



ANNUAL REPORT

— 2020 —



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



A MESSAGE FROM ELCA PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON

Dear friends in Christ,

This year has been a challenging one! The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the church and society. We have had to shift the ways we engage in ministry from a focus on in-person worship and meetings to livestream worship, virtual meetings and gatherings in the parking lot. We have had to shift to teaching children at home and working from home. We have not been able to travel to see friends or relatives or to celebrate life events. This has also been a time to address economic and social justice issues, to shift our thinking and our way of life.

In times such as this, our baptism in Christ makes a difference and makes us different. Like Christians before us, we recall that God is faithful to God's promises and God's people. We see that God enables us to connect with one another even when we are separated. Shifts in the world invite us to be innovative in how we do God's work and reach out to all ages in making disciples. We see that God is at work not only in our buildings but beyond them as well. We have found new ways to serve our neighbors and reach those in need.

As we experience this time of uncertainty, we sense something new emerging. In many places there are new strategies and renewed energy for ministry, often generated by emerging leaders. We have developed a framework to build on, and now is the time to engage in hard work together. As you do in your congregation, we want our collaborative efforts to be both faithfully thoughtful and sustainable. We want to build up the body of Christ today and for the future.

Looking across the church, I am grateful for your generous giving of time, talents and resources. Yes, God does continue to bless us! God will provide both relief from life's struggles and hope for a stronger church, God's church. We do not need to know how the future will unfold. As members in the body of Christ, we need only trust that God is with us and will provide.

Building up the body of Christ together,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." —Ephesians 4:11-16



Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda.....	2
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes, Sunday, January 26, 2020.....	4
House of Prayer Special Congregational Meeting, May 31, 2020.....	10
Council President’s Report.....	12
Christian Education Report.....	13
Community Festival Report.....	13
House of Prayer Finance Ministry Report	15
House of Prayer 20/20 Vision/Mission.....	16
Ifunda Companion Congregation Report Global Missions Committee.....	17
Guiding Worship Report.....	18
Internship Report.....	19
Membership Report.....	20
Memorial Committee Report.....	21
Outreach Report.....	21
Property Committee.....	22
Service Ministry.....	24
Women of Hope.....	25
Music Director’s Report.....	26
Re-entry Team Report.....	27
Pastor’s State of the Congregation Report.....	28
Love Fund Financial Report.....	30
Treasurers Report and Balance Sheet.....	31
Biographies for Council Positions.....	32
2021 Church Council Elections Ballot.....	33
Bishop Lull’s Annual Report to Congregations January 2021.....	34
Notes.....	36
Addendum-Budget Report and Graphs	

Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda
House of Prayer Lutheran Church Oakdale, Minnesota
Sunday, January 31, 2021

1. **Call to Order** – President Bruce Johnson
2. **Opening Devotion Prayer** – Pastor Dan Streeper
3. **Teller’s Count** – Lead Teller
4. **Approval of Agenda** – Bruce Johnson
5. **Approval of Minutes** - January 26, 2020 Annual Congregational Meeting – Bruce Johnson
6. **Approval of Minutes** - May 31, 2020 Special Congregation ZOOM Meeting – Bruce Johnson
7. **Council Election – Part One:** Nominations and Candidacy – Pastor Dan

Open the floor for additional nominations.

Allow time for Biographical Information for each new candidate, if any. (Have forms ready)

Final opportunity for any candidate to withdraw.

Introduction of ALL Candidates for Election.

8. **Reports:** Bruce Johnson
 - a. Approval of written Ministry Reports, including but not limited to:

Pastor’s State of the Congregation Report; Council President’s Report; Finance Ministry; Global Missions; Memorial Committee; Music Ministry; Property Report; Re-Entry Team Report; Service Ministry; Vision 20/20 Plan; Women of Hope; Community Festival; Auditor’s Report and Treasurer’s Report.
9. **Old Business:** - Bruce Johnson
 - a. **House of Prayer Constitution Changes Ratification:** Motion made by the Church Council on Dec 10, 2020 to table ratification of the House of Prayer Constitution with ELCA updated changes until the January 2022 Annual Meeting.
10. **New Business:** - Bruce Johnson
 - a. **Motion to Create “Media Technical Consultant” position:** The Church Council on Oct. 8th, 2020 moved to recommend to the congregation the creation of a Media Technical Consultant to be paid per worship production unit.
 - b. **Nominations for Delegates** to the Synod Conference Assembly / Tool Kit – Sat. Feb. 13, 2021; via Zoom at either 9:00 or 11:00 AM. (Four candidates are needed: 2 female & 2 male)

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- c. **Nominations for Delegates** to the 2021 Synod Assembly: Fri-Sat. May 14-15, Eve-Morning 2021; via Zoom, exact times yet to come. (Two candidates are needed: 1 female & 1 male)

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- d. **2021 Budget Presentation and Vote** – Treasurer Scott Hults motions to adopt the 2020-2021 budget, approved by the council on Dec. 10, 2020 as presented.

