



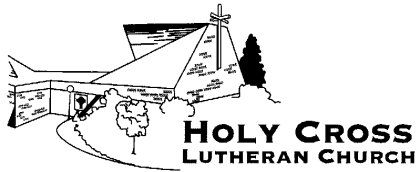
ANNUAL REPORT

— 2020 —



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

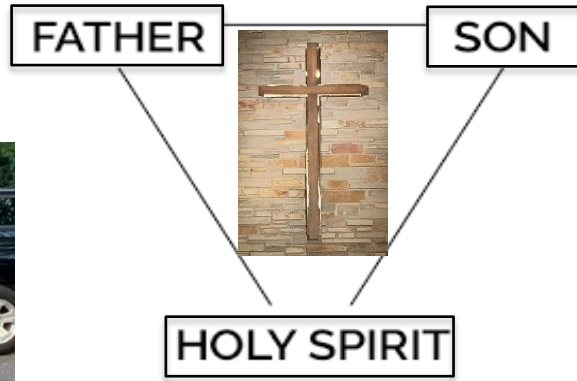




**2020 Annual Report of the Congregation
January 31, 2021**

6355 10th Street North · Oakdale, Minnesota 55128 · (651) 739-0643
www.holycrosslc.org

2020 HOLY CROSS ANNUAL REPORT



Mission:
Holy Cross welcomes everyone as we worship and grow in faith together, serving God's people, in the name of Christ

Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Annual Report
January 31, 2021
Table of Contents

	Page
• January 19, 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes	5
• Ministry Team Reports	
▪ President	9
▪ Senior Pastor	10
▪ Director of Music	13
▪ Music & Worship Chair	14
▪ Director of Children, Youth & Family	15
▪ Stewardship Chair	16
▪ Serving God's People Chair	18
▪ Property Chair	19
▪ Welcoming - Men's Group	20
▪ Welcoming - Women's Group	21
• Financial Reports	
▪ 2020 Year End Financial Secretary Report	22
▪ 2020 Year End Treasurer Report	24
▪ Proposed 2021 Budget	27
• Nominating Committee Council Candidate Ballot	29
• ELCA Presiding Bishops Report	30
• St. Paul Area Synod Bishops Report	31
• Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp Report	33

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
Annual Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2020
Fellowship Hall ~ Following Worship

Holy Cross welcomes everyone as we worship and grow in faith together, serving God's people in the name of Christ.

Call To Order

President Stefan Babirad called the Annual Meeting of the Congregation to order at 11:19 a.m. A quorum was present with 64 members in attendance. Stefan thanked everyone who brought a dish to share, Jim Ostrander for setting up the sound system and table for the Executive Committee, and Arlan Tietel for keeping him in line with Robert's Rules of Order.

Opening Devotions

Pastor Rusty Brace provided opening devotions.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

There were no additions to the Agenda.

Marla Davenport made a motion to approve the Agenda as published / Pam Sorensen seconded / Motion carried.

Approval of 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes, the Minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting on August 25, 2019 (to call Pastor Rusty Brace), and the Minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting on October 20, 2019 (to approve the changes made to the Constitution)

Rose Johnson made a motion to approve the Minutes of the 1/27/19 Annual Meeting / Scott Sorensen seconded / After no corrections or additions were noted, the motion carried.

Phil Follmer made a motion to approve the Minutes of the 8/25/19 and 10/20/19 Special Congregational Meetings / Debby Dellis seconded / After no corrections or additions were noted, the motion carried.

Ministry Team Reports

Jerry Vehrs made a motion to approve the Staff and Ministry Team reports as published / Frank Max seconded / At the close of discussion, the motion carried.

Recognition

- Pastor Rusty reported that this year, we will be recognizing the exemplary service of five members where others can see the Light of Christ shine in and through them.

- John Johnson, Ann Hagestad, Heidi Paulson, Melanie Accola and Stefan Babirad were recognized for their exemplary service to Holy Cross and were each presented with a Light of Christ certificate.

2019 Financial Reports

Bonnie Katzmark's Financial Secretary report published in the Annual Report reflected General Fund Income of \$199,468 and Total Expenses of \$196,963, netting a Reserve of \$2,504.

Debby Dellis made a motion to approve the 2019 Financial Reports as published / Phil Follmer seconded / At the close of discussion, the motion carried.

New Business

Approval of 2020 Proposed Budget

- \$3,000 is being budgeted for a financial audit of the church records.
- \$52,500 one-time capital expenditure is being budgeted for maintenance to the flat roof and the heating and cooling systems.

Dale Friesen made a motion to approve the 2019 Proposed Budget as published / Marla Davenport seconded / At the close of discussion, the motion unanimously carried.

Nominate & Elect New Council Members

Financial Secretary:

- Stefan Babirad thanked Bonnie Katzmark for serving in this position for two years and reported that Bonnie has agreed to continue in this position for another two years.
- No other nominations were heard from the floor.

Char Nun made a motion to close nominations and elect Bonnie Katzmark / Scott Sorensen seconded / Motion carried.

Treasurer:

- Stefan Babirad thanked Pam Klingsporn for serving as the Council-appointed Treasurer for the last year and asked for nominations from the floor.
- Jerry Vehrs nominated Pam Klingsporn.

Jerry Vehrs made a motion to close nominations and elect Pam Klingsporn / Len Utecht seconded / Motion carried.

Serving God's People:

- Stefan Babirad thanked Rose Johnson for leading this team and announced that Nina Nason has agreed to run.
- No other nominations were heard from the floor.

Roxanne Vehrs made a motion to close nominations and elect Nina Nason / Char Nun seconded / Motion carried.

Welcoming:

- Stefan Babirad thanked Phil Follmer for serving in this position for the past two years and announced that Rose Johnson has agreed to run for this position.
- No other nominations were heard from the floor.

Ann Hagestad made a motion to close nominations and elect Rose Johnson / Frank Max seconded / Motion carried.

Vice President:

- Stefan Babirad thanked Michelle Gydesen for serving as Vice President for the past four years, and asked for nominations since no one has offered to serve in this position.
- No nominations were heard from the floor.
- This position was declared vacant, and, pursuant to section C11.03 of the Constitution, the Congregation Council has agreed to appoint Kyle Paulson to serve as Vice President for the next year.
- Pursuant to section C11.04, no officer shall hold more than one office at a time, so this appointment creates a vacancy in the Children Youth & Family Ministry Team.

Children Youth & Family:

- No candidates have come forward to fill this position so Stefan requested nominations from the floor.
- No nominations were heard.
- Stefan declared this position vacant and indicated that it will be addressed at the March 2020 Council meeting.

Ratification of Holy Cross Constitution

- The Congregation Council revised the Constitution in 2019 to conform to current Synod standards.
- Copies of the Constitution were provided at the meeting.

