

# Lord of Life Lutheran Church of Baxter 2020-2021 Annual Report



*Our Mission: To inspire a deeper and richer  
connection to Christ, our community, and each other.*

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# Church Council and Staff

## Staff:

Pastor Steven Rye, Senior Pastor  
 steven.rye@lolbaxter.org

Pastor Erika Nilsen, Associate Pastor  
 erika.nilsen@lolbaxter.org

Anne Laechel, Ministry Operations Manager  
 anne@lolbaxter.org

Tim Slinger, Youth Ministry Director  
 tim@lolbaxter.org

Jennifer Persons, Worship Director  
 jennifer.person@lolbaxter.org

Sarah Aamot, Choir Director  
 sarah-lundin@hotmail.com

Karen Erickson, Custodian

Paul Erickson, Custodian

Tyler Jensen, Communications Coordinator  
 tyler.jensen@lolbaxter.org

## Council:

Dan Tupy, President

Steve Schaitberger, Vice-President

Laura Campbell, Secretary

Chris Adamson, Treasurer

Emmy Holcomb-Smith,  
 Youth Council Representative

## Mission Leaders:

Darcy Dwyer, Mission Upward

Pam Caughey, Mission Inward

Lori Rehnblom, Mission Outward

Brian Orłowski, Mission Ground

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AGENDAJune 6, 2021 - 11:00 A.M.

1. Call to order-President Dan Tupy
2. Opening prayer and celebrations-Pastor Erika
3. Review and approve the special rules/procedures of the remote meeting
4. Attendance
5. Certification of quorum (30 voting members required)-Secretary Laura Campbell
6. Adoption of Agenda (Verbal Vote)-President Dan Tupy
7. Minutes of Congregational Meeting - October 4, 2020-Secretary Laura Campbell
8. Presentation and Discussion of Annual Reports-President Dan Tupy
9. Presentation of Budget for July 2021 to June 2022-Treasurer Chris Adamson
  - a. Motion to adopt, discussion, and approval (Verbal Vote)-President Dan Tupy
10. Nominating Committee Report
  - a. Voting on Council members, Nominating Committee & Financial Review Committee (Verbal Vote)-President Dan Tupy
11. Other business
12. Motion to Adjourn-President Dan Tupy
13. Closing Prayer-Pastor Steve

Meeting Information

Online (Audio &amp; Video):

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82458826878?pwd=Vnl1TXlGSXZWS2paSldTM2YzQX-ZOZz09>

Meeting ID: 824 5882 6878

Passcode: 128088

Phone: +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Check-in will begin at 10:30 a.m. All individuals will first be placed in a digital waiting room and admitted to the meeting after confirmation of connection to Lord of Life. Please join the meeting with both your first and last name(s) in the name field.

# Proposed Rules and Procedures

## Voting Member Credentials

1. C8.02.b - Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
2. C8.02.c - Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.
3. C11.02; C12.02 - Officers and Council members shall be elected by majority vote of those present and voting, by voice vote, or by written secret ballot upon request of a voting member.
4. Voting for other measures including the budget will be completed by majority vote of those present and voting by voice vote.

## Quorum

1. C10.04. Members equaling ten percent of the average worship attendance for the prior calendar year shall constitute a quorum. Quorum is 30
2. C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted but attendance through electronic means may be permitted if approved by the President of the Congregation.
3. C10.06. All actions approved by the congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.
4. C10.07. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.
5. All individuals will first be placed in a digital waiting room and admitted to the meeting after confirmation of connection to Lord of Life.
6. Please join the meeting with both your first and last name(s) in the name field.
7. Attendance will be taken by participants entering their name(s) into the Chat window in Zoom, as well as a verbal roll call for phone call only participants, and screenshots of online participants.

8. The contents of the Group Chat will become a part of the Minutes of the Congregational Meeting.

### Discussion/Addressing those Assembled

1. All mics will be muted as you enter the meeting. Please leave your microphone muted to reduce the group hearing personal conversations or loud audio feedback.
2. To unmute on a computer, toggle the mute icon in the lower left corner of the screen.
3. Individuals joining by phone only can toggle the mute/unmute feature by pressing \*6 on their phone's keypad.
4. If a person wishes to speak to the group, please type your request in the Group chat feature on Zoom and/or press the Raise Hand button from the Participants menu.
5. Individuals joining by phone only can get the attention of the chair by pressing \*9 (Raise Hand) on their phone's keypad.

### Zoom

1. Confirm that you have strong internet connection. If for any reason you lose your connection to the meeting, you can log back in using the original link provided.
2. Additional information about using Zoom can be found here <https://bit.ly/32Tgl1i>

# 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes

Lord of Life Lutheran Church  
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes  
October 4, 2020

Meeting called to order at 11:05 am by Council President Cindy Swenson.

Opening prayer and celebrations led by Pastor Erika R. Nilsen.

