

Good News

July
2022

Lord of Life
Lutheran
Church
(ELCA)

Worship
Sunday -
9:30 am
Wednesday -
6:30 pm

Ministers
The Lord of Life
Faith Family

Pastors
Steven J. Rye
Erika Nilsen

Office Hours
Mon.-Fri.
8:30am - 5pm

Contact Info
(218) 828-9374
office@lolbaxter.
org

Deeply Rooted in a Boundless God Pastor Erika Nilsen

Dear friends,

The other day, my husband David pointed out a tiny new branch emerging from one of our grand oaks [I live on Grand Oaks Dr.] in our front yard. In contrast to this big beautiful tree, full of thick branches and covered in the green of leaves, there now exists a small twig, with an oak leaf the size of your smallest finger nail on it. I stood and marveled for a time – pondering the energy that it took that tree to grow and burst forth from the bark. That little branch, though it looks terribly fragile, is so connected to the root and nourishment system of the tree that it has all it needs to keep growing! We too – with our lives deeply rooted in Christ and nourished by the living God have all that we need to keep growing – to keep growing in a deeper and richer connection to Christ, our community and each other.

But sometimes growth involves struggle. Actually, most of the time, growth involves struggle. We know this is true in our bodies. I still remember when my kids were growing fast – their joints ached all of the time. There's a reason why they are called growing pains!! It hurts. And now, I watch my parents as they are growing old – and how their bodies remind them every day of the struggle.

Our spirits also know the truth that growth often involves struggle. When we are faced with learning something new – or forced to shift our thinking – it often comes with loss, with a sense of being uprooted for a time, and a surrender that doesn't always come easily. I think so often of the story in the Old Testament where Jacob wrestles with an angel of the



Lord. He emerges blessed – but limping.

Our church also knows that growth involves struggle. As we as a congregation have grown and changed over the years, there have been marvelous gains as well as worrisome losses. Growth demands greater nourishment from the “root system” (the financial, spiritual and tangible resources of God's people) and sometimes we're not always sure that we have all that we need to keep growing. Yet – the depth of resources is so great at Lord of Life. The financial, spiritual and tangible gifts of God's people in this place are so very deep. And I thank you for all of the ways in which you have indeed nourished and made possible the growth of this congregation over the years.

What we do know is that when we are deeply rooted in Christ Jesus, our boundless God does indeed provide all that we need. In that we can be free to face the struggles, keep reaching out to others, and we can be renewed in hope every day. Thanks be to God.

In God's boundless love,
Pastor Erika

Council Changes

Council Transitions!

THANK YOU to Dan Tupy, who is stepping down from his role as Church Council President! Dan led the way beautifully during the most difficult times of the Covid crisis and we are deeply grateful. Dan offered a tenacious love of the Church and a tender heartedness that helped us remember what was most important.

THANK YOU to Pam Caughey, for serving as our Inward Council member, and helping us keep our eyes on our worship life and the caring ministries of the Congregation. Pam offered an articulate, faithful, and action-oriented spirit to the council!

THANK YOU to Tom Campion, for serving as our treasurer. Tom is stepping away from that role as of July 1st. Tom offered the wisdom of years of financial experience, an ability to cut to the chase, and a marvelous hope in the mission and ministry of the Church to do the good God has called us to in this world.

THANK YOU to Steve Schaitberger who will be shifting roles on the Church Council. Steve has served faithfully in the role of Vice President, and has done a wonderful job leading the personnel team at Lord of Life. Steve has offered an incredible lens of faith and organizational wisdom. Steve now serves as our Council President and we are so grateful for his leadership.

WELCOME to Kurt Porter, who takes on the role of Council Vice President.

WELCOME to Jolene Parks, who is now our Inward Council member

WELCOME to Greg Bennet, who takes on the role of Treasurer.

Welcome New Council Members!!

Council Minutes

Lord of Life Church Council Regular Meeting Minutes Thursday, May 12, 2022 at 6 p.m.

Present: Pam Caughey, Pr. Erika Nilsen, Kevin Olson, Donna Salli, Steve Schaitberger, and Dan Tupy
Absent: Tom Campion, Pr. Steve Rye (on sabbatical), Brian Orłowski, and Emmy Holcomb-Smith
Guest: Anne Laechel

Meeting called to order at 6:10 p.m. by President Tupy.

