

Besides the pandemic related struggles, this year has also brought to the forefront racial and socioeconomic issues that we have needed to deal with as a church. I have seen our church continue to try and work through these far-reaching issues. These issues are complicated, hard and uncomfortable to talk about or engage in. I'm happy to see the kinds of dialogues and discussions that have happened.

*"I have seen our church continue to try and work through these far-reaching issues."*

You will be able to read many of the details of all the great work accomplished this year from the board reports, so I will not go into great detail about the amazing food ministry work or how many people have embraced things like Zoom, YouTube etc. to accomplish our mission. Instead I want to look forward to 2021. We will continue to have new challenges we have to adapt to. I see on the horizon change coming with the arrival of vaccines and new leadership in our country. I expect a lot of change. I know change will be our constant in the future.

We as a leader group read Canoeing the Mountains by Tod Bolsinger. I personally really find the metaphor powerful not just for the challenges laid out in the book, but for all the unknown unknowns coming. We have proven in 2020 we can adapt and change. We know it's hard, but we have been willing to make hard choices. I am excited to see what change comes in 2021 and beyond. I am excited for this change because I know my church family will be here with me through it.

Jeff Beck,  
Council President



## Senior Pastor Report—Rev. Bonnie Wilcox

### Living Connected: To God and Each Other In the Time of Covid-19

Our lives were disrupted in ways we could not have imagined in March of 2020. At First Lutheran, we were in the midst of a new experiment, Wednesday Night Dinner Church, a way to connect relationally with others, to hear the Word of God, and to celebrate holy communion. We “redecorated” Martin Luther Hall, strung lights from the ceiling, and were overwhelmed when 60-80 people came each week!

And then it was over. The coronavirus, COVID-19, had been rumored to be spreading quickly around the world, and was now in the U.S. Dinner Church was over. Sunday Worship was over. All of our gatherings, with children, youth, adults, families, etc., were over.

It was the right thing to do, even if it was also an order from our governor.

But one thing was not over: The Sunday Community Meal.

As Council and Staff struggled with decisions about how to find a new way of being church, the Sunday Community Meal became an important consideration. This program of about four years had become an important way for friends and families to connect over a hot meal. It was open to the community, and we became familiar with those who came for just the meal. “We like that we can eat with all of you. We don’t feel like we’re on display,” one person told Jane Bugbee, our Community Faith Nurse.

The Community Meal is a great example of how we’ve remembered what’s important this year, and how we’ve re-imagined a ministry in the time of COVID-19. Jesus’ command to love one another was clear. But how do you serve a meal

without people sitting together inside? Drive-Thru Community Meal was born! The same great food by the same set of cooks, now packaged in to-go containers for people to pick up at church and enjoy at home.

The pastors and staff greeted people in line in the lot, listening to what was happening in people’s lives, and offering prayers and blessings. Those who helped to prepare and serve the meal found purpose in this work. In a time of isolation, they were caring for others.

For those who came through, it was a chance to check in, to be seen and heard, and to offer a blessing to the church, in addition to a hot meal. Or maybe they didn’t “need” the meal, but just wanted the opportunity to visit a bit from a safe distance with a mask on our faces.

Our food ministry serves the Sunday Community Meal, our After School kids and their families, our pre-COVID Gathering, and Lent soup suppers. That’s more than 10,000 meals served in 2020--during COVID!

This Annual Report is filled with stories like this. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

I am grateful for the work of so many to pray, discern, research and imagine new ways to be the hands and feet of Christ to others. To our Church Council, our Staff, and our Boards, I could not be more proud and honored. In some areas, we continue to look for opportunities. In others, we are already re-re-imagining what will happen next.

We have provided a weekly service available online. Even when the time comes for us to be able to worship together again in the building, we will continue to provide an online service



*Senior Pastor Report continues on next page*



## Senior Pastor Report—*continued*

for those who appreciate it -- those confined at home, or those who spend time away for a season of the year, or just a weekend away.

Many of you have found ways to consider those who are most isolated from their loved ones because of COVID. Weekly mailings to homes who do not have internet access have been an important lifeline with ninety households. We send a worship service to use at home; a list of our weekly First Prayers; and updates about First Lutheran.

We must look forward and continue to work against racism and racial bias in our community, state and nation. The most important things we can do right now is listen to our neighbors who are people of color. A second step is to examine why we may be wary of conversation or interaction with people of color. And a third step

is to learn more about the advantages that are present for people who are white in our nation.

God has been faithful to us in spite of this unexpected time in our lives. God has been faithful through each one of you, and through me. Thank you for your generosity, understanding, patience, tolerance, and imagination!

In 2021, we continue the conversation that began in 2018 about our mission in this community. Here are some questions, based on the Bible, for our prayer and consideration and conversation and ACTION this year:

What does Love (God) require?  
What kind of neighbor am I (are we)?

Rev. Bonnie Wilcox  
Senior Pastor

“Dearest First Lutheran,  
We are former members who have lived in central Minnesota for over 25 years. It's still a joy to see dear friends. We have enjoyed the wonderful online services during the pandemic.”

## Pastoral Acts and Statistics

### 2019 Statistics

Baptisms	10
Marriages	5
Confirmations	6
Funerals	16
New Members	9
Average Sunday Attendance	196

### 2020 Statistics

Baptisms	12
Marriages	4
Confirmations	8
Funerals	16
New Members	1
Average Worship Attendance	N/A

Since March 2020, the people of First Lutheran have worshiped physically distant, but spiritually close. We have produced worship services online for people to watch at home via our website, YouTube and Facebook, as well as printed worship outlines mailed to homes for people without internet access. Thank you for your faithfulness in worship attendance.

