



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

**2021
ANNUAL
REPORT**

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION 2021

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2021 Congregational Meeting

Christ Lutheran Church, Valparaiso, IN

November 14, 2021

“This Church changes lives!”

Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Approval 2020 Annual Meeting and Special Meeting Minutes
3. Year in Review
4. 2021 Church Council Acknowledgments
5. 2022 Church Council Nominees
6. Operating plans:
 - a. 2021-22 fiscal year conversion
 - b. 2022-23 Annual Operating Plan
7. Closing Prayer

Proposed Rules of Assembly

1. Each speech from the floor on all resolutions and motions will be limited to 3 minutes.
2. A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s). *(Someone cannot comment on a proposal and, at the same time, call for an end to others' comments. Calling for an end to debate must be their first and only comment.)*
3. A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. *(It's not appropriate to call for an end to all comment on all issues or agenda items, only the topic currently under consideration.)*
4. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately pending question is not in order. *(See above; it is important that we are able to get through all agenda items.)*
5. Any recount must be ordered by a majority vote before the end of the assembly at which the voting result was announced. *(In the case of a recount request, it should be submitted during the Annual Meeting itself.)*

Statistics for the Meeting:

Baptized Members: 695 in 314 households

Confirmed Members: 549 in 300 households

Voting Members: 394 in 212 households

Quorum: 40 voting members

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Annual Meeting on Zoom
November 15, 2020

The 2020 Annual Meeting was called to order at 12:07 pm by Brian Niksch

Pastor Tim led us in the opening prayer.

There were 72 registered for the meeting.

Brian Niksch reviewed the Agenda and Meeting Overview.

Approval of the 2019 Annual meeting minutes:

Motion to accept 2019 Annual meeting minutes, seconded, no discussion, motion passed.

What goes on at CLC?

2020 in Review Slide Show

Thank you, Heather Budnik for putting the slide show together!

Overview of slides:

- The Church's Mission statement
- The slides theme is Because of YOU – we are still changing lives in 2020!
- Benefit of You Tube and Zoom we were able to stay connected.
- Map of the World: areas around the United States and World where services are being viewed.
- Pictures of the ways Youth are stay connected and Little Lamb Preschool school
- How we service and support the Valparaiso, Northwest Indiana. Indiana and Kentucky Synod, United States and Worldwide missions and ministries.
- Kits put together
 - 100 School Kits
 - 330 Quilts
 - 750 Personal Care Kits
 - 600 Baby Care Kits
 - 96 Fabric Kits*-

Financial/budget discussion part 1:

- Slides on the 2020 Income and 2020 Expenses (Income \$652,495 as of Oct. 31, 2020 and Expenses \$673,455 as of Oct. 31, 2020)
- Slide on 2020 Income and Expenses for Little Lamb Preschool (Income \$209,508 as of Oct.31, 2020 and Expenses \$173,215 Oct. 31, 2020)
- Slide on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan \$92,900.
- Slide stating as of October 31, 2020

Unrestricted Offerings	\$578,909
Direct Ministry Support	<u>6,245</u>
Total Unrestricted Income	\$585,154
Operating Expenses	\$676,455
Funding Gap	\$(88,301)
PPP Funds	<u>\$67,340</u>
Net Funding Gap	\$(20,960)

Thanks to outgoing council members for their service:

Charlie Schmidgall Youth Representative

Dorothy Bass Worship and Music

Diana Iltzsche Social Ministry

Erin Schmidgall Youth

2021 Church Council slate:

- Vice President: Luke Venstrom
- Church Property: Tim Kratz
- Worship and Music: Phyllis Schroeder
- Social Ministry and Mission: Lisa Owen
- Youth Ministry: open
- Youth Representative: open
- Financial Secretary: Faith Noe
- Auditing Committee: Amy Boedeker, Karen Seykowski, and Jeff Rodeck
- Nominating Committee: Sue Reinhold, Sue McPherson, Brian Niksch, Diana Iltzsche, Mike Felton, and Betty Lucket
- Synod Assembly Voting Nominees: Ellen Swayne, Sue McPherson, Tony & Sue Reinhold, Lorelei Schwartz.

Pastor Erica prayed before the 2021 Church Council Nominees vote.

Approval of the 2021 Church Council nominees:

Motion to accept 2021 Church Council nominees and, seconded, no discussion, motion carried.

Financial discussion Part 2: Scott & Heather.

- 2021 Planned Expenses (2021 Projected Income \$729,871 and 2021 Projected Expenses \$915,190, Projected Funding Gap \$ 185,319)
-

Pastor Tim- Prayer before the 2021 Planned Expenses vote

Approval to Accept the 2021 Planned Expenses

Motion to accept 2021 Planned Expenses and, seconded, no discussion, motion carried.

Pastor Erica led us in a closing prayer.

Brian adjourned the meeting at 1:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Swayne, Council Secretary, 1/1/2021

Special Called Congregational Meeting

September 27, 2020

Brian Nicksch called the meeting to order at 12:10pm.

Pastor Tim Knauff opened with a prayer.

Cindy McGuire verified that there was a quorum.

Brian Nicksch proposed a change to Christ Lutheran Church's constitution to be able to have the November annual meeting in an online format.

Brian also mentioned that the Church's constitution was updated with the ELCA synod 2019 model constitution requirements.

There was a motion and second. The motion passed.

Pastor Erica Gibson-Even ended with prayers.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Swayne Secretary

2021 CHURCH COUNCIL LEADERS
CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Valparaiso, Indiana

President	CINDY McGUIRE <u>priusv10@gmail.com</u>	929-8051
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Property	KARL SCHMIDTT <u>pelonza@gmail.com</u>	443-904-7154
Social Ministry	LISA OWEN <u>jlo46383@msn.com</u>	477-9240
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Worship & Music	PHYLLIS SCHROEDER <u>phyllis.schroeder@valpo.edu</u>	263-8820
Little Lamb Board Rep	LAURA VENSTROM <u>laura.venstrom@gmail.com</u>	815-751-8347
Youth		
Youth Representative		

Nominating Committee

SUE MCPHERSON suemcpherson626@hotmail.com
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Audit Committee

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Budget Committee

ALLISON SCHMIDT allisoneschmitt@gmail.com

STAFF

Senior Pastor	TIM KNAUFF, JR. pastortim@clcvalpo.org	242-7308
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Director of LLP	JEN GOTTLIEB jen.gottlieb@clcvalpo.org	309-6019
Director, Music Ministries	BRIAN BARTUSCH brian.bartusch@clcvalpo.org	307-9864
Parish Administrator	JENNY BIAS jen.bias@clcvalpo.org	228-0573
Business Manager	HEATHER BUDNIK heather.budnik@clcvalpo.org	707-7295
Parish Nurse	JULI VERKLER forever20154@att.net	619-518-8599
Property Manager	MILAN COBURN milan.coburn@clcvalpo.org	510-2421