- 11. **Church Council Election – Part 2:** Official Balloting: - Pastor Dan Streeper
- 12. **Call for Announcements** – Bruce Johnson
- 13. **Council Election – Part 3:** Official Results – Lead Teller
- 14. **Closing Prayer** – Vice President Tom Gualdoni
- 15. **Adjourn** - Bruce Johnson

**Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes
House of Prayer Lutheran Church Oakdale Minnesota
Sunday, January 26, 2020**

Congregational Goals: 1) Deepen our relationship with God and each other; 2) Improve Congregation Communication; 3) Simplify Ministry Efforts; 4) Establish a 5-10 Year Congregation Plan

Council Members: Pastor Dan Streeper, Bruce Johnson (President), Tom Gualdoni (Vice President), Beverly Buan (Secretary), Scott Hults (Treasurer), Karla Danley (At Large), Sebastian Schoonover (At Large), Dave Biedermann (At Large) and Barb Zehoski (At Large).

1. **Call to Order:** The Annual Congregational Meeting of House of Prayer Lutheran Church (HOP) was called to order by President Bruce Johnson at 10:56 a.m.
2. **Opening Devotion:** Pastor Dan read the Litany from the back of the Annual Report about always being aware of God's presence.
3. We sang the **song** in the back of the Annual Report "God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind".
4. **Teller's Count:** Tom Gualdoni reported that 74 members were in attendance. The required number is 35 members are required for a quorum.
5. **Approval of the Agenda:** Audrey Orf made a motion to approve the agenda and Barb Zehoski seconded that motion.
6. Pastor Dan and Dean Libby reported on the "**Year of Renewal**". Pastor Dan gave an overview of the Congregation Vitality Survey that was done October thru December of 2016 during worship. Dean Libby and Deacon Erin Morris were the chairs of the committee. Other members of the committee were: Melinda Berosik, Tim Byboth, Pastor Dan and Rosie Flannigan for a short time. The Asst to the Bishop, Justin Gram reported the results to us showed that 2/3^s of the 67 people who completed the cards are excited about the future of HOP. Also, that 80% of the people are having regular Spiritual Conversations. The congregation feels that we support each other in times of difficulty and we are supporting in using our gifts for ministry. Things that we need to work on are: We are not always good about sharing our tensions and working thru them, we could improve on excepting and involving new people. We tend not to invite others to share in our ministry. We need to be more open with people. We feel equipped to share our faith but tend to not invite others to share in our ministry. Overall our ministry is vital and currently viable but overall it is likely not sustainable for the long term. We need to think creatively, about our congregation's focus, and structure our assets and ask God what is needed to do ministry in our context and community. The committee worked with the Synod the next year thru-out our Year of Renewal. We did the 3 Great Listening's: 1) Listening to God thru Scripture and Prayer; 2) listening to each other and 3) during Lent we listened to people from the Community.

Dean stated that in 2017 HOP entered into the “Year of Renewal. Members liked that we were working with the Sheridan’s Project, North St. Paul Food Shelf, Operation Christmas Child and Tanzania. They were asked how would they tell friends about HOP; they stated they would mention the friendliness of the members, the music program and the Pastor. We can do better for the people already here. Everybody is a greeter on Sunday morning. The speakers we invited for our “Listening to the Community” were: Lutheran Social Service, the Superintendent of School District 622, Community Service Officer, Mayor of North St Paul and the North St. Paul Food Shelf. We are watching the new housing projects starting in our neighborhood.

7. Two motions were voted on to amend the Constitution, Bylaws and Resolutions of House of Prayer. The House of Prayer section is Sections 10-14 and all other portions are directed by the Synod. The motions were voted on together. The council has made the motion to make these changes and Michael Hanson made the second. Both of the amendments were approved together. Beverly Buan explained that the Constitution now needs to be sent to the Bishop of the Synod for her approval. Then it will be final. At the next congregation meeting we will then vote to Ratify the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions. These changes were made at the national Assembly.

8. Approval of the Minutes of the January 27, 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting and the Special Congregational Meeting, July 14, 2019 meeting:

Dave Burau made the motion to approve both of the minutes and Mary Lou Hodge made the second.

9. Reports

Audrey Orf made a motion to approve all of the ministry reports with a second from Gene Hults. The motion was passed.

- **President’s Report:** Bruce Johnson gave his report on being the Council President’s. He praised all the ways the members of House of Prayer work together to help others. He wanted to thank all the members for their assistance.
- **Pastor’s Report:** Pastor Dan is excited about the future of HOP. He gave his report showing the membership is up by 4 people. The HOP “20/20 Prayer” which started the end of August is very effective and a lot of good will happen because of it. The Love Fund was up to about \$12,000 in 2019, Trunk & Treat had several hundred more people, and the Christmas Breakfast had 50 new faces. Many of them said it was because of the postcards that were sent out. Benita’s music school has brought new kids to Sunday School. We need to increase our hospitality especially with the new members and increase our Outreach. The median age in Oakdale is 38 and the HOP member’s is in the 50’s. Correction in this report: The Special Congregation meeting was July 14th, 2019 not August.
- **Auditor’s Report:** Audit Committee members are Perry Johnson, David Buan and Karla Danley. The committee reports that the HOP accounts, Global Mission and Women of Hope accounts are in order. They have not reconciled the Love Fund

yet, they are off \$240. They are recommending that the deposits for Love Fund and Global Mission be deposited directly into their accounts not into the general fund. They are also recommending that the monthly reconciliation report be received each month.

