

# **St John's Lutheran Church**

*"We are disciples of God, living in his grace as an inclusive community, worshiping together, growing in faith, serving others, and living as witnesses of Jesus Christ."*

## **Council Meeting Agenda**

*Tuesday, Apr 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 7:30 p.m. – via Zoom*

1. Call to order – Sam (15 minutes)
  - a. Approval of agenda
  - b. Review any *thank you* notes or correspondence sent to Council or St. John's
2. Devotions – Darcie (5 minutes)
3. Reports – Sam (5 minutes)
  - a. Discuss/Approve previous meeting minutes, staff reports, and commission reports
4. Financials – (20 min)
  - a. Summary of the past month's financials (David)
5. Old Business – (20 min)
  - a. CKP update (Marlo/PD/Exec)
  - b. *Canoeing the Mountains* Book Study – Part Two (Sam)
6. New Business – (20 min)
  - a. Membership Outreach
  - b. Personnel update
  - c. State of Emergency Financial Planning
  - d. Roundtable discussion
  - e. Closed session – elected council
7. "God Sightings" – All (5 minutes)
8. Motion to Adjourn
9. Lord's Prayer
10. Upcoming events/ meetings:
  - a. Next council meeting – Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020
    - i. Devotions – Sam
11. Parking lot (Items for future discussion):
  - a. Facility usage update (Pastor Dave)

## **March 2020 Council Minutes: Tuesday, March 10th, 2020 7pm Fireside Room**

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Present: Sam, Rayelle, David B, Dave Z, Marlo, Ann, Darcie, Dan, and Jon. Deacon Amanda, Lindsay, and Pastor Dave were also present. Kelly was absent/excused.

1. Call to Order - Sam called meeting to order at 7:02pm
  - a. Approval of Agenda – Jon made a motion to approve the agenda. Darcie seconded the motion. Motion carried.
  - b. Welcome any guests – No guest were present however, as a representative for communications, Pastor Dave presented the new Logo and rebranding options to council. Marlo asked if the rebrand comes with a toolkit that can be used church wide so that there is cohesiveness with font, colors, etc. This question will be forwarded to communications. The options were reviewed by council. Ann made a motion to approve the new logo with the blue/green/grey color scheme. The motion was seconded by Dave Z. Motion carried.
  - c. Review any thank you notes or correspondence sent to Council or St. John's – a thank you from Winona Lutheran Campus Center for monetary donations was reviewed. Lindsay also noted that there are new thank you notes posted on the Mission and Outreach board.
2. Devotions – Rayelle led devotions.
3. Reports
  - a. Discuss/Approve previous meeting minutes, staff and commission reports – Council reviewed the submitted reports and minutes. Ann made a motion to approve the reports as submitted. Dan seconded the motion. Motion carried.
4. Financials
  - a. Summary of the past month's financials – David B reported that net income vs expense put February month end at -\$7940 (to nearest dollar) Sam noted that there seems to be a discrepancy between the January and February month end totals. It was discussed that this may be due to expenses from January cleared after month end and were added onto January financials after the January reports were run. Dave B was asked to look into this. Dave B also wanted to be sure council was aware of scam emails that he had received. He stated the emails appeared to come from Sam and were asking for money in the form of gift cards. Council discussed how these scam messages and emails are an ongoing issue and to be alert to them. It was also noted that no from council or staff will every ask for cards or money via email or text message. Dave B was asked by Lindsay and Amanda to provide them monthly commission financial reports. Council agreed that it would be good for each commission to receive monthly reports so that accounts and be reconciled and mistakes can be caught immediately.
  - b. CKP Update – Pastor Dave and Marlo spoke about CKP financials. It was noted that due to month end landing at the end of the week for both January and February, that the numbers will be skewed as the month end deposit is not done until Monday and therefore will not post to the bank until the after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month. CKP treasurer feels that it will be easier to grasp where CKP and Little Lambs land financially after March month end. Marlo noted that although some CKP/LL financials were over expense from budget, there are expense accounts that are under therefor, offsetting the overages. Jon made a motion to approve financials with the understanding that finance and Dave B will be looking into the discrepancy between January and February reports. Marlo seconded the motion. Motion carried.
5. Old Business
  - a. Coffeehouse Follow up- Pastor Dave and Lindsay reported that the coffeehouse event was a success and very well received. There were roughly 100 guests and 20 musical acts. There