Devotions by Pr. Nilsen. Reflecting on being grateful for material goods as shown by abundance at LOL garage sale this week. Following early church example in Acts of the spirit of sharing.

Consent Agenda:

- Adoption of 5/12/22 Agenda (CC.2022.05.01)
- Approval of April 2022 Regular Council Meeting minutes and February 22, 2022 Council Special Meeting minutes (CC.2022.05.02)
- April 2022 Financial Report (CC.2022.05.03)

Old Business:

Budget discussion. Schaitberger gave recap of recent budget discussions by variety of LOL financial planning groups/managers. Priority established to keep current staff and attempt to increase giving/stewardship. Also delete, at this time, children's ministry position opening, Luther Crest membership, and some technical upgrades for a savings of approx. \$10K/yr. Discussion followed. Possible children's choir will help with lack of children's ministry coordinator position. Emphasis at annual meeting should be what's still in the budget. Summary of budget categories to be presented at meeting. Overall result of budget discussion, challenging: but optimistic.

MOTION to approve proposed 2022-23 LOL budget. Motion by Salli, second by Schaitberger, all ayes (CC.2022.05.04)

New Business:

- Directional leaders asked to contribute reports for 2022-23 annual Report by 5/18/22.
- Laechel will send out annual meeting notice by email or US mail at least 10 days before meeting.
- Child care will be offered at meeting.
- Tyler Jensen is working on video for Generosity Team about increased giving.

Directional Council Updates

Salli (Outward): Bonnie Henningson reported late start for two Habitat for Humanity builds, more information to follow. Micah Group hosting clothing giveaway this year. \$700.00 sent from Beyond Our Doors account to Hauters, missionaries in Brazil. (LOL has provided support for the Hauters for several years).

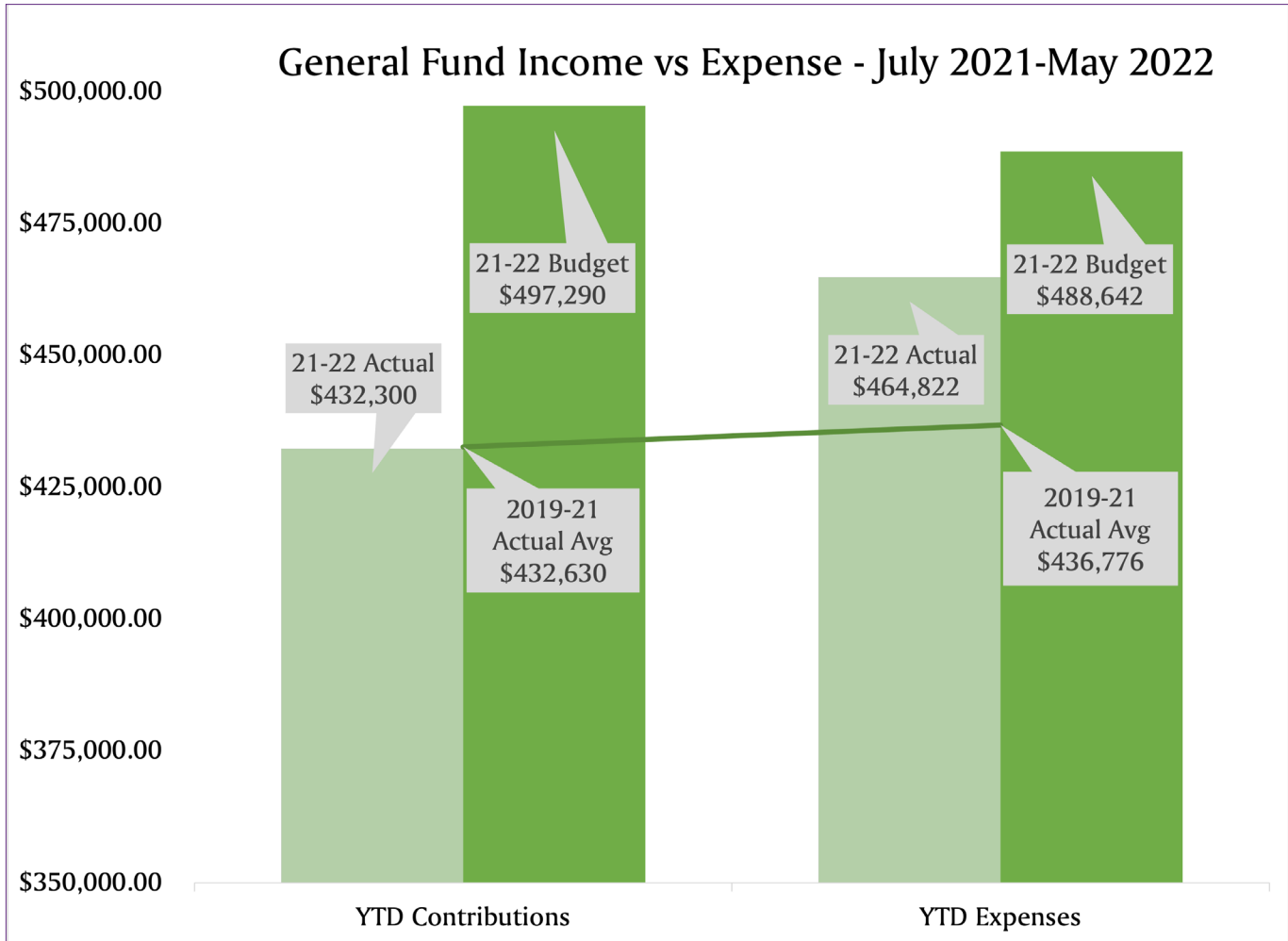
Schaitberger (V.P., Personnel): Waiting to hear if Music Coordinator candidate has accepted offer. Data Privacy Policy formulation in progress.