Kyle Paulson made a motion to ratify the revised Constitution of Holy Cross English Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as printed / Marla Davenport seconded / At the close of discussion, the motion carried.

Announcement

Pastor Rusty Brace announced that he is planning a trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area for our youth.

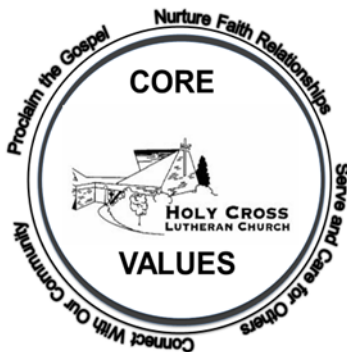
- The trip is scheduled for June 14th through June 20th, 2020.
- Twelve youth plus two chaperones will be able to attend, and he is extending the invitation to Beaver Lake and House of Prayer as well.
- Pastor Rusty would like to offer camperships for this trip, and invited anyone interested in either attending or in providing a campership to contact him.

Adjourn Meeting

Phil Follmer made a motion to adjourn the 2020 Annual Meeting / Jim Dellis seconded / Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m. followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Submitted by,
Pam Hinton, Council Secretary



PRESIDENTS REPORT

As I finish my 2nd year as Council President, I want to express my gratitude serving the congregation of Holy Cross Lutheran Church. As we rolled out 2020, there was a buzz of enthusiasm, vigor and excitement planning a full year of service ministry with Pastor Rusty. The council asked of themselves and the congregation what gifts we brought to Holy Cross to focus our mission. We quickly concluded that the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19 of spreading God's love within our community defined Holy Cross perfectly. Numerous council members attended the Synod's Tool Kit for Leaders networking and sharing best practices for our ministry teams. Our property board was securing contract bids for the building flat roof and air handling systems. We entered the 40 days of Lent strong with ash laid crosses on our foreheads and Lenten fellowship services planned. With Christ and the Cross as our "true north" compass, Holy Cross met 2020 firing on all cylinders.

For the health safety of our congregation, volunteers, staff and visitors, the necessary and difficult decision to close off our church building and in-person worship was made in mid-March. God does work in mysterious ways. Without wavering our focus on Christ, we faced and overcame the challenges 2020 presented with unforeseen opportunities. With doors closed, we pivoted our face-to-face ministry with virtual and digital content to Christ's community keeping Him centered in our heart and action.

Through on-line, drive-through, drive-in, walk-in connection, our ministry expanded and thrived! Zoom, Google, instant messaging, e-mail, Facebook, Live streaming, all helped Holy Cross spread the Good News in a new format. Our financial health remained strong with increased on-line giving and through the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP), we were able to retain all staff positions. Our community ministries and stewardship outreach was offered to those seeking comfort in these stressful, hardship times. Showing Christ's love through your hands, we helped our neighbors in need with Free Bakery Sundays, Free distant learning VBS, and Free backpacks with school supplies for Head Start preschoolers. The community responded with offering their aluminum cans to fill our utility trailer supporting Tartan High School Relay for Life. What typically took us 3-months to fill the trailer now is taking 2-weeks. Yes, the pandemic temporarily closed our doors physically, but opened many more doors where community stewardship has been enhanced. "The church is not a building. We are the Church!" Thank You for your dedication and community engagement keeping our church focused on God's work.

As we move into 2021, we will continue our congregational faith journey keeping our eyes and hearts on Christ. We know that safety precautions of mask wearing, social distancing and personal hygiene of washing hands will continue. As we approach normalcy, we are planning a 60th Anniversary celebrating Holy Cross in our community.

In closing, thank you for allowing me to serve as President this past year, there is always more to be done and I look forward to what lies ahead.

In Christ,
Stefan Babirad
Council Presiden

SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT

If 2019 was a year of change, then 2020 was a year of challenges. It was not exactly an ideal year to introduce a new pastor, and yet here we are. I suppose the best thing about the challenge is that it reveals much about the character of individuals and communities. How does a community react to being physically isolated from one another and physically separated from their place of worship? This was a major question that the Hebrew people experienced in the Old Testament. Their identity was tied to Jerusalem and the Temple of God; but the powers of the world (the Babylonian Empire) separated the people from their holy places. Prophets came to encourage, to spread hope, and to remind the people of God's love for them. When they returned to Jerusalem they were still a community but they had changed. There was a renewed focus on faith and new opportunities to express God's love for the world and for themselves. God is good, all the time.

As a new pastor for this congregation, I know that people had to put a lot of faith and trust in my leadership without knowing me very well. The decision to close our sanctuary took place less than six months after I began ministry here. I'm grateful for the support of the elected council representatives; the creativity of my ministry partners Pat and Gibson; and the encouragement I received from many parishioners here at Holy Cross. Many challenges attempted to thwart the objective of getting to know you all. But I trust that our primary objective of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ has been evident.

I often liken leadership to a botanist shaping a bonsai tree. It takes constant watering, shaping, and pruning to keep the bonsai healthy and beautiful. This year some things had been trimmed, this year some things had to be reshaped, and through the Holy Spirit I know the congregation has been watered and nurtured. But sometimes we prune too closely, sometimes we over-bend, and sometimes things that needed a little more nurturing did not receive it. We test, we try, and we learn. The roots of this congregation run deep. And we are indeed a beautiful collection of hearts and minds in the eyes of our Creator.

STAFFING There is a book called *Good To Great* and it talks about how successful organizations are like a bus trip. To have a great trip it's not only having the right people on the bus, but having those people in the right seats. We are fortunate to have Bob caring for our building and property; he is a dedicated, helpful and hard-working facilitator. Adding Pat as our director of music ministry has been a blessing. She is constantly pushing her creative comfort zone in ways that augment our worship experience; and she tirelessly stays connected with our singers and musicians despite being unable to visit in person. Our director of CY&F, Gibson, continues to share her gifts of youth ministry; but also uses her creative flair and technical savvy to collaboratively create ministry opportunities for the whole congregation. I'm grateful to have such dedicated ministry partners. We have one on our bus yet to fill, however. As our technological needs have increased, we will soon be searching for someone to fill a new hybrid position. We will be seeking someone with a high level of technical skills in video production and editing; and it is also adept at multimedia and web development.

WORSHIP While our primary focus of worship is uplifting music, praising God, and hearing the good news of Jesus Christ, I also believe it is important to connect on

Sundays. With the help of Andrew Powell, we began a new Sunday evening music and prayer worship service. I look forward to resuming this new worship opportunity once the pandemic worries are over. I cherish spending time sharing stories over a cup of coffee. This year has been, as I've said already, a challenging one. Perhaps the most difficult aspect of the pandemic is the restrictions put on fellowship. Pat, Gibson, and I have done our best to create an online worship experience that is personal and meaningful. We have completely restructured the order of worship, and when the weather was nice we took our cameras outside to show that God's word is not just tied to the inside of the building. I find great joy in sharing music and fellowship as well as the Word and Sacraments. I look forward to returning to our sanctuary while still keeping our online presence vibrant. Because we were forced into change, we have added pieces of equipment that will allow us to live stream worship for anyone unable to attend our services for years to come.