- **Treasurer's Report:** The following report is as of December 31, 2019:
He reviewed the graph showing the expenses. He also explained the benevolence amount is approximately \$30,000 but we gave more from the designated accounts. The total is more like \$49,000 or 19% from income a prospective.
The Council created a fund of \$6,000 for a property replacement fund.
The actuals for the Faith factor in 2019 was -21,142 and in 2020 is -46,163. Gifts received at the end of December are not showing because they were not reflected until January. The difference is an increase of 3% for staff members and an agency fee. We are also showing the commitment to Sheridan's Story of about \$2,500 for the school year. We are in good shape.
- **Christian Education:** Since the fall of 2019 Pastor Dan and Monica have lead the Sunday School program. As in the past few years HOP youth have joined with Beaver Lake Lutheran and Holy Cross Lutheran for confirmation which included a youth program called "The Rock" for youth grades 3 through 6. Speakers at the Adult education have been guest teachers from around the Twin Cities.
- **Community Festival:** The total before expenses totaled \$5,320.00. The expenses were \$1,240.21. The balance to be distributed equally was \$4,079.79. The funds were disbursed equally to North St. Paul Food Shelf, Sheridan Project-Cowern School and Compassion in Action (Homeless) in the amount of \$1,359.93 each.
- **Finance Ministry:** Responsibilities are as follows: To oversee any financial accounts intended for longer term than annual operating budget, including any accounts that hold securities (stock, bonds, mutual funds, insurance policies, etc.). The current members of this committee are: Scott Hulst, Mike Nelson, Dave Burau, Perry Johnson, Dave Buan and Doreen Biedermann. The ex-officio members include the Church Council and Pastor Dan. The firm handling these funds is RBC Wealth Management. The year-end account value as of November 30, 2019 is:
Medtronic stock (165 shares) = \$15,008.40 and the Money Market cash account \$42,950.36 totaling \$57,958.76.
- **20/20 Vision:** Tom Gualdoni reported on the vision for HOP. This is a "God Focused and God Lead" program. It will be built on a foundation of prayer. We have seen how this is working at HOP. Charles Stanley said "We can't see God at work if we are not prayerful people. Prayer centers our attention on him." This program will need input from the congregation and we will need to use everyone's gifts. "Our Mission is Christ's Mission, Love God and Love One Another."
- **Global Missions Committee:** Our Companion Congregation is located in Ifunda, Tanzania. Our promise is to pray for them, to help them with church projects by sending \$1,000.00 each year, and to continue to build strong relationships since our

partnership began in 2000. We have sponsored 18 students with scholarships for Secondary School in the Iringa Diocese. Each scholarship received has a ripple effect that directly impacts the lives of ten other people. The cost to educate a secondary student is \$400.00. Our Christmas Community Breakfast raised \$3,511. In 2020 seven members of House of Prayer will be traveling to Tanzania. All travelers pay their own way.

- **Internship Report:** In 2019 we wrapped up a shared internship with partner St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi hosting Intern-Deacon Erin Morris. Erin ended her time with us in May as she received a call from St. John's Lutheran Church, Spartanburg, South Carolina. We also hosted Intern John Swanson from June thru August. John was part of the Luther Seminary trial MDivX program.
- **Membership Report:** Membership at the end of 2019 – 349.
- **Memorial Committee:** Thank you to all who have remembered loved ones through your donations to House of Prayer. Funds that were donated were used to provide: Material to recover the administrative desk in the office, foam and material to recover the chairs in the nursery, plants for the narthex and an adjustable speaker podium for Pastor Dan and visiting pastors.
- **Property Projects:** Bruce reported we started out hoping for \$22,000 which includes a tithe. We started in August and received \$31,000 by the end of November.
Parking Lot Lights were installed.
We are waiting for the rebate from EXCEL – We only received a partial rebate because Premier Lighting submitted it incorrectly.
The altar work is almost complete and the Altar was carpeted.
The tuck pointing could not be done because of the weather.
The flag poles will be done in the Summer.
The Organ is here and William is working on being trained on it.
The security camera will go in when the tuck pointing is done.
Painting was done inside the church.
The balance was going to be used to replace the snow plow but when they received a bid from a local plowing company it showed the cost is better hiring them. They are working out great.
A thank you was said to Bruce for all the Altar work and Dean and his crew for the painting.
The custodian has requested that we purchase a carpet cleaner.
Shrubs: Dave Burau stated that many of the shrubs have died around the church.
Shirley Grendahl asked about replacing the kitchen floor and was told it would be part of future planning discussions.
Mary Lou Hodge stated "Gratitude leads to miracles"
- **Service Ministry:** Thank you to House of Prayer members who generously participate and support these ministries.