MEMBERSHIP STATISTIC FOR 2021

Members received

Baptisms: 6

Adult Baptism: 1

Affirmation of Faith/Transfers: 12

Members removed

By death: 7

Moved/Transfers: 26

Pastoral Acts

Funerals: 7

Students confirmed: 10

To: Church Council

Re: Financial Audit for the period January through December 2020

Financial Audit for the period January through July 2021

Audit Committee reviewed the financial records for the year 2020 and stub year 2021 for Little Lamb Preschool and Christ Lutheran Church and completed the following:

1. Verified the bank balance and financial transaction for all bank accounts for CLC and LLP.
2. Reviewed various payments for accuracy.
3. Verified recurring transactions for timely payment.
4. Reviewed Petty cash totals.
5. Salaried and hourly staff payments compared to budget.
6. Verified payroll taxes and payments to IRS and Indiana.
7. Reviewed counter sheets and compared amounts to bank deposits
8. Reviewed the balance sheet for accuracy.
9. Verified procedures for authorized signatures.
10. Procedures are sufficient.

In conclusion of our review, we found no material discrepancies and the financial statements appear accurate. The fixed assets were not reviewed as there were no changes to fixed assets and there is not a detail of furniture and equipment.

We do not have any recommendations to Council.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amy Boedeker

Karen Seykowski

Jeff Rodeck

Report of the Senior Pastor
Rev. Tim Knauff

Do you remember how odd it was when the whole world changed 18 months ago? When the streets were empty, we were wiping down our mail, we felt like we were embarking on a great journey to get the groceries -- remember back when everything was so unknown, scary, and tumultuous? In some ways it's hard to remember that was part of the same pandemic we are still experiencing, the fast-and-furious start that has slowly, S-L-O-W-L-Y evolved into our current, "lingering" phase.

Think how much we have been through, and how much we as a congregation have learned and grown. We've learned how to worship "together" when we're not together. We've experimented with Sunday School at home, online with our friends. We've discovered what a gift our big church backyard is, and how beautiful it can be to worship with our beloveds, gathered around the Memorial Garden. We confirmed students at the foot of our Memorial Cross when we couldn't gather indoors. Together we held Christ Luthera's first, ever, on-line Annual Meeting last year. We've explored new evening liturgies and found different ways to worship, together, protecting our vulnerable beloveds. We have adapted and improvised and experimented and grown and we are not the same as we were before the pandemic. Imagine just how many ways that's the truth: We are not the same, beloveds, as when the pandemic began.

And yet, throughout the pandemic, as we have always been, we are a church that changes lives -- because of you. We are, and have always been, a place where community *builds up*, where worship *shapes us*, where *friendships strengthen us* and *children are welcome, beloved, and nurtured*. We are, and always have been, a Church that *makes a difference* in the community around us: through our Social Ministries, through our Men's Shelter (even when we haven't been able to host ourselves, we still have been serving!), through the many volunteer hours and leadership and world-changing work of you, of all of us, following Jesus into Valparaiso and Chesterton and beyond. We are, as we always have been, *a Church that changes lives*. We can't help it! Because Jesus is in our midst.

As we continue within this lingering, ongoing pandemic, as we've experienced (and lost, and created) "new normals" for gathering, for worship, for service, for community, it's time for us to turn our focus to **Sustaining Ministry Excellence**. Our congregation, leaders, and staff have responded brilliantly to unthinkably challenging circumstances, and that has been *preparing* us for what is next. Now it's time to be sure that this unthinkably wonderful preparation, the incredible strength and vitality the past 18 months have given us, continues. You're going to hear throughout this Report the many remarkable ways we've grown stronger. At the Annual Meeting you'll hear how we can and will Sustain our Ministry Excellence, together. Together we will discover that Jesus is inviting us: not into more of the same, not what we had before, but something more wonderful, because Jesus is with us.

Our Church can't help changing lives, because Jesus is with us. Jesus is among us. Jesus is in our beloveds, our vulnerable ones, our beautifully imperfect community, our inspiring and soul-shaping worship. Together, let us sustain and build what Jesus has given us and made us to be -- all the way through, and right out of, this pandemic that still lingers.

In God's amazing grace,
-Pastor Tim

Annual Report for 2021 - Pastor Erica Gibson-Even

Friends, this got long. In a year where it's so easy to get discouraged, it was a gift to take stock of where we have been, and all the ways that God has been faithful. So I invite you to read, and remember!

Last year, as we were unable to gather for worship and so much of our community life was upended, I looked to Martin Luther's 'Marks of the Church' to help frame a sense of who we are together as God's people in the midst of it all. In the year since, so much has changed - a lot for the better, thanks be to God! - and now we are in a new season of dislocation, reorientation, and discernment. Martin Luther described seven "Marks of the Church" for the Christian communities he tended, new communities that weren't always sure who or what they were after separating from the Roman church. I'm finding that the Marks of the Church are still key in helping listen for the Spirit as we think about our common identity and calling in this new day.

The Church is a community gathered around the Word:

In difficult days, we often find ourselves listening more closely for the Spirit as we hear the word. Online worship seemed to offer a bit more of a chance for feedback on preaching, in interesting ways. Creative storytelling in our online Easter vigil opened our ears in new ways. Online Advent services allowed for more participation as folks gathered in real time or used the service as a devotional time later in the week. Vacation Bible School happened in a re-envisioned format in the church backyard that allowed for generations to participate together. Knowing how to gather online meant that we could join in a time of prayer and scripture on the evening of January 6 in the midst of national uncertainty. Knowing folks' hunger for scripture and for gathering, we had a second series of preaching in our summer midweeks, for those that would be coming twice. On Christmas and Ash Wednesday, we found ways to "drive through" in person to pray together and mark the holiness of those days. And progress with public health meant we could gather in person around the Word for Palm Sunday, Easter, and ever since!

The Church is a community of Baptism:

Praise be to God for the ways we continued to nurture our identities as children of God. Our families worked together to provide Sunday School online for our young ones. Our kids continued to contribute to our worship life - sending us videos of scripture readings, special music, and sending us from worship to "serve the Lord!" The witness of our Priscilla circle, who persisted in gathering around scripture throughout the pandemic - online when necessary, outdoors when necessary, with masks when necessary - reminds us all that the community of baptism and the nurture of God's word are so necessary to our lives. Now that we've returned to a full Sunday Schedule, in-person Adult Faith Formation has begun, and Sunday Schoolers are again gathering joyfully.

Throughout the pandemic, as we have worked together to find the best way forward as a community, I've been deeply grateful for the congregation's readiness to lean into our

baptismal identity - Luther loved to remind folks that we were made free from the law, sin, and selfishness as children of God so that we can be unafraid to use our freedom for the sake of our neighbors rather than ourselves. None of us love any of the adaptations we've had to make - but for the sake of others, we can throw on a mask and get on with the business of being the church!