TEACHING I consider myself to be a teaching pastor so whether I am hosting a class or preaching, my goal is always to engage Scripture in a way that opens up God's message of love. We have had to change the dynamics of Confirmation, but are still working together with Beaver Lake and House of Prayer. We were able to meet in person a few times in our parking lot at the beginning of the program here (safely outside); we now meet every other week online. Due to the strain in relationships social distancing has created, our focus has been talking about biblical stories involving the different underlying forces of both good and bad relationships.

In adult education, I led a fairly successful "Reading the Bible" class; an intensive Lent Bible study; and in April began a year-long journey to read the Bible in its entirety. As I write this we are over two-thirds of the way along in our quest. Following Easter, I plan on hosting more conventional Bible studies that either examine a single book in the Bible or specific topics found throughout the Bible. My goal as always is to expand Biblical literacy and theological understanding.

EXPERIENCES This summer Lynette and I have found a few times to unplug and get out of town. I'm grateful for those opportunities. We had to cancel our youth trip to the BWCA due to the pandemic; and I missed out on fellowship with the Men's Club due to the cancellation of cheese curd events. In terms of professional development, I am participating in a Second Act Cohort that has partnered me with a group of people entering their 5th - 10th year in ministry with those who have been in ministry for more than 20 years. We share with each other the challenges of ministry and life in supportive ways. We also engage in regular Bible studies as well as workshops to be more effective ministers.

STRATEGIC PLANNING As part of the Bonsai Approach to ministry; we all must be continually questioning what we're doing; why we're doing it; and is what we are doing sustainable. Again, this has been complicated by our inability to meet face-to-face as a Council and in committees. I felt it was important for us to match the gifts and talents with the needs in our community...*in a sustainable way*. It seemed important to try to limit the number of ministry activities we are engaging and in order to do an exceptional job at a few things; rather than do a marginal job at many things.

As we consider the interconnectedness we have with the larger body of Christ; my mantra is: "There is so much to do in the world. And while we can't do everything that needs to be done, we can do something. Let us not replicate the ministry of others, but

instead focus on what we do well and trust that God is working in and through other communities of faith to do the things we are not doing.”

TO CLOSE: I realize that this has been a difficult year; but we will get to the other side of the external challenges we are facing. I am honored to be your pastor and I am excited about the future. I will strive to be the best spiritual leader that I can be. I look forward to growing deeper in faith with you and in getting to know you all better in the coming year. May God continue to bless us all as we spread the good news!

Respectfully submitted,
Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Rusty

MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT

During the time of Covid-19, many activities have taken on a different appearance. As with the other ministries in the church, the Music Ministry has had to undergo numerous changes in order to cope with the pandemic.

With no worship services being held in the sanctuary since mid-Lent, I have been providing prerecorded keyboard music for the video services. For the parking lot services we are using live keyboard and vocal music.

Prior to the lockdown in March, the choir sang weekly for worship services and presented a Christmas musical, "Beautiful Star," in December of 2019. As group singing is not considered a safe activity because of the spread of aerosols, the choir now meets twice monthly on Zoom, mostly as a way of checking in with each other.

Four ringers were willing and able to resurrect the Joyful Noise handbell ensemble, and they practiced outside when the weather was warm. Now they have twice-monthly Zoom rehearsals, either by using household implements to substitute for bells (no sound is made by the players) or by using bells (with Zoom on mute). Although neither method is ideal, we have fun trying to learn the proper ringing motions for each piece.

During 2020 a generous gift enabled the church to purchase a Bell Tree, a movable rack upon which our handbells are hung and struck with mallets. I am excited about the possibilities for incorporating the bell tree into future worship services.

As we explore new ways to present our musical offerings to the congregation during the pandemic restrictions, I am reminded that it is possible to keep a song in our hearts and to continue to make a joyful noise to the Lord, even if it is not in the ways we have been used to.

Thank you to the volunteers for providing vocal music and sound assistance.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Hurlbutt
Director of Music Ministries

WORSHIP & MUSIC REPORT

The Worship and Music (W&M) Ministry Team consists of 14 dedicated members living Holy Cross' mission of "*welcoming everyone as we worship and grow together, serving God's people in the name of Christ*". Our unified goal is to enhance the worship experience for Holy Cross congregants and be an inviting environment to our community worshipping with us. Our team goals align with the Congregation Council, Pastor and Music Director, regarding all aspects of the Lutheran worship service experience. We normally meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. But due to the Covid Pandemic, our team has not been able to meet together in person since February.

Although our regular meetings were cancelled, members of the Team continued to work on enhancing the worship experience at Holy Cross with Pastor Rusty and Pat Hurlbutt, Director of Music. Two members of the team met weekly with the Resurrection Team to plan worship services online and outside and communion opportunities. The committee set up guidelines for returning to worship in the sanctuary when it is deemed safe to do so. The Altar Guild members continued to care for the paraments in the sanctuary for the online services. Pat planned and provided music for worship services. Volunteers were organized for readings, parking, greeting, singing and offering for the Drive In Worship Services. The choir and bell choir members continued to meet and practice in hopes of adding their voices to the worship services.

One of our team members, Sheryll Max, recently retired from leading the Prayer Chain. Sheryll was one of the organizers of the Prayer Chain about 40 years ago when the phone was the technology for sharing information. Over the years she employed technology sending weekly email updates to more than 30 prayer warriors, caring for members, families and friends. A special thank you to Sheryll for her years of service and dedication to Holy Cross!

I would like to recognize the members of the W&M Team. They volunteer to make worship at Holy Cross a welcoming and spiritual experience. Team members include: Dorothy Frank, Rose Johnson, Melissa Kohel, Sheryll Max, Gayle Nason, Tom O'Brien, Yvonne O'Brien, Jim Ostrander, Pat Ostrander, Amy Powers, Andy Powers, Pam Sorensen, Marla Davenport and Pat Hurlbutt.

Yours in Christ,

Marla Davenport,
Worship and Music Ministry Team

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY REPORT

Hello Friends,

In a year where plans were halted, focus shifted, and certainties seemed less so; God remains faithfully with us. I was made deeply aware of this through the resiliency of our youth. Their ability to adapt over these last 11 months and maintain hope amongst disappointments has encouraged me to be creative and intentional in the ways we connect. We've zoomed and met in socially distanced circles, explored what it means to be in relationship with each other, and shared some laughs over virtual bingo.