- Undies Sunday; Caring Hearts Supply Drive for Homeless People; Boots for Kids; North St. Paul Food Shelf; Arc's Value Village Thrift Store; School Tools Outreach; Sheridan's Story; God's Work Our Hands; Red Kettle Bell Ringing; Giving Tree; Foster Care Families; Gifts for Seniors.
- **Women of Hope**: Play a key role in hospitality related ministry. They are funded through donations, free-will offerings, Lenten Soup Suppers, Bake Sale, and other church events. They provide services which include maintaining the kitchen; providing refreshments for church functions; hosting funeral receptions; providing dinners for First Communion training and New Member Orientation; pies and beverages for Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service. Other activities include: Saint Paul Area Synodical Women's spring Convention, East Central Cluster meetings, Knitting Ministry provides warm winter weather items, Nighttime Knitters for whom they provide lessons on how to knit and crochet.
- **Music Director's Report**: One of the greatest gifts to House of Prayer has been the dedication of those who have provided our beautiful and inspiring music each week. There are many ways to participate such as: Adult Choir, Handbell Choir and HOP Musicians. 2020 will be an exciting year as a new modular/component-based organ has arrived.
- **Love Fund**: Members have been very generous this year. The donations given in 2019 far exceeded prior years and therefore HOP was able to help many more people including: 30 families both inside and outside HOP, helping Nikky Kazeem with legal assistance as part of her Asylum and Immigration process and future legal fees. We were also able to help the Hult's neighbors who lost their home to fire in November. Also, a significant number of gifts went through the account for the Sendafa Orphanage in Ethiopia, as part of the Gemechu Music fundraiser for the Orphanage there.

New Business:

A. Synod Conference Assembly: We are the East Conference. We can take the pastor and 2 male and 2 females. February 22nd, 8:30-2:30 at Gloria Dei, St. Paul which include lunch, worship and church business. Tool-kit is ideas from other churches. Dave Biedermann and Mary Jo Hodge have agreed to go.

B. 2020 Synod Wide Assembly: Friday, May 15 – Saturday, May 16, St. Andrews Lutheran Church. We have 3 votes: Pastor, one male and one female: Linda Siluk has volunteered.

C. Elections: If you are a confirmed member of House of Prayer you are eligible to vote. Tom Gualdoni and Scott Hults are willing to run again and the candidates for At Large are: C. Linda Silek, Bill Ham, Steve Lutz and Nikky Kazeem.

Linda: She has served on many types of boards and likes to walk her dogs.

Nikky: She loves to read her bible every day and with her immigration issues she tries to keep pushing. She appreciates her HOP family and never takes them for granted.

Bill: He has been on several HOP boards. He enjoys doing nothing in his retirement.

Steve: He has only been a member for a few months but he was attending with his mother who died recently. He enjoys music and has provided it for several HOP events. We thanked those going off the board: Karla Danley and Barb Zehoski

Ballot Count: Tom Gualdoni and Scott Hults were re-elected. For the At-Large position: The vote count was: Nikky Kazeem-50, Steve Lutz-36, Bill Ham-31 and C. Linda Silek 20. So, the new At-Large members are Nikky Kazeem and Steve Lutz.

D. Adoption of the Budget

The 2019 faith factor budget was -\$30,965 and the year end with an actual of -\$21,142. The 2020 faith factor is: -\$46,163.

On the budget the front side is the income and the back are the expenses.

We created a \$6,000 fund for property repairs. A motion to approve the budget was made by Irene Kube and seconded it by Dean Libby.

Discussion: Is Pastor taking a Sabbatical? It may get pushed out another year. We are working on Funding for the Sabbatical. Karla: Property campaign of 2019 has additional funds so do we still need the \$6,000? Karla: Can we start using our designated funds when needed for shortages? We are trying to create a 3-month account so we can be ahead and not behind on our finances.

Giving Envelopes: The numbers have changed this year. Debt reduction is now on the left-hand side in operating expenses. The right side is for designated but you must list who you want to give the funds to.

All were in favor of the motion to approve the budget except one abstain and the motion passed.

Closing Prayer: Thanks for doing God's work and bless our ministries.

A motion to adjourn: Pam Hults made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Larry Bachmann made the second.

We moved to the fellowship area for lunch and fellowship.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beverly Buan
Council Secretary

Special Congregational Meeting Minutes
House of Prayer Lutheran Church Oakdale Minnesota
Sunday, May 31, 2020

Congregational Goals: 1) Deepen our relationship with God and each other; 2) Improve Congregation Communication;
3) Simplify Ministry Efforts; 4) Establish a 5-10 Year Congregation Plan

Council Members: Pastor Dan Streeper, Bruce Johnson (President), Tom Gualdoni (Vice President), Beverly Buan (Secretary), Scott Hults (Treasurer), Steve Lutz (At Large), Sebastian Schoonover (At Large), Dave Biedermann (At Large) and Nikki Kazeem (At Large).