Next regular Council meeting set for Thursday, June 23, 2022, 6 p.m.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer, 7:28 p.m.

Kevin Olson, Secretary.

Financials



Discerning Moments

Understanding that the Body of Christ, as a whole, is dramatically divided regarding the current Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe V. Wade, and understanding that you may be wondering how your church, the ELCA, “thinks” about the issue, I commend to you Bishop Elizabeth Easton’s pastoral message. Bishop Eaton is the presiding Bishop of the ELCA. She takes seriously our call as baptized, beloved children of God to strive for justice and peace in all the earth and to hold in tension the current cultural landscape, our biblical witness and the tradition of the church.

You can access her letter by going to the “News” Tab at lodbaxter.org

If you would like to engage in conversation and prayer around this issue, please reach out to the pastoral staff. In all things we seek to deepen and enrich our connection to Christ, our community and each other.

Calendar

Friday, July 1

Men's Breakfast, 7 am
Al-Anon, 7 pm

Sunday, July 3

Worship, 9:30 am

Monday, July 4

Independence Day, Office Closed

Tuesday, July 5

Property Team Meeting, 6:30 pm

Wednesday, July 6

Citywide Youth Group, 6:30 pm
Wednesday Worship, 6:30 pm

Thursday, July 7

Summer Stretch, 9 am
Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am
Parkinson's Support Group, 1 pm

Friday, July 8

Men's Breakfast, 7 am
Red Cross Blood Drive, 10 am
Al-Anon, 7 pm

Sunday, July 10

Worship w/ Noisy Offering, 9:30 am
Micah Group, 11 am

Tuesday, July 12

Synod Journey Trip Gathering, 7 pm

Wednesday, July 13

Summer Stretch Twins Game Trip
Worship, 6:30 pm

Thursday, July 14

Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am

Friday, July 15

Men's Breakfast, 7 am
August Newsletter Deadline

Sunday, July 17

Worship w/ High School Summer Trip Blessing,
9:30 am

Wednesday, July 20

Micah Group Book Study, 5:15 pm
Worship, 6:30 pm

Thursday, July 21

Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am
High School Summer Trip begins

Friday, July 22

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

Sunday, July 24

Worship, 9:30 am
A Conversation with Deacon Bernu, 10:45 am

Wednesday, July 27

Worship, 6:30 pm
End of High School Summer Trip

Thursday, July 28

Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am

Friday, July 29

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

Sunday, July 31

Worship, 9:30 am

Micah Group

I learned that there is only one race in this world – the human race. All humans share the same biological traits. There are different cultures and skin colors, but one race. I learned that the land my Swedish grandparents homesteaded was first taken from the Indigenous people who were forced onto nearby reservations. I learned that the GI Bill that enabled my WW II navy veteran father to purchase our home was not so readily available to his fellow service members of color. I learned that the loan my wife and I received to purchase our first home, free to live wherever we wanted, was not so readily available to people of color who may have had to pay higher interest and been limited to purchasing a home in a less desirable part of town. I learned that some people of color, right here in the Brainerd Lakes Area, face racist remarks, judgments and/or even attacks every day of their lives. And I learned that even though I have maybe never knowingly said or done anything negative to another person whose skin color is different than mine, I am a part of the American system constructed to benefit my European ancestors and me. The same system that has for hundreds of years and still yet today keeps people of color at a disadvantage to me, treats them as somehow less valuable or deserving than me. That's not how God sees them.