were 10-12 visual artists. Date night was also a success with 15 children attending. Rayelle asked that we ensure that Trail Creek Coffee Roasters get a heartfelt thank you for the donation of their coffee and time.

- b. Ash Wednesday follow up-several people noted they had heard positive feedback on the daytime service. Pastor Dave feels it went well. Lindsay noted that attendance was likely much lower at evening service due to conflicts with outside events.
- c. Directory/Membership Update-Rayelle update council that the membership updates are completed for the first round. It is planned that the membership roster will continue to be reviewed and updated even after the directory is done. Directory photos are this week and there are currently 205 households signed up to have their photos taken. Rayelle will resend the email link to sign up to help check people in for their photos.
- d. CKP update-Marlo reminded council that this Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> is CKP Sunday. There will be a pancake breakfast as well as the children are singing during worship. Registration is now open to the public. Each week of summer care has 100 “slots” that can be filled (20 children at 5 days a week) Currently, there are 67/100 slots full. CKP board has submitted a grant request for a software program to help with billing, scheduling, and payments. They are hoping to hear about the grant status soon. Fall 2020 currently has 42 children enrolled for preschool and 26 children registered for Little Lambs. These numbers are significantly higher than this time last year. There will be some staffing changes as Carol Sullivan has formally resigned effective the end of the school year and there is currently an open position in Little Lambs. CKP will also be seeking high school help for summer and 2020/2021 school year. Job postings, interviews will be ongoing until positions are filled. Sam noted that CKP board exec met with St. John’s exec and it was expressed and decided that a paid administrator is a mandatory requirement starting this summer. Currently, Pastor Dave, Deacon Amanda and Marlo have been splitting an administrator’s roll. This arrangement is not sustainable, and an administrator needs to be hired.

#### 6. New Business

- a. Book Study Launch-Pastor Dave introduced the book study for *Canoeing the Mountains* by Tod Bolsinger. Pastor Dave’s continuing education last year was on adaptive leadership and this book was part of the education. Pastor Dave feels it is a very good read for church leadership and will help St. John’s to adapt with the needs of our faith community and outreach ministries.
- b. Personnel update- Pastor Dave advised council that Personnel has approved the hire of Mark Madsen as the part-time custodian. Mark has signed an intent to accept the position. Rayelle made a motion to accept personnel’s recommendations for the position and to hire Mark Madsen as the part time custodian. Ann seconded the motion. Motion carried. Sam and Pastor Dave reported St. John’s is actively seeking an Office Administrator as Shelley has left her position St. John’s. Sam reported personnel will be working with CKP to fill the open positions they need filled.
- c. Soles for Souls-Dave B asked on behalf of the KM Lions if they could place a barrel for a collection of gently used shoes for their Soles for Souls program. The Lions collect the gently used shoes that are eventually shipped to countries where they do not have footwear for those who need it. Lindsay expressed that Mission and Outreach should be consulted about this because the program would be in their purview. Sam motioned to approve the placement of the collection barrel or container at St. John’s pending an approval from Mission and Outreach. Darcie seconded the motion. Motion carried. Lindsay and Dave B will ensure Mission and Outreach have this information for their next meeting.