1. **Call to Order:** The Special Congregational Meeting of House of Prayer Lutheran Church was called to order by President Bruce Johnson at 9:56 a.m.
2. **The Tellers count:** Tom Gualdoni reported that 59 members were present.
3. **Opening Devotion:** Pastor Dan gave a prayer thanking us for coming together via ZOOM. He also explained that the council is trying to figure out what needs to happen for us to come together again. They are trying to create a team to make these plans. Please contact the pastor or council if you are willing to be on this committee. Many things are being done around the church to make the changes needed to meet the Governor's requirements. We are looking into getting FM modulators for our cars in the parking lot. We will continue to worship as we are now at this time.
3. **Scott Hults gave us a report on our finances.** We are ahead of last year at this time. We received funds from the Payroll Protection Plan of approximately \$15,300. This will be used for payroll, mortgage and utility costs. Most of this will be in the form of a grant. The budgeted figure for the end of April was -\$15,000 and we are now at a positive \$5,000. We now have a lockbox outside of the church to be used for offering. It is just above the security panel.
4. **President, Bruce Johnson introduced an emergency motion** made by the council to apply for the Payroll Protection Program. Bruce also explained that given the pandemic, we wanted to ensure that we could continue to pay our staff and keep them employed. The council also felt that this would help us through a possible economic downturn later in the year. We needed to take action before the money was gone. Even so we were only able to participate in the second allocation by Congress. Also, because of the possible debt to the congregation (if it all ended up as a loan) it may have exceeded the maximum expenditure for the council of 3% of our total congregation budget, therefore we needed the approval of the full congregation. Thus, the reason for this meeting and the vote for congregation approval.

Bruce read the motion from the council:

Given that the Federal Government took emergency action to provide financial assistance to small businesses due to the Covid19 Pandemic in March and April of 2020 in the form of the Payroll Protection Program, which when used appropriately will likely be to a great extent forgiven as a grant.

AND;

Given that the House of Prayer Council acted in good faith to apply for this Payroll Protection Program before the deadline, knowing that our response time was limited and that a Special Congregation Meeting must be called so that said application could be approved.

Be it so resolved that the Church Council requests final approval for participation in the Federal Payroll Program by the House of Prayer Congregation.

Bruce asked for a second to this motion: Rosie Flannigan made the second.

He than asked for questions. Jane Bachman asked about the interest rate and payback period. This would cover staff salaries for an 8-week period excluding the pastor's housing allowance. Repayment starts 6 months after the end of the period the funds go out. We would have 2 years to repay the funds. Scott believes the interest rate is approximately 1%. The loan is approximately \$15,300. It is believed that only the portion with the custodian may be a loan. So, we believe most of the funds will be a grant.

Up to 25% can go to mortgage & utilities after we have spent 75% on payroll.

Pastor said a pray on the vote.

Bruce Johnson called for a unanimous vote. If no objections the motion will pass. If there is an objection, we will do a row call vote. It would then need a simple majority to pass. He asked if there were any objections. There were none. The motion passed.

Pastor and Bruce Johnson concluded the meeting at 10:17 a.m. and Pastor said a prayer. A motion was made by Monica Streeper to adjourn the meeting and a second was made by Alex Odegard.

Respectfully Submitted:

Beverly Buan, Secretary

Council President's Report

Dear Members of House of Prayer,

2020 has brought a new chapter to all the world and to our church life at House of Prayer. Who would have thought a year ago that our Sunday worship would be conducted in our homes via the internet and listening to the radio in our cars at the church parking lot! COVID 19 has challenged us to find new ways to worship God and to serve our neighbors.

First and foremost, Pastor Dan and a dedicated crew have worked very hard. Starting from scratch, they developed means to provide Sunday worship services that we could access on computers, phones and tv's. In July, we purchased an FM transmitter so we could attend worship in our cars. It was good to be together.

Next, who had ever heard of 'Zoom' meetings? We learned quickly that Zoom would allow us to conduct many of our activities safely. Council meetings, congregational meetings, Bible studies, coffee hours and Contemplative Prayer were made possible. I suspect other opportunities will arise to use Zoom, such as our annual meeting.

COVID also caused us to cancel the Community Festival in August, Trunk or Treat in October and the Community Pancake Breakfast in December. To allow giving for our supported charities, we conducted a fund drive on our House of Prayer website. The response was wonderful, with donations amounting to \$4125.00 to support the North St Paul food shelf, Every Meal (A.K.A. Sheridan Story) and Walking with a Purpose.

We completed the last of the property projects funded by the 2019 capital campaign. This included tuck pointing brick walls, parking lot LED lighting, a garage security camera, remodeling the altar area, new flag poles, a new organ and a 10% tithe.