Review & adopt for approval the special rules/procedures of the remote meeting. Motion to adopt rules & procedures by Steve Schaitberger, seconded by Bob Nelson. All approved. Motion carried. (CM.2020.10.01).

Council Secretary Laura Campbell certified that a quorum of voting members was present.

Motion to Adopt the Agenda - Motion by Sue Beck, seconded by Jim Kingsley, All approved. Motion carried. (CM.2020.10.02)

Approval of Congregational Meeting Minutes June 23, 2019. The Annual Report was presented.

Motion to adopt the budget for July 2020 to July 2021. Motion by Pat Huhta, second by Mel Nefstead. All approved. Motion carried. (CM.2020.10.03)

The Nominating Committee 2020 (Beth Hensel, Judy Bialka, Emilee Freed, Richard Koop, Bev Owen, Ginger Augustinack) submitted the following names for election to

- Church Council::
  - Dan Tupy- First Term as President
  - Steve Schaitberger - First Term as Vice-President
  - Chris Adamson - Second Term as Treasurer
  - Laura Campbell - Second Term as Secretary
  - Brian Orłowski – First Term on Council (Ground)
  - Pam Caughey – First Term on Council (Inward)
  - Darcy Dwyer - Second Term on Council (Upward)
  - Lori Rehnblom - Second Term on Council (Outward)
  - Emmy Holcomb Smith - First term as Youth Council Member
- Financial Review:
  - C. B. Bylander (1 year remaining)
  - Tom Champion (2years remaining)
  - Joel Staehling (3 years remaining)
- Synod Assembly:
  - Sarah Meier
  - Jim & Teresa Kingsley

- Nominating Committee 2020-2021:

- Cindy Swenson
- Pat Huhta
- Ruth Nelson
- Delia Bruggeman
- Matt Rioux,
- Jolene Parks
- Pastor Steven Rye

Motion to adopt the report of the Nominating Committee for positions on the Council, Nominating Committee and Financial Review Committee for the 2020-2021 planning year.

Motion by Sue Beck, seconded by Lori Rehnblom. Motion carried. (CM.2020.10.04)

Motion to ratify action of the council regarding the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program.

Motioned by Paul Jacobson, seconded by Mary Anderson. All approved. Motion carried. (CM.2020.10.05)

Meeting adjourned. Closing prayer by Pastor Steven J. Rye



# Member Milestones

During this meeting, we would like to take the time to recognize some milestones in our members' lives. We are incredibly thankful for our faith family and we look forward to making more memories together in the 2021-2022 year.

During this year, we welcomed the following people into our Church through them being baptised into the faith:

- On October 25, 2020, Giana Grace Getty, daughter of Alex and Katie Getty was baptized.
- On April 3, 2021, Sydney Shirley Christopherson, daughter of Kelsey Kunde and Blake Christopherson was baptized.
- On April 11, 2021 Jameson Timothy Lange, son of Christopher and Ashlyn Lange, was baptized.

Unfortunately this year, we also lost members of our faith family. We give thanks to God for the gifts they gave us as members of the Church, our community and as our friends and family. Let us take a moment to remember:

- Mel Nefstead, who passed away November 18th, 2020. Both within Lord of Life and throughout the community, Mel was dedicated to helping others, participating in Bible studies, mission trips and a number of civic organizations.
- Mark Beckerleg, who passed away December 24th, 2020. Mark shared his gifts of carpentry with Lord of Life, constructing a number of items that are invaluable to the Church. He also contributed his time and talents to the overall maintaining of the Church as a member of the Property Team.

# President's Report

That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

1 Corinthians 12:25:27

I thank God for my Lord of Life Family!

For some of us, myself included, the last year has held great personal and professional loss. During these hard times, we have had our faith family to pick us up, support and pray for us. Although not in the ways we are accustomed and not always in the ways we prefer, that support has been there none the less and together we have made this year blessed!

We must acknowledge that in the last year we have diversified as a faith family! We have supported and loved each other from a distance with air hugs, fist bumps and prayers. Through the great effort of many, we have strengthened our online worship which has helped many stay connected to LOL and made a few new friends in the process. And in case you haven't heard, we are back! We have brought back in-person worship in an extremely safe manner following all the necessary precautions with the guidance of our SMART Team.

I'll confess that I am a face-face kind of guy. Maybe that's why our first time back to a LOL in-person service was just extraordinary. Sarah's voice had never sounded sweeter, Jennifer's playing was flawless, the overhead and sound system-perfect and the preaching never rang so true! That service moved me in a way I have never experienced before. Those that were there that day (some dear friends and others that I didn't know) shared the deepest, most heartfelt smiles that no mask could hide. I hope to share my smile with you soon.

Lord of Life's more tangible achievements during this past year,:

- We have maintained our excellent staff with zero COVID-related lay-offs
- The Personnel Committee created a practical and professional employee handbook
- Tyler Jensen was hired as our Communications Coordinator
- A beautiful new storage building was completed by the sweat and generosity of our members
- We saw continued growth of our services for members and beyond our doors with our many activities and groups while adding new ones like the Grief Support Group
- We budgeted for the first cost of living raise for staff in 7 years!
- And so much more...