As we look to what the next months and year will bring for our ministry together, the experiences of late have made it clear that simply being together is enough.

I leave you with the words below, selected by our confirmands during a Zoom to describe themselves. Joyful reminders of our unique community.

In Christ,
Gibson Stanton
CYF Ministry Director

Colorful	Funny	Accident-prone
Hungry	Kind	Athletic
Hyper	Crazy	Caring
Smart	Clums	

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Looking back at our Stewardship theme for 2020, *“Celebrating Stewardship in 2020; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15”*, a pandemic did not stop our congregation, YOU, from celebrating stewardship and from spreading God’s love. Stewardship held strong throughout 2020 and our congregation displayed that stewardship extends beyond your generous financial giving.

Each of us has experienced this pandemic differently; many have faced life changes and struggled in different ways this past year. I would like to share two of the many stories about how members of our congregation have continued to share God’s love in new ways throughout these challenging times.

While we have not been able to gather and worship inside the building space, we have still been able to offer a space for and continue to support the Head Start program. For those unfamiliar with Head Start, *their programs* promote the school readiness of infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children from low-income families. They have been utilizing the classrooms in the building’s addition for many years. During this critical time of a pandemic, it was essential that this program still be offered to these families. A member wanted to create a space for the community, the congregation, and these families to be able to use as a resource center.

“Implementing this space was started prior to the pandemic, but seeing and hearing how the pandemic was affecting many, it was even more important for this resource center to be available. This center is filled with many pamphlets, handouts, books, and resources for a variety of topics, for a variety of ages; from infants, to children and teens, to adults and senior adults.”

The second story I would like to share relates to the beatification of the church for the Christmas season. While our way of worship has been changed to include a virtual service, a member wanted to see one “tradition” continue on, decorating with poinsettias for Christmastime. This member was able to receive a grant through the Thrivent Action Teams program to purchase beautiful poinsettias that will not only provide décor for the season, but then be passed to those on the prayer chain, the Head Start teachers, and our Holy Cross staff. Again, this is one way that someone has helped to spread love and cheer to others during a time that we are all distanced.

In short, we have also been able to spread God’s love and do His great work in many other ways, including utilizing the garage space to expand the free bread and bakery to the community. With the pandemic there has been a shortage of blood drives and donations. Holy Cross partnered with the American Red Cross to host two blood drives this year in order to help continue to support the mission of the American Red Cross. The ways of forming and continuing to build relationships with each other has been greatly impacted by this pandemic. We have been able to find new ways to be good stewards of each other and these relationships by: writing cards to each other to show support; meeting through virtual methods; through a personal phone call; through email; and when

possible, by meeting in person physically distanced. A virtual bible study has been well received and attended by many. All of these ways, and those not listed, that we have been able to stay connected to each other represent an aspect of stewardship.

Thank you to those that have offered your time in helping to make these possible and continuing to support Holy Cross!

With Christ being our focal point, the possibilities remain endless through your continued prayers and generosity. THANK YOU to each of you!

Blessings,
Heidi Paulson
Stewardship Chair

SERVING GOD'S PEOPLE

In 2020, Holy Cross' Serving God's People ministry focused on forming deeper meaningful relationships with our community. Over the years, we traditionally served numerous local schools, shelters, and families in need. At times, we rolled up our sleeves and assisted neighboring churches serving Loaves and Fishes. All of these outreach community ministries were well received by the community.

As the coronavirus pandemic became more prevalent and our community family's anxiety, stress and financial hardships were heightened, Serving God's People ministry focused more with helping with a few needs. By doing so, this newer focus was aimed at developing a deeper, richer and impactful relationship within our community.

One of Holy Cross' successful ministries, from past years, was to expand our offering of Cub Food bakery items on Sunday mornings. For the last nine months, Serving God's People ministry has transitioned our garage space to a Free Bakery Sunday and open to anyone. As the community need increased, the White Bear Cub Foods joined Oakdale Cub Foods in providing bakery items. Typically, we see around 40 families who shopped our tables.

As a means of giving back, these shoppers bring in their aluminum cans to be added to the utility trailer next to our garage. The trailer has seen an uptick of being filled. What has taken three months to fill is now being filled in three weeks. The cans are taken to a recycler and the money generated is given to Tartan High School Relay for Life Cancer Program.

2020 had our ministry team focus on the teachers, families and children that attended Head Start School at Holy Cross. As the school year began, Holy Cross, through Thrivent Action Team dollars provided each student with a school backpack filled with pencils, crayons, erasers, glue sticks, scissors and numerous items needed to get the students year off to a great start. A \$50.00 Cub Food Gift Card was given to Head Start families this Christmas season to provide a little grocery help.

These local community relationships are just a beginning for our ministry team during this trying year. We will continue with our financial benevolence supporting Tanzania Parish, the World Hunger Coin Box Appeal, and Camp Wapogasset. It takes many volunteers to execute these endeavors and I want to thank Holy Cross members for rolling up your sleeves supporting Serving God's People.

In closing, we are led by the Spirit of the Lord to participate in his kingdom of mercy and light.

Peace and Blessings,
Nina Nason
Serving God's People Chair

PROPERTY REPORT

2020 has been a busy year involving some critical building and maintenance capital asset investments, which were addressed in the 2019 Annual Meeting.

The first project was replacement of the leaking 25+ year-old rubber flat roofs with a new Thermoplastic Polyolefin, TPO, single-ply roofing membrane. This project also replaced the two aged skylights, installed new roof metal and downspouts. The property board would like to thank the congregation, Men's and Women's Groups for assisting in funding of this project.

The second project was the replacement of the 25+ year-old sanctuary rooftop heating/AC unit, RTU. As part of that project, new interior supply and return ductwork and grilles were installed, with the addition of an in-duct air ionization unit. This will aid in better sanctuary air circulation, air cleaning and heating savings. The Executive Committee explored numerous external funding for this project without success. The funding was made from reserves in our savings account with anticipated utility energy savings of \$1,000 annually. We thank Frank Max for fabricating and installing wooden face coverings of previous return cavities.

It also was necessary to purchase a new Toro zero-turn lawn mower for grounds maintenance as our old lawn tractor caught on fire and was damaged beyond repair.

We thank Shane and Gary Nason for the installation of a new service door to the garage to assist with the Free Bakery Sunday community outreach.

In 2021, we will continue to look at all church assets and prioritizing the risks to our building and facilities operations. The outcome of these investigative plans and other future maintenance projects will be factored and addressed in upcoming budgets. I have consented to stay on as Property Chair for the next two years, and ask that you pray and help support me with our property needs as they arise.