Attendance has been great this year in spite of the pandemic challenges! Most people continue to worship at 10 AM on Sundays, even though they could watch at any time. We receive notes on occasion from people who have found our services from far away who appreciate our particular form of worship. Collaboration with other congregations and church entities has also increased the creativity of our worship.

The ELCA has given us new definitions for tracking worship attendance, but this was not complete in time for this report. --- Rev. Bonnie Wilcox

## Pastor Report—Rev. Jill Bergman

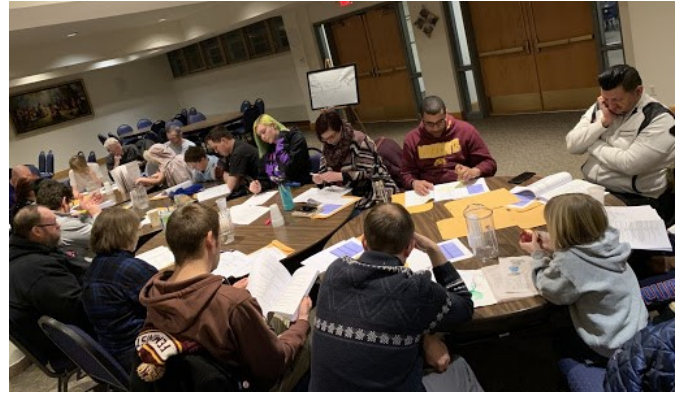
*In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:37-39*

**I**n this tumultuous year, I have witnessed true spiritual growth and renewal at First Lutheran Church. We were all shocked when we were suddenly told that we couldn't continue to function as normal. The ministry we engaged in was deep, nuanced by over 100 years of growing into our identity. Honestly, many of us had no idea there was any other way to serve our mission with Christ, or if there was, how we would go about it. Instead of giving up, however, we adapted. We insisted on continuing our ministry. We declared that no amount of evil and strife could overpower us.

Today I see that we grew more spiritually in 2020 than I have ever witnessed in any congregation in any single year. We testified by word and deed that Jesus is alive in our world. Jesus is alive in our congregation. Jesus is alive, and because of him, we live also.



I am proud of how we adapted to the challenges brought before us. We began the year strong. I was blessed to be able to go again to Mission Jamaica and to participate in building a house completely funded by FLC. We presented the homeowner with a quilt made by our Mission Workshop team.



We also began rehearsing for our annual Last Supper Drama. While we didn't get to perform it, we had many dedicated volunteers ready to give their time and creativity to the project.

Once Covid 19 took hold in our area, though, our time and creativity took on a whole new dimension. We learned how to bring Word and Sacrament outside of the Sanctuary, inviting people to meet Jesus in person through virtual ministry. We learned how to baptize believers into the Body of Christ and to welcome them from afar. We learned how to celebrate our graduating seniors from a safe distance. We learned how to serve our neighbors with food, prayer, and fellowship safely. We learned that Jesus Christ certainly is not limited by any illness. In fact, the Holy Spirit had already equipped us with everything we needed, before this pandemic struck, to effectively love God and neighbor.



In this year that has been challenging like no other, we have been richly blessed at First Lutheran Church to be reminded that we worship a God like no other. We discovered that the only limits to God's love were the limits we ourselves had placed upon it.

Encouraged by the spiritual growth we experienced in 2020, First Lutheran Church is continually adapting so we may continue to serve Jesus and this world that Jesus loves.

It is a privilege to be called your pastor.

In Christ,  
Pastor Jill Bergman

## Board of Spiritual Growth Report—Janet Zarich

### Board of Spiritual Growth Members for 2020:

Pastor Jill Bergman, Jay Craft (Chair), Char Zarich (Vice Chair), Ronell Benson, Randy Bergman, Michelle Edwards, Janet Zarich

The goals that the Board of Spiritual Growth worked on in 2020 can be summed up by First Lutheran's Mission Narrative, *Living Connected...to God and Each Other*. Our main goals at the beginning of the year were:

- Finish our Little Free Library
- Identify, publicize, and expand small group ministry
- Continue to help people grow in their faith through adult forum.

We were off to a good start with Michelle researching what small groups were being offered and Randy arranging speakers for adult forum. In February, several First Lutheran members gave presentations focusing on missions. The Dittbenner family talked about their trip to Haiti, Catie Miller told us about her trip to Tanzania, and Larry Bugbee gave a presentation about Mission Jamaica. Then, everything changed with the onset of Covid. The rest of our year was spent trying to reach our goals in a much different way.

We met via Zoom for most of our meetings from March through the end of the year. The exception was September when most of us were able to meet in person after the blessing of our Little Free Library. We sat outside with proper social distancing and we wore face masks. Janet joined the meeting via Zoom.

We focused on the small group ministry at First Lutheran. Michelle

worked with Joyce Weaver to develop a small group booklet, identifying the names of small groups offered at First Lutheran, the leaders of the small groups, the purpose of each group, and information about when and where the groups meet. Michelle's Sunday morning Bible Study was a way for people to be able to connect to God and to each other. The Bible Study has been taking place via Zoom. There has been a consistent group attending on Sunday mornings. The Bible Study is recorded each week, so that people who cannot attend via Zoom on Sundays can watch the recording at their convenience. A second day and time for the Bible Study will be offered in 2021.

Char's book club was an opportunity for small group ministry. Members of the book club met, following proper Covid safety guidelines. A highlight for the book club was having Paul Christensen's friend, Author Keith McConnell, lead an in-person book study of his book *Shillingstone* at the October book club meeting. Keith is a great storyteller. We hope to have him speak at future events in our church.

Randy researched ways for adult forum to be offered. He worked with the Minneapolis/St. Paul Synod for ideas. He has been posting information about Zoom events focusing on various faith topics. He has also been posting information about other events, such as virtual concerts. He continues to lead us in making decisions about further adult forum opportunities that can be offered, while following current Covid safety guidelines.