Over the next year we plan to:

- Enhance our youth programs
- Focus and save towards the needs of our beautiful physical plant
- Increase the churches giving to our multiple communities while remaining good stewards of our many talents and personal resources
- Keep open lines of communication between the council and all church members
- Most importantly, we will create a new and improved "back to normal".

Thank you for supporting your Lord of Life family.

Dan Tupy

# Senior Pastor's Report

Paul writes; “we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” - Romans 5:3-5

Recently, I visited with a gentleman who wishes to join our congregation. We talked about where he had come from and his involvement there. Among other things, he had volunteered in an oncology department of a hospital. He reflected on his experience, “What I find so fascinating is the wide range of ways that people enter into their chemo treatment. Some with a great life spirit, others with deep dread and everything in between.” Over my years in ministry, I have found this to be so true. Those with a great life spirit tend to be people who have GRATITUDE and a spirit of HOPE.

Where does one even begin to report on all that has taken place since our last Annual Meeting? This year has seemed like one big - long - treatment. Like many in treatment that I have been inspired by over the years, I find myself with a tremendous life spirit filled with gratitude and a spirit of hope.

First of all, I am so grateful for my Lord of Life family. For so many people and their efforts through it all. I’m grateful for our new Communication Coordinator, Tyler Jensen, who filled a huge gap on our staff that opened up when Colleen left. He has quickly become an essential part of the team. I’m also grateful for the rest of the staff. There is a wonderful team spirit among us, they have tremendous servant-hearts, and as a congregation, we are blessed to have them. I’m grateful too for so many members who have stepped up in so many ways, from the quiet hero’s who continue to financially support our congregation to those who have stepped up to ensure our vital ministry continues.

Despite the shutdown of so much of what we do, we were still able to hold Master Classes, First Communion, and Confirmation. We have been able to sustain the effort of putting out prayerLIFE@12:45 devotionals, Christmas Eve and Easter Kits. Other things that fill me with gratitude: The Advent lights and patio prayer station, Participating in the national COVID memorial, The spawning of a new ministry group: “Friends of Baxter Elementary,” and recently our Mother’s Day hymn sing.

As we move forward, I am HOPEFUL we will continue work to recalibrate and right-size our staff for growth and congregational vitality. We will leverage the skills of our new Communication Coordinator to communicate in this ever-more complicated world effectively. Online and in-building programming and worship will continue and expand. We also need to provide thoughtful in-reach to current members.

I am hopeful we will steward our “COVID reset” well through examining our past practices in light of our new environment. We are discerning what will meet the needs of the un-churched or the de-churched and reclaiming a hunger for outreach. As more and more ministries come back online, we will be intentional about starting them off on the right foot - supported by our mission-oriented council.

Finally, I am HOPEFUL we will stay on a firm organizational footing. Then we will build upon the mission-oriented culture change taking place within the congregational and the council. I am hopeful we will remain fiscally sound through the cultivation of generosity.

How am I hopeful in these days after our “treatment”? Because, as Romans 3 tells us, “We live in the assurance that our hope does not disappoint us because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

Thank you for allowing the Holy Spirit to be a conduit for God’s love poured out into the world! And thank you for your partnership in ministry!

Blessings!

Pr. Steve

# Associate Pastor's Report

On May 5th, 2020 I shared a 12:45 devotion. We were just 6 weeks into our Covid-19 quarantine and were faced with countless questions and unknowns, fears and concerns. The world seemed terribly unreliable and fragile. I felt that way too. As you know – May 5th is Cinco De Mayo – so I did a little research and discovered that the battle that was won on May 5th in Mexico against the French who were hoping for an outpost in the “New World” was just the first battle and victory of a fight that went on for 5 more years. The victory most certainly was not the end of the war or a guarantee of ultimate victory. But that small victory was a significant win - it made a difference - and became the symbol of Mexican resistance to foreign domination.

While I truly dislike military imagery – I’m going to go with it as I reflect back on this past year. So why does this story seem so important even today? Because I feel like amidst the “war” against Covid-19 – amidst the battle our nation encountered this past year and the individual battles we were all fighting and facing on various levels and to varying degrees – while the “fight” continues – there have been countless small victories that have buoyed our spirits, that have lifted up our eyes, that have made a difference and that have helped us see a way forward when it felt like there was no way.

Some of the large and small victories I witnessed:

- Sustained financial support!
- Fully engaged music staff that provided ongoing worship leadership and support amidst ever changing logistics and limitations.
- Fully engaged TECH volunteers and staff who moved us “online” within days of the shut down and have ceaselessly tweaked, updated, made better, expanded the system.
- New Vision for Club 56 which involved door to door pizza deliveries and one-on-one connections with middle school kids.
- Visiting every confirmation student.
- Launching a new Stephen Ministry Training on zoom.
- Stories of Change – a ministry to families throughout the summer inviting intentional conversation around issues of race and discrimination.
- Take Home Kits!!!
- Summer Video Interns – Preston Owen and Tyler Schaitberger!
- Thanks be to God that the list could go on and on!