I would also like to thank our custodian, Bob Benitz, as he has done a great job of caring for the building inside and out over the last year.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tom Nun
Property Chair

WELCOMING – MEN’S GROUP

The Holy Cross Men’s Group invites all men to unite with a common bond of fellowship, promote spiritual and social interest, and to aid in the charitable work of the church.

Most of our plans and activities were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Enclosed below are a few activities that the Men’s Group accomplished in 2020.

- A brief historical document was created highlighting some key events of the 40-year history of the Men’s Group.
- The Men’s Group unanimously voted to contribute \$7,000 for the flat roof replacement.
- To support Holy Cross Rally Day, we provided cheese curds to those congregation members that attended drive-in worship.

The leadership of the Men’s Group would like to thank all the volunteers who have supported this ministry over four decades.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Max, President Men’s Group

WELCOMING – WOMEN’S GROUP

We welcome all women of Holy Cross with a mission of fellowship, laughter, and outreach ministries creating a welcoming environment.

The Holy Cross Women’s Group activities were pared back due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Our 2020 accomplishments included the following:

- A successful fellowship potluck luncheon prior to the Annual Meeting
- Prior to the church building closing, Two Lenten Soup/Suppers
- Financial Support of \$5,000 for the flat roof replacement
- Helping serve cheese curds at Rally Day drive-in worship

Thank you to all who participate in the Women’s Group and also to those that have attended and supported our works. We look forward to Holy Cross’ 60th Anniversary celebration in 2021.

Blessings,
Debby Dellis

2020 Financial Secretary Year End Report

The total income received by Holy Cross for 2020 was \$316,062.88 a 21% increase of giving as compared to 2019 where \$261,049.66 was recorded. An increase of 13% was observed for on-line giving in 2020 in comparison to 2019.

The 2020 total pledges were recorded at \$129,474.00 for Sunday Worship. The year-end realized 2020 total pledge and non-pledge financial giving was recorded as \$162,289.11, representing a 25.3% increase over pledged amounts.

The 2020 pledged pastoral leadership fund was recorded as \$16,070.00. The year-end realized pledged and non-pledged giving was recorded as \$24,831.58 representing a 54.4% increase over pledged amounts. Additional contributions of \$2,500 by the Men's Group and a special gift of \$75.00 were recorded in 2020. Total 2020 pastoral leadership funds were \$27,406.58. Utilization and transfer of \$22,200 from the Pastoral Leadership fund to the General Fund was accomplished in 2020 and shown in the chart below.

Breakdown comparisons of the 2020 General Fund to the 2019 General Fund is shown in Chart 1 below. In 2020, Holy Cross recorded \$232,553.82 in total expenses with \$240,762.80 of total income yielding a positive \$8,208.98 in reserve.

Chart 1: General fund breakdown:

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Sunday Worship	\$156,711.93	\$162,289.11
Rental Income	19,907.00	18,300.00
Holiday Offering	7,139.00	6,775.00
Loose Offering	2,468.53	2,529.61
Misc. Income	4,464.18	3,222.08
Pastoral Leadership	8,777.00	22,200.00
Paycheck Protection Program		<u>25,447.00</u>
Total General Fund Income	<u>\$199,467.64</u>	<u>\$240,762.80</u>
Total Expenses	<u>(196,963.36)</u>	<u>(232,553.82)</u>
Total Income (loss)	\$ 2,504.28	\$ 8,208.98

Holy Cross financial accounts reside locally with Lake Elmo Bank. The 2020 year end balances are recorded as: Checking Balance - \$19,295.56; Savings Balance - \$79,909.11; Money Market Account Balance - \$41,752.30; and Endowment Fund - \$4,695.04. The Men's Group 2020 final balance was recorded at \$11,040.14. Total cash balance for 2020-year end at Lake Elmo Bank was recorded as \$ 156,692.15.

Of note to Chart 2 shown below, a negative year-end 2020 balance of \$19,500 is recorded in the Building Fund/Maintenance line. This was the December payment for the Roof Top Unit.

Chart 2: 2020 End of Year Fund Balances

FUND	Beginning Balance Jan 1, 2020	Income	Expense	End of Year Balance 2020
Elevator Fund Balance	\$40,900.00	\$970.00	\$-	\$41,870.00
Headstart	\$7,862.95	\$-	\$7,862.95	\$-
Audio/Visual Fund	\$6,363.03	\$1,272.04	\$272.04	\$7,363.03
Barb Schulte Funeral Meal	\$498.51	\$-	\$-	\$498.51
Building Fund/Maintenance	\$1,264.63	\$21,671.11	\$42,435.74	\$(19,500.00)
Children's Ministry/VBS	\$185.00	\$-	\$-	\$185.00
Confirmation Fund Balance	\$503.41	\$397.00	\$476.56	\$423.85
CYF Events (w/wo/service immer)	\$4,672.73	\$968.67	\$716.85	\$4,924.55
Equipment fund	\$2,500.00	\$-	\$439.15	\$2,060.85
Flower-Christmas Fund	\$178.00	\$-	\$178.00	\$-
Flower-Easter	\$379.52	\$338.00	\$-	\$717.52
Hunger Fund Balance	\$-	\$141.79	\$141.79	\$-
Kitchen Remodel	\$4,410.94	\$-	\$-	\$4,410.94
Memorial Fund	\$3,318.72	\$2,146.00	\$209.40	\$5,255.32
Music Ministry	\$923.54	\$50.00	\$784.96	\$188.58
Pastoral Leadership	\$28,469.22	\$27,406.58	\$22,200.00	\$33,675.80
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$335.00	\$-	\$-	\$335.00
Post-Secondary Scholarship Fund	\$4,180.00	\$635.00	\$1,500.00	\$3,315.00
Ramsey County Grant	\$649.43	\$250.00	\$-	\$899.43
Tanzania Parish Fund	\$(144.00)	\$749.00	\$605.00	\$-
Women's Group	\$9,690.48	\$706.00	\$5,674.46	\$4,722.02
BWCA	\$-	\$1,000.00	\$-	\$1,000.00
PPP	\$-	\$25,447.00	\$25,447.00	\$-
TOTALS	\$117,141.11	\$84,148.19	\$108,943.90	\$92,345.40

	End of Year Balances
Endowment fund Balance	\$4,695.04
Checking account balance	\$19,295.56
Savings account balance	\$79,909.11
Money Market Account Balance	\$41,752.30
Men's Club	\$11,040.14
	\$156,692.15

I would like to thank the volunteers who gave of their time and talents in counting this year. They are: Char Nunn, Debby Dellis, Don Leholm, Dorothy Frank, Gayle Nason, Glenna Kubat, Jammie Klingsporn, Jerry Vehrs, Karla Beaulieu, Pam Sorensen, Roxane Vehrs, Scott Sorensen, Sister Annette Langdon, and Tom O'Brien.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Bonnie Katzmark
 Financial Secretary

2020 Treasurer Report

2020 Holy Cross Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee Members include: Debby Dellis, Pam Hinton, Bonnie Katzmark, Pam Klingsporn, Don Leholm, Charlene Nun, and Scott Sorensen.

