



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



ANNUAL REPORT

2019



TABLE OF CONTENTS
Annual Meeting
January 26, 2020 – 9:30 a.m.

Light of Christ Lutheran Church
3976 County Line Road SE, Delano MN 55328

Page

1	Roster of 2019 Council and Committees
2	Agenda
3-4	Minutes of January 27, 2019 Annual Meeting
5	Pastor Bruce Kuenzel
6-7	Children, Youth & Family Ministries – Kirsten Kelly, Catherine Borman, Kim Wortz
8	Shared Ministry Coordinator – Jinnelle Weis

COMMITTEE AND GROUP REPORTS

9	Community Life Committee
9	Endowment Committee
9	Finance Committee
9	Library Committee
9-10	Mission/Evangelism Committee
10	Mutual Ministry
11	Personnel Committee
11	Property Committee
11	Small Group Ministry
12	Stewardship Committee
12	Worship and Music Committee
13	Altar Guild
13	Birthday Party Ministry
13	Sisters of LOC
13	Social Justice Ministry
14	Women of Light of Christ
15-16	Youth Fund Financial Report
17-20	Treasurer's Report
21	Membership Statistics
22	Bishop's Annual Report

CHURCH COUNCIL & COMMITTEE ROSTER

January 27, 2019 to January 2020

Light of Christ Lutheran Church, Delano, Minnesota

CHURCH COUNCIL

(3-year terms)

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Brenna Demeules
Dennis Lohmann
Dave Wuerger

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Kylee Amdor
Dan Langner
Wes Aylsworth

Term expires Jan. 2022:

Bob Gielau
Elizabeth Kohlhof
Tom Sebelien

TREASURER:

Brenna Demeules

FINANCE ADMIN.:

Debbie Johnson

COMMITTEES:

(Committees are 2-year terms, with exceptions noted.)

CHILDREN & FAMILY

MINISTRY TEAM

Preschool - Grade 6

2nd Tuesday, 6:45pm

Council Rep: Kylee Amdor

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Jen Burbach
Shannon Durick (5th tm)
April Fritz
Melissa Hillmyer
Laura Jaunich (2nd term)
Tara Olson (4th term)

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Susie Larison
Lori Prickett
Kim Wortz

THRIVENT ADVOCATES:

Mary Johnson
Bill Weis

SYNOD ASSEMBLY

(May 3-4, 2019 mtg.)

YOUTH & FAMILY

MINISTRY TEAM

Grades 7-12

2nd Tuesday, 6:30pm

Council Rep: Dan Langner

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Annette McClelland (2nd tm)
Anne Rothstein (2nd term)

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Lesley Berscheid
Holly Caple
Gwen Egly (2nd term)
Andrea Quandt
Lisa Schmit

COMMUNITY LIFE

2nd Tuesday, 6:30pm

Council Rep: Elizabeth Kohlhof

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Heidi Goldbeck (3rd term)
Jennifer Grant (4th term)
Kelly Harstad (2nd term)
Melanie Paulson (2nd term)

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Mary Allen (2nd term)
Becky Coyle (2nd term)
Bonnie Czanstkowski (3rd tm)
Jen Droneck (2nd term)
Tracy Magner
Candace Mielke (2nd term)
Jeanne Schansberg
Wendy Towne

ENDOWMENT

Amy Bigot (1-year term)
Jonathan Ness (2-year term)
Brian Harstad (3-year term)

EVANGELISM/MISSION

Meets as needed

Council Rep: Bob Gielau

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Jessie Aylsworth
Lona Jose (4th term)
Becky Schaust
Traci Torgerson

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Wendy Towne

FINANCE

Council Rep: Brenna Demeules

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Carol Henry

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Lee Ashfeld
Steven Dickey (2nd term)
Rob Geistfeld (2nd term)

LIBRARY

2nd Tuesday, 11:00 am

Council Rep:

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Jan Styve

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Dorothy Henry
Sharon Sebelien

MUTUAL MINISTRY

(appointed by Pastor & President)

Amy Bigot
Kevin Jaunich
Paul Ludwig
Stacy VanCura
Natasha Werner
Adam Wortz

NOMINATING (5

needed)

(1 yr. term, expires 1/20)

Robin Olson
Jeff Rubertus

PERSONNEL

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Vicki Noetzelman
Robin Olson

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Rhonda Almquist
Rhonda Current (through 2019)
Melissa Hillmyer
JoMarie Williamson

PROPERTY

2nd Tuesday, 6:30pm

Council Rep: Tom Sebelien

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Mike Boyack (2nd term)
Scott Dallmann
Peter Grant
John McClelland (2nd tm)
Dan Torfin (4th term)
Bill Weis

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Aaron Amdor (3rd term)
Stan Droneck
Kevin Rothstein (2nd tm)
Bob Slipka (2nd term)

SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

Meets as needed

Council Rep:

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Penny Bailey (3rd term)

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Gina Nee (2nd term)

STEWARDSHIP

2nd Tuesday, 6:30pm

Council Rep: Dennis Lohmann

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Amy Bigot
Laurie Langner

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Cheri Ashfeld
Tim Johnson
Stacy VanCura (2nd term)

WORSHIP & MUSIC

2nd Tuesday, 6:30 pm

Council Rep: Dave Wuerger

Term expires Jan. 2020:

Sue Fink
Barb Russell

Term expires Jan. 2021:

Brad Goldbeck
Kara Larson
MaryAnn McKay

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

January 26, 2020 – 9:30 a.m.