Our baptismal calling shapes us to follow Jesus in giving ourselves away for the life of the world. With amazing hard work and persistence, our Little Lamb Preschool ministry has continued to share God's love with our wider community. Throughout the pandemic, our Social Ministry team has led us in challenging us to generosity, service, and growth in our understanding of God's justice. The Social Ministry team built relationships Our shelter team has helped lead in the re-establishment of the rotating overnight shelter; our Mission Team partnered to learn and serve with neighbors both in Gary and in Costa Rica around gardens and food justice.

The Church hungers for Holy Communion:

Oh how we hunger for the Bread of Life when so much is unsettled! Together we have gathered to receive the presence of Christ - in our homes online, outdoors in person, in the sanctuary with masks and registration, in the sanctuary more freely, at the beach in person with our neighbors from Bethel in Gary, even online with friends from Costa Rica and with our wider Indiana Kentucky Synod. However and wherever we have gathered, Christ has been present, feeding us with his forgiveness and life. But you likely noticed the tears in your pastors' eyes and the quivers in our voices as we have seen each newly re-gathered face at God's table - what a joy to be able to SEE the Body of Christ together!

The Forgiveness of Sin is the calling of the Church:

Perhaps the unique gift of the pandemic and zoom was our Sacred Ground study group. More than 40 folks from CLC joined neighbors from Trinity Lutheran and St Andrew's Episcopal from January through June as we worked on the practices of repentance around racism in our past and present. Listening to the stories of our neighbors, learning and sharing together, we were the church in one of its most powerful forms - redeemed children of God who are unafraid to hear and tell the truth, confident enough in God's forgiveness that we are open to the Spirit's call to repentance, and filled with God's Spirit to begin to embody God's new reality in the world around us. I'm excited for the ways we'll continue to follow up and invite the wider congregation into our conversations!

The Church relies on the Office of Ministry:

Our leaders have been such a blessing through another long pandemic year requiring more tough decisions and gospel-centered focus. Bishops Gafkjen and Eaton have provided helpful guidance; Bishop Gafkjen and the Synod office have done remarkable work in supporting clergy and congregations - both in providing every resource they can think of, and in tending to clergy health as leaders. Every single staff person has gone

above and beyond in creativity and faithfulness in re-envisioning, sustaining, and re-envisioning *again* in their areas of ministry. Our council leaders have been faithful and wise; lay leaders in all sorts of ministries have been creative and faithful. Pastor Tim and I have found that a frustration of this time is the way that it has required the congregation to rely more heavily on the clergy as the central touchpoint and connection - our heartfelt ministry cannot replace the connections that we have all together, and we're so grateful for those who have worked so hard to help maintain connections.

Through it all, the tasks to which the church calls pastors (these are the things in our "letter of call") have continued: preaching and teaching the Word, celebrating Holy Communion, Baptisms, and Confirmations, leading worship, proclaiming forgiveness, providing pastoral care, speaking for justice, encouraging people to prepare for ministry, connecting to the wider church, encouraging generosity, equipping God's people for witness and service, guiding the congregation in proclaiming God's love in word and deed. Always, there is more that can be done. Always, there are ways we need to ask forgiveness. I'm so grateful for Pastor Tim's teamwork and leadership, and the prayer, support, and partnership of CLC.

The Church is a "place" of Public Worship and Prayer:

We've learned to appreciate this place God's given us even more in the last year. We've come to treasure praying gathered at the foot of the cross around our Memorial Garden. Our gatherings for outdoor worship were a witness to neighbors on the walking trail, and neighborhood kids who joined by bicycle! In VBS we learned about the plants and natural systems, the ways that our facilities ministry cares for this corner of creation - bioswales and pollinator gardens, native plants. We grew a 'demonstration garden' that provided some food to our New Creations neighbors and then some food to the deer who call our backyard home. Liturgical arts folk have helped beautify the sanctuary, both for livestreams and with new paraments and vestments as we returned in person.

The Church lives at the foot of the Cross:

As we move into whatever exactly is next in the long tail of this pandemic, this is a crucial (pun intended) reminder for us. The center of our faith is God's presence in Jesus at the most difficult part of human living, redeeming it by his very presence. We are so prone to look for success, and when we do, we look for it by the world's metrics - numbers, money, public influence. The cross reminds us that "success" in the kingdom of God is trusting so fully in God's unending faithfulness that we can give ourselves away for the life of the world. We don't know what is to come - but we know that we have already been saved, are already held by love that is stronger than death. So whatever is next, we know that we're prepared - because Christ is with us. Thanks be to God!

2021 President's Report

Our church has surmounted many challenges in 2021. Last year, many of us thought if we could just get through 2020, the pandemic would be over. Unfortunately, the pandemic continues but our church has never stopped doing Christ's work. We continued ministries not only within our own congregation but also in our community and the wider world.

Pastor Tim & Pastor Erica have met every challenge in maintaining pastoral care. Determining the most effective way to function as a congregation while keeping our people safe was a real and ongoing challenge, but our staff and council stayed current and followed the experts. Some painful conversations and decisions were necessary. We didn't always agree on the path forward, but the commitment to God and our ministries never failed or flagged.

And hybrid doesn't just describe cars or soybeans! Thanks to the dedication of our staff and volunteers, we now have hybrid worship and meetings and classes! Drive-through Ash Wednesday ashes! Pastoral care by phone, email, text, Zoom and Facebook, as well as in person when possible. Coming up with new ideas and making them work has been never-ending work for our staff and volunteers this year. Some of our equipment was not up to the challenge and had to be replaced. Despite all these challenges, our pastors continue to look ahead and have visions for our future.

Brian's music ministry is a real blessing. His knowledge and creativity are phenomenal! We would like for him to grow with us in the future. The soloists and choirs are incredible. We couldn't have done all that we did without our faithful Worship and Music Committee.

We joined other congregations for worship and activities. Trinity Lutheran joined us for shared online services. Joint activities with Bethel Lutheran included joint worship at Marquette Park in Miller, Sojourner Truth Walk (hybrid), as well as Bible study & a book discussion group.

Clint's work with the youth of our congregation is amazing. Confirmation classes and Faith Formation continued through the changing conditions of the pandemic, adapting as needed. We couldn't have done all that we did without our Christian Education Committee.

We received a 2nd PPP loan, and it was forgiven. Many thanks to Heather and Scott for our steady financial leadership.

We decided to move LLP and CLC to the same fiscal year 8/1 through 7/31. We puzzled through the concept of the Stub Year (1/1/22 – 7/31/22). We determined to keep the annual meeting & elections in November, at least for now.

We implemented a new accounting system, Blackbaud, to replace our outdated and limited system. Council read the book Abundance by Mike Ward as part of the Stewardship Committee's program "Stewardship for All Seasons."