Ex-Officio Member: Stefan Babirad

Mission: The mission of the Holy Cross Finance Committee is to oversee the finances and stewardship of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in accordance with the mission of the church.

The Finance Committee meets monthly. We review and approve the ledger reports. Each check written the previous month is reviewed to assure accuracy.

Finance requests were collected from the Ministry Team Leaders, Personnel Committee on Staff Salaries, Executive Committee, and historical utility expenses to compile the 2021 annual budget proposal. The 2021 proposed annual budget was scrutinized and reviewed by the Finance Committee on December 14, 2020 comparing historical amounts with approval to bring to council.

The proposed annual budget was reviewed and approved by the congregational council at the January 5, 2021 meeting.

Our goal in 2021 remains to be fiscally responsible and provide necessary communication with the congregation on updates of the financial status of the church and any loan activity (if needed) relating to the operations of the church.

An overall reduction of \$18,241 or 6% is observed when comparing the 2020 budget (\$300,866) to the 2021 proposed budget (\$282,625). Areas of budgetary increase in 2021 are the following:

- Payroll/FICA/Pension: \$29,299 for Health Insurance of Sr. Pastor and replacement of Admin with Media Specialist
- Fiscal Audit \$7,000 Financial Audit of church accounting books
- 60th Anniversary \$1,000 for celebrating 60 years of faithful service
- Instrument Maintenance \$2,500 for maintaining key instruments (bells)

Thank you for your past dedication and generous support in investing in our church operations.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pam Klingsporn - Treasurer

		2020 Budget	2020 Expenses	Difference	Percent of 2020 Budget
General	Description				
	Payroll / FICA	162,196.00	160,984.45	1,211.55	99.25%
	Travel Expenses	500.00	-	500.00	0.00%
	Continuing Education	800.00	-	800.00	0.00%
	Official Meetings	500.00	15.00	485.00	3.00%
	Professional & Ministerial Expense	500.00	-	500.00	0.00%
	Miscellaneous Salary	1,200.00	-	1,200.00	0.00%
	Contingency Expense	500.00	-	500.00	0.00%
	Adult Education	500.00	-	500.00	0.00%
	General Total	166,696.00	160,999.45	5,696.55	96.58%
Administration					
	Office/Bldg Supplies	3,000.00	1,412.29	1,587.71	47.08%
	Office Equipment	4,000.00	3,585.93	414.07	89.65%
	Telephone / Internet	2,800.00	2,481.28	318.72	88.62%
	Postage	1,000.00	795.10	204.90	79.51%
	Payroll Expense	3,500.00	2,514.66	985.34	71.85%
	Technology	2,000.00	2,909.17	(909.17)	145.46%
	Advertisement	1,000.00	-	1,000.00	0.00%
	St. Paul Synod Benevolence	4,000.00	4,000.00	-	100.00%
	Camp Wapo Association	625.00	625.00	-	100.00%
	Background Checks	100.00	-	100.00	0.00%
	Estimated Equity line Interest	3,000.00	-	3,000.00	0.00%
	Updated HVAC Unit (Loan payment)	-	-	-	0.00%
	Audit	3,000.00	-	3,000.00	0.00%
	Administration Total	28,025.00	18,323.43	9,701.57	65.38%
Property					
	General Maintenance	7,500.00	2,982.57	4,517.43	39.77%
	Insurance	8,500.00	8,860.16	(360.16)	104.24%
	Seasonal Cleaning	300.00	-	300.00	0.00%
	Electricity / Gas	16,000.00	9,237.68	6,762.32	57.74%
	Water and Sewer	3,000.00	2,202.37	797.63	73.41%
	Garbage Removal	2,000.00	1,894.17	105.83	94.71%
	Security System	1,700.00	2,031.90	(331.90)	119.52%
	Snow Plowing	4,000.00	2,800.00	1,200.00	70.00%
	Lawn Care	550.00	3,476.25	(2,926.25)	632.05%
	Property Total	43,550.00	33,485.10	10,064.90	76.89%
One Time Capital Expense					
	One time Capital expenditures	52,500.00	13,443.53	-	25.61%
	Bldg Fund/Property Maintenance	-	-	-	0.00%
	Head Start/Restricted	-	-	-	0.00%
	Capital Expense Total	52,500.00	13,443.53	-	25.61%
Welcome Ministry					
	60th Anniversary Celebration	-	-	-	0.00%
	Hospitality	1,000.00	-	1,000.00	0.00%
	New Member	500.00	-	500.00	0.00%
	Ramsey County Grant Expense	-	-	-	0.00%
	Welcome Ministry Total	1,500.00	-	1,500.00	0.00%
Worship Ministry					
	Music / Drama	1,500.00	1,373.19	126.81	91.55%
	Combined Worship Supplies	2,000.00	1,675.08	324.92	83.75%
	Instrument Maintenance	-	160.00	(160.00)	0.00%

Worship Ministry Total		3,500.00	3,208.27	291.73	91.66%
Growing in Faith Ministry					
	Birth - Three Ministry	-		-	
	Children's Ministry	600.00	381.69	218.31	63.62%
	Youth Ministries	600.00	27.11	572.89	4.52%
	Children's Ministry / VBS	700.00	352.92	347.08	50.42%
	Ministry Milestones	300.00	-	300.00	0.00%
	Confirmation	-	-	-	0.00%
Growing in Faith Ministry Total		2,200.00	761.72	1,438.28	34.62%
Stewardship					
	Stewardship Materials	750.00	194.95	555.05	25.99%
	Offering Envelopes	500.00	328.37	171.63	0.00%
Stewardship Total		1,250.00	523.32	726.68	41.87%
Serving God's People Ministry					
	Outreach	1,000.00	1,000.00	-	100.00%
	Tanzania Student	665.00	665.00	-	100.00%
	Tanzania Parish	-	144.00	-	0.00%
Serving God's People Ministry Total		1,665.00	1,809.00	-	108.65%
Ministries Total		300,886.00	232,553.82	29,419.71	77.29%