As we move forward now into a new year with all sorts of possibilities and battles of which we do not yet even know, I will forever be blessed by the faithfulness, creativity, and resiliency of this congregation. I was also showered with your love and support after the sudden death of my mother-in-law Carolyn and in the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of my ordination.

And let us never forget how wonderful it is that in Christ the victory has already been won!

Grateful and Hopeful,  
Pastor Erika

# Ministry Reports

## Worship Team Report:

During this year, we worked with musicians to accommodate their schedules and needs in regards to COVID, while ensuring music remained a part of Lord of Life services.

We worked a lot with our sound and video technicians setting up live streaming.

We accommodated moving from the Sanctuary to outdoor worship

While choir was not in session at all for the 2020-2021 season, our Choir Director, Sarah Aamot, helped by playing Wednesday services and singing most Sundays.

We are expanding the selection of music we have during services with a new book of music.

Worship Director Jennifer Persons participated regularly in the 12:45 devotionals.

We are looking forward to the fall and more gatherings with musician groups

## Worship Environment Team Report:

Wow what a year it has been! Last year at this time we were quarantined and no one was allowed in the church except for staff. That made it a little difficult to fulfill our duties but we got creative!

At the beginning of the year, people saw the inside of the church only through streamed services. During nice weather we were able to have services outside along with our inside service.

Throughout the year we had to alter how we presented the various seasons of the church. Advent showed us that we could offer experiences for families outside the church building. Decorating for Christmas was a challenge as in years past it took a village to put up the Christmas tree and COVID wouldn't let us be around that many people.

Our team decided this was the year to buy a new tree that can be put up and taken down by two people. A new Nativity set was used for the children's sermons and to enhance the service.

The Lenten season was also altered as we couldn't offer our usual traditions. Easter saw the return of indoor worship and what an exciting day that was! Our team came together to decorate before and during Holy Week, including late on Friday night following the Good Friday service so we would be ready for Easter Sunday.

People may notice we no longer offer candles to be lit after communion as that was a change that needed to be made. As we look forward to next year we are hoping we can bring back some of the traditions that we haven't been able to do as well as incorporate new ones.

Beth Hensel, Patty Wallace, Wendy Adamson, Karen Erickson, Judy Bialka

## Children's Ministry:

What a year! We really felt the absence of a Children's Ministry Coordinator this past year, however, we were able to pull together some opportunities for connection and learning and growing throughout the year. This "quarantine year" also led to a much more intentional focus on family ministry – and the gifts of sharing faith around the home table or at bedtime or in the morning – which sounds a lot like what God had in mind for God's people when they were just trying to figure out life after slavery in Egypt [look up Deuteronomy 6:4-9].

So what happened this past year? Here are a few things:

- Stories for Change – a weekly ministry that invited conversation about home about race and discrimination. Dreamed up after the tragedy of George Floyd's death – Guy Kelm did a read aloud story each week followed by a conversation between Guy and Pastor Erika reflecting on themes and questions for families to talk about. Each episode ended in prayer – counting on God's spirit to be wildly at work to sow new visions for how to be Christ followers in the world. Preston Owen did all of the amazing filming and editing for this project! He also created the animation for the opening and a friend of his composed an original piece of music for it as well. A truly creative collaboration!
- Compassion Camp – Virtual VBS
- Day Camp with Camp Onomia
- Val Rangen's Backyard and Advent Kids Time Messages!
- Partnership with Luther Crest Bible camp for weekly video Sunday School lessons for 10 weeks in the Fall of 2020.
- A number of Take Home Kits for families to enhance the seasons of the church year and Festival Sundays.
- 3rd Grade Bible class over zoom
- 2021 Bible Story Reading Challenge for 2nd – 4th graders!
- First Communion – virtual and in person.

There's more! There's always more

I am beyond hopeful [thanks to your generosity] that this coming fiscal year we will be able to once again hire a part-time Children's Ministry coordinator to continue to support the faithful work of parents and guardians in passing on faith to their children, so that we can continue to support parents in the baptismal promises they made to their children, so that the kids of this congregation may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace! May it be so!

- Pastor Erika

## Youth Ministry:

### 2020-2021 Youth Team Members:

Jessica Balsley, Layne Danielson, Helene Danielson, Katy Kelm, Darcy Walkowiak, Jason Walkowiak, Tim Slinger

### Highlights/Events:

- Summer Splash & Summer Stretch
- Senior Recognition in August (outdoors) & Confirmation Service in November
- School Year Youth Programs
- Programing shifts in the midst of a pandemic

### YEAR END REFLECTIONS ON YOUTH MINISTRY

Before writing this reflection, I took a moment to look back on what I had written in last years' annual report. Here is how that article started off. "The program year of 2019-20 will be one I will never forget. As I sit here and am busy writing this reflection, we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic." Who knew that as I would be writing this today we are still in the midst of the pandemic but there is light at the end of the tunnel. This again will be a year I never forget!