Light of Christ Lutheran Church - 3976 County Line Road SE, Delano, MN 55328

1. Call to Order
2. Devotions
3. Approve Agenda
4. Approve Minutes
 - a. 2019 Annual Meeting
5. Pastor's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
 - a. Narrative Budget
 - b. 2019 Financial Statement
 - c. 2020 Proposed Budget
7. 2020 Ballot for Council/Committees
8. Committee Reports
9. Capital Campaign Update
10. Columbarium Update
11. Closing Prayer
12. Motion to Adjourn

Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes – January 27, 2019
Light of Christ Lutheran Church
3976 County Line Road SE, Delano, MN 55328

1. Meeting called to order at 9:33 a.m.
2. Devotions
3. Motion to approve the agenda
 - a. Motion – Tim Current
 - b. 2nd – Brenna Demeules
 - c. Motion carries
4. Motion to approve the minutes of the 2018 Annual Meeting
 - a. Motion – Jinnelle Weis
 - b. 2nd – Brad Goldbeck
 - c. Motion carries
5. Motion to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2018 Meeting
 - a. Motion – Becky Schaust
 - b. 2nd – Laurie Langner
 - c. Motion carries
6. Motion to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2018
 - a. Motion – Gwen Egly
 - b. 2nd – Vicki Noetzelman
 - c. Motion carries
7. Motion to approve Pastor's report (Pgs 6-11)
 - a. Motion – Darrell Egly
 - b. 2nd – Fred Caslavka
 - c. Motion carries
8. Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report
 - a. Narrative Budget
 - i. Discussion regarding special funds. Suggestion to have request for information from the congregation regarding some of these funds.
 - b. Motion to approve the 2018 Financial Statement
 - i. Motion – Wes Aylsworth
 - ii. 2nd – Jinnelle Weis
 - iii. Motion carries
 - c. Motion to approve the 2019 Proposed Budget
 - i. Motion – Wes Aylsworth
 - ii. 2nd – Becky Schaust
 - iii. Motion carries
9. Endowment Fund
 - a. Motion to establish an endowment fund and transfer funds from the Mission Investment Fund.
 - i. Motion – Brenna Demeules
 - ii. 2nd – Tim Current
 - iii. Motion carries
10. Motion to accept the candidates for the positions listed on the 2019 Ballot for Council/Committees – JoMarie Williamson and Stacy VanCura will continue on their respective committees also.
 - a. Motion – Brad Goldbeck
 - b. 2nd – Vicki Noetzelman
 - c. Motion carries

11. Motion to adopt the 2018 Committee Reports
 - a. Motion – Sue Fink
 - b. 2nd – Dave Wuerger
 - c. Motion carries
12. Capital Campaign
13. Columbarium Update
14. Closing prayer
15. Motion to adjourn at 10:43 a.m.
 - a. Motion – Brenna Demeules
 - b. 2nd – Wes Alysworth
 - c. Motion carries

REPORT OF THE PASTOR
Bruce Kuenzel, Pastor

Dear sisters and brothers,

2019 has been an exciting, growing year! We have been blessed in so many ways! We have so much to celebrate!

- **Over \$345,000 has been pledged** to our New Day Capital Campaign, and over **\$154,000 of the pledged amount was given in 2019**. As a result, we've already **saved \$22,000** in mortgage interest on our Education Wing.
- We welcomed new staff leadership for our ministries: **Katie Kohler** as our full-time Worship and Music Director, and **Catherine (Cat) Borman and Kim Wortz** have joined **Kirsten Kelly** as a permanent part of our Children, Youth and Family staff team.
- We rejoiced with 55 of our second, third, and fourth graders as they received their **First Communion** this fall, and with 21 of our tenth graders as they **affirmed their baptismal faith**.
- We rejoiced to **welcome 31 new members** into our family of faith by transfer or by affirmation of faith and welcomed **16 infants through the Sacrament of Baptism**.
- We established the Light of Christ **Endowment Fund**.
- We launched a new **Healing and Wholeness** ministry with a special focus on mental health and wellness. We hosted a speaker from the National Alliance on Mental Illness and we held our first "Blue Christmas Service" in December.
- * We are broadening our service to the poor by ramping up our **Fifth Sunday offerings** by adding a hands-on service component to each of our Fifth Sunday designated ministries.
- We have started planning for the construction of a **Light of Christ Columbarium** in 2020.
- * Our financial generosity for the year was one of our best ever. We gave over **\$528,000** in our regular offerings which means **we ended 2019 about \$12,000 in the black**. In addition, we gave \$154,000 in giving to our New Day capital campaign for **a total of over \$682,000**.

So a heart-felt "thank you" for all you've done in the past year: to our excellent, dedicated staff; our energetic, thoughtful Church Council members; our ministry leaders in worship and music, property, finance, stewardship, personnel, children and family, youth and family, community life, small groups, mutual ministry, etc.

"Thank you" for being a part of the Holy Spirit's transforming work – for being transformed by Christ's love, and for being about the business of transforming other lives by that same love. It is a privilege and a joy to partner with you in the work and gift of transformation. You are a blessing and a gift to me and I look forward to what the future holds for our life together.

Rejoicing in the Lord and in you,

Pastor K

2019 Annual Report for Children, Youth & Family Ministries (Preschool – Grade 12)

Submitted by Kirsten Kelly, Catherine Borman and Kim Wortz (in consultation with the Children, Youth and Family Ministry Teams)

This has been another transitional year for the Children, Youth & Family (CYF) Ministries at Light of Christ. We were sad to see David Schneck leave staff but are proud of him for following God's call and using his gifts in pursuit of caring for creation. Now we welcome Catherine Borman and Kim Wortz as part-time staff working with our children and give thanks for being "full strength" once again! We look to the future with anticipation and excitement and truly feel blessed to have so many kids, youth and families involved in the ministries at Light of Christ. We continually invite more and more volunteers to join us on the adventure... we hope you will consider what your role might be as well!

Below is a summary of CYF ministries that took place in 2019. The numbers don't define us but give an idea of what is happening. It has been a great year! We count it as a blessing and honor to walk with families on their faith journey! Thank you for your continued love and support of all the ministries at Light of Christ.