Book studies, historical presentations by our own history teacher members, community forums, personal conversations with people of color, workshops, videos, television specials, personal reading – all of these, many sponsored by our own Lord of Life Micah Group, have taught me these things and far more. Thanks be to God who loves and cares for all people equally. “For God so loved the world . . .”

Together, via Micah Group, we are working to learn more about the real history and circumstances of our “neighbors” / fellow human beings / fellow beloved of God and how we, as individuals and collectively, can somehow contribute to enabling every person to have the same opportunities as I do to experience deep, rich and abundant life as citizens of this country and God's creation.

Are you open to learning a little more about your fellow travelers in this journey of life? You are invited to join us:

- **Book Study – *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet by Jamie Ford***. This study focuses on “A wartime-era Chinese-Japanese variation of Romeo and Juliet . . .” (The Seattle Times) reexamining the impact of the internment camps where Japanese American citizens were forced to live during World War II. This study is being led by Lolly Kalinoski and Michael Erickson. Wednesdays, July 20 and August 17, 5:15-6:15, bring a bag supper, child care/activities provided for children, please call to register your children. Canned and dry food items will also be collected at these studies to contribute to local food shelves.

- **Worship, Sunday, July 24, 9:30 a.m. with message by Deacon Colleen Bernu**, member of the Fond du Lac Band in Cloquet and Director for Evangelical Mission and Northeastern Minnesota Synod Minister for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as an assistant to Bishop Amy Odgren. Followed by her presentation on “The Intercultural Lutheran Experience in the United States,” 10:45 a.m., in the sanctuary.

Darrell J. Pedersen

Welcome Kennedy Niska

Lord of Life is ecstatic to announce the newest member of our staff, Music Director Kennedy Niska.

Kennedy is excited to join the staff at Lord of Life! He has prior experience working in church music with Salem Lutheran Church in Deerwood, and most recently with Breckenridge Lutheran Church in western Minnesota. Kennedy is a native of the Mesabi Iron Range, holds a bachelor of music degree from Concordia College-Moorhead, and brings a passion for youth ministry to Lord of Life with his background as an elementary music teacher. In his spare time, Kennedy enjoys travel, cooking, hiking, and bike rides.



Please join us in welcoming Kennedy when he starts work with the rest of the team in mid-July.

LoL Staff

Senior Pastor

Steven Rye
steve@lolbaxter.org

Associate Pastor

Erika Nilsen
erika.nilsen@
lolbaxter.org

Operations Manager

Anne Laechel
anne@lolbaxter.org

Youth Director

Tim Slinger
tim@lolbaxter.org

Communications

Coordinator

Tyler Jensen
tyler.jensen@
lolbaxter.org

Custodians

Paul and Karen
Erickson

Music Ministry

Coordinator

Kennedy Niska

Groups

- Men's Fellowship - An opportunity for men to meet to discuss the Bible and other religious topics, while enjoying coffee, donuts and fellowship. This group meets every Thursday at 9:30 a.m. in the Commons.
- Quilters - The Lord of Life Quilters are meeting throughout the summer on Thursdays at 9 am to go over material, plan for the upcoming quilting season, and socialize. The group meets in the Fellowship Hall.
- Men's Breakfast - This group meets Friday mornings at 7 a.m. for breakfast, Bible studies, and fellowship.
- Sarah Circle - The Sarah Circle meets the second Tuesday of each month for Bible Study and fellowship for women at Lord of Life.
- The Micah Group - A team of Lord of Life members and others, who are working to address racial issues in our community and world. Micah Group is currently meeting one or two Wednesdays a month at 5:15 pm for group discussions known as "Story Circles." These discussions allow members of the group to go around and share their stories, without a traditional discussion leader. More information and signup sheets are available in the Narthex.