This past summer looked drastically different than what we were used to experiencing at Lord of Life. The pandemic forced the cancellation of both the summer mission trip to Jamaica and our canoe adventure to the Apostle Islands for our high school students. Summer stretch continued but with a new look being offered completely online with weekly service challenges and scripture lessons that were posted for families. We were blessed with the opportunity later in the summer to offer two in-person Daycamp experiences through Camp Onomia. What a blessing it was to gather back together at church outdoors for the first time since the pandemic had begun!

### School Year Programming by The Numbers:

- 63 youth participated in the confirmation program
- 28 youth participated in our Club 56 & Teen's Upstream programs

It's hard to put into words what this past year has been like! This year brought about new changes and experiences that I will always remember and I am thankful to all the families who journeyed with us! As program staff, we found ourselves connecting with families where they were. This brought us to doorsteps, front yards or going out for walks around your neighborhoods together! Our Club 56 program made a drastic shift with a new format this year which included intentional faith conversations around the family dinner table and pizzas delivered to your door step! Our high school youth group was blessed to meet in person towards the end of last summer. Remaining outside on Wednesday nights even throughout the cold winter months devoted to connect with one another and enjoy some intentional faith conversations around a campfire! Confirmation began the year online until we reached the season of Lent where we were able to meet in person and offer a hybrid learning model for families! This year was filled with lots of Zoom meetings and livestreams but I am thankful for technology which gave us the opportunity to connect with all of you when we could not be in person!

There is so much more that I could share with regards to this past year but I will wait for another time to do so. I want to thank the congregation for their continued support of the youth ministry programs at Lord of Life and to all the families who are involved. I can't wait to see what this next year has in store for all of us!

Blessings,  
Tim Slinger  
Youth Director



## Property Team:

Team Members: Hawk Hawkinson (chairman), Rick zumBrunnen, Jack Christofferson, Gerry Bergstrom, Stan Kalinoski, Joe VanDenBoom, Kelly Story, Ron Hensel, Verdell Bose, David Schliek, Steve Jones, Layne Danielson, Karen Erickson and Doug Schultz

### Major 2020-21 Activities:

- Mowed grass during summer months
- Painted exterior storage/shop building walls
- Installed interior wall, double door system and lighting in the storage/shop building
- Installed pre-finished steel fascia and soffits on east, south and west side of church
- Replaced exterior vinyl door sweep weatherstripping on the Son Shine room
- Facilitated the fall work day
- Wired entry electronic keying device at the Son Shine entry door
- Shoveled sidewalks during winter months
- Administered the tree removal on the Barrett property
- Replaced the exhaust fan in the women's restroom
- Replaced damaged narthex LED light fixtures
- Posted No Trespassing & No Hunting signs on the Barrett Property
- Applied weed & feed fertilizer to all grass areas
- Repaired leak in roof-top condensing unit
- Facilitate spring work day

### Goals for 2021-22:

- Complete installation of pre-finished metal fascia & soffits on north side of church
- Insulate and install gypsum board on storage/shop building walls and ceiling
- Schedule fall and spring work days
- Install new door sweeps on both south entry door systems
- Repair woodpecker damage on stucco walls
- Repair or replace damaged shingles on Sanctuary roof
- Stain wood benches at the fire ring at north side of church
- Add additional irrigation to SW corner of church property
- Install LED light fixtures in classroom/office hallway

## Prayer Shawl Ministry:

A prayer shawl is intended to be a reminder of God's ever present love; a gift for every time and every occasion; for every season and circumstance; when weeping or celebrating.

We are celebrating our ministry's 11th Anniversary this year. Over the years, we have given away hundreds of shawls which have been a blessing to so many. You do not need to be a member of Lord of Life to give a shawl or to receive a shawl.

There are no membership lists; we invite anyone who is interested to come and join us. When we gather, we bring the shawls we are currently working on, exchange ideas, enjoy fellowship, and then ask God's blessing on the shawls that will be given away.

If you have questions regarding a pattern, yarn, etc., please call Jeannine zumBrunnen at 218-343-0964. If you know someone that would appreciate receiving a prayer shawl, you may pick one up at the church, or if you would like to have it delivered, please call Brenda Johnson at 218-831-9725.