Our Property team's stewardship enabled us to win the Energy Champion award from NIPSCO for energy conservation & environmental sustainability. The Youth Room and Activities Center HVAC units were replaced.

While the mission trip to Costa Rica did have to be delayed, we maintained connections with our contacts there, including a joint livestream worship.

This is only a few of the things our church has done in 2021. With God's help, what can we accomplish next year and years to come?

Please listen for God's "still, small voice" that might be calling you to learn and assist in a particular area. As Paul says, we have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. It's exciting to think how our church grows with the unique gifts of our staff and volunteers! Our staff and committee members are wonderful mentors to new volunteers. Serving on Council is a very supportive environment. If you are approached to serve, I sincerely encourage you to prayerfully consider accepting.

As my year as CLC Council President ends, I want to say a heartfelt thank you to our volunteers and staff for their faithfulness and hard work. In 2022, CLC will be under Luke's excellent leadership.

Cindy McGuire
CLC Council President 2021

2021 Little Lamb Preschool Annual Report

CHRISTIAN MISSION STATEMENT

Little Lamb Preschool, in union with Christ Lutheran Church, serves God by shepherding God's children as we nurture the whole child in partnership with families.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

We are a Christian preschool whose goal is to provide excellence in education and a loving, safe learning environment for every child. Based on the philosophy that young children learn best through play, we provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for them to explore, make discoveries, and learn respect for themselves and others. We firmly believe that all children are wonderful gifts from God to be cherished and nurtured. In collaboration with families, we encourage and support children to learn and grow socially, emotionally, academically, physically, and spiritually.

BOARD MEMBERS

Our hardworking, committed LLP Board members include, Laura Venstrom, Chairperson; Rachel Lieske, Vice Chair; Shana Provenzano, Secretary; Heather Budnik, Treasurer; Traci Coil, Andrew Soleim, and Kerstin Koch.

LITTLE LAMB STAFF

Our excellent, dedicated staff includes Patti Earhart, Mary Comstock, Sharon Castellanos, Teri Coplan, Ashley Kimmel, Donna Ferguson (teachers), Dani Dziedzinski, Cheryl Mulder, Mallory Raab, Susan Shingler, Jenn Jones (teaching assistants), and Jen Gottlieb (Director).

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We completed our 2020-2021 school year with Graduation, Beginner picnics and Mother Day celebrations in person, outside. It was an extremely meaningful time for us as we were able to share the school and students with our families. Fall of 2021 surprised us with a second year of COVID precautions but God (as always) has blessed us with an unbelievably dedicated and hardworking team and up-to-the-challenge families. We have currently have 10 energetic and joyous classes. All safely in their own classrooms, learning, growing, and forming relationships. We are blessed everyday we get to come to school. The children and each and every LLP team member brings joy into the school day. **LLP has 142 students attending the ten different classes** within four classrooms. We offer two 5-sessions per week, five 3-sessions per week, and three 2-sessions per week classes. Our developmentally appropriate curriculum is updated on an ongoing basis following guidelines from Indiana's Foundations for Early Learning Standards, Creative Curriculum, ELEA and NAEYC Accreditation Standards, and input from community Kindergarten teachers. Children attend Chapel Time weekly (outdoors this year) and participate in daily classroom devotions. We plan to offer a week-long STEAM camp during the summer. We are employing a new to us family engagement tool **ClassDojo**. It is an app to increase communication between school/teacher/parent. LLP continues its role on the VBS planning committee and volunteering during the VBS week. **LLP is an ELEA accredited preschool and is currently a Level 3 Paths to QUALITY school** (Indiana's rating system for Early Childhood Centers).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We appreciate the CLC Staff supporting us through music accompaniment (Brian), Chapel and Program Openings (Pastors Tim and Erica), scheduling (Jenny & Clint), finances (Heather) and continual property maintenance (Milan). We thank congregation members who helped our LLP ministry and those who support us in prayer and encouragement. We especially thank all that have financially donated to our school by providing equipment, memorial gifts, scholarships, monetary gifts, and educational materials. Your help reaffirms our church and school's commitment to providing an excellent Christian early childhood education.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We continually strive to improve the quality of our program, while maintaining its respected reputation, by meeting the educational, social and spiritual needs of our students, their families, our congregation, and community. **LLP is working towards becoming Level 4 Paths to QUALITY school and becoming accredited by NAEYC in 2022.**

Little Lamb Preschool is very thankful to be a ministry of CLC and an outreach to the Valparaiso Community.

Christian Education
2021 Annual Report

The committee this year includes: Ruth Cozza, Kerstin Koch, Pr. Erica Gibson-Even, Amy Knauff, Brooke Robinson, co-chair Becky Frye, and co-chair, Benjamin Crill.

This year started slow but has progressed very well. Starting off with our live stream Sunday Schools, we have since been able to have some family-oriented activities in person, were able to have a modified vacation Bible school, and have since resumed in person faith formation.

Vacation Bible school this year was a new experiment. Christian Education partnered with Stewardship to provide a multi-generational VBS. One of the highlights was a tour of the church grounds. This related to our learning of how to be stewards of our environment. Kudos to Betty Lockett for providing a tour for kids and adults to show how we are caring for the grounds God has entrusted to us. Thanks to Tim Sutherland and his team for being great partners in this experiment and helping lead the adult discussions!

In person faith formation resumed this fall in a modified format. The beginner through kindergarten is together and the first through fourth graders are together. Thank you to all the teachers in your commitment to our kid's faith journey and help in doing so in a safe way!

A special thanks goes out to Sandy Keammerer and Ramona Krueger! Sandy has been a staple of our Sunday School program from the beginning. Ramona has provided music for our youngest Sunday Schoolers alongside of Sandy. Thanks so much for your faithful service to God and our kids through the years!

We look forward to evolving our programs as conditions allow. We appreciate the support of the church as we navigate new formats and experiment with a new normal.

Submitted by Benjamin Crill, Chair of the Christian Education Committee

Christian Growth Committee Annual Report 2021

This congregation is so blessed by the dedicated members who serve as part of the Christian Growth Committee! The mandate of the Christian Growth Committee is ***“implementing programs and activities to increase the spiritual growth of the members of the congregation.”*** We have had to be creative since the pandemic began, but these are the programs that are continuing or resuming.

Bread Breakers, led by Amy Knauff

There is no report for Bread Breakers. We took a break from this ministry during Covid. Hopefully, we will pick it back up next fall

Caring Meals, led by Amy Knauff

The Caring Meals ministry uses www.takethemameal.com to line up meal providers with the meal receivers. There are 42 people on the caring meals mailing list. Meals are provided to families due to illness, death of a loved one, birth of a baby, or some other difficult time.

Since the last annual report, we have provided 9 meal schedules for congregational members. Referrals can be made through the church office or one of the pastors. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for this ministry, contact Amy Knauff @ 219-242-7448 or amyknauff@gmail.com.