One of the highlights of our year was the completion of the First Lutheran Church Little Free Library. Thanks to Gary Berg for designing and constructing it. We had a blessing event in September with Gary, Pat Stinson, and the members of our board. Our Little Free Library is registered on the International Little Free Libraries Registry. People have donated books for our Little Free Library. Char has taken on the responsibility of taking care of our Little Free Library, making sure that the books are appropriate and periodically rotating the books in the library. She is the contact person for the Little Free Library Registry. We are proud of our Little Free Library!

We ended our year with the Fall Stewardship Drive. The theme was *Livin' On A Prayer*. Even though, it was a tough year, people continued to give. Many people dropped off their pledges on Commitment Sunday.

Although it was a challenging year, we felt successful as we realized that we could still find ways to help people grow spiritually. We have learned this year, that even when we are socially distanced, we can still find ways for people to remain connected; to God, to each other, and to our neighbors in and beyond Columbia Heights. We will continue to base our goals on that Mission as we move into 2021.

Respectfully  
Submitted,  
Janet Zarich,  
Board of Spiritual  
Growth





## Children, Youth and Family Ministries Board Report—Rachel James



Thank you First Lutheran Church for all your support of children, youth and family ministries in our church and community this year! In this time of pandemic, we pivoted our ministries to connect online, outdoors, through the mail, and in prayer.

### FAITH FORMATION

**Confirmation** this year has been online with CYF Intern Alexis Mattson as the primary teacher. There are 12 registered students. We have learned about New Testament stories and about the Creed. In addition to the online classes each Sunday, confirmation students have joined us for our monthly Family Fun Days in the church Courtyard.



We are very proud of our **2020 Confirmands**:

Emma Bendix, Hazel Bendix, Aria Bergman, Nora Pederson, Anna Presseller, Madison Ratliff, Roger Rogne and Caeden Shull. They each completed a project and pastor interview, along with three years of classes, service projects and events.

**Sunday School** has been an adventure as we move into online Sunday School! In the spring and throughout the summer, we did Storytime on FB Live each Sunday and mailed out packets to each Sunday School student each week. We ended the school year with the Blessing Bus where we visited the homes of each Sunday School and Confirmation student and handed out balloons and ice cream.

Twenty-five students registered for our Zoom Sunday School classes, with six amazing teachers. Thank you to John Miller, Franklin and Shirley Gummahdi, Janet Zarich, Christine Myhre and Kaylie Crotteau. We held a Thanksgiving Party on Zoom together and an online Sunday School Christmas program.

**FLY Youth group** has found new creative ways to stay connected! In the early part of 2020, we did a service project at SACA food shelf in partnership with St. Matthew's youth. We also had a fun night at Zero Gravity Trampoline Park and participated in Dinner Church.

Since the pandemic began we have done many Wednesday night Zoom youth groups online, playing games and studying the Bible together. We also have held 9 bonfire nights in the church Courtyard for in-person events with an average of 20 youth per event. It has been a powerful time to connect together. A big thanks to our TIM Team leader Ed O'Brien for doing high school leadership development once a month at youth group.

### JUSTICE AND SERVICE

This year we focused on racial justice and learning as we responded to the death of George Floyd, the protests in Minneapolis and the much needed conversation about the effects of racism in our country. In partnership with Nathan Roberts, Director of Community Engagement and the rest of the staff team, we led several events.



- \* **June:** Columbia Heights Town Hall on Race with many Black and People of Color neighbors sharing their experiences to about 100 community members
- \* **July:** Visit to the George Floyd Memorial and art installation of people killed by police violence and service learning project to Christ Church International on Lake Street in South Minneapolis for 25 youth and parents
- \* **July:** Zootopia Movie and Discussion Night for kids and families at the church courtyard for over 50 people, where we watched the movie and started discussion on racism and policing.
- \* **November:** We hosted a community COVID-19 Vigil in Huset Park.





## Children, Youth and Family Ministries Board Report *continued*

### LEADERSHIP

Thank you to our dedicated and faithful **Children, Youth and Family Board:** Doug Zamora (chair), Katie Schweiger (vice-chair), Paula Million, Edward O'Brien, Michelle Young and Ava Ericson. The CYF Board hosted several Family Fun Days in the church Courtyard. In July we had a Water Fun day with a waterslide, water balloons, and frozen treats. In September we had our First Day Carnival, with games, prizes, Bible Milestone and Blessing of the Teachers and Students. In October we hosted a Fall Fun Day with pumpkin carving & decorating, along with cider and cookies.

We successfully completed a fundraising meal of **SpudFest** as a drive thru in November, raising \$800. Our CYF kids and youth also participated in the drive-thru Pancake Breakfast in October to benefit SACA Food Shelf.

**VBS** this year was an outdoor walk-through adventure in August with over 60 people participating. Our theme was Knights of the North Castle where we learned about the armor of God and how to *"Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. - Ephesians 6:10"* Our music

and puppet drama station was led by Jeffrey Patry, Alexis Mattson and Junia James at the front walkway. Our gardeners Paula Million, Linda Fowler-Pettigrew and Dan Fishbeck taught us at the church garden. Pastor Jill Bergman and Katie Schweiger led the Bible Story station in the Courtyard. Youth Ava Ericson and Aria Bergman led the craft station near the playground. The first night we also had a community educator from Mississippi Watershed Management Organization teach the kids and families about our stormwater runoff plan and how to understand the watershed.

Thanks to Michelle Young the check-in leader, Chris Million our set-up and meal delivery leader, and Jane Bugbee & Christine Anderson who made our meals each day. We ended the week with each kid getting knighted as they put on the armor of God.

Thank you for your prayers as we continue in this journey together.