## Stephen Ministry:

Lord of Life's Stephen Ministry has now been functional for more than 2 years. This powerful, confidential, caregiving ministry is one way our congregation lives out its mission statement, and also follows Jesus' command to love one another and bear each others' burdens. Stephen Ministry is an all-volunteer program based on distinctively Christian caring. In addition to giving care receivers a compassionate listening ear, Stephen Ministers are trained to offer biblical encouragement, therefore helping the care receivers, as well as themselves, to grow in faith. Stephen Ministry also provides assistance to our pastors in their demanding caregiving responsibilities to congregational members in need of support. One very important goal of Stephen Ministry at Lord of Life is that no one here will need to walk alone through life's challenges.

We are so grateful to you, the faithful members of Lord of Life for your prayer support! We are now well into the four-month-long process of training six new trainees who graciously said yes to the invitation to become Lord of Life's second team of Stephen Ministers. Of our first team, four of the five trained and commissioned Stephen Ministers are still generously giving their time and skills as they walk alongside their care receivers.

Due to the limitations of pandemic living, our weekly training sessions have been using remote Zoom format, but we plan to resume meeting in person as soon as possible. Likewise, our active Stephen Ministers have had to come up with creative ways to "meet" weekly with their care receivers, but they have faithfully continued to provide care throughout the very challenging months of social distancing. Also, the bimonthly continuing education and peer supervision meetings of the active Stephen Ministers have continued via Zoom with good outcomes, reinforcing the trusting team spirit and faith sharing that supports the best Christian care we can offer to folks in need of care.

Lord of Life's Stephen Ministry represents approximately 100 volunteer hours monthly, including the time of the leaders, the Stephen Ministers, the training classes, and the joint meetings. All aspects of the Stephen Ministry system are functioning very well, and together we have gratefully experienced many grace-filled moments in this much-needed ministry.

We ask for your continued prayers – for the folks who are undergoing difficult challenges of many kinds; for the Stephen Ministers who offer support to people in need; for the new trainees and for the trainers as they form a trusting team. Mostly, please join us in prayers of thanksgiving for the guidance and grace provided by the Holy Spirit, as we strive to be the heart and hands of Jesus in our hurting world.

God's Peace!

The Stephen Ministry Leadership Team: Deb Bergstrom, Lolly Kalinoski, Pr. Erika Nilsen, and Pr. Steve Rye

## Men's Fellowship:

After spending most of the year meeting via Zoom, the Men's Fellowship group at Lord of Life has returned to meeting in-building, Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.

This year, our group supported causes with two \$300 donations to the Second Harvest Heartland food program and Operation Sandwich.

## Friends of Habitat for Humanity:

In February 2021, Lord of Life entered into agreement with Thrivent and Lakes Area Habitat to support the Thrivent Faith Build for the Svoboda family. Lori Rehnblom signed the Faith Builds Partnership Agreement. Habitat and volunteers will start building Svoboda's home in May 2021. The build site is in SE Brainerd.

Twenty five Lord of Life members have signed up to support this build by working on site, providing lunches and/or organizing fundraising and awareness activities. We have asked all Lord of Life members to pray for the Svoboda family and the community volunteers who will assist them in building their home.

LOL Friends of Habitat hope to raise \$5,000 for the Svoboda home build. Fundraising activities began the first week in April (monthly newsletter, weekly announcements, display table in commons area). After 1 month of fundraising we are halfway to our goal of \$5,000.

LOL Friends of Habitat Leader:  
Bonnie Henningson

## Friends of the Red Cross:

Lord of Life hosted two blood drives for the American Red Cross this past year on July 10, 2020 and February 19, 2021.

All donations were by appointment only, no walk-ins, and all COVID-19 safety protocol was strictly followed. Sixty-six pints of blood were collected.

Next drive will be on Friday, July 9, 2021 from 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

## Women's Bible Study:

When the pandemic shutdown occurred in March 2020, our study went immediately from an in-person study to Zoom online. The women seemed anxious to keep our connection with each other going throughout the summer since any personal contact at church was made impossible due to Covid 19 guidelines. We continued our study of I and II Peter and then James throughout the fall. We began a study entitled "Christ in the Psalms" in November and have continued it through May 19 2021 on Zoom. The average attendance throughout this past year has been 9 women. We are taking a break this summer and will resume "Christ in the Psalms" in the fall, possibly moving back to the church setting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Rodseth

## Generosity Team:

Team Members: Pastor Steve Rye, Anne Laechel, Claire Rud, Tyler Jensen, Ann Smallman (Current Chair), Steve Schaitberger, Jana Shogren, Valerie Jones (Outgoing Chair)

In March, the COVID-19 pandemic brought the challenge of encouraging our members to continue their gifts to the church in the absence of in-person worship and other in person ministries. But thanks to technology and wonderful volunteers, worship moved online to Facebook and YouTube, and other church ministries moved to meeting on Zoom. Generosity messages during online worship were highlighted during the usual offering time. Our faithful church community came through, and giving did not decrease during the COVID lockdown.

Spring and Summer our team began planning for a Fall generosity campaign. In April 2020, our team listened to a presentation from a fundraising consultant, but decided on a different route. The team planned to continue our giving campaign with the theme from 2019, "Imagine the Possibilities." Steve Schaitberger resigned from the team due to accepting the position of Church Council Vice President.