- d. Strategic Planning- Pastor Dave discussed a plan for St. John's to form an Action Team to work on strategic planning. The team would work on moving St. John's forward in our faithful work here at St. John's and our outreach ministries. This is part of Pastor Dave's call and he intends to focus more on this in the near future. As part of this plan Sheryl Rayor has offered her services. Sheryl is only asking for compensation for her mileage to St. John's from St. Paul. Sheryl feels called to offer her services and will not require any other compensation. Sheryl is a workplace giving fundraiser for Community Shares of Minnesota. She has training in has assisted in facilitating strategic planning for nonprofits and the public sector. She meets with workplace partners and facilitates their strategies for workplace giving while aligning their goals with company mission, vision, and values. Sheryl is currently in her second year of the Hamline University Masters in Nonprofit Management (MNM) program through their business school. Sheryl is excited to work with staff, council, and key decision makers at St. John's Lutheran Church to help develop a strategic plan that ensure St. John's thrives in the Kasson community.

Council discussed Sheryl's offer. Ann commented that it was a great opportunity for St. John's and it is not likely a better opportunity for professional help would come along. Darcie motioned that we accept Sheryl's offer of her expertise and services and St. John's will reimburse her mileage. Marlo seconded. Motion carried.

- e. Roundtable Discussion-Pastor Dave brought attention to ELCA recommendations for planning for a pandemic. With COVID-19 concerns, there are many steps St. John's can take to protect out faith family. ELCA's recommendations include common cup practice for communion wine. Council agreed we did not feel common cup was best for St. John's. Discussion were had about the possibility of not serving wine for communion and other options. Pastor Dave expressed that communion without wine still fulfills Lutheran communion elements and only bread acceptable. He will make announcements as needed about how communion without wine is still Christ, fully present in one element. Council discussed who would make the decision to change the way we normally do things at St. John's should an outbreak occur here. Rayelle motioned at our Rostered/Program staff along with Worship and Music should make those decisions when and if they feel it is necessary. Darcie seconded. Motion carried.

Sam brought councils' attention to the Synod event the Pastor Emily Carson had discussed. The event is synod-wide and is created to equip church members and leaders. The focus is on work of creatively and courageously incorporating adaptive change. Sam encouraged council members to attend. The event is April 26<sup>th</sup> from 1-3:30pm at Epiphany Lutheran in Eagle Lake, United Redeemer in Zumbrota, or Christ Lutheran in Preston. The event will be live streamed at all locations. Registration is not required. More information is available at [semnsynod.org/renew](http://semnsynod.org/renew)

- f. Closed Session – Closed session was not held.

7. Council shared God Sightings that they encountered.

8. Motion to Adjourn – Marlo made a motion to adjourn. Dave Z seconded the motion. Motion carried.

9. Council closed the meeting by reciting the Lord's Prayer.

10. Upcoming event/meetings

a. Directory Photos- March 12-14<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>.

b. Next council meeting – Tuesday, April 14th 7pm in Fireside room. Darcie will lead devotions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rayelle Haase



### **The recommendation from CKP Treasurer:**

Parents forward the e-mail receipt from Tithe.ly to the teacher in order to receive their materials. This removes a manual audit stream of a church financial person needing to go in to Tithe.ly and output the report to see who has paid. That way the responsibility is on the parent to send us a record, the teacher won't release class information until received, and the teachers can provide a listing of who has paid each week.

When messaging the procedure, please also provide a strong reminder of how to check "Cover the fees"; that's critical for such a small amount over so many iterations, especially if people are paying with credit cards.

Lindsay asked about the ability to remove people from google classroom should the need arise due to nonpayment. Amanda investigated this while we were discussing and noted that people can be removed from google classroom access if needed.

Dave B motioned to approve CKP's request to move forward with distance learning. Jon seconded. Ann asked that motion be amended to ensure it is noted that the distance learning program only continue so long as it is financially self-sustaining. Dave B motioned to approve as amended. Ann seconded. Motion carried.