In Christ,  
Rachel James, Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries  
and the Children, Youth & Family Ministries Board

## Board of Worship Report

**T**his is a somewhat different year to write a report for the Board of Worship. Even though it didn't follow our regular plan, I would like to thank our board members, Jeffrey Patry, Cheryl Ballingrud, DJ Ferrise, Carol O'Brien, Faith White, & Wendy Ramirez.

For the first couple of months we organized ushers, readers, communion servers, etc. In March, everything changed! We did not worship in our Sanctuary, funerals were not held with large gatherings, volunteers were not regularly used for Bible readings, and we could not gather in the Commons. We gathered with the Pastors and the church council to find other ways to serve related to worship.

Some of our activities were as follows: assisted with prayers in the parking lot; provided treats for Bless your Pets day; costumed up, decorated a table & handed out candy at the Trick or Treat night; learned how to take temperatures for small

gatherings; direct traffic and several other special tasks. We helped to make Confirmation a special day for confirmands & their immediate families. We filled small condiment cups and bagged with a wafer; we took temperatures of all attendees, seated all attendees, and released families in an orderly fashion (to prevent grouping inside).

We assisted with funerals, whether 75 or 25, to keep our church safe for staff and guests by checking names off lists, taking temperatures, keeping attendees from congregating.

Thanks again to all board members, staff, and volunteers for your service on the Board of Worship. We have all agreed to serve another year on the Worship Board.

In faithful service,  
Janet (Jan) Meyen  
Chair Worship Board



## Worship & Music Ministry Report—Jeffrey Patry

“*I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*”

This verse from Joshua was my confirmation verse from many years ago. I still remember it and it has proven to be so beneficial this year as we have tried to navigate through some rough waters. This has definitely been a challenging year for many.

We have had to change how we do normal everyday tasks. We have had to be vigilant in who we come in contact with and force ourselves not to hug that person that so desperately needs it.

We have changed so many things at FLC as well. We shifted all our weekend worship services to online having to navigate through some challenges along the way. “How are we gonna do this again?” I vividly remember uttering that phrase to myself many times at the beginning of this pandemic. I have to give my deepest thanks to Pastor Bonnie and Pastor Jill for their creativity in reimagining worship. I am so lucky to work with two of the finest pastors that truly have their best interest for the congregation of FLC.

I also have to thank my two partners in crime, Drew Stolba and Chris Larson who are the technical brains of the operation. There is no way that I could have put all of this together by myself. They have been amazing in all of their work splicing this, editing that and operating cameras and sound equipment. I need to thank the many wonderful singers, instrumentalists and handbell players for their devotion to FLC. Again, working with such wonderful and willing musicians makes my job so enjoyable and such a breeze!

I also have to give thanks to our Worship Board for helping with ushering for funerals, preparing communion and the many other tasks that they do. Thanks also to the environment committee in beautifying our sanctuary for recording. *It takes a village!!*

Amidst a pandemic, we have still connected with FLC as much as possible. Since the middle of March, I have been recording a Friday musical offering for our FLC Facebook group as well as my

own Facebook page. I love doing this. It has forced me to learn new music and to connected with many of you and friends from all over the world.

This summer, the CYF Ministry offered a week-long Outdoor VBS. Alexis Mattson and I helped with the music. It was great to see the kids & their families!



We also enjoyed a Wednesday morning Sidewalk Worship Service with Holy Communion during the summer months.



In the fall, I offered a beginner music class, which we will resume again when it is safe to do so. And, I had the pleasure of performing a mini Halloween Spooktacular via Facebook. You also got to see me dress up in costume, which is a rare occasion! All of these activities have kept us connected as a church family.

This pandemic won't last forever. I have to keep telling myself that everyday. We will once again gather together as a church family stronger than ever! May God bless you now and forever.

Jeffrey Patry,  
Director of Music Ministry



## Hospitality and Outreach Board Report—Nathan Roberts



### COMMUNITY MEAL

**Drive Thru meals: 125 - 200 meals**  
**Volunteers: 12-20 each week**  
**(Increased by 40 meals from in person meals on a Sunday)**

This year was unlike any other. We had an amazing and committed team of H & O board members, volunteers, and staff who continued to be passionate and creative about life giving ministry in a pandemic. And speaking up and healing a city torn apart with grief, anger, racism, protests, and violence after the murder of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis Police officer.

But each step of the way we put our heads and hearts into the work of meeting the physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual needs of our community.

In March 2020, our first government lockdown was ordered. Our church went into action finding safe and creative ways to continue to serve Sunday Community Lunch in a drive through style. We did not skip a beat! Which is amazing and shows the commitment to our community. We had 125 people drive through the first Sunday with pastors outside to pray with those who drove through. Each week we see community members in need, some may be living in their cars and who appreciate a warm, healthy meal. We continually hear how grateful people are for this important ministry. The prayers from pastors and FLC members is appreciated by folks struggling with life during these challenging times.

We normally do not have community meals in the summer but nothing is normal in 2020. So we continued with "Grill" style meals and had amazing grill masters step up to help us serve and maintain the relationships we created. People were clearly relying on this ministry as it was one of the few times we got to see people masked face to masked face. We had bakers drop off cookies to hand out as a special treat each week.

In the fall, we really began to see a growing need. We were serving around 150 each week. We did have a COVID exposure on Nov. 8 and had a paired down box lunch meal served the following Sunday. We had our first drive through Pancake Breakfast and raised \$1,500 for SACA Food Shelf in Columbia Heights. We asked the community to match this gift and were inspired by the amazing donations that came in from the wider community!

We are eager to continue to serve our community and adapt to whatever comes next.