The question on everyone's mind is 'when will House of Prayer return to normal activity so we can worship in the sanctuary and meet together?' At this time, we can't be sure. We know that we are more cautious than some other churches. We have created a re-entry team, which has prepared detailed protocol for a safe return. Additionally, we have purchased disinfecting foggers to sanitize surfaces and we have installed duct mounted needlepoint bi-polar ionization systems in each of the building HVAC systems. The ions introduced into the air will increase filtering capacity and will neutralize the virus. This reduces the chances of the virus spreading through the air. Our council believes that by following the developed protocol, we will be able to return safely to regular activities when the state relaxes limits on gathering.

I want to thank all who have helped carry on worship and church activities under difficult conditions. I especially want to thank Pastor Dan, who has worked tirelessly to keep things going.

I look forward the coming year when we can be together again and further develop our Vision 20/20 project.

May God bless you all.
Bruce Johnson

Christian Education Report:

During 2020 no Christian Education Ministry Team was active.

Pastor Dan continued to provide weekly Bible Studies, Centering Prayer education and opportunities, as well as work with Holy Cross and Beaver Lake Lutheran Churches to provide remote Confirmation classes during the Covid19 Pandemic. Pastor Dan, as a response to the loss of our Sunday Morning Sunday School time, provided a weekly “Kid’s Corner” education section for families do their Sunday School lesson together at home. And Monica Streeper was occasionally able to put together video Sunday School for the youth.

Community Festival

As the August date for our usual Community Festival approached, we realized that the Covid-19 virus was going to either cause us to cancel the event or find some other way to continue. Unwilling to give up support of things we support and relationships we have developed in our community it was decided to try an online Community Festival. The three programs we had already chosen to support were The Sheridan Story (which right in the middle of the festival changed its name to “Every Meal, Fighting Child Hunger”) The North St. Paul Food Shelf. And Walking with A Purpose who works with the homeless people in St. Paul.

Using a video and pictures posted online by The Sheridan Story a new video was created. Bruce Johnson who works at the Food shelf, recorded an inside look at the food shelf. Also using pictures posted online by Walking with a Purpose a new video was narrated . An introductory video was created as well as a wrap up video to be shown as a final plea for not only members

of House of Prayer but members of the Community who have supported us in the past. Armed with these videos it was decided to show them on our web site, one a day for a week, in order to let the community know who we are, where we are, what we're doing, and how anyone watching could help.

We tried to figure out a way to hold an online "Silent Auction" but as time got closer, we put that on the shelf. As a result, we raised \$3,875.00 to be equally split by the three programs chosen.

Our original hope was to introduce House of Prayer to members of the community who may not know about us as well as anyone new to the community, invite them to join us, and show them that Covid-19 was not going to detour us from our mission... Love God, and love our neighbor.

On behalf of all those who helped in any way, from putting together the videos, watching the videos, and contributed the \$3,875.00 as a result of watching the video, I would like to thank you all and remind everyone that House of Prayer is strong and continues to find ways to do God's work.

Respectfully,
Dean Libby

House of Prayer Finance Ministry 2020 Annual Report

The Finance Ministry Board was added as a bylaw at our Annual Meeting on January 2015 and its responsibilities are as follows:

The Finance Ministry shall oversee any financial accounts intended for longer term than annual operating budget, including any accounts that hold securities (stock, bonds, mutual funds, insurance policies, etc).

The current members on the Finance Ministry Board which were appointed by the HOP Council are Scott Hults, Mike Nelson, Dave Burau, Perry Johnson, Dave Buan and Doreen Biedermann. . The ex-officio members include the Church Council and Pastor Dan.

The primary financial firm that handles transfers of stocks and money market funds is RBC Wealth Management located in St. Paul. The following is the financial activity For HOP's account at RBC.

Beginning account value January 1,2020

Medtronic stock (165 shares)	18,719.25
Money Market cash account	<u>67,901.26</u>
Total	86,620.51

Money coming into HOP account in 2020

Operating Income	65,757.58
Undesignated income	28,244.00
Interest (Thru 11/31/2020)	15.57
Dividends	<u>369.60</u>
Total	94,386.75

Withdrawals from Money Market cash account

HOP Operating Expenses (thru 11/30/2020)	62,770.00
RBC Account fees	<u>142.06</u>
Total	62,912.06

Year-end account value November 30,2020

Medtronic stock (165 shares)	18,760.50
Money Market cash account	<u>54,111.65</u>
Total	72,872.15

David Burau

Chairperson

Strategic Planning 2020 Mission / Vision

As with many endeavors in 2020, the Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on this important initiative. The fluctuating nature of it - increases, decreases and surges - has made progress in this planning difficult.