Faith Formation Hour, led by Kathy Stefans

Our Faith Formation Hour is newly up and running again at 9:20 am on Sunday mornings. An ongoing Bible study, called "Celebrating God" Includes Exodus, 2 Samuel, Psalms, Mark, Acts, and Revelation with Dave Keammerer on Patio (weather permitting) or room 120.

A variety of presentations about different ministries we support are scheduled in the sanctuary each week. Details are in the weekly eNews and on the website. If you have ideas for programs or studies you would enjoy, please contact Kathy Stefans @ 847-612-3025, Kathy.stefans@gmail.com or Pastor Erica through the church office.

Grief Group, led by Jane Aicher

At this time, there is no grief group meeting, but Jane is willing to start one up if the need arises.

Funeral Dinners, led by Marilyn McGawn

Funeral Meals/Receptions has just recently resumed its service which was inactive due to COVID pandemic limitations. Our purpose is to offer church families a time of fellowship and sharing with a meal or light refreshments following the funeral or memorial service of their loved one.

A meal for seventy was served in the Fellowship Hall following a service in August.

The current roster of our service team includes 21 members. We would certainly welcome other volunteers who would like to be involved in this ministry, to provide food and/or to help serve at the .event

Contact: Marilyn McGawn at memcgawn@comcast.net or 219-510-5106 (home).

Parish Nurse, Juli Verkler

Juli was providing blood pressure checks the first Sunday of each month before COVID-19. Blood pressure checks will again be offered when it is safe to do so. You may reach Juli at forever20154@att.net .

Stephen Ministry, led by Dr. Tim Knauff

With ten active and two in training, Stephen Ministers serve CLC and our surrounding communities. Stephen Ministers are highly trained to walk with people experiencing life's difficulties. It could be the loss of a job or loved one, health issues, family dynamics, a new pregnancy, faith concerns, hard decisions and more. We maintain very strict confidentiality. Our experience shows that change, resolution, and healing comes as a gift from God. If you would like the ministry of a Stephen Minister, please see one of our pastors. Our Stephen Ministers wear blue name tags, so they're easy to find!

Traveling Tea Parties, led by Holly Knauff and Beth Coburn

It is so easy to be forgotten and we want to remind each shut in Guest that they are still a member of the Family of God at Christ Lutheran Church. The Traveling Tea Parties continue to deliver a card with a tea bag and an individually wrapped cookie to our nine members at The Pines, Rittenhouse, Avalon and Coffee Creek every three months. We will keep this format until Covid is not a threat to our Tea Party Guests.

-- Submitted by Kathy Stefans, Chair

Social Ministry and Mission Committee
Annual Report 2021

Committee Members: Diana and Bill Iltzsche; Lisa Owen; Irene Adams; Tim Sutherland; Kathy Lundstrom; Kathy Page (secretary); Tony Reinhold; Ed and Karen Seykowski; Becky Fry; Eileen Piehl; Phyllis Schroeder; Faith Noe, Adam Gibson, Linda Hazelton, Kathy Sutherland

The work of the committee continued to focus on hunger, housing, homelessness and mission, with an added focus on social justice around diversity. Monthly emphases fall under these areas and provide giving and in many cases volunteer opportunities. Each of these organizations is a line item in the Social Ministry and Mission budget, as well as receiving designated giving from members. Volunteer opportunities have been dramatically reduced during COVID, but slowly we are finding safe ways to work together.

- January = Homeless/Housing: First Contact Christian Resources & Mike Steiner Fund
~Volunteer Opportunities: CLC members welcome to volunteer year-round at First Contact
- February = Hunger: Hilltop Neighborhood House
~Volunteer Opportunities: CLC takes leadership/provides vols. for Hilltop Fundraiser
- March = Homeless/Housing: New Creation Men's Center/Overnight Shelter**
~Volunteer Opportunities: CLC provided supervision and meals
- April = Homeless/Housing: Housing Opportunities
~Volunteer Opportunities: CLC members volunteer at H.O. and serve on their board.
- May = CLC Youth Mission Trip
~Volunteer Opportunities: CLC Youth summer mission trip; DVBS/S.S./Confirm. serv. projects
- June = Hunger: Food Banks of Northwest Indiana
~Volunteer Opportunities: CLC provides food item donations Immanuel Luth./P.C. Food Pantries
- July = Mission: ELCA Global Missions/Selian Hospital, Tanzania/ AMOS Guatemala medical mission
- August = Mission: Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services & Lutheran Braille Ministries
~Volunteer Opportunities: CLC hosts and provides braille services/products for visually impaired
- September = Mission/diversity: Gloria Dei Compass International education program; ELCA #66 synod endowment
~Volunteer Opportunities: Pack Away Hunger event in Crown Point; Compass volunteers
- October = Hunger/ Poverty: Lutheran World Relief; ELCA World Hunger/Lutheran Disaster Relief
~Volunteer Opportunities: CLC is LWR Truckload Pickup Site (Quilts/Care Kits/School kits)
- November = Mission: Lutheran Diaconal Association
~Volunteer Opportunities: CLC hosts diaconal Sunday; CLC hosts Alternative Giving Fair each November; virtual event this year
- December = Mission/diversity: Bethel Lutheran Gary (ELCA Urban Congregation)
~Volunteer Opportunities: Interfaith Action Network, Sojourner Truth House, Bible study, Lake Michigan joint worship with Bethel
~Volunteer Opportunities: CLC hosts Food Bank NWI Dec. food distribution

In addition, the committee has been working in these other areas:

- The providing of support for the Stewart family; they have moved to Hammond. Prayer support continues.
- Exploring via Zoom a closer spiritual and working relationship with Bethel Lutheran Church in Gary
- Joint worship and picnic with Bethel Lutheran Church at the lakeshore in August, which saw over 100 participants
- Supported Lucia Otten in a six-week service project through Casa Adobe to Costa Rica
- Most committee members, among 40 CLC members, participated in Sacred Ground, an Episcopal church program teaching racial reconciliation and awareness.

For the past several years, Christ Lutheran's role as a men's overnight shelter site has provided us with an opportunity to welcome and serve men experiencing homelessness each Saturday night from mid-April to mid-October. COVID-19 forced New Creations Men's Center, our partner ministry, to cap their numbers and shelter in place. CLC members helped to supervise overnight guests at the Housing Opportunities as well as by donating cooked meals and groceries. At this time CLC is no longer an overnight site, but we are "standing by" as a back-up location in case the current housing should be overwhelmed. Food donation is still welcomed at the Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Owen, Church Council representative

Christ Lutheran Church (ELCA/Valpo) Stewardship Committee 2021 Annual Report to Congregation

The Stewardship Committee/Team, with members Helen Arvidson, John Buggeln, Dave Keammerer, Pastor Tim, Crystal Ridley, and Tim Sutherland (Chair), have met monthly in 2021 to provide ongoing stewardship/generosity programming for the congregation. Despite the ongoing Pandemic the Committee has met consistently to read, think, discuss, and plan.