*Thank you to Rock & Kari Hauser, Brian Schweiger, Roy Weber, Jane & Larry Bugbee, Chris Dansby, The White Family, The Habeck Family, The Rogne Family, The Craft Family, The Dela Cruz Family, Amada and Frost Simula, Kevin Kaliher, Suzi Vescio, Julianne Wyckoff, Judie Opheim, Betty Krah, Pam Hartel, Joe Stinson, Julie Wilson and so many more.*

### AFTER SCHOOL

**Meals Delivered: 40 - 90 per week**  
**Volunteers 3 - 20 per week**  
**3 Northwestern University Interns**



Our After School Program continued to serve healthy meals and mentorship to 20-30 kids on Tuesday and Thursdays each week. This year, that meant working with a team of volunteers to cook, bag, load the bus, and deliver meals to homes of families in our neighborhood. This meal delivery allowed us to continue to support our families in need. It also gave us a chance to connect with the



## Hospitality and Outreach Board Report

students on their school, mental health, and physical health. Many of our stops turned into discussions about how we could pray for families and help meet immediate needs. Like how to get students art supplies, or to listen to a mom worried about a relative with COVID.

Throughout the months of September and October we were able to be outside enjoying the beautiful weather and meeting in the Courtyard. We were blessed to have three amazing Northwestern University education students as Interns this fall. This was a brief and fun chance to connect in person with masks. However, as COVID numbers rose we returned to delivery in November. We plan to continue to deliver meals through the winter.

*Special thanks to Jane and Larry Bugbee, Rachel James, Shanequa Cook, Maria de Jesus Lujan, Sheri Bodell, Debbie Grisco, Karen and Phil Mattison, Valerie Wiig, John Burke, and Joe Stinson for their support of this ministry.*



### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**Discussion Groups about Race and Racism**  
**Participants in 4-week Discussion Groups: 115**  
**Volunteers: 5 per week**

On May 25 George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis Police officer. This event shook Minneapolis and the rest of the world. Protests and riots were spreading across Minneapolis and St. Paul. First Lutheran was looking for a way to respond to the grief, anger, and call to stand with our brothers and sisters of Color against racism in our community.

We were approached by community leaders of color to co-host a community town hall at Huset Park. We provided the sound system and social media marketing for the event. Rachel James and



Nathan Roberts spoke alongside a dozen speakers of color. It was pouring rain and yet people stayed and listened (even when our sound system shorted out twice!) We heard powerful stories encouraging Columbia Heights residents to do more to welcome their neighbors of color into our community.

Afterwards three next step options were provided for those who attended. The people of color gathered to speak about next steps. Rachel James helped white parents talk to their children about race and racism.

The H & O board, Nathan Roberts, and Pastor Bonnie had participated in a Race and Racism discussion group class in 2019. Because of this preparation work we were able to offer a class on how white people can have better discussions about race and racism. We had 115 people sign up for the 4-week discussion groups. It was powerful and healing for the people who participated.



To broaden the discussion, we hosted an all-ages outdoor movie night to talk about the themes of prejudice, racism, and systemic racism in the movie Zootopia. In September, we hosted a storytelling night for community members of color to talk about what they had experienced and learned over the summer.

We remain committed to continue the discussions and address racism in Columbia Heights going forward.

*Special thank you to Chris Dansby, Larry Bugbee, Karen and Phil Mattison, and Julie Wilson for their support of this ministry.*



## Hospitality and Outreach Board Report *continued*



**Halloween**  
**Trick or Treaters: 275**  
**Volunteers: 20**

On a very joyful note we had a wonderful community trick or treating event on the Thursday before Halloween where 275 people came to trick or treat around the nine outside doors of the church! It was very fun and we should definitely do it again!

*Special thank you to our After School team, Worship Board, and the Bergman family for handing out tricks and treats.*



**Playground Spinner is Installed!**  
**Kids who use the Spinner: 250**  
**per week**  
**Volunteers: 12**

Thank you to all the amazing men who planned, shoveled, mixed cement, and then spun their kiddos on the new Comet Spinner on our Playground. We have seen hours of fun from church families, neighbors, and the teachers at our TESFA charter school said it was the "talk of the school!"



### *A few Special Thank Yous...*



*Thank you* to all who participated in our FLC partnership with the American Red Cross Blood Drive on Nov. 20!

*Below are excerpts of a letter sent to FLC from Gail McGovern, President & CEO*

“As thousands of blood drives around the nation were cancelled due to the impact of COVID-19, please know that your drive protected the health and well-being of the most vulnerable among us – including accident victims, cancer patients, those suffering from chronic illnesses and many others. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for stepping up to help collect and donate lifesaving blood, even as the circumstances of the coronavirus outbreak often made it difficult to do so.”



**2020... “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,** it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.” --- Charles Dickens

### **But YOU did it!**

**Thank you to the Ministry Teams** who served (and found ways to adapt and continue to serve) our First Lutheran members, guests and community in 2020!

Archivers	Front Desk/	Musicians/
Baptismal Hosts	Receptionist	Vocalists/Bells
Bible Study	Funeral Care	Photography
Book Club	Holiday Market	Prayer Chain
Building &	Kitchen Crew	Prayer Shawl
Maintenance	Lutefisk Dinner	Tesfa Tutors
Bus Drivers	Matter of Balance	The Gathering
Caller & Mailings	Class	WELCA
CCG Group	Meals on Wheels	Women's Circles
Drama Group	Mission	Worship & Tech
Farmers Market	Workshop	Assistants
Gardeners	Money Counters	Young at Heart
55 + Singles		

*My apologies if your ministry team was not mentioned. Please contact the church office to add your ministry to the listing, or for information to get connected.*

## Building Operations & Administration—Julie Wilson

**H**ave you ever wondered what goes on in the background? What makes our church run so smoothly? It is so clean and well taken care of. I had the privilege of going from a member to church staff overseeing this building and administration team mid-year, during an epidemic and creative programming. I can tell you it takes a village! What a wonderful team of staff and volunteers we have at FLCCH.

### SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2020:

Did you know that much of the work around here is done by our amazing team of volunteers? They complement our remarkable staff and help us to not only be good stewards but build relationships with one another – the volunteers bring expertise in the various areas required to manage a building like this but also a spirit of benevolence and investment in the mission that happens out of this building, even during a pandemic! Many of the men of FLCCH worked to maintain the playground and again, demonstrated the benefit of relationships, working together for something important to each of us, while simultaneously being good stewards.

FLCCH has done a remarkable job maintaining communication this year. While many of us have experienced a lot of isolation over the past year, we have also adapted to find ways to engage and continue to create space for connection. Zoom (who knew

what that was before 2020?), outdoor meals, services, events, music! And mailings, mailings, mailings!

Joyce Weaver and our volunteers have done a fabulous job getting these messages out to our FLCCH family. We have utilized our website, Facebook, YouTube, Constant Contact and emails, physical signs, and good old fashioned Postal Service to ensure you not only know what is going on but have responded to volunteer and financial needs that have occurred this year, and the needs of our community. Not to mention, the extraordinary gift of equipment for improving the online worship experience.

The kitchen stayed busy during this unprecedented year, with community meals, meals for After School kids, TESFA school children, preparing cookies and baskets for many. Outdoor propane heaters were purchased to continue outdoor ministries as the weather got colder! Adapt. Adapt. Adapt.

We continue to have a strong partnership with TESFA. Although, with all schools, Tesfa has had seasons of the school year that have been distance learning – we are all anxious to have the kiddos back in the building the end of January!

We implemented and continued to adapt in our COVID precautions in the building to ensure safety for our staff and volunteers, and small events.



Additionally, FLCCH was working with two new grant funded projects this year.

- 1) The generous grant from Anoka County for our Gathering Ministry. We were able to do a lot of upgrades, big and small to the shared Youth / Gathering space, as well as the Library, which will continue to host caregiver support groups as we open up.
- 2) FLCCH was the recipient of a grant through the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) to continue the work of the parking lot and rain gardens. The resurfacing of the parking lot began, as well as the development of native gardens along the walk way.

Journeying with you,  
Julie Wilson  
Operations & Finance Manager

## Faith Community Nurse Report—Jane Bugbee

**F**lexibility is my word for 2020 as your Faith Community Nurse (FCN)! With shut-downs and restrictions of our usual work, flexibility has kept me going this past year. Flexibility is used often on our Mission Jamaica Mission trips which we were able to go in 2020, but sadly, not for 2021.

I began as your FCN in November of 2010, just as our dear member, Adelyn Rime's kidneys started to fail. Adelyn was my first parish nurse visit at Methodist Hospital. Back then, I provided nursing education about her dialysis future. I continued on with her dialysis journey over the years, and then supported her decision to end dialysis a few months ago. I was honored to say goodbye and give her communion one last time at Ark on the River Hospice, and then speak at her funeral. Wow!

Despite not being able to visit physically with our members at hospitals, assisted living facilities, or in their homes, I feel closer to our members than ever thanks to making hundreds of phone calls. I have helped our FLC members reach out to members via Community Connection Groups and Christmas Groups.

A joy for me was All-Saints Day. Who knew a small brass bell could bring such joy and tears! This year, I delivered a little brass bell, along with condolences and instructions for families that had lost a FLC loved one for our All-Saints Day on-line service. Families were able to ring their bells when their family member's name was spoken during our on-line service. Delivering the bells brought me much joy and immense tears of joy to the recipients!

I was honored to speak at the Prayer Vigil on Nov. 1, communicating about how the pandemic has affected our FLC seniors who have been isolated from family and friends. Pastor Bonnie allowed everyone to "scream!" out loud for them!

Grant writing despite the pandemic has continued to be a joy! This year we received a grant for a new AED thru Allina Heart Safe program, along with a rebate for our ten-year-old AED we returned to the manufacturer.

Another grant from Anoka County for the Gathering program held at FLC brought us \$10,000 for room improvements for our elderly dementia clients. We are still getting improvements purchased, but soon we will have new cabinets, a smart TV, microphones, and other items to make the Gathering technologically better for our seniors, along with sharing with the youth who use this room. Unfortunately, a sink that would have been nice, just is not to be in the 1922 part of our building!

M Health Fairview will be sending the After-School Program \$500 before the end of the year to support our kids with food and a hand sanitizer station.

Cooking for the After-School home delivery program all summer, and continuing into this fall and winter twice a week has given me joy. Despite the kids being stuck at home learning, not being able to come to FLC, we are able to check in with these at-risk kids and provide a hot meal twice a week.

Hopefully 2021 will bring renewal and healing from the pandemic, just as the vaccines are being shipped to Minnesota and inoculations begin today!

In Christ,  
Jane Bugbee



“Dear First Lutheran,  
Thank you for the Nov. 1 All-Saints service that included my husband's name and photograph. All my kids watched the service and rang their bells along with me! We appreciate your thoughtfulness for our family.”



## Community Garden Report—Dan Fishbeck

**I**n its seventh year, 2020 brought unique challenges for the FLC Community Garden stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic. During this year of uncertainty, widespread food insecurity and social distancing, the garden team modified several processes to ensure everyone would remain safe and healthy. Social distancing is easily accomplished in a garden of this size!



With good weather, water, and soil, the garden again produced well over 2000 pounds of fresh and healthy vegetables. Produce was distributed at the Sunday Farmer's Market at FLC and the after-school program (both drive-up). The pandemic also had negative impacts for SACA. The FLC garden provided hundreds of pounds of fresh produce to SACA (delivered by Linda Fowler-Pettigrew) to help bridge the gaps in the food chain within our community. The curbside Sunday meals at FLC also utilized the bounty from the bumper crop we were blessed with this year.