- 1) Lindsay wanted to bring to council attention that she has sent an email to exec about an outstanding bill from Good Earth Village for roughly \$1400. She asked that exec review the bill to approve her to pay the bill with her church credit card.
- 2) Lindsay wanted to let council know that summer mission trips are going to be combined and moved to Michigan. Details will be going out to families and program staff will be having conversation about the changes.
- 3) Lindsay also noted that action packed day camp has been moved to August.
- 4) Pastor Dave noted that online worship is currently at 7pm on Tuesdays. He asked if everyone would be ok with moving the council meeting to 7:30pm on Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup>. There were no objections.
- 5) It was noted that Exec meeting on Tuesday 4/7 will also be moved to 7:30pm

Meeting was adjourned

Respectfully submitted by Rayelle Haase

## Commission Ministry Readiness Report

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On March 18, 2020, Pastor Dave sent out a request for information from our commission leads. What follows are the responses from the majority of our commissions. Pastor Dave will also provide information for committees that have been supporting our leadership during this unprecedented time. Please note: There will be responses by some of our commissions that have been removed due to concerns about confidentiality.

<b>Food for Friends</b>	<b>Contact: Tracy Lee</b>
In what specific ways might your commission be able to meet a need in our community in the days ahead?	Food for Friends is continuing to distribute backpacks while schools are closed. We plan to distribute a weekly bag to participating families on Tuesdays while lunch is distributed to school students at St. Johns. If there is a large need, we will try to get bags to additional lunch distribution locations.
What roadblocks have you encountered that are preventing you from fully living into ministry in your commission?	I feel we are only truly addressing the need at the elementary school with our backpack program. I think that students at the middle school, especially in the younger grades could also benefit from a weekend backpack. Funds and volunteer resources hold us back.
Who in your commission would be willing and available to help meet needs in our community?	Our team of volunteers is committed to continuing to pack backpacks in small groups and helping with distribution. A few have also volunteered to aid seniors by using online shopping services to order and deliver he groceries that seniors need to help them limit their risk of exposure to COVID-19.
Is there anyone in your commission, or anyone who your commission serves, that you are worried about during this pandemic?	There is an increased need for our services and each child that we serve needs additional food during this time. This is putting a strain on our financial situation. We either need financial donations or food donations in the form of individually packaged snacks, cereal, and small plastic jars of jelly. Canned fruit and vegetables are also helpful.
Is there anything else that you would like to share with leadership about your commission at this time?	We couldn't do this without the support of our volunteers and Lindsay and Amanda. They have been tremendous in helping us navigate these uncertain times.

## Mission and Outreach

**Contact: Jackie Longendyke**

In what specific ways might your commission be able to meet a need in our community in the days ahead?

M&O does not have any upcoming or specific activities planned in the community. We would welcome opportunities to help where needed. Our members are actively looking for some ways to help.

Years ago, St. John's had a commission, committee or group given the responsibility of emergency preparedness. We would recommend this group be re-established but this will probably only help for the future. At least, we would have a group for our church who could work with all of us plus outreach areas.

Food For Friends: (See their responses above)

Connection with vulnerable population - helping the effort to keep the population who is most vulnerable connected to others through phone calls, etc.

Help family members connect their older loved ones to technology that can help connect like video calls and streaming or recorded worship and study groups.

Help the older generations with running errands - grocery shopping, prescription pickup, and other small tasks that might be harder as we start to see more restrictions on social distancing. Amanda forwarded some information regarding a group called "Shopping Angels" that has formed a group in Minnesota.

What roadblocks have you encountered that are preventing you from fully living into ministry in your commission?

We haven't identified any areas of growth that have been delayed due to funding or volunteers. During this time of need, more local funding might be considered for Kwik Trip and Erdman's gift cards for the people in the community that may need assistance. Other things that Mission & Outreach may be able to help with would be supplies and/or resources for homeschooling and childcare.

Who in your commission would be willing and available to help meet needs in our community?

The members of the Mission and Outreach commission are willing to help. All of us have differing availability depending on the time and day.

Is there anything else that you would like to share with leadership about your commission at this time?