- **NEW** Good Friday Family Worship and Cross Crafts to partner with families during Holy Week.
- **NEW** initiative to lower the age for First Communion at LOC. A planning team was assembled (thank you Aaron Amdor, Melissa Hillmyer and Gina Nee for participating!) as we navigate these changes. 59 2nd-4th grade kids celebrated their 1st Communion this fall and all ages are invited to participate in the class and celebration this spring! Moving forward, we will have a class/celebration each spring and children of all ages will be welcome at the table. Each family will make their own decision about when their child will participate in First Communion.
- **NEW** Spring Sunday School offering project and "Noisy Offering" benefitting the ELCA Global Barnyard raised \$1,447.97 which was enough to purchase: 2 cows, 3 goats, 3 pigs, 100 chicks and 4 sets of farming tools/seeds.
- **NEW** Confirmation Family Matters Events – speakers on topics related to youth/families.
- **NEW** Advent Family Event (making Advent Wreaths) with over 75 kids/families in attendance.
- Year 3 of Spark (Wednesday after school ministry for grades 2-6) – each week we have about 15-25 youth participate as we learn about different foundational pieces of our faith! **NEW** this year... a recap of what kids learned is shared in worship at the end of their 4-week session.
- 171 children currently registered for the 2019-2020 Sunday School year.
- 65 kids registered for Confirmation during the 2019-2020 school year.
- Organized several Confirmation service events such as FMSC, Global Health Kits, etc.
- Several special events during Sunday School – 150 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes filled and sent to children in need, 20 fleece tie blankets made for Love INC and The Crisis Nursery, flowerpots decorated for local nursing homes and special fridge magnets made for mothers.
- 9 high school youth attended the Ski Trip to Buck Hill in January.
- Kirsten Kelly & David Schneck attended the ELCA Extravaganza (continuing ed) in January.
- Youth Fundraiser in February was a huge success and raised over \$7,600!
- In February, 9 kids in grades 5-6 attend our afternoon retreat at the Monticello Community Center (swimming, rock climbing and basketball).
- Children sang in worship several times throughout the year.
- Bible Camp Fundraising Event in April raised nearly \$1000 for the Camp Scholarship Fund.
- Summer Ministries:
 - 43 kids attended Bible camp at Ox Lake and Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp in Amery, WI in June. This is an increase of 30 kids from the previous summer!
 - 9 HS girls and 3 adult leaders went on the HS Mission Trip to the Black Hills, SD serving through Outlaw Ranch near Custer State Park. They had an incredible trip!
 - 7 HS boys and 2 adult leaders went on the high adventure trip to Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp in July and had an awesome experience!

(continued from previous page)

- 38 youth attended our Serve and Splash event in July. We packed meals at Feed My Starving Children and then went to Zero Gravity Trampoline Park (due to rain).
- 75 children (preschool – 4th grade) attended Vacation Bible School the end of July; 20+ adults and 24 youth (grades 5-12) volunteered to make it a success!
- 29 youth went to Valleyfair with LOC for a fun day of fellowship in August!
- Staff led many children's messages in worship including the Blessing of the Backpacks.
- Worked with Katie Kohler on the Christmas Program – 34 children participated in the cast and all Sunday School children were encouraged to participate in the chorus. They did a great job!
- Many administrative tasks (bulletin, newsletter, parent emails, staff meetings, budget, etc).
- Staff led monthly meetings for the CFM and YFM Teams. We are so grateful for these volunteers that give so much to ensure the ministries get carried out and go smoothly!

Current Children & Family Ministry Team members: Kylee Amdor (Council rep), Catherine Borman (staff), Jen Burbach, Shannon Durick, April Fritz, Melissa Hillmyer, Laura Jaunich, Kirsten Kelly (staff), Susie Larison, Tara Olson, Lori Prickett and Kim Wortz (staff).

Current Youth & Family Ministry Team members: Lesley Berscheid, Holly Caple, Gwen Egly, Kirsten Kelly (staff), Dan Langner (Council rep), Annette McClelland, Andrea Quandt, Anne Rothstein and Lisa Schmit.

Children, Youth and Family Ministry Goals for 2020:

1. Continue to provide more opportunities for families with children birth – age 3 to connect with others and grow in faith as a family.
 - a. Provide Splash Newsletters (monthly age-appropriate newsletters for birth – age 3)
 - b. Quarterly activities between worship for families with young children
 - c. Explore the possibility of adding a 2-year-old Sunday School class for parents and kids
2. Work with volunteers to provide additional fellowship events for kids/families in grades 5-9.
3. Continue to invite and involve more dads/men to be involved in the Children, Youth and Family Ministries (such as teachers, Guides and on ministry teams) at Light of Christ.

Thank you for your support and partnership in the ministries at Light of Christ!

Kirsten Kelly

Director of CYF Ministries

Catherine Borman

Family Events Coordinator

Kim Wortz

Sunday School Coordinator

SHARED MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT
Jinnelle Weis, Shared Ministry Coordinator

Light of Christ has a strong history as a faith body committed to **Shared Leadership**. Participation from everyone is encouraged. Only with Shared Leadership can Light of Christ reach its maximum potential as a church body. And, with participation our volunteers benefit in creating new relationships, enjoy new friendships, create new support systems and strengthen faith.

Each of us is blessed with God given talents and gifts. They may all be different, but they are all valuable and are all meant to be shared. **And, share you did in 2019!** Light of Christ had over 85 members sharing their gifts through participation in church council and committees. With support of volunteers we continue to have a vibrant Sunday School and Confirmation program. We had approximately 31 persons contributing as worship assistants every Sunday morning. One of the greatest blessings of assisting in worship is the ability to do so as a family – involving youth in worship services emphasizes our belief that children are an integral part of worship at Light of Christ.

With support of volunteers, 2019 brought new hospitality/fellowship opportunities between worship services, we established multiple task force groups to move forward changes in First communion for our youth, Columbarium exploration, New Day initiatives and communications audit review. An experienced usher mentor group is available to assist persons wanting to serve in this capacity on Sunday mornings. Talented Light of Christ members have graced our Sanctuary with beautiful new banners and other seasonal decorating. Volunteers regularly assist with office support in a variety of ways. And, as sponsor families and congregation, you participated in welcoming several new families to Light of Christ throughout the year. Light of Christ members have offered their time and energies to multiple philanthropic programs within our Delano community and beyond.

Time, talent and dedication shared in too many ways to list – volunteers are a true blessing to Light of Christ.

As we look forward to 2020, prayerfully consider the gifts you have to offer. Light of Christ will have stronger fellowship, more new and relevant programs and greater outreach as we commit ourselves to 100% participation! A sincere and very grateful **THANK YOU** to each person that volunteered in 2019 – you make a difference for everyone that connects in any way with our church family!

Respectively Submitted
Jinnelle Weis

COMMUNITY LIFE COMMITTEE

Committee members: Mary Allen, Becky Coyle, Bonnie Czanstkowski, Jennifer Droneck, Heidi Goldbeck (chair), Jennifer Grant, Kelly Harstad, Elizabeth Kohlhof (council rep), Tracy Magner, Candace Mielke, Melanie Paulson, Jeanne Schansberg, Wendy Towne

No report submitted.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Committee members: Amy Bigot, Brian Harstad, Jonathan Ness, Pastor Kuenzel

The Light of Christ Endowment Committee was newly created for 2019 to establish and oversee the new Light of Christ Endowment Fund. The committee has three members including Brian Harstad as Chair, Amy Bigot as Secretary and Jonathan Ness as Treasurer, serving staggered terms. An Endowment Fund is an account separate from the church's operating and building capital funds, which is designed to accept and hold both current and future contributions and estate gifts for the purpose of making distributions for ministry.