In 2019, three flowering crab trees were planted on the north side of the garden. The trees are doing very well and produced beautiful flowers to welcome

spring and now have fruit that will remain on the trees until spring which will help feed migrating birds. A fourth flowering crab was planted this year to complete the grouping.

Spring bulbs planted in the fall of 2019 brought a burst of color as they popped up, even while snow was on the ground.

The garden and its surrounding flowing plants have been installed to help the pollinators in our midst that are so important to a balanced ecosystem.

2021 will be the eighth year of the FLC garden. It has grown and seen many improvements over these years. This coming season will be a year to rebuild several vegetable bed frames that are disintegrating. Maintenance and rebuilding work will reduce the total number of beds planted in 2021. This is necessary in order to keep the health and wellbeing of the garden space in proper condition. Planning over the winter will determine which beds need repair as well as other maintenance items. Crop selection for next year will be carefully considered to ensure the "favorites" with high demand are prioritized for spring planting.

Thanks to the many volunteers who have assisted in the garden in so many ways! Additional garden volunteers are always welcomed and appreciated, contact Dan if you're interested, no experience required! As we head into another winter, visions for next year begin to sprout anew!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dan Fishbeck



## Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner - January 2020!



**Thank you to the many Lutefisk Dinner volunteers who worked to feed over 1000 people on Jan. 19, 2020!**  
**And to Committee Members: Ruth Dodson, Dorothy Markowitz, Sonja Super, Michelle Young, Cheryl Ballingrud.**  
**We appreciate all your hard work and commitment to support our church and community with this spectacular meal. We look forward to seeing you, and its return!**



## Report of the Board of Finance—Chad Habeck

Dear First Lutheran Family,

The year 2020 will certainly go down as one for the books. We started the year out like normal, and then mid-March, boom! A global pandemic hits like a ton of bricks and turns everyone and everything on its head.

From a finance perspective, we went into the year with a budget projecting a loss of about \$47,000 and the plan was to use funds from our special projects undesignated gifts bucket to cover this shortfall. We also had a goal of a 5% increase in overall giving to try and offset this shortfall. We also had a budget in total offerings at about \$390,000 and special gifts at \$70,000.

Then in March, with COVID - 19 spreading, gatherings and in person worship were put on hold. So, all of a sudden, we couldn't worship in person. And as a result, we start having budget discussions to figure out a plan for how to navigate these uncharted waters. We of course, had lots of questions. How are our members that give their gifts using envelopes or cash in person going to continue to support FLC? How do we make sure we still are able to pay our normal bills? What do we do about staffing if we are not meeting at church? Do we continue to pay them their normal salary? Do we have to think about furlough? What about income from Tesfa, the charter school that we share space with. How are they and our monthly rent from them impacted?

All of these questions with the virus situation and rules and advice constantly changing, made for an interesting year to say the least.

So, nine months later, how are we doing? How did we do?

First of all, we continued to keep all full-time staff at full time. Unfortunately, we had to decrease hours for a few part-time folks, but this was due to the fact that with no in-person gathering, there wasn't the need.

We applied for and received a loan from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) as part of the federal government Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) act. This program provides small businesses with funds to pay up to 8 weeks of payroll costs including benefits. Funds are provided in the form of loans that will be fully forgiven when used for payroll costs, interest on mortgages, rent, and utilities. Thanks to the work of our business administrator, we applied immediately for this loan, and in mid-April, we received \$103,000. In the months that followed, we followed the guidelines and terms of the loan and thankfully received confirmation that our loan had been forgiven. That's right, it became a grant and does not need to be repaid.

Our church set up online worship and also decided to provide meals every Sunday via drive up. What a HUGE success both of these have been. This gave us all a chance to worship together, albeit virtually, and gave folks a chance to come to church to get a meal. And lots of you came to not only get meals, but to drop off your giving envelopes or to pray with a pastor or just to say hello as you drove through.

Our estimated envelope giving is down about \$30,000 from budget, but considering how hard this virus has been on our economy, we are very pleased and grateful to our congregation for their continued support. God bless you all!



However, our special gifts for the year is trending to be up by \$30,000, so that means from an income standpoint, we are on budget in a year with a global pandemic. Absolutely amazing. God is good and so are our members.

And thankfully Tesfa was still able to maintain their financial commitments for the year, even though they had a smaller number of students.

Add it all up, and we on the finance board can honestly say that we are very pleased and blessed and thankful to all of our members and community for their amazing support.

One other item of note. Our business administrator for the last three years, Dave Reilly, ended up leaving us late in the year and thankfully our own Julie Wilson stepped in to help and is now on staff learning the ropes and doing a great job for us in this position. Thank you Dave for your time with us and welcome Julie!

Lastly, I'd like to thank the other members of this board for helping me navigate this strange and challenging year, I couldn't do it without you: Rock Hauser, Chris Larson, Rebecca Dodson, Wendy Watson, Blaine Barnhart and David Hagen.

Respectfully and faithfully submitted,

Chad Habeck  
Chair, Board of Finance

## Memorial and Endowment Committee Report

### Members:

#### Council Appointments

John Peterson	Chair	<u>Term Expires</u> January 2022
Chad Habeck	Vice Chair	January 2021
Robert Nelson	Secretary	January 2023
Chris Larson	Treasurer	January 2023
Paul Turner		January 2023
Drew Stolba		January 2021

The terms of Chad Habeck and Drew Stolba will expire. The Committee highly recommends their appointment to another 3-year term.

Board of Worship Appointment:	Faith White	January 2021
Board of Spiritual Growth	Char Zarich	January 2021
Church Treasurer:	Chris Larson	January 2023

Thank you to Faith White and Char Zarich for their service to the Committee. Representatives from the Boards of Worship and Spiritual Growth will be needed for 2021.