The members of the Mission & Outreach commission are not sure where and how to prioritize needs that exist right now with this ever-changing situation and welcome guidance on where and what is needed within our congregation, community, and elsewhere.

## Communications

**Contact: Patty Foster. Staff Relator: Katie Livingood**

In what specific ways might your commission be able to meet a need in our community in the days ahead, or, have you already begun to plan and implement specific activities?

**From Patty:**

We can figure out new ways to get news out and update what we are already using.

**From Katie:**

Getting leadership's messages out, tips/ideas for faithful living on social media (ideas to reach out to neighbors, sharing resources, etc.), discussed ways to reach out to those not digitally connected - we will connect directly with other leaders to share our questions/ideas

What roadblocks have you encountered that are preventing you from fully living into ministry in your commission?

**From Patty:**

More information/news for everyone put together more clearly and accessible.

**From Katie:**

There are many opportunities we still hope to address as our commission's time allows

Who in your commission would be willing and available to help meet needs in our community?

**From Patty:**

I am willing to help however possible.

**From Katie:**

Depending on what is needed, Ann Brenke indicated willingness to help at home or church building and Patty Foster offered to help however is useful. Michelle Coy is sharing medical information she can, to keep people healthy (her Facebook friend list) and can be a reference for further info as needed.

Is there anyone in your commission, or anyone who your commission serves, that you are worried about during this pandemic?

**From Patty:**

See Katie's comments.

**From Katie:**

Specific concerns mentioned were for anyone who doesn't use social media or engage with media as well as at risk populations (diabetics, senior citizens, infants). Anyone downplaying the situation.

Is there anything else that you would like to share with leadership about your commission at this time?

**From Patty:**

We are a newer commission and feel like we are still forming a clear direction of makes our committee the most useful for our church.

**From Katie:**

We're here to help! We can be resources as needed.

<b>Media</b>	<b>Contact: Dennis Foster</b>
In what specific ways might your commission be able to meet a need in our community in the days ahead?	We can offer our service and equipment.
What roadblocks have you encountered that are preventing you from fully living into ministry in your commission?	We struggle with a lack of volunteers. We struggle to upgrade equipment due to cost.
Who in your commission would be willing and available to help meet needs in our community?	Dennis is willing under most any circumstance.
Is there anyone in your commission, or anyone who your commission serves, that you are worried about during this pandemic?	None that I know of.
Is there anything else that you would like to share with leadership about your commission at this time?	We struggle with a lack of volunteers.

<p><b>Youth and Families</b></p>	<p><b>Contact: Katie Freerksen</b> <b>Staff Relator: Lindsay Colwell</b></p>
<p>In what specific ways might your commission be able to meet a need in our community in the days ahead?</p>	<p>Our commission is supporting Lindsay as she connects with families individually. We are also taking a look at how we can best serve our students as we move into the summer months. We will be meeting as a commission online to discuss the postponement of Action Packed Day Camp, our plan for our camp week at Sugar Creek Bible Camp, and what we will need to change about our 2 Youth Works trips this coming summer. We will be working to uplift what our youth and families are doing during this time on our social media pages.</p>
<p>What roadblocks have you encountered that are preventing you from fully living into ministry in your commission?</p>	<p>Our commission has been spending a lot of time talking about how we can engage more intergenerational relationships and how to support parents as they take an active role in the faith building of their children. The time that has been given to us in this difficult time will help us to explore a few more ways for us to engage our students and families online and in their homes. We hope that with this break from our "normal" families will see that there are wonderful ways to refocus their attention on their relationships and we want to be able to support them. Hopefully this refocusing will help engage more adults in these areas and invest in time with our youth.</p>
<p>Who in your commission would be willing and available to help meet needs in our community?</p>	<p>Our members have been helping in any way they can when they are able. We have several members in our commission who are healthcare workers. Some of our students are also providing childcare during this difficult time.</p>
<p>Is there anything else that you would like to share with leadership about your commission at this time?</p>	<p>Not at this time.</p>