The progress to date has been as follows:

Approximately a year ago an initial draft of a planning framework / outline, along with draft mission and vision statements, was developed and presented to the council. With this as a starting point, it was suggested that we consider using an outside consultant to lead and/or assist with this planning. A consultant was referred to the council by the synod and several meetings were held with him. A proposal for a planning process was developed and presented to the council by the consultant, along with an initial cost estimate. After consideration, due largely to the cost for the consultant and the fact that significant funding for capital projects was recently provided thru an appeal to the congregation, it was decided to look for other alternatives, including conducting the process and development in-house.

As Covid 19 became a pandemic, shut-downs began, effectively stopping the planning process until decisions could be made regarding meetings (streaming services, ZOOM, in-person, etc.), and effectively using them for strategic planning, both with the council and congregation.

This fall it was decided the planning process should begin in house and an updated planning framework / outline, and draft mission and vision statements, were presented to the council. The council decided to restart the planning process with a council meeting in September. The council met and went through an analysis of House of Prayer ministry, both the current state as well as issues to consider and address for the future ministry and growth of HOP. The meeting was led by Pastor Marla Amborn, a colleague of Pastor Dan, and used an approach that addressed strengths, concerns, opportunities, and threats for the current and future ministry of HOP. The results of this meeting have been used to develop a questionnaire for use with members of the congregation. This will use a similar approach to gather the thoughts and input from the congregation members, which are essential for the development of a successful strategic plan.

The questionnaire will be emailed or mailed to congregation members (depending on their needs and preference) after the first of the year. Results will then be presented to members, hopefully via in person meetings. Based on these results, a plan will be developed. This will incorporate a vision and mission statement, new HOP logo and a plan to implement the findings.

As we now have 2020 hindsight, please continue to pray for this planning in 2021.

Amazing God, we ask for your guidance to develop a clear vision and mission for House of Prayer ministry. Help us to recognize and understand your will, and to share these insights with each other. Empower and energize each of us to use our gifts to accomplish your mission. – In Christ's name we pray. Amen

God's blessings for a safe, healthy, and peaceful New Year!

Respectfully Submitted, Tom Gualdoni, House of Prayer Vice President

Ifunda Companion Congregation Report Global Missions Committee

We continue to receive great blessings from a partnership with our Companion Congregation in Ifunda, Tanzania. They pray for us daily and have enriched our lives in countless ways since our partnership began in 2000. Our promise to our partner congregation continues to be to pray for them, to help them with church projects by sending \$1,000 (funded through our church budget) each year and to build relationship with our partners.

We sponsored 18 students with scholarships for Secondary School in the Iringa Diocese. The gifts for education that you at House of Prayer have given over the past nineteen years have blessed the families of Ifunda beyond measure. As our friends in Iringa like to remind visitors, given how extended families work in Tanzanian culture, each scholarship received has a ripple effect that directly impacts the lives of ten other people. Asante Sana (Thank you) to all for your generosity in walking beside these students and helping them to have a profound impact on their communities. Cost of education keeps rising in Tanzania as well. The cost to educate a secondary student is currently \$450. This year we did contribute to help a student from the Iringa diocese study at Lutheran Seminary here in Minnesota. He has begun his studies through distance learning and we hope and pray he will soon be able to travel to St. Paul and continue his education.

Because of the pandemic there was no Community Christmas Breakfast this year. We pray that soon we will be able to sponsor an event to benefit our Christian brothers and sisters in Ifunda.

We were able to travel to Ifunda in late January and returned on February 14. Mike & Maren Nelson, Barb Lind, Larry Lind, Dave Biedermann and Gene and Pam Hults were the mission partners who journeyed to Tanzania. We were able to worship two Sundays with our partners at Ifunda. We learned of the great progress within the congregation. New churches are being built at some preaching points. A building has been built to house the micro finance business as well as meeting room for the parish. There is also space to store supplies for planting and harvest that the parish may use. We travelers are so blessed to spend time with our partners. We want to thank the members of House of Prayer for their support and prayers of this wonderful mission.

House of Prayer Special Checking Account – Global Missions

Beginning Balance, January 1, 2020	\$2,500.00
Total Disbursements	\$3,200.00
Total/Income/Deposits	\$4,615.30
Ending Balance, November 30, 2020	\$ 3,915.30

Deposits to this account include fund raisers and donations by individuals (some outside the congregation from family and friends). Monies raised are used for financial support for our partners in Ifunda. This account is also used for travel to Tanzania. No money received from donations or fund raising is used for travel. The travel money is paid by the individual travelers.

Gene and Pam Hults
Global Mission Chairs

Guiding Worship

This Ministry Team did not meet in 2020.

The ‘charge’ for this ministry team is as follows: To prayerfully oversee, direct and evaluate worship for the House of Prayer Lutheran Church congregation and community in consultation with the pastoral and music staff. Worship should strive to bring glory to God, provide for the administration of the sacraments in good order, and deepen the faith and level of involvement of all participants preparing them to be sent into the world to do Christ’s ministry.