The committee drafted the Endowment Fund Bylaws, which define the committee roles, investment policy and distribution policy. These were approved by the church Council and an initial contribution to establish the fund of \$25,000 was made from the church savings. The fund is managed through the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust, with reinvestment of earnings back into the fund. As of October 31st, the fund had increased in value to \$25,530. An endowment giving choice was added to the church's online website as another option for giving.

The committee is working to increase awareness of the fund and its ministry giving, plan future Legacy Giving workshops, and develop a process for making our first distribution to one or more ministries. We look forward to starting those processes in 2020.

Respectfully submitted by Brian Harstad

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Committee members: Lee Ashfeld, Brenna Demeules (council rep), Steven Dickey, Rob Geistfeld, Carol Henry

No report submitted.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Committee members: Dorothy Henry, Sharon Sebelien, Jan Styve, and John McKisson, our council rep, who passed away this past year. We miss his dedication and appreciate his time and generosity.

The committee:

- Started a gospel music CD collection, thanks to John
- Maintained the library with our easy self-check-out system
- Took part in Fire Fest in September where we handed out bookmarks to encourage readership

Respectfully submitted by Jan Styve

MISSION/EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Jessie Aylsworth (Chairperson), Lona Jose, Becky Schaust, Traci Torgerson, Wendy Towne, and Bob Gielau (Council Rep.)

This committee is responsible for evangelism to current and potential members to help make LOC a welcoming church home. Our mission outreach calls us as Christ's disciples to extend compassion and serve those in need in our local and global community.

Outreach in 2019

- **5th Sunday Offerings** – special offering opportunities above & beyond your regular giving on months with 5 Sundays. Donations put in special 5th Sunday envelopes or designated on check go to the special cause.
 - March – Delano Food Shelf – “Pack the Pews” drive brought in 278 lbs. & \$1,457

(continued from previous page)

- June – Karen Anderson – ELCA Missionary to Chile (who works with EPES which has programs to help poor communities gain more control over their lives and health) - \$221
- September – Cart for the Food Shelf - \$546 (enough for 2 carts) plus \$150 check to them
- December – St. Stephen’s (supports people experiencing homelessness to achieve housing) – Item and cash donations accepted
- **Love INC (Love In the Name of Christ) Support**
 - Many from congregation volunteer at Love INC’s stores in Delano and Howard Lake
 - 1% of all LOC offerings is given to Love INC
 - Back to School Supply Drive in August
 - Christmas Sharing – Sponsor a Family, donate gifts or volunteer to work at their Christmas Store
 - Birthday Ministry location offered in our church
- **Helping Hands Food Shelf in Delano** (located in Community Ed. Building’s basement on Elm St.) **Support**
 - Grocery cart in narthex available all year for donations – especially need personal items and kids’ snack items
 - June and December are LOC’s months to help at Food Shelf (contact Dee Beilke if interested in helping)
- **Meal Train** (mealtrain.com) service is used to support our congregation in need. Once a need is known (contact the Pastor or church office) an email goes out to the group willing to provide meals on specific days. Anyone interested in helping provide meals please contact Holly Caple or the church office.
- **Grace Place** located in Montrose is a ministry center where the purpose is to create the space for the wider community to meet, renew, grow and work toward transformation, wholeness and fulfilled living. They provide connections of the communities’ resources with people’s needs and help build relationships with God and one another. In June Pastor Cathy Jones gave a temple talk about their ministry. Every 3rd Thursday usually there is a community meal – anyone is welcome to come. Check out their facebook page for more information.
- **Serving the Poor Task Force** - watch for future outreach activities partnering with our committee

Evangelism Activities in 2019

- **Discover Light of Christ** (Interested New Member Orientation) information meetings were held in January, April, and October. Committee members helped host offering food, childcare, and fellowship.
- **New Member Sundays** were held in February, May, and November welcoming total of 12 family units to our LOC family. Committee members welcomed the new members with corsages and small gifts for the children.
- **Dog Days Supper and Worship in August** - special invitation was sent to the past year’s new members to attend
- **Summer “Put a Name to a Face”** – committee puts out nametags for summer worship to help promote us to get to know each other better
- **Online Member Picture Directory** – Committee had photo booth at their Rally Day table for anyone needing a picture taken to upload to the online directory. Picture taking was also offered on several other Sundays. For anyone who has still not sent in their photos please upload your picture directly to the directory, or send a photo to the church office, or watch for upcoming photo booth offerings.

Respectfully submitted by Jessie Aylsworth

MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Committee members: Amy Bigot, Kevin Jaunich, Paul Ludwig, Stacy VanCura, Natasha Werner, Adam Wortz

This committee meets with the called staff (pastor) approximately once per quarter, or as needed, with the task of confidentially listening, encouraging and supporting.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Rhonda Almquist, Rhonda Current, Melissa Hillmyer, Vicki Noetzelman, Robin Olson, JoMarie Williamson, (chair) Pastor Bruce

No report submitted.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Committee members: Aaron Amdor, Mike Boyack, Scott Dallmann, Stan Droneck, Peter Grant, John McClelland (chair), Kevin Rothstein, Tom Sebelien (council rep), Bob Slipka, Dan Torfin, Bill Weis

With the hard winter of 2018/2019, the property committee encountered some major repairs to our campus. This along with the normal wear and tear we see every year, kept the committee very busy. Our facility is busy with many groups and organizations using the campus every day. With the age and use of the campus and the changing needs, there are many areas that require maintenance weekly and eventually replacement

Areas worked on in 2019 include:

- 1) Ice dams over music room
- 2) Water damage from ice dams in 2 classrooms, insurance claim filed, oversaw repairs
- 3) Investigated why we had ice dams, found no or lacking amounts of insulation in parts of the attic
- 4) Contracted to have insulation installed in attic to prevent future ice dams
- 5) Coordinated and oversaw installation of a new furnace and AC for sanctuary
- 6) Coordinated and oversaw installation of 2 new furnaces and AC units and 1 new water heater (this completes replacing all the old HVAC units)
- 7) Contracted an engineering company to do soil borings and a site survey to determine the type of soil under the parking lot
- 8) Obtained numerous bids on repairing or replacing the parking lot
- 9) Contracted the repair of the parking lot
- 10) Met and obtained bids for the installation of the fence around the playground (Wright County Services paid for the fence and installation)
- 11) Straightened out border around playground and installed more pea gravel
- 12) Oversaw installation of fence
- 13) Installed new cabinets and countertop in copy room
- 14) Installed shelving in Sunday school storage room
- 15) Performed many general repairs throughout the campus weekly including, weather stripping, adjusting doors and replacing door closures, plumbing repairs, spraying and pulling weeds throughout entire property, replacing exit signs, repairing parking lot lights when not working
- 16) Painted gable vent above front sanctuary doors
- 17) Obtained and reviewed contracts for mowing and snow plowing

Are you interested in performing maintenance and planning for the future in the areas of the property and the facility? Please contact anyone on the committee to see about joining.

Submitted by John McClelland

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Members: Penny Bailey (chair), Gina Nee

Small Group suggests studies for Adult Education. Sub groups include the Women's Bible Study & Social Justice Ministry. We share our resources with other groups if we have found something that may be helpful to another committee.

Respectfully submitted by Penny Bailey

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Committee members: Cheri Ashfeld, Amy Bigot, Tim Johnson, Laurie Langner, Dennis Lohmann (council rep), Stacy VanCura (chair)

No report submitted.

WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE

Members: Katie Anne Kohler (Chair), Sue Fink, Brad Goldbeck, Kara Larson, Mary Ann McKay, Dave Wuerger (Council Rep)

2019 was an exciting year for the Worship and Music program at Light of Christ. One of the most notable events was hiring Katie as the Director of Worship and Music. With the permanent and full-time position now filled, we can move forward in growing the music program.

Some of the other tasks we completed this year are listed below:

1. There were several technology updates with the purchase and installation of choir mics and a new pair of wireless mics and receivers. Pastor Bruce also received an over-ear microphone as requested. We also brought in a professional to tweak some of the details/levels on the sanctuary soundboard, as well as educate our AV volunteers. The floor monitors are now running correctly as well. A couple of the cords were not working, so it was an easy fix.
2. The second summer worship occurred on Mondays at 7 PM (versus Wednesdays two years before and the absence of a second service last year). The committee decided to keep this day/time for next year as the numbers indicated a larger attendance than Wednesday evenings.
3. Christmas Eve service times were changed from 3 and 5 PM to 2 and 4 PM with the hope of having a more even attendance.
4. We experimented with expanding some of our service styles by adding a Bluegrass service. Congregational response was very positive and we will continue adding "special" services like this.
5. The praise band will start playing in worship twice a month starting in Fall 2020. Michelle will continue leading the praise band one week and Katie will take the other week. Katie and Michelle will discuss the best way to implement these changes after the new year.
6. A hospitality committee was formed.
7. We hosted the annual Ecumenical service this year with a soup dinner after. The service ran smoothly.
8. We added an option for people to donate to St. Stephen's Ministry in lieu of poinsettias for Christmas. We will hopefully have ornament options next year.

Some future goals include:

1. Some more technology updates: the addition of a second screen and a projector update hopefully sometime in June (Katie and Brad are actively working on this), video recorded services, and an outdoor sound system so we can have more outdoor services in the summer.
2. A thriving youth choir.
3. Adding more instrumentalists to praise band.
4. Possible instrumental ensembles.

A big thank you to all the committee members and volunteers who help with the worship and music program! I'm very excited to continue working with everyone.

Peace,
Katie Kohler

ALTAR GUILD

Altar guild began its duties on November 18, 1997. At present time, we have 22 members. We sign up quarterly using SignUpGenius. Our duties consist of preparing the communion table, setting up for baptism, caring for the banners, maintaining oil for the candles, robes for the acolytes, and setting up for the Christmas Eve service. The altar guild purchases the grape juice and communion bread from Coborns grocery store in Delano, and the wine is purchased from Delano Wine and Spirits, with all items being charged to the church. All other supplies were ordered from CM Almy Company and Amazon.

Kim Wortz and Kylee Amdor share the duties as chairpersons for altar guild.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Wortz

BIRTHDAY MINISTRY

Members: Jessie Aylsworth, Ann Bassett, Brenda Dallmann, Sarah Evjen, Toby Ingebrigtsen, Ginny Iverson, Laurie Langner, MaryAnn McKay, Terri Reuter, Anne Rothstein, JoMarie Williamson

The Light of Christ Birthday Ministry is in collaboration with Love, INC-Heartland and will facilitate "shopping appointments" for neighbors in need that are referred to LOC from Love, INC.

LOC is responsible for securing donations for birthday supplies including –

- Birthday gifts appropriate for boys and girls ages 10 and under
 - Suggested maximum cost per gift of \$10.00
- Gift bags, wrapping paper, bows, etc.
- Birthday invitations, paper plates, napkins, cake mixes, frostings, balloons, candles, favors, etc.

In 2019, the Birthday Ministry has provided birthday party supplies and presents for a total of 33 children.

Respectfully submitted by Terri Reuter

SISTERS OF LOC

Committee Members: Becky Coyle, Bonnie Czanstkowski, Jen Droneck, Heidi Goldbeck, Jennifer Grant, Kelly Harstad, Tracy Magner, Candace Mielke, Melanie Paulson, Jeanne Schansberg, Wendy Towne

No report submitted.

SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

Members: Amber Becker, Carolyn Hirsch, Janine Holter, Brad Pappas, Mary Robinson, Jan Styve, JoMarie Williamson.

The Social Justice Ministry at Light of Christ follows in the steps of the Peace and Justice Ministry. Our mission is to become God's beloved community by promoting inclusion and awareness in both our Church community and the greater Delano community. Our projects in 2019 included the following:

- Carolyn Hirsch created legal rights cards to distribute to immigrants.
- Carolyn Hirsch attended the Lights for Liberty at the Sherburne County Jail - a vigil to end human detention.
- Members wrote letters to elected officials, jails and prisons with concerns about our tax dollars used for human detention.
- Members attended an Iftar meal at the Northwest Islamic Community Center in May.
- Brad Pappas attended Delano United Diversity Task Force events and meetings.