<p><b>Education</b></p>	<p><b>Contact: Kelly Utesch</b> <b>Staff Relator: Deacon Amanda Sabelko</b></p>
<p>In what specific ways might your commission be able to meet a need in our community in the days ahead?</p>	<p>Our commission has been continuing to connect people with faith forming resources. As we move forward, we are planning to continue an online bible study (Sat, 10 AM) and starting to integrate more interactive posts on our social media pages.</p> <p>As we think ahead to summer, I am outlining a home VBS study that parents can easily lead with their families. This will probably include some sort of online, interactive learning as well.</p>
<p>What roadblocks have you encountered that are preventing you from fully living into ministry in your commission?</p>	<p>I think expanding how we engage families in faith formation - which we're having to do a lot of now. I think we could do a lot of interactive and small group things; particularly if we had volunteers to help organize/host conversations. The ability to use funds to set up a secure platform would be helpful to creating a safe, secure, and private space to "live among God's faithful people" without being physically present together. I have no idea what is out there that would help accomplish this.</p>
<p>Who in your commission would be willing and available to help meet needs in our community?</p>	<p>Deacon Amanda</p> <p>Mel Klein - from home Could assist with getting supplies to people</p> <p>Awaiting replies from other members at time of submission of this report</p>
<p>Is there anything else that you would like to share with leadership about your commission at this time?</p>	<p>First Communion Class is awesome!</p>

## Creation Kids Preschool Zoom Meeting Minutes: April 7, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

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### 1. Deacon of Faith Formation –

- St. John's church will remain closed through May 4<sup>th</sup>. Unsure if Sheryl will be in the office PT during that time and no tabulators.
- Services are held online on Sunday and Wednesday.
- Sunday school and confirmation services are cancelled through the school year

### 2. Treasurer's Report

- Several families are prepaid. Further discussion will take place on how to refund those families. One family paid for April and does not want to be reimbursed. The remainder need to be addressed.
- There are Kwik Trip car wash cards to sell once we are able to open door back up

### 3. CKP Updates- Rachel/Jess

- Distance Learning Platform began Monday 4/6/2020. 69% of families signed up and of those families who signed up provided proof of payment to Peggy and Carol. 20 was needed for break even and currently have 34:
  1. Mrs. Moran currently has 20 out of 30 students enrolled
  2. Mrs. Sullivan currently has 14 out of 19 students enrolled
- Google classroom, circle time, videos, online worksheets, etc. are being used. Families seem to really love it.

### 4. Postponements are to be determined at a later time. Two of fundraisers are needed to replenish the scholarship fund for 2020-2021.

- CKP Sunday, CKP Soup Supper, Spring Program and Open House

### 5. May/Graduation: TBD

### 6. Advertising: Summer Care and Fall Registrations (1<sup>st</sup> day summer care May 28 potentially but on hold due to COVID)

- Will host a virtual open house. Subcommittee was formed to do this. Depending on shifts and employment we will determine if Summer Care will be delayed. TBD

### 7. April/May Action Items:

- **Staffing needs to be done for next year. We need to replace Carol. Due to COVID we have delayed advertising and hiring. We have an Aide on hold to replace Sonja.**
- 2020-2021 Calendar. Jessica and Rachel will work on this
- Typically this time of year we would be doing the following year Employee Agreements and discussing possibility for an annual increment. Unsure how to go about this due to current financial issues due to COVID and the need for Personnel to be involved.
- Confirming all summer care by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Jessica will work on this. Unsure if we will be opening and if it needs to be confirmed?
- Letters to kids who were baptized. Tessa will work on this and she will get the letters to Amanda who can stamp them and get in the mail.