Our most significant endeavor was a planned and implemented financial stewardship/generosity program in January-February 2021 with members providing annual estimates/intents for giving. Our Estimate of Generosity theme was “Open Hearts, Faithful Feet – Stewardship is everything we do after we say I believe”. Three video temple talks were provided Jan. 31, Feb. 7, & Feb. 14 during online worship by Hannah Buggeln, Karen Harper, & Chuck Schaefer. Pastor Tim and Heather Budnik worked with the committee to develop a pdf tri-fold and a Google Forms response card (online and print) for the Feb. 14 celebration event. Using Chat, kids (doinggoodtogether.org), youth, and adults provided examples of intended service and volunteering in the congregation in the spirit of generosity of time and talent. There was encouragement for additional members to consider moving to online giving through Pushpay. Church Council members were asked to complete estimate cards early as an example for the rest of the congregation. Over 60 households responded (provided estimates) during February. Combined with another 40 households who are regular givers this provided documentation of over 100 households supporting generosity efforts during the 2021 year of ongoing Pandemic. Pastor Tim has authored quarterly thank you letters for members that accompanies the quarterly financial statements prepared by Heather Budnik.

To enhance Little Lamb Preschool and to take advantage of features of new church software, the Council changed to a spending plan year for LLP and CLC that is August through July (program year) not January-December (calendar year). This will allow Stewardship to continue to encourage end of year generosity in July (end of program year) and November-December (end of calendar year). Congregational givers did respond in a wonderfully generous way in July to allow CLC end the new financial year in the black (and with the help of PPE loan/forgiveness funds)

The group through its Council Stewardship budget (\$2000 per year – cost also subsidized by I-K Synod) has begun partnering with Mike Ward and Jennie Wolf Smith, GSB stewardship consultants with I-K Synod, to help our congregation grow its generosity and giving through the program “Stewardship for All Seasons”. Data about CLC has been shared e.g. SAS Pre-evaluation “Benchmarking the Stewardship Situation”. Jennie provides monthly Zoom sessions with SAS participating congregational leaders from within the I-K Synod, and periodically meets individually with CLC and other congregations throughout the year. Jennie and GSB Fundraising organization will assist/support CLC with resources/expertise prior to our next annual appeal in January/February 2022. “Sustaining ministry excellence” will be an important theme plus some additional priorities requiring “new monies” to be identified by Church Council). Continuing to create outcome/impact stories creates inspiration and storytelling for the ministries of CLC within and beyond our ministry center. *Abundance* book by Mike Ward (2020) is being read and discussed by Stewardship Team and by Church Council members and CLC staff. The Church Council’s discussion of the book, using questions for reflection from Pastor Tim, is proving to be a valuable exercise for new thinking around a theology and belief practice of abundance not scarcity,

believing God will provide enough/more than enough, and learning to better live in a spirit of gratitude for all we have been given along our faith journeys!

Some members of the Stewardship Team assisted with a summer DVBS program this summer (Christian Education and Pr. Erica) entitled "Good Stewards Together". Helen and Tim from the Stewardship Team have maintained an Excel inventory listing of activities at CLC that can be sorted by CLC Council Committee areas. So far this has been shared with the Social Ministry Committee but may have uses by other committees.

Feedback, ideas, and suggestions to the Stewardship Committee are always welcomed. Thanks to the entire Stewardship team for the continuity of serving together the past four years, and best wishes to member John (and Gretchen) Buggeln currently on a joint sabbatical through mid-2022. The Stewardship Committee would love to welcome new members interested in joining the Team to help promote generosity throughout the 2021 year. Report respectfully submitted Oct. 3, 2021, by Tim Sutherland, Committee Chair.

2021 Annual Report of the Worship and Music Committee

Due to the continuing pandemic, the people of Christ Lutheran began the year worshipping in front of screens, most in their homes, with one pastor leading worship while seated in front of a webcam in a nearly empty sanctuary, save for the person operating the video and Brian Bartusch at the organ. On the day this report is written 10 months later, 161 people of Christ Lutheran gathered in person for worship in two services and were joined by an estimated 76 people through the hybrid live streamed late service. This was also the day the Sanctuary Choir returned for their first anthem in 18 months.

In the 7 intervening months, our worship practice was impacted by the continually changing pandemic conditions with helpful advice from the Porter County Health Department and thoughtful guidance from Indiana-Kentucky Synod's Bishop, Bill Gafkjen. Throughout, however, we were fortunate for the very careful attention by our pastors as to how to continue our strong commitment to worship at CLC, but to do so with the priority concern for the health and safety of our members amidst the challenges of the COVID virus.

We reopened the sanctuary doors for an in person service on Sunday, March 7th with 46 in attendance, while an estimated 225 continued to worship via a separate live streamed. Across the following weeks:

- Holy Week services were live streamed, although the pastors offered drive through imposition of ashes on our hands on Ash Wednesday in the turnaround adjacent to the Memorial Garden.
- We added a second in person service for Easter Sunday only, and a total of 194 worshiped at church, with an estimated 242 joining us by live stream.
- The congregational singing of the sending hymn was introduced.
- The Bell Choir returned to frequently offer special music.
- Outdoor worship returned on Thursday evenings for the summer using, Marty Haugen's "Unfailing Light" communion liturgy;
- In August, the schedule changed to have an 8 am in person service, and a hybrid service at 10:30 that was both in person and live streamed.
- We were able to return to an indoor confirmation service in which the 10 confirmands affirmed their baptismal vows with their families, sponsors and mentors at their side.
- The hybrid service has encouraged continual thinking and adjustments by the pastoral staff as to how best to incorporate hospitality for our live streamers so that they continue to feel included rather than as observers.

Throughout this time, countless people stepped up and adjusted to necessarily ever-changing practices and procedures. Ushers and communion assistants especially responded willingly and graciously to instructions that often changed weekly as adjustments were made to how best to gradually return to our pre-pandemic worship life.

Likewise, the members of the Altar Guild were continuously willing to adjust as needed, starting the in person services with communion served at the foot of the chancel steps and then moving it back to the altar when it was determined we could safely again kneel at the altar rail, or recognizing an unexpected increase in attendance and preparing an additional tray to be carried to the altar during the service. Throughout, Barb Clements and Terry Albrecht have been there on Saturday and Sunday mornings to insure the setup is complete, as well as the cleanup is done following worship, and we're grateful for their work, and for that of those members who have joined them on the Altar Guild.

Our worship has also been brightened by the new paraments on the altar and the chasubles worn by the presiding pastor, created by Marla Niksch and Terry Albrecht.