We are continuing to develop opportunities for our church to consider issues of inclusion and diversity. We welcome ideas from the congregation and would welcome more members into our ministry. We meet at 6:30 pm the fourth Tuesday of each month at Light of Christ. Please join us! "As-salamu alaykum - Peace be Upon You"

Respectfully submitted by Janine Holter

WOMEN OF LIGHT OF CHRIST

Our purpose as Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Light of Christ:

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, society and the world.

Services and Events 2019

- July: Women of Light of Christ hosted the July birthdays at The Estates of Delano
- November: Women of Light of Christ hosted the annual Advent Brunch at Light of Christ
- Served 2 funerals
- Light of Christ Quilters made and donated several quilts to Village Harvest
- Quilt fundraiser for quilting supplies
- October: The Light of Christ Quilters prepared and served the meal to Love INC 's class at The Village Free Church.

God's Blessings to all who answer the call to serve.

Submitted by Ginny Iverson

Women of Light of Christ Financial Report 2019

Date	Check #	Description	Debits	Credits	
		Beginning Balance		738.56	
06/14/19	2296	Quilt batting & cutter Blades	95.23		
06/19/19		Carol Galarneault Funeral Service		100.00	
07/10/19	2297	Costco 3 cakes Pastors 35 th Anniv & Delano Estates B'days	57.00		
09/12/19		Quilt Auction \$40 B Schaust \$50 M McKay		90.00	
10/21/19		Quilt Raffle/Quilting Supplies		141.00	
11/11/19	2298	Riverside Design Advent Posters	13.00		
11/22/19		Advent Brunch Tickets		645.00	
11/23/19	2299	Dobo's Catering Advent Brunch	600.00		
11/30/19	2300	Advent Music Prog Katie Kohler Thank You	200.00		
11/30/19	2301	Paul Gabrelcik Thank You	50.00		
12/05/19		Advent Brunch Tickets		76.72	
Totals			1015.23	1791.28	
Checking Account Balance					776.05

YOUTH FUND
January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

	<u>Beginning Balance</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Ending Balance</u>
<u>YOUTH ACTIVITIES</u>	4,945.29			
Payment from General Fund - No Star		75.00		
Bar Sales		22.00		
Interest Income		15.62		
Good Will Dinner		38.00		
First Communion Babysitting			50.00	
Totals-Youth Activities	4,945.29	150.62	50.00	5,045.91
 <u>CONFIRMATION</u>	 1,397.02			
Transfer to Camp Scholarships			1,397.02	
Totals-Confirmation	1,397.02	-	1,397.02	0.00
 <u>CAMP SCHOLARSHIP</u>	 5,991.54			
Transfer from Confirmation		1,397.02		
Honeywell Donation		1,081.86		
Ash Wed Lenten Supper		376.00		
Transfer from General Fund - Special		2,401.23		
Camp Dinner			121.07	
Camp Scholarships			3,110.00	
Donation		100.00		
Totals-Camp Scholarship	5,991.54	5,356.11	3,231.07	8,116.58
 <u>MISSION TRIP</u>	 15,128.71			
Cinnamon Rolls		8.75		
Spaghetti Dinner Tickets/Exp		898.00	569.16	
Silent Auction/Cake Auction		7,177.00		
Coffee Sales		294.18		
Flathead Deposit			5,750.00	
InterFaith Bridge Building Event			100.00	
Lenten Supper - Community Life		83.00		
Transfer to Indiv. Accts - Spaghetti Dinner			6,000.00	
Train Tickets - MT19 Flathead			1,758.00	
Transfer from General Fund - Speck		474.33		
Dog Days		337.00		
Lutheran Outdoors			3,500.00	
Cash for Trip		30.00	100.00	
Restroe Apparel MT19 T-shirts			270.00	
MT19 Trip Expenses (Gas, misc.)			3,439.09	
Transfer from Individual Accts		9,600.00		
MT20 Deposit-Service Learning Camp			750.00	
MT20 Fundraising - Equal Exchange			677.80	
MT20 Planning Help			175.00	
Totals-Mission Trip	15,128.71	18,902.26	23,089.05	10,941.92

(continued from previous page)

YOUTH FUND
January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

INDIVIDUAL YOUTH FUND

<u>ACCOUNTS</u>	1,174.16			
Cinnamon Rolls		26.25		
MT19 Deposits - MT & Adv Wk		1,600.00		
Coffee Sales		781.87		
Transfer Spaghetti Dinner Funds to Indiv		6,000.00		
MT19 Payments		702.26		
MT19 Flathead payments		442.09		
Transfer from Individual Accts			9,600.00	
MT20 Deposits		1,200.00		
Totals-Ind. Youth Funds	1,174.16	10,752.47	9,600.00	2,326.63
 TOTALS	<u>28,636.72</u>	<u>35,161.46</u>	<u>37,367.14</u>	<u>26,431.04</u>

Cash Balance as of 12/31/19

Checking Account				14,754.18
Savings Account				<u>11,676.86</u>
Total-All Accounts				<u>26,431.04</u>