### 8. Other:

- Jessica and Rachel will get a letter to teachers to send to all families to help gauge interest in the CKP Board. Jessica and Rachel would like to step down at the end of the CKP school year but will remain on board to help transition the roles and help implement the new billing software. Jessica and Rachel have served on the board as parents for 2 years and on the executive board for 2 years and feel the role is ready to be passed to new volunteers. Justin has stated he would like to pass the role of Treasurer off at the end of the school year as well. He needs to dedicate more time to his family and work.

## Executive, Finance and Personnel Committee Report

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Leadership from these committees have been meeting regularly to discuss our current ministry situation, to make plans for what will hopefully be a short-term closure, and to make sure that we are prepared for full ministry when the stay-at-home order has been lifted.

Members from these committees, as well as program staff, CKP board, and worship and music met on Sunday, March 15, to formulate a plan for ministry in a time of social distancing, as well as a possible closure of the building. Our first online services took place on Sunday, March 22, CKP and Little Lambs closed on Wednesday, March 25, and the building closed officially on Friday, March 27. Since that time, CKP is offering limited programming in an online capacity (see CKP report). Food for Friends is still distributing food to families in need during this time, though it is taking place outside of the building. The Kasson-Mantorville schools are also using our parking lot to distribute food. All other outside groups have been asked to cease their meetings in our building. In the days following the closure, these three committees have met either individually or together at least six more times to navigate an ever-changing reality as we do our best to cope with COVID-19, and the demands being placed on our staff, our congregation and our community.

Personnel has been busy in the past three weeks as well. Our office administrator, Shelly, resigned to take a new job for the city of Mantorville. After her departure, personnel began a search for a new office administrator in the weeks prior to our closure. That process is currently on hold as we await our return to business as usual.

Of greatest concern at present is the very real possibility of seeing a shortfall in our giving that will deplete our financial reserves. Historically, when we miss a worship service, we see a significant reduction in our offering; a shortfall of thousands of dollars for each occurrence. Also, leadership is very aware that there are many faithful stewards in our midst who are unable to continue their financial support at this time because they have been furloughed or laid off from their jobs. The anxiety around what all of this means during a time of significant absence is distressing. Many steps have already begun to plan for this shortfall, such as turning off the boiler in the building when it is empty, freezing any non-essential ministry spending, having conversations with our creditors, and exploring other possibilities currently available to help organizations such as ours during this difficult time.

And yet, there is still room for God's faithfulness. There is still space for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, even now. At our last count, of the 1400 giving units at St. John's, 475 have contributed financial support to our ministries. For those who are able, even a regular weekly gift of \$10 from half of those who are yet to contribute this year, would be equivalent to almost \$2000 per month; an amount that would go a long way towards meeting a projected financial shortfall in the thousands of dollars. In 2 Corinthians, Paul sets for us the foundation of financial stewardship: "7 Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work." (2Cor 9:7-8, NRSV) Please pray over your household finances, and listen to how God is directing you to steward your finances. Along with leadership, including the stewardship committee, thank you so much for your generosity and support of our ministries in the past, and we are grateful for your continued financial support in the days ahead.

We conclude this message with Paul's words from Philippians: "6 I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil 1:6, NRSV) God is at work now in our congregation, just as God has been and will continue to be in the days ahead. May God continue to uplift us all in faith and hope until that day when we gather together again.

## **Office and Program Staff Update**

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Even during the closure of our office and building, St. John's staff has been hard at work, connecting with our membership, working on worship services, keeping folks informed, and planning for the future.

Before the shutdown, Sheryl created a new mailing list, which included not only our regular homebound members, but also those who might not be receiving digital announcements. A mailing has been going out weekly with updates on our building and our ministries. She has also been learning how to do necessary portions of the office administrator's job until that position is filled.

Since the office has been closed, Sheryl, our secretary, has been on vacation for two weeks. Mark, our custodian, has been working reduced hours. He has been checking in on the building daily. Katie, our communications specialist, has been working diligently with staff and other leaders to keep us informed of any changes.