Summer 2020 meant planning the Fall giving campaign in earnest. A timeline was set for pledge card and letters mailing, and basin talks were scheduled and recorded to present during worship to encourage generosity. Gratitude Wednesday and Sunday were scheduled for November 18 and 22, respectively.

Our Fall giving campaign resulted in a 20% increase in pledge amounts over pledges received in early 2020. Our team was grateful, and handwritten thank you cards were sent to families who made a financial pledge to Lord of Life.

In February, our team welcomed new members, Tyler Jensen and Ann Smallman as we began to plan for our Fall 2021 giving campaign. After reviewing two generosity campaigns, our team voted to proceed with the Live Generously/Live Courageously Campaign, which highlights a slightly different slant on generosity each year for four years. Cost for the printed materials to guide our team is minimal.

in April, Ann Smallman took on the leadership role of the Generosity Team and Val Jones remained on the team as a member. In early May, Ann Smallman, and four members of the Generosity Team met with members of the Church Council, the Finance Team and Personnel Committee to discuss financial goals for the next fiscal year. Recommendations were made and referred to the Church Council for action.

Valerie Jones  
Outgoing Chair  
Generosity Team

# Communication Coordinator's Report

Hello Everyone,

It has now been about five months since I took the position and I have to say the time has really flown by. I want to sincerely thank all of you in the Congregation who welcomed me back to Lord of Life and been so kind to me as I have begun my work as Communications Coordinator.

Before anything else, I want to thank the numerous volunteers who have stepped in to help make our worship services possible by ushering, preparing communion and helping run our video and sound equipment. The contributions you have made to the Church are invaluable.

I would also like to thank the volunteers who do their part to ensure the Church continues to operate smoothly. These include the people who donated their time to shoveling snow or mowing the lawn, helped us make improvements inside the Church by hanging the new TVs we use for worship and organizing our inventories of items, and those who have dedicated themselves to serving others through the Prayer Chain, Grief Support Group, Stephen Ministry and numerous other programs.

Now, onto what we have accomplished. Since the last meeting we have continued with our prayerLIFE @12:45 devotionals, streaming worship services and supported a move to in-building worship, in-building Confirmation and the re-opening of the Church.

Online involvement with Lord of Life is becoming more and more common. Here is a snapshot of where we stand as I write this report:

- On Youtube, we are seeing between 1,800 and 1,900 views on our services, devotionals and other videos per month. In total, these viewers spend more than 300 hours a month watching us and we have grown to 201 people subscribing to us.
- Meanwhile on Facebook, people interacted with us 1,500 times in the past month, we had 1,900 views of our videos and 634 people have liked us on Facebook, which means our content will be sent to them.

In the upcoming year, we are looking to expand our online presence into Twitter and Instagram so we can reach more of our congregation. We are also working to revamp the Lord of Life website to improve the user experience and appearance. Along with this, we are updating electronic forms and connection cards in order to build a better experience for the congregation. In addition to online improvements, we plan to improve outreach through more traditional means as well.

As always, I hope you feel free to get in touch with me with your thoughts and suggestions,

Tyler Jensen, Communications Coordinator  
tyler.jensen@lolbaxter.org

# Synod Assembly Report

The ELCA's Northeastern Minnesota Synod's annual assembly was held Friday, April 30 - Saturday, May 1 online. Salem Lutheran Church in Hermantown hosted the physical aspects of the Assembly.

Lord of Life's representatives included Jim and Teresa Kingsley and Sarah Meier, the Synod Assembly Representatives, while Pastors Steve and Erika also attended.

The ELCA's Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton delivered the keynote address, where she recognized work being done in the Synod. These included the work being done by the Together Here / Anti-Racism Team to build relationships with Native American communities. The Northeastern Minnesota Synod is neighbors with five federally recognized tribal reservations.

Bishop Eaton also touched on the partnership with Lutheran Social Service (LSS). The organization's services impact 1 out of 50 people in the United States. She also spoke about the ELCA Covid Relief Fund, which has provided extra financial help to ministries throughout the Church, including Lutheran Outdoor Ministry, which partners with our Synod.

The Assembly passed the 2022 Budget totalling about \$1.17 million, up from \$1.16 million in 2020.

In three ballots, Sanna Berdahl was elected Youth/Young Adult voting member. Micah Johnson was elected as the alternate.

LSS presented the Servant of Christ Award to First Lutheran, Kenwood Lutheran and Lutheran Church of the Good Sheperd all of Duluth, for their work sewing more than 4,000 face masks to help with the pandemic.

The 2022 Synod Assembly will be held April 29 - May 1, 2022 at Cragun's Resort here in the Brainerd Lakes Area.