Submitted by Vicki Noetzelman

Light of Christ 2019 YTD Financials- Income Statement 1/1/19-12/31/19

	2019 Actuals	2019 Total Budget	2019 Actuals vs 2019 Budget
<u>GIFTS/RECEIPTS</u>			
<u>General Fund</u>			
40010 · Faith Sharing	496,479	458,576	37,903
40015 · Deferred Sharing	4,967	4,967	0
41000 · Interest Income	1,296	1,200	96
41010 · Endowment Interest	109	0	109
41100 · Rent-Head Start	7,650	7,650	0
41200 · Building Use Fees	5,135	5,497	(362)
41300 · Sunday School	214	0	214
41400 · Confirmation Registration	1,110	2,800	(1,690)
41450 · Sunday School Registration	2,170	2,200	(30)
41600 · VBS Registration	1,781	1,350	431
45005 · Offset	481	0	481
45015 · Donut Sunday	338	500	(162)
45000 · Misc. Income - Other	6,108	0	6,108
TOTAL GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS	527,838	484,740	43,098
<u>EXPENSES</u>			
<u>Staff</u>			
60010 · Staff Mileage Reimbursement	1,961	2,500	(539)
60050 · Staff Min. Pension Med.	40,777	39,245	1,532
60100 · Staff Min. Prof. Education	845	1,000	(155)
60150 · Staff Education	2,015	2,000	15
60250 · Work Comp	1,528	2,134	(606)
60300 · Christmas Bonus	1,500	0	1,500
60350 · Staff Synod Assembly	390	500	(110)
60400 · Payroll Expense Wages	271,142	289,667	(18,525)
60450 · Staff Benefits	8,550	8,400	150
60500 · Staff-Other	7,689	8,400	(711)
60600 · Payroll Tax Expense	12,625	11,547	1,078
Total Staff	349,022	365,393	(16,371)
<u>Building Operation</u>			
61010 · Custodial Supplies	1,617	1,500	117
61050 · Electric	5,810	5,000	810
61100 · Garbage	1,439	1,036	403
61150 · Heat	5,184	5,000	184
61200 · Insurance	9,339	9,700	(361)
61250 · Lawn Care	2,760	3,510	(750)
61300 · Mortgage Interest Expense	11,511	11,511	0
61350 · Repair and Maintenance	16,291	13,400	2,891
61400 · Snow Plowing	3,270	1,600	1,670
61450 · 3rd Party Contractors	8,896	7,801	1,095
Total Building Expense	66,117	60,058	6,059

Light of Christ 2019 YTD Financials- Income Statement 1/1/19-12/31/19

	2019 Actuals	2019 Total Budget	2019 Actuals vs 2019 Budget
<u>Benevolence</u>			
62100 · ELCA Mpls. Synod	46,868	45,858	1,011
62200 · Love Inc.	4,712	4,586	126
Total Benevolence	51,580	50,443	1,137
<u>Office</u>			
63010 · Banking Fees	2,885	2,600	285
63050 · Computers & Furnishings	605	1,000	(395)
63100 · Equipment Maintenance	4,538	4,500	38
63150 · Kitchen Supplies	888	800	88
63200 · Office Supplies	2,743	3,000	(257)
63250 · Postage	1,136	1,500	(364)
63302 · Payroll Processing Fee	942	0	942
63300 · Subscriptions - Other	1,614	1,700	(86)
63350 · Telephone	2,679	2,300	379
63400 · Web Site	1,088	1,000	88
63000 · Office Expense - Other	700	0	700
Total Office	19,817	18,400	1,417
<u>Worship</u>			
64010 · Alter Supplies	2,523	2,600	(77)
64050 · Bulletins	83	200	(117)
64100 · Flowers/Decorating/Banners	1,104	1,000	104
64150 · Guest Speaker	980	1,200	(220)
64200 · Offering Envelopes	1,312	500	812
64250 · Organist/Pianist	325	500	(175)
64300 · Publications	379	325	54
64350 · Worship Resources	917	600	317
Total Worship	7,623	6,925	698
<u>Music</u>			
65010 · Copyright License	610	525	85
65050 · Hymnals	0	0	0
65100 · Instrument maintenance	625	400	225
65200 · New Equipment and Sound	787	1,500	(713)
65300 · Vocal Music	1,253	750	503
65510 · Musicians	125	1,000	(875)
Total Music	3,399	4,175	(776)

	2019 Actuals	2019 Total Budget	vs 2019 Budget
<u>Education (3yrs-Grade 6)</u>			
66501 · Bibles	1,730	600	1,130
66505 · Christmas Program	331	200	131
66510 · Day Camp/VBS	2,555	750	1,805
66515 · Special Events	2,378	650	1,728
66520 · SS/Ignite Class Curriculum	1,262	2,500	(1,238)
66525 · SS/Ignite Class Supplies	931	350	581
66530 · SS/Ignite Mission Projects	258	200	58
66535 · Safe Sanctuary	0	400	(400)
66540 · Spark Supplies	1,132	650	482
Birth-Age 3 Ministry	0	0	0
Total Education (3yrs-Grade 6)	10,576	6,300	4,276
<u>Education Grades 7-12</u>			
67010 · Service Learning	196	300	(104)
67050 · Chaperone Fees	0	600	(600)
67100 · Confirmation	949	500	449
67150 · High School Ministry	214	500	(286)
67200 · Supplies and Materials	1,892	800	1,092
67250 · Individual Ministry	83	200	(117)
67300 · Large Events	1,040	1,000	40
67350 · Safe Sanctuary	398	500	(103)
67400 · Miscellaneous - Other	714	1,000	(286)
Total Education Grades 7-12	5,485	5,400	85
<u>Evangelism & Mission</u>			
68100 · Advertising	659	200	459
68200 · Chamber of Commerce	0	120	(120)
68300 · New Members	224	250	(26)
Total Evangelism & Mission	883	570	313
<u>Small Group Ministries</u>			
69100 · Adult Education	26	500	(474)
69200 · Sister of LOC	121	450	(329)
Total Small Group Ministries	147	950	(803)
<u>Stewardship</u>			
70010 · Fall Stewardship Program	120	450	(330)
Total Stewardship	120	450	(330)
<u>Community Life</u>			
71050 · Community Life-Other	1,464	900	564
Total Community Life	1,464	900	564
Total General Fund Expense	516,233	519,964	(3,731)
Net Income	11,605	(35,224)	46,829

Special Funds 2019 YTD						Capital Campaign		
	Beginning Balance	Income	Expense	Ending Balance			2019 YTD	
5th Sunday	(35)	271	236	-		Income	154,108	
Capital Appeal Fund	(5,320)	154,108	107,393	41,395	a)			
Banners	201	-	53	148		Expenses		
Bldg Maint Fund	3,374	5,202	7,036	1,540		Mortgage Payments	30,696	
Camp Scholarships	1,129	1,272	2,401	-	*	Principal Payment	35,000	*saved \$21,939.91 in interest!
Columbarium Fund	2,340	2,835	1,460	3,715		10% Tithe	15,411	
Community Emergency	3,208	-	3,208	-	*	Mission Investment Fund re	25,000	
Furnace Fund	-	17,250	16,714	536		Other Expenses	22,017	
Gifts/Memorials	162	236	-	398		Total Expenses	128,124	
Holiday Flowers	1,540	-	1,540	-	*			
Library Fund	1,143	-	62	1,081		Capital Campaign Balance	25,984	
Love Inc Birthday Ministr	187	-	-	187				
Lutheran Music Scholars	597	-	597	-	*			
Kingdom Nursery School	3,412	-	3,412	-	*			
Men's Group	61	-	61	-	*			
Ministerial Scholarship	2,659	100	50	2,709				
Mission Trip (youth)	474	-	474	-	*	Light Of Christ 2019 Ending Account Balances:		
Nigeria Mission	80	-	80	-	*	Cortrust Checking Account	176,218	
Pew Bibles	195	-	195	-	*	ELCA Endowment Fund	25,109	
Piano Fund	2,099	2	-	2,101		Mission Investment Fund	89,427	
Pipe Organ Fund	2,210	-	2,210	-	*	Total	290,755	
Prayer Shawl Ministry	267	-	267	-	*			
Thrivent Choice Funds	1,643	435	743	1,335		Mortgage Balance	368,021	
Other Funds	(1,975)	2,013	-	38				
Web Page	(9,360)	9,360	-	-	*			
ELCA Disaster Relief	31	454	-	485				
Theologian in Residence	50	-	50	-	*			
TOTAL	10,373	193,538	148,243	55,668				
					*Cleared out in 2019			
a) Less 10% Tithe of 15,410.78								