2021 Proposed Holy Cross Budget					
			2020 Budget		2021 Proposed Budget
		Description			
General					
		Payroll / FICA/Pension	162,196.00		191,495.00
		Travel Expenses	500.00		500.00
		Continuing Education	800.00		800.00
		Official Meetings	500.00		500.00
		Professional & Ministerial Expense	500.00		500.00
		Miscellaneous Salary	1,200.00		1,200.00
		Contingency Expense	500.00		500.00
		Adult Education	500.00		500.00
		General Total	166,696.00		195,995.00
Administration					
		Office/Bldg Supplies	3,000.00		3,000.00
		Office Equipment	4,000.00		4,000.00
		Telephone / Internet	2,800.00		2,800.00
		Postage	1,000.00		1,000.00
		Payroll Expense	3,500.00		1,140.00
		Technology	2,000.00		2,000.00
		Advertisement	1,000.00		1,000.00
		St. Paul Synod Benevolence	4,000.00		4,000.00
		Camp Wapo Association	625.00		625.00
		Background Checks	100.00		100.00
		Estimated Equity line Interest	3,000.00		3,000.00
		Audit	3,000.00		7,000.00
		Administration Total	28,025.00		29,665.00
Property					
		General Maintenance	7,500.00		7,000.00
		Insurance	8,500.00		8,500.00
		Seasonal Cleaning	300.00		300.00
		Electricity / Gas	16,000.00		16,000.00
		Water and Sewer	3,000.00		3,000.00
		Garbage Removal	2,000.00		2,000.00
		Security System	1,700.00		2,000.00
		Snow Plowing	4,000.00		4,000.00
		Lawn Care	550.00		550.00
		Property Total	43,550.00		43,350.00
One time Capital Expense					
		One time Capital expenditures	52,500.00		-
		Bldg Fund/Property Maintenance	-		-
		Head Start/Restricted	-		-
		Capital Expense Total	52,500.00		-
Welcome Ministry					
		60th Anniversary Celebration	-		1,000.00
		Hospitality	1,000.00		1,000.00
		New Member	500.00		500.00
		Ramsey County Grant Expense	-		-
		Welcome Ministry Total	1,500.00		2,500.00
Worship Ministry					
		Music / Drama	1,500.00		1,500.00
		Combined Worship Supplies	2,000.00		2,000.00
		Instrument Maintenance	-		2,500.00
		Worship Ministry Total	3,500.00		6,000.00
Growing in Faith Ministry					
		Birth - Three Ministry	-		-
		Children's Ministry	600.00		600.00
		Youth Ministries	600.00		600.00

	Children's Ministry / VBS		700.00		700.00
	Ministry Milestones		300.00		300.00
	Confirmation		-		-
	Growing in Faith Ministry Total		2,200.00		2,200.00
Stewardship					
	Stewardship Materials		750.00		500.00
	Offering Envelopes		500.00		750.00
	Stewardship Total		1,250.00		1,250.00
Serving God's People Ministry					
	Outreach		1,000.00		1,000.00
	Tanzania Student		665.00		665.00
	Serving God's People Ministry Total		1,665.00		1,665.00
	Ministries Total		300,886.00		282,625.00

Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Nominating Ballot
Election of Church Leaders 2021-2022

The Nominating Committee presents for office the following nominees, whom we find qualified to serve, and for whom we thank God. The election will be held at the annual congregational meeting on January 31, 2021.

President

Stefan Babirad



Stefan has been serving as Council President for the last 2 years. He has been an active member of Holy Cross since 1992. He has held positions as Vice-President, Stewardship, H2H guide, and Men's Group previously.

Vice-President

Don Leholm



Don has been an active member of Holy Cross serving as a lecturer, H2H guide, Finance Committee member, and Call Committee Member. We thank Don for his previous service and running for Council VP.

Secretary

Ann Hagestad



Ann has been a active member of Holy Cross. She can be often seen volunteering through the Women's Group activities, Food Shelf coordinator, and Cheese Curd booth help. She had previously been on Council as lead of Serving God's People.

Stewardship

Heidi Paulson



Heidi has been serving as Council Stewardship lead for the last 2 years. During this time, she has brought stewardship as a yearlong focus. Using congregational storytelling to highlight faith journeys will continue to accentuate time, talent, and treasure.

Property

Tom Nun



Tom will return as Council Property lead at Holy Cross. Over the last two years, Tom has spearheaded our overall facility upgrades and property issues with new water heaters, new flat roof, new HVAC system, and regular maintenance to our grounds. He has compiled a list of capital needs for our prioritization.

Worship & Music

Marla Davenport



Marla has been serving as Council Worship & Music lead for the last 2 years. Marla previously has served Holy Cross in numerous Council positions as President, H2H guide, Personnel Committee, Call Committee, Resurrection Team, HC Constitution, choir member, and a host of volunteerism within our church.

**Children, Youth,
& Family**

Jen Mallinger



Jen has been an active member of Holy Cross since 1998. She has served Holy Cross as a Sunday School teacher, lecturer, H2H guide, CYF team member, Call Committee, and willing to help out in any capacity. We thank Jen for stepping up and running for Council CYF lead.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Pam Sorensen, Michelle Gydesen, Stefan Babirad, and Pastor Rusty Brace



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,

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



2020 Annual Report of the Synod

by Bishop Patricia Lull | January 2021

“We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.”
(paraphrase of Philippians 4:13)

Dear Partners in Ministry,

2020 has certainly been the strangest and most challenging year for us as a synod—for congregations, specialized ministries, and institutions—and for each of you. Thanks be to God, who has strengthened, uplifted, and sustained us during this year of a global pandemic, and important learnings amid social unrest.

I am cheered by the immediate response made by congregations across this synod when we needed to stop gathering in person in early March. From the start you have shown respect for the wisdom of Governor Tim Walz and our public health experts. You pulled together informed lay leaders and community representatives to guide your rostered ministers in crafting a plan for safe reopening and use of your building. Within days, worship planners found new ways to bring the Gospel to a dispersed congregation through mailings, recorded services, live-streamed worship and Zoom. When the weather and new state guidelines allowed gatherings in small numbers, you moved worship outdoors to your parking lots and side yards or used registration, masks and hand washing to ensure that your congregation would not become a hotspot for spreading COVID-19. Thank you.



With courage, you as people of faith faced the tough challenge of offering pastoral care to those who were ill and to the dying. We learned afresh how much a phone call can mean and how Zoom can draw family and friends together in times of grief. So many funeral services had to be postponed or turned into small-size gatherings. Let us commit to remembering the saints we have entrusted to God this past year and find new ways to mark anniversaries when we are able to gather in person again.

When the pandemic wanes we will have much learning to share from this past year about what it means to be a community of faith in the twenty-first century. There will be innovations to keep and cherished practices to reclaim. I look forward to learning with you, especially about how the good news of God’s grace and forgiveness is spoken to us through God’s word and the sacraments.

In 2020, the synod played a unique role in convening congregational leaders amid the pandemic. We hosted Zoom conversations on public health mandates, PPP loans for small businesses, remote congregational meetings, and stewardship of financial resources. I thank Carol Hood, synod vice president; David Laden, synod treasurer; and Sarah Crippen, synod attorney; for helping with many of those sessions.