Program staff have all been working from their homes during the shutdown. Following is a breakdown of some of the activities that program staff have been working on during our time apart.

### **Deacon of Faith Formation: Amanda Sabelko**

- Checking in with Sunday School, Oasis and Club 56 families
- Working with Lindsay on Wednesday interactive worship
- Faith Formation Weekly Update
- Developed a Google Classroom to teach first communion
- Participating in the Ruth book study. Working with Kelly Utesch to schedule a new online study
- Working with Lindsay on weekly CKP Chapel Service
- Staying connected to other leaders in the synod through the Faith Formation Network
- Staying connected with Education Commission and CKP
- Helping to keep program staff informed about state and local responses to COVID 19
- Meeting with Pastor Dave and Lindsay twice weekly
- Working on VBS Bible studies
- Working with Just Like Home and Community Ed while considering options for CKP

### **Director of Youth and Family Ministry: Lindsay Colwell**

- Checking in with Confirmation families and Youth Troop
- Working with Deacon Amanda on Wednesday interactive worship
- Weekly updates for confirmation families and Youth Troop, with a special focus on summer programming such as mission trips and camp. Coordinating with YouthWorks and camps
- Helping to keep program staff informed about state and local responses to COVID 19
- Staying connected with Youth and Family and Mission and Outreach commissions
- Working with Deacon Amanda on weekly CKP Chapel Service
- Staying connected to other leaders in the synod through the Faith Formation Network
- Participating in Bible and Brew
- Meeting with Pastor Dave and Deacon Amanda twice weekly

### **Pastor Nirmala Reinschmidt**

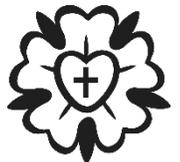
- Checking in on the homebound members by phone
- Following up with pastoral emergency needs, and communicating with Pastor Dave
- Coordinating with the visitation team to make contacts with members
- Checking in with prayer group

## Pastor Dave Efflandt

- Meeting with program staff twice weekly, and checking in with staff regularly
- Meeting with the following commissions, committees and groups:
  - Executive Board and Council, Personnel and Finance
  - Worship and Music Commission
  - Stewardship
  - CKP and Little Lambs
  - Youth Troop
- Leading online Tuesday Bible Study and Bible and Brew on Thursday
- Planning and producing online worship services
  - Contacting members to request their participation in services through readings, music, prayers, etc.
  - Working with new software to record and edit video and audio files
  - Setup a studio in my house to record services
- Checking in with other members during the closure
- Following up with pastoral emergency needs
  - Rescheduling baptisms and funerals
  - Members going into the hospital for emergencies or surgeries
- Staying connected to other ministry leaders for support and guidance: other pastors, deacons, and members of the SEMN Office of the Bishop, including our Bishop, Regina Hassanally

In closing, I would like to offer the words from Luther's Evening prayer. They are filled with joy in seeing God at work in the light of day, need for God's forgiveness and protection during the dead of night when we cannot see what God is up to, to faithfully place all of who we are into God's hands, and look forward to another day with hope; a day where we will be used by God to love and serve the world as He has loved it first in Christ.

### **Luther's Evening Blessing** *(From the Small Catechism)*



In the evening, when you go to bed, you are to make the sign of the holy cross and say:

“God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit watch over me. Amen.”

Then, kneeling or standing, say the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you wish, you may in addition recite this little prayer as well:

“I give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected me today. I ask you to forgive me all my sins, where I have done wrong, and graciously to protect me tonight. Into your hands I commend myself: my body, my soul, and all that is mine. Let your holy angel be with me, so that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.”

Then you are to go to sleep quickly and cheerfully.

May God continue to bless the life and ministries of our community of faith, preparing us during this season of waiting, strengthening our faith for love and service, ready to meet a new and ever-changing world with the Gospel; a Gospel proclaimed with words and with faith active in love. Amen.

*Pastor Dave Efflandt*