It wouldn't be possible to name all of those to whom we are indebted who willingly served as lectors, prayer assistants, ushers and communion assistants, but the group that perhaps deserves special recognition is the live stream technical crew. We have been blessed for the 18 months they have served faithfully every Sunday morning, from the early days of the web cam to the more sophisticated live stream we now offer. At the risk of overlooking someone, special thanks is due to Ben Crill, Paul Danger, Malcolm McGawn, Tony Reinhold, Adam and Daniel Gibson-Even.

And finally, the people of Christ Lutheran are indebted to Pastor Tim and Pastor Erica for the pastoral care and leadership they have continued to offer us during all of the challenges of the past year. Likewise, we are grateful for Brian Bartusch, our Director of Music Ministries, for his work to continually enrich our worship with alternatives to congregational singing and choral work by incorporating special music, including additional organ pieces throughout the service, ensemble and individual performances, and increased participation by the bell choirs.

Current committee members are Ed J. Seykowski, Marla Niksch, Dorothy Bass, Sue McPherson, Tony Reinhold, Brian Bartusch, Pr. Tim Knauff, and Phyllis Schroeder, chair.

Annual Report – Youth Ministry

By Clint Mullet

Director of Youth Ministries

Overview

We have cemented a strong, safe, and welcoming community of young people in our high school and middle school groups. The kids have stayed engaged and active despite the significant challenges our youth ministry has faced for the past year. We have used data-driven, research-guided programming to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our CLC teens. We have taken a cautious approach by doing as much as we can, as safely as we can. **Christ Lutheran Church's youth ministry is not only being sustained, it is actively growing in the midst of the pandemic.**

Program Recaps for October 2020 – October 2021

Circle (High School group)

Circle has met continuously through the past year. This alone is an accomplishment we should celebrate! Our consistent meeting schedule provided a supportive and safe community during the difficult 2020-2021 school year. Since the return of our regular, in-person meetings in the Fall of 2021, we've seen attendance jump to pre-pandemic levels!

Circle's weekly meetings last year primarily consisted of conversations, games, and bible study. The majority of our efforts were focused on lifting spirits, practical spiritual advice, and providing encouragement during a difficult year. In Fall 2020, we met in-person weekly at the church. We participated in the Lutheran World Relief truck loading and raked leaves for some folks in November. From November 2020 to March 2021, we met online due to the pandemic. We saw a significant drop in attendance and engagement during February 2021. When we returned to in-person meetings in March 2021, attendance rose sharply. We celebrated the graduations of 2021 senior class with a Senior Celebration party in May.

Over the summer, 4 of our high school teens participated in our summer trip to Camp Lutherwald! The kids spent a week at Lutherwald learning, growing in their faith, making memories, and doing service projects around the Lutherwald site. Our kids did landscape work, painted cabins, stained decks, and more!

We had a significant surge in engagement during Fall 2021. Our consistent meetings and welcoming community grew to include a wide variety of teens. The hard, long work of pandemic youth ministry is already bearing joyful fruit. The questions, conversations, and connections forming in Circle will have impacts for years to come!

Fusion (Middle School Group)

Fusion's growth over the last year is one of the great stories of CLC's last year. The pandemic has presented a significant stress test for our middle school ministry. In Spring 2020, middle school engagement with Fusion hit rock bottom due to the move to digital ministry. We spent the last year rebuilding and recapturing the energy we saw in Fall 2019.

We successfully provided a consistent, safe, and engaging experience for our middle school kids during the 2020-2021 school year. Our middle school families rose to the challenge of staying flexible and staying committed to Fusion. We met on Sunday afternoons outdoors and indoors throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

From November 2020 to March 2021, we moved to Zoom due to the pandemic. While I suspected we would see engagement fall significantly as it did in Spring 2020, **something remarkable happened instead: we saw a huge surge in attendance during these months.** The kids came more often, invited friends, and embraced Zoom. We laughed and bonded over bible studies, Jackbox Games, and Among Us. These meetings cemented the bonds of group and established a culture that continues today. In March 2021, when in person meetings resumed, the momentum continued through the end of the school year.

This summer, 10 middle schoolers participated in Confirmation Camp at Camp Lutherwald in Howe, Indiana. We spent some of our Confirmation classes with Bethel Lutheran Church from Gary, Indiana! It was wonderful to see the kids make new friends and form deeper bonds with the people they knew.

In Fall 2021, Fusion began meeting on Sunday mornings for the first time in a year and a half. In our 2020 Annual Report, we wrote “Fusion’s normal meeting time may be one of the biggest factors that drove attendance numbers in the Fall. We expect a return to our pre-pandemic numbers once we are able to meet on Sunday mornings again”. We are thrilled to report that this is occurring now! We are excited to see how Fusion will grow over the next year.

Confirmation

We confirmed 10 of our young people in the 2021 Confirmation class. These magnificent, hard-working, flexible kids chose to affirm their baptism and explore their faith during one of the most stressful times of their lives. We couldn’t have accomplished it without the support and encouragement of their mentors and their families.

Our current 2022 Confirmation class has 7 kids preparing to affirm their baptisms next year. Pastor Tim and I are excited to walk alongside these middle schoolers during this time in their lives. The confirmands are in the midst of selecting mentors.

Hurdles and Obstacles from the past year

Youth Board Chair vacancy: For the past year, we have not had a Youth Board Chair to organize youth board meetings or speak for the youth ministry on the Church Council. The vacancy hurt our youth ministry. We have not had an advocate for the youth ministry, our families, our parents, or our young people during one of the most difficult years this church has faced. The potential for our youth ministry’s growth remains capped by this vacancy.

Volunteer Vacancies: I have been put in the tough situation of doing youth ministry without a volunteer team for most of the last year. It has been extremely difficult to find folks willing to volunteer over the past year. We have seen all of our volunteers step away due to the pandemic, family needs, or changing workloads/schedules. We will not sustain our current success without active involvement from adults in our church.