### Description of Funds

The Memorial Fund consists of gifts received from congregation members and friends in memory of loved ones. These gifts are often designated for a program or activity that was near and dear to the individual being memorialized. The Endowment Fund consists of gifts given for the long-term, future benefit of the congregation, as well as the earnings generated by those gifts. The Endowment Fund is a "permanent" fund in that the gifts received - or principal - are held in perpetuity ("Dollars Forever"). Only the earnings generated by investing these gifts are spent.

### Summary of 2020 Activities

**THE GOAL FOR THE ENDOWMENT FUND IN 2020 WAS TO INCREASE ITS UNDESIGNATED BASE BY 3%, WHICH IS \$30,400.00. Attained.**

The Committee fulfilled the following requests for 2020 expenditures: Playground Loan Repayment \$3,750.00; Computer server equipment \$10,513.00; ELCA; College Scholarship Awards \$3,000.00; Benevolences \$27,387.00 (Allocated by the Finance Board) and Playground Equipment \$1,700.00

Total \$46,350.00

### Planned Activities for 2021

**THE GOAL FOR THE ENDOWMENT FUND IN 2021 IS TO INCREASE ITS UNDESIGNATED BASE BY 3%, WHICH IS \$30,875.00.**

The Committee has received the following requests for 2021 expenditures: Playground Loan Repayment \$2,339.25; Purchase & install Sanctuary equipment for live worship streaming & recording \$21,390.00; ELCA Youth Gathering \$3,150.00 (Carry-over from 2020); College Scholarship Awards \$3,000.00; Benevolences \$22,500.00 (To be allocated by the Finance Board)

Total \$49,229.25

Bob Nelson,  
Secretary

## First Lutheran Church Financial Cash Balances 2020



**LIVING CONNECTED**  
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

*Please Note: In light of COVID and personnel transitions, financial reporting is being finalized at the time of printing.*

2020 Cash Balances	General Checking	Special Project	Debt Savings	Mortgage & Maintenance	Scrip Program	Perpetual Reserve	Memorial	Endowment	TOTALS
Jan. 1	\$ 13,244	\$ 269,720	\$ 7,947	\$ 33,736	\$ 10,739	\$ 106,314	\$ 34,870	\$ 1,243,899	\$1,820,469
Dec. 31	\$ 83,310	\$ 515,321	\$ 18,216	\$ 5,213	\$ 10,739	\$ 107,176	\$ 42,676	\$ 1,273,370	\$2,106,021
Net Change:	\$ 70,066	\$ 245,601	\$ 10,269	\$ (78,523)	\$ -	\$ 862	\$ 7,806	\$ 29,471	\$ 285,552

### 2020 Benevolence Offerings:

2020 Benevolence Offerings	2020 Budget	2020 Actuals	Difference
Mpls ELCA	\$ 24,237.00	\$ 24,000	\$ 237
WAPO Bible Camp	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000	\$ -
Crestview			\$ -
Pushpa	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,700	\$ (700)
Meals On Wheels	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500	\$ -
Prison Ministry			\$ -
Alexandra House			\$ -
SACA*	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 7,171	\$ (4,171)
Mission Jamaica*	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 5,047	\$ (3,047)
Lutheran Soc. Svc			\$ -
Hope 4 Youth*	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 3,066	\$ (1,066)
Sheridan Story	\$ 2,650.00	\$ 2,650	\$ -
Other	\$ -	\$ 872	\$ (872)
Benevolence Total:	\$ 40,387.00	\$ 50,006	\$ (9,619)
*SACA offset by fundraising			
*Mission Jamaica & Hope 4 Youth offset by Special Offerings			

### Christmas Memorials 2020



*It has been a long tradition of honoring loved ones, living and departed, with sentiment and beauty during the Christmas season. Thank you for honoring your loved ones and helping to beautify our worship space this Christmas season.*

- \* **In memory of loved ones**  
Silvia Okerstrom & Mike
- \* **In loving memory of Russ & Mae Lyons and Homer & Margaret Needle**  
Curt Lyons & Kathy Needle
- \* **In loving memory of Glenn Fishbeck**  
Carolyn & Dan Fishbeck
- \* **In loving memory of my parents**  
Rev. Bonnie Wilcox
- \* **In memory of Luke John Crotteau**  
With love from his family
- \* **In memory of Mick & Joan Aasen**  
With love from their family
- \* **In memory of John Aasen Jr. and Philip Aasen**  
With love from their family



*Dear First Lutheran,*

*We want you to know how much we have been enjoying the services of First Lutheran Church. Christmas Eve was so beautiful! So was the Concordia service.*

*We live in Missouri now, having moved in 2017 to be near children and grandchildren... First Lutheran is near and dear to my heart. I am so thankful for this by-product of Covid--online church. May you, and the church, be blessed in this coming year."*

### Worship with us!

Join us for Online Worship 'live' on Sunday mornings at 10 AM, or preview any past worship service, including our beautiful Christmas service. Visit First Lutheran's website: [flcch.org](http://flcch.org) or find us on FLC Facebook & YouTube.





First Lutheran Church  
1555 40th Avenue NE / Columbia Heights, MN 55421-3195  
WEB: [flcch.org](http://flcch.org) / PH: 763-788-9653

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## RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

**SUNDAY ONLINE  
WORSHIP 10 AM  
YOUTUBE &  
FACEBOOK LIVE**

**SUNDAY MEAL  
SERVED CURBSIDE  
DRIVE-THRU  
11 AM—12 PM**

CHURCH OFFICE  
is currently closed due to  
COVID-19 crisis.  
Please check our website:  
[flcch.org](http://flcch.org) or call for any  
updates: 763-788-9653

**2020... “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...”**