2019 MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

2019 BAPTISMS

Name	Baptism Date
Marielle Ricke*	03/10/19
Jackson Fegers*	03/24/19
Laura Myhre	03/31/19
Dylan Thompson	04/07/19
Daxton Custer	04/28/19
Maisey Koethe-Lindvall	04/28/19
Tyler Anderson	05/12/19
Matthew Motzko	05/12/19
Samuel Nordlie Jr.	05/19/19
Logan Dickey	06/23/19
Porter Pearson	10/20/19
Jack Erickson*	11/24/19
Quinn Wray	12/01/19
Blaire Friehl	12/29/19

* non-member baptism

2019 Member Deaths:

Harold Wachs	d. 1/29/19
Jonathan Ceder	d. 2/22/19
Loren Rumpza	d. 5/16/19
Carol Galarneault	d. 6/5/19
John McKisson	d. 8/6/19

2019 NEW MEMBERS

Tyler Anderson
Cameron Behnke
John Behnke
Isaac Behnke
Isaiah Behnke
Megan Behnke
Mia Behnke
Micah Behnke
Carina Borman
Catherine Borman
Luke Borman
Owen Borman
Wyatt Borman
Daxton Custer
Logan Dickey
Blaire Friehl
Emerson Hinker
Greg Hinker
Jennifer Hinker
Madison Hinker
Diane Irish
Alexander Kelly
Andrew Kelly
Benjamin Kelly
Dave Kelly
Kirsten Kelly
Amanda Koethe
Kathleen Koethe
Maisey Koethe-Lindvall
Matthew Motzko
Jordan Myhre

Kayla Myhre
Laura Myhre
Samuel Nordlie Jr.
Porter Pearson
Jerry Podratz
Paulette Podratz
Claire Roeglin
Bruce Schantzen
Deb Schantzen
Dylan Thompson
Jay Thompson
Karolyn Thompson
Maggie Thompson
Natalie Thompson
Greg Thorstad
Marshall Thorstad
Nolan Thorstad
Sarah Thorstad
Anna Tool
Carter Tool
Ryan Tool
Samantha Tool
Taylor Tool
Quinn Wray

2019 NEW MEMBERS:	55
Adult Members:	943
Baptized Children:	338
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP:	1281



Dear Friends in Christ,

Frederick Buechner offers a definition of grace:

Grace is something you can never get but can only be given. There's no way to deserve it ... any more than you can deserve the taste of raspberries and cream or bring about your own birth. A good sleep is grace, and so are good dreams. Most tears are grace. The smell of rain is grace. Somebody loving you is grace.

I've thought about adding another thing to Buechner's list: A good congregation is grace. Being a part of a church you can call home – that is grace. It is grace to hear God's word proclaimed, to be drawn into the mystery of God through worship, to be connected in community. It is within the church that our lives are transformed, that our brokenness is made whole. And, it is within the congregation that we are led and empowered to be the real presence of Christ – in our neighborhoods and with our neighbors.

You are reading this report because you care about your congregation; you care in a way that prompts you to read your congregation's annual report and attend its annual meeting. Thank you.

The commitment to faithful and vital congregations is the highest priority of the Minneapolis Area Synod. Most of our time is spent supporting our 145 congregations and six mission starts:

- We work to accompany congregations in times of discernment or visioning, conflict resolution or problem solving, staff relationships and program development.
- We show up for anniversaries, installations, congregational meetings. We attend monthly conference meetings for pastors and deacons.

The synod's commitment to vital congregations is deeply related to its commitment to support leaders, both lay and ordained. This aligns with the ELCA's strategic foci of **Vital Congregations and Leadership**.

It is hard to imagine vital congregations without healthy and faithful leaders. Synod staff share this commitment, so:

- Our synod currently has 65 people preparing to be pastors and deacons; synod leaders meet with each of them about four times during their seminary years.
- We worked with 50 congregations in call processes last year. I visit each congregation once it has completed its ministry site profile. My colleagues meet with call committees much more often.
- We facilitate peer groups for support and prayer for everyone who works in a church – not just pastors.
- We provide educational and training resources for congregations – especially for church councils and committee leaders – like the "Tool Kit" on February 22, highlighting topics like evangelism, stewardship and finances, how to lead productive meetings, maximizing the value of congregational real estate, church safety and emergency preparedness, and more.
- We provide pastoral care to the 700 rostered leaders in our synod, of whom half are retired. It is my great privilege to bring greeting from the larger church at funerals for our rostered leaders.

And we foster partnerships:

- among and between congregations,
- between ELCA congregations, the synod, the national church, and the wider faith community,
- with ecumenical and global partners, and
- with community organizations that share our mission objective and bring deeper and more sustainable health to our communities.

January marks the mid-point of my eighth year as your bishop. I am so grateful for this calling and honored to serve with you as partners in the Gospel. For most of my years as bishop, our Synod has been led by the vision statement:

We work together so all experience gracious invitation into life-giving Christian community, and live in just and healthy neighborhoods.

Yes, a good congregation is a gift of grace. May God bless you and your congregation and all the partners in our synod, that together we may discover new ways to share God's grace, build beloved community, and be the real presence of Christ -- in our neighborhoods and with our neighbors.

In Christ,

Bishop Ann Svennungsen