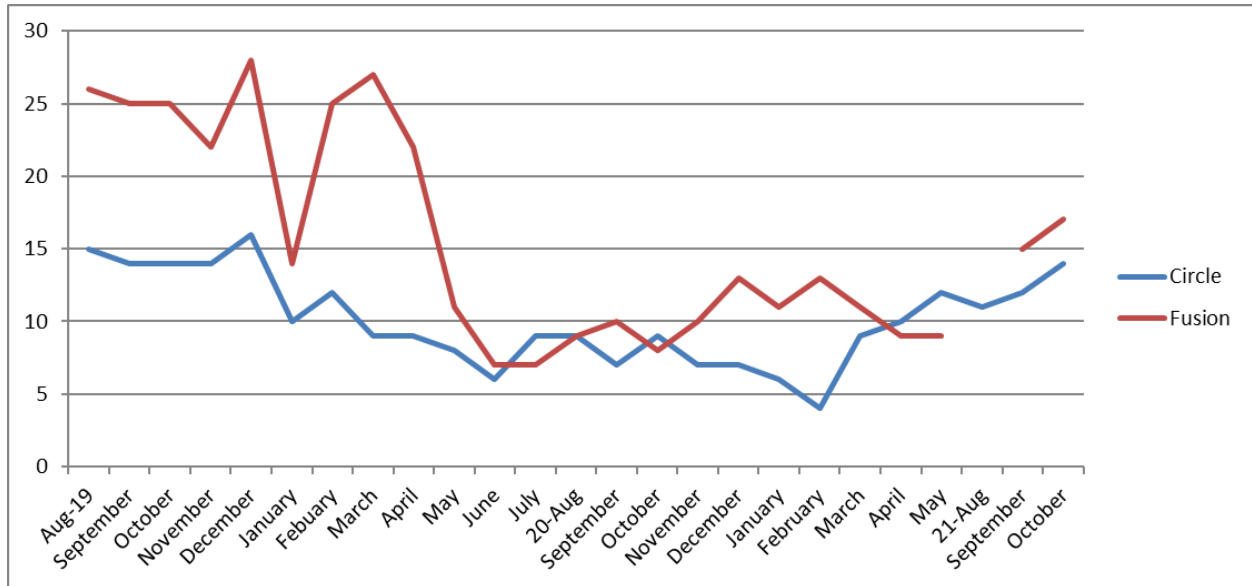
2022 National Youth Gathering

We currently have 5 chaperones and 14 kids signed up for our trip to National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Gathering is happening July 23 – July 29, 2022. We currently have a little over \$10,000.00 raised for the trip. Our goal is \$30,000.00, so we hope to raise an additional \$20,000.00 over the next 8 months. National Youth Gathering is a life-changing experience! Our church will be blessed for years to come from the experiences and memories from this trip!

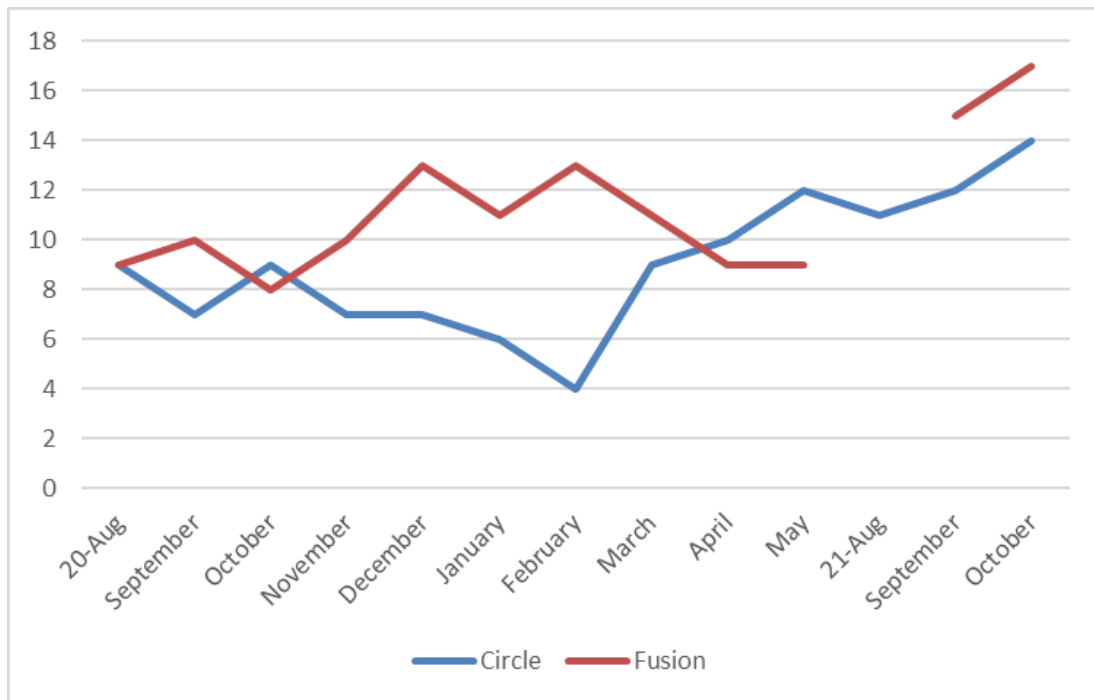
Attendance Averages

Monthly averages are the mean attendance of all meetings from every month. *All meetings were digital (on Zoom) during: March 2020 – June 2020; November 2020 – February 2021*

Monthly Attendance, August 2019 – October 2021 (pre-pandemic to present day)



Monthly Attendance, August 2020 – October 2021



2021 Property Annual Report

Property Committee strives to maintain all buildings and grounds in an excellent and eye appealing condition. Committee members are :

Tim Kratz / Karl Schmidt – chair
Milan Coburn – Property Manager
Malcolm McGowan
Marla Niksch
Tony Reinhold
Ed Seykowski
Betty Lockett

Significant projects completed throughout the year are:

- Repaired walls and repainted main hallway by mailboxes and lower section of walls in Fellowship Area
- Installed new under loft lighting in two preschool rooms. Kids can now see better when they play and learn in this area!
- Replaced wall sconce light bulbs in Sanctuary with LED. Went from 60w to 6w. Replaced more parking lot LED bulbs under warranty as they fail prematurely. Have 1 or 2 more to do
- Replaced LLP Annex furnaces and air conditioners (2 units). With energy efficient units. Existing units were 20+ years old and one had a cracked heat exchanger. Removed old flue stacks and patched roof. Also replaced east Activity Center furnace/air conditioner which had also reached the end of its useful life. Received \$795 rebate from NIPSCO for this work.
- Had a risk inspection by our insurance carrier, Church Mutual. Everything in good shape with only 2 minor recommendations which were taken care of.
- Installed brick paver border around circle garden in front of Church
- Installed American Heritage landscaping rock in garden by kitchen with some new shrubs. Also added some of this same rock to gardens in front along circle drive.
- Added flowers and mulch to gardens around LLP and planters by doors. Continued to improve plantings in bioswales in parking lot.
- Patched bad asphalt around 3 parking lot drains and installed crack fill in all asphalt areas west of back parking lot to extend life of these areas.
- Replace three broken windows, one from a snow blower stone, one from mower across Campbell at the high school, and one cause unknown.
- Replaced six exit lights that were going bad or of the old style.
- Installed new flooring in LLP Annex, a combination of hard surface tile and carpet. The existing carpet was very worn and the new surfaces provide a better surface for the activities that occur in that room.
- Re-mulched the base of trees around the facility. We have over 100 trees of different varieties around the facility not including the woods in back.
- Painted exterior metal doors and completed some metal siding patching where it is rusting.
- Replaced front mail box post that had been hit and broken.

Many thanks to our group of property volunteers that work diligently throughout the year to make CLC a beautiful place! Marla, Betty, Vicki, Scott, Doc, Irene, Marilyn, Tim.