# Nominating Committee Report

## PROPOSED 2021-2022 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Leadership Nominations presented by the 2021 LOL Nominating Committee:

President: Dan Tupy

Vice-President: Steve Schaitberger

Treasurer: Tom Campion

Secretary: Kevin Olson

Nominating Committee Members: Sonja Nefstead, Eric Ding, Sue Beck, Kari Stengrim, Andy Isackson and Rob Freelove

Financial Review: John Wolf (nominated for a new three-year term), Andy Rangan (Nominated to fill the remaining year of Tom Campion's term), Joel Staehling (two years remaining)

Synod Assembly 2022: Tom Koop, Bob and Shari Nelson

Mission Outward: Donna Salli

Mission Inward: Pam Caughey

Mission Ground: Brian Orlovski

Mission Upward: Darcy Dwyer

# Finance Team Report

The Lord of Life finance committee meets monthly to review and discuss the general oversight and performance of the church when it comes to its financial performance. The financial year for the church begins on July 1st, and ends on June 30th, which means the church books are almost closed on the year!

The church also has two sides to its operations, and you may notice on your contribution envelopes that you have an option to contribute funds to the “general” fund or the “capital” fund. It is very simple, if you give to the “capital” fund, those funds are put toward the church monthly mortgage payment. If you give to the “general” fund, those cover everything else. If you make a contribution to the church and do not specify a fund, the funds will go to the “general” account.

We would also like to note that the expenses of the church are very predictable, with more than 80% of the expense being directly related to pastoral and lay staff of the church.

How have we done in the pandemic fiscal year?

The church has been able to maintain all services as adopted in the 2020-2021 budget due to sustained giving by our members, as well as assistance from the SBA Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loan program. It was almost remarkable that our members maintained giving at approximately the same total as in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. But, with our operating costs increasing in almost all categories, there will be a need for increased giving in the next year to cover the additional expenses.

You will hear more about this need from the Church Council and Cultivating Generosity teams in the very near future.

More good news is that contributions to the “capital” account have been adequate to cover the church building mortgage payments. Thank you! Several church families have allocated more to their giving to assist in ensuring this fund is adequate to cover the loan payments, as this had not always been the case in prior years.

The biggest change this year has been a shift in how giving occurs, as dropping a check in the basket was not an option with the church facility being closed for an extended period. The church remains committed to sending you offering envelopes, and also having very easy electronic payment options for you.

Our partnership with Pushpay has allowed many of you to continue giving as we have been away from the church building, and we encourage everyone to consider automating your giving. Pushpay is able to conveniently set up giving options every week, every 2 weeks, monthly or on the 1st and 15th of the month. All with a simple tap on the screen of your smartphone!

Thank you for the time and consideration in regard to the finances of the church, and again we hope that everyone can prayerfully consider either the amount or the allocation of your giving to Lord of Life.



# Statement of Financial Position

*Lord of Life Lutheran Church*

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## Statement of Financial Position

*Annual Meeting*

March 31, 2021

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	Year to Date Balance
<b>Assets</b>	
Checking Account Totals:	118,314.37
Cash Totals:	150.00
Land and Building Totals:	2,941,557.70
Totals:	0.00
<b>Total Assets:</b>	3,060,022.07
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Payroll Withholdings Totals:	0.00
Mortgage Totals:	713,130.73
Accounts Payable Totals:	0.00
Notes Payable Totals:	0.00
<b>Total Liabilities:</b>	713,130.73
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Totals:	2,223,080.65
Without Donor Restrictions	66,402.46
With Donor Restrictions	7,341.03
Dedicated Accounts Totals:	73,743.49
Current Period Changes to Net Assets	50,067.20
<b>Total Net Assets:</b>	2,346,891.34
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets:</b>	3,060,022.07

# Activities and Proposed Budget

*Lord of Life Lutheran Church*

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## Statement of Activities

### *Annual Meeting*

March 31, 2021

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	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Annual Budget	Next Year Annual Budget
<b>Income</b>				
Offerings Totals:	359,065.25	367,509.00	487,370.00	529,000.00
Rent Totals:	170.00	3,535.00	4,000.00	4,000.00
Other Income Totals:	56,561.66	51,100.00	51,100.00	0.00
Income Totals:	415,796.91	422,144.00	542,470.00	533,000.00
<b>Expense</b>				
Pastoral Ministry - Personnel Totals:	131,039.99	136,200.50	180,748.00	180,748.00
Lay Ministries - Personnel Totals:	137,586.35	171,683.84	228,464.98	216,670.00
Ministry - Ground Totals:	73,340.12	73,802.15	91,792.00	94,315.00
Ministry - Outward Totals:	20,241.10	20,889.00	27,401.00	26,225.00
Ministry - Upward Totals:	1,649.10	3,870.00	4,665.00	4,665.00
Ministry - Inward Totals:	1,873.05	5,997.01	8,002.00	7,500.00
Expense Totals:	365,729.71	412,442.50	541,072.98	530,123.00
<b>Income - Expense:</b>	50,067.20	9,701.50	1,397.02	2,877.00