During all that, the synod assembly was hosted as an online event on Sept. 25-26. We did it, friends! We mastered new technological platforms and demonstrated we could be together while being apart for the essential business of the synod. I am grateful for the confidence you showed in me and the synod staff team when you re-elected me to a second six-year term.

One of the commitments I bring is to continue the transformational work we need to do as individuals, congregations, and institutions to address racism and to hard-bake racial equity and a profound respect for diversity into all aspect of our church life. That is as essential to our well being as are all the safety precautions we have taken to lessen the impact of COVID-19.

Our pastors and deacons deserve our gratitude for stepping up and creating new ways to live out their vocations. Put to the test, they responded with imagination and persistence. I know you join me in thanking them. Three new colleagues were ordained in 2020. They include Deacon Stephanie Anderson-Telschow, Pastor Jason Kramme, and Deacon Brad Mills. At the close of 2020 we have 47 persons in the candidacy process and are grateful for their openness to serving in a church so shaped by the events of 2020.

While the focus of ministry shifted in every setting, eight congregations continued their work in the Year of Renewal, an intentional revitalization process that matches the spiritual gifts of members with God's work in the surrounding community. The 2020 participants included Bethlehem, St. Paul; Chisago Lake, Center City; Our Saviour's, Hastings; Redeemer, White Bear Lake; and Our Redeemer, St. Paul. Alongside this work, 12 congregations participated in the synod-sponsored Stewardship for All Seasons program, and 11 others in the Beginning a Culture of Generosity initiative.

While much attention was given to sustaining congregational life this past year, our mission start partners and global companions were not forgotten. Together as a synod we have supported ministry efforts at Christ the Servant, Vadnais Heights; Lutheran Church of Peace, Maplewood; Hope, St. Paul; Minnesota Faith Chinese, Roseville; Good Samaritan, St. Paul; Humble Walk, St. Paul; The Depot of St. Andrew's, Hugo; Cristo Rey, New Brighton; Foundation of Life, St. Paul; and Shobi's Table, St. Paul. Likewise, while the pandemic made it impossible for delegations to travel to Tanzania or Guatemala, prayers and project support abounded to help our siblings in other parts of the world continue their mission in Christ.

Let me end with a special work of thanks to the synod staff. Two staff members retired or completed their term of service in 2020 – Greg Triplett and Deacon April Trout. We thank them for good and faithful service. The current staff include Michael Gold, office assistant; Alicia Rodriguez, office manager; Mary Smith, director of communications; David Roinas, finance administrator; Pastor Justin Grimm, director for evangelical mission and assistant to the bishop; Deacon Krista Lind, assistant to the bishop; Anna Marsh, executive assistant to the bishop; Pastor Peter Harrits, director of Bega Kwa Bega and assistant to the bishop, and Ryan and Astine Bose, newly named short-term volunteers in Iringa.

We have been stretched and tested, but all through this past year God has been at work in and through us. What a joy it is for all of us to serve with you in the Saint Paul Area Synod.

Yours in God's service –



Bishop Patricia Lull

Congregational Report 2020

Thank you for being an Association Member Church! 2020 was an incredibly difficult and unpredictable year for churches, camps, and communities. Amidst the challenges of 2020, we are thankful for your partnership and support, and look forward to the opportunities for ministry in 2021. Here are some highlights from 2020 that we lift up with grateful hearts:

An Updated Brand and New Website Way back at the beginning of 2020, before we knew anything about a pandemic, we started on a fantastic journey with a marketing company to create a refreshed brand for the camps of LWLBC and a new website. Check it out! lakewapo.org

Summer 2020 Despite having to cancel all of our traditional summer camp programming we were still able to hire a small summer staff for Wapo/Ox and Wilderness Canoe Base. This group of talented and dedicated young adults created incredible camp experiences that campers and families could enjoy at home. We were sad to not gather in person but so grateful for the ways we could engage with campers virtually. We were able to provide limited cabin space for family rentals and our staff at Wapo and Wilderness were so happy to host real live people!

Retreats and Events in 2020 The COVID-19 health crisis caused a major disruption in our retreat calendar as well. Because this landscape changes quickly and is unpredictable, most of our groups canceled for the year but we were able to safely host a few groups in the Fall. We have implemented even more rigorous cleaning and disinfecting protocols for all of our sites and require masks and social distancing. Many of our normal events had a new look this year as we adapted to drive through versions of the Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast and Christmas Dinner Theater, a shortened and physically distanced Boat-in Worship season, and a golf tournament with picnic meals.

Rooted and Renewed The Rooted & Renewed campaign for Wilderness Canoe Base reached a significant milestone when we raised the \$300,000 needed to pay off the loan used for the final purchase of that site. And now, we are so close to raising the remaining \$100,000 for needed upgrades in the Cove. If you'd like to learn more, please contact Nathan Berkas at nathanb@campwapo.org.

The Gather Campaign for a new Dining Hall and Hospitality Center With the support of our Board, we decided to begin Phase 1 of this project in 2020. We had the funds in hand to begin building and the time was right due to the disruption in hosting guests and events at Camp Wapo. We anticipate that Phase 1 will be complete in time for the summer 2021 program to begin. Please prayerfully consider how you might be able to financially support this important project as we continue to raise funds for Phase 3. See building progress at lakewapo.org.

Financial Gifts. 2020 was a rough financial year for so many families, businesses, and organizations. The financial impact of the pandemic is far reaching and long lasting. Here at camp we experienced an estimated \$2.3 million loss in summer and retreat program revenue. We adjusted our budget by reducing our expenses by 40% sustaining only our essential day to day operations. We could not have financially survived 2020 without the incredible support we have received from our partner churches and individuals. We are humbled and blessed by your generosity.

Leadership Transition. We are so grateful for the care and leadership that Pastor Jeff Barrow provided as Interim Program Director. As we said goodbye to Jeff in December, we welcomed Pastor Suzi Orlopp as the Director of Programs and Retreats for Camp Wapo and Ox Lake. Suzi brings a great deal of energy and expertise, coupled with her longstanding love and admiration for outdoor ministry.

Risk Management and Youth Protection In a year where nothing was normal, our mission was critical, "places of grace forming people of faith". LWLBC has the primary purpose of providing opportunities for campers to discover, build, and celebrate their relationships with Christ, the church and each other. We are passionate about proclaiming the good news of Jesus to kids in safe spaces. This year we prioritized improving our policies and procedures so we are well poised and ready for 2021. You can find our policies at lakewapo.org.

Our theme for 2021 is "Just Love" Psalm 33:5 says "The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord". This theme will help us focus on living out justice that is formed and shaped by the unearned and utterly gracious love of God, which is longer, higher, wider and deeper than we can imagine.

We look ahead with eager anticipation and a sure sense of hope.