To that end, this team considers congregation worship feedback, and offers creative and inspirational ideas to the staff in all areas of worship planning. Due to Covid19, Pastor Dan and the Staff working to adapt as needed and keep people safe, did much of this work. It is Pastor Dan and the Staff’s hope that this committee will once again find members interested in ‘Guiding the Worship’ of House of Prayer in the future.

Internship Report

“Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, ‘Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?’” Esther 4:13-14

2020 was indeed a unique year. As many of you may remember, way back in the final months of 2019, we hosted second career Intern John Swanson for a time from July through the end of August. John was part of the Luther Seminary trial MDivX program. A new two-year internship program intended for students on a fast track through seminary. This newly granted program was the first of two, two/three-year trial periods intended to immerse interns in a ministry context, while attending seminary full time and helping to reduce the costs involved with seminary. During his time with us, John discerned that this was not a call for him.

In 2020, the committee was ready to move forward with the possibility of hosting an intern for the second of the two-to-three-year tracks for ministry when the world was confronted with the Covid19 pandemic. As a result, nearly all internships that were not in place were either put on hold or arrangements were made so that Interns could serve from more local congregations remotely. It is our hope that we will at some future point again be able to host an intern at House of Prayer. In the meantime, I invite you to simply pray for all those interns out there following God’s call to ministry. – For such a time as this!

Respectfully, Pastor Dan Streeper

Membership Report

Membership Statistics:

1. Membership, end of 2019	349
2. Members received during 2020	
a. By baptism (15 yrs. and under)	2
b. By Baptism (16 and older)	0
c. By Affirmation of Faith	0
d. By Transfer	0 *
e. From other sources/statistical adjustment	1
Total members received during 2020	3 *
3. Baptized youth confirmed in 2020	0
4. Members removed during 2020	
a. By death	6
b. By transfer	4
c. For other reasons/statistical adjustment	2
Total members removed during 2020	12 *
5. Membership, end of 2020	340 *
6. Average weekly worship attendance 2019	107
7. Average weekly worship attendance 2020	*

*Given changes due to covid 19, the * numbers are still being tallied and will be available by the Annual Meeting.

Members added in 2020:

Baptisms (2):

- Prisch, Clayton – June 27, 2020
- Prisch, Jackson – June 27, 2020

Transfers (0):

Members removed in 2020:

Deaths (6):

- Robert Smeed - Jan 18
- Angela Krismer - Jan 22
- Norman Hodge – Feb 9
- Harold Hallberg – July 31
- Avis Wegner – Sept 19
- August Kiekhoefer – Oct 23

Transfers (4)

- Jill Feland
- London Feland
- Jim and Sue Reibel

Memorial Committee Report

Items purchases by the Memorial Committee in 2020 were:

A picture frame for the portrait of Jesus which was donated by Denny and Jan Stiles.

A Navy buffet to be used for storage and is in the hallway by the kitchen.

The Memorial Committee is composed of Pam Hults, Irene Kube, Dienne Wyland, and Mary Kay Meisner. We wish to extend our deepest sympathies to all who lost loved ones this year. Thank you for your donations to House of Prayer in memory of them.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kay Meisner

Outreach Report

No Current Committee

Property 2020 Annual Report

2020 has been a challenging year with the Covid 19 virus affecting many of the things we normally do. Services outside in the parking lot, services broadcast over the internet. That said, Pastor and staff have done a magnificent job keeping everything working. Even so, we were able to complete many of the Property Projects outlined in 2018.

Brick repair and tuckpointing

The southwest corner of the Sanctuary has been a problem for years. The freeze-thaw of snow in that area caused major water incursions into the Sanctuary. We contracted G. B. Masonry, LLC to repair the outside brick work. Also included in the repair work was the tuckpointing needed to fix the numerous brick grout failures both inside and outside. The total cost was \$2670.

Replace the ancient hot water boiler

The old hot water boiler was installed when the church was built over 50 years ago. It is very inefficient. Bruce Johnson was able to get a super deal from Soderholm & Associates for a High Efficiency Combi boiler. The cost quoted was \$1800. The Combi boiler replaced the hot water heater and the old boiler. We should see a savings in our heating costs for that system. The installation costs were \$6772.17, bringing the total cost up to \$8572.17. A rebate from Xcel Energy was also requested. We should receive that rebate in December or January.

Flagpoles

The two flagpoles in the front of the church installed by the Boy Scout Troop had been damaged by a windstorm two years ago. It was agreed to replace them with sturdier telescoping flag poles. The total cost for the flagpoles was \$1,033. Bruce Johnson and Dave Burau removed the damaged flagpoles and installed the new ones.

New custom-built organ from Arnold Custom Organ Works

The old organ that we had is many decades old. I'm guessing it was purchased in the 1970's. Many parts in the organ were failing and repair parts are no longer available. William Mills researched the current market to find what's available. William found a suitable company to build us a custom-made organ which was installed, and it works great! The total cost for the new organ was \$11,372.

Many thanks to William. His expertise was invaluable. We could not have done it without him.

Security cameras

Two high resolutions cameras were installed late this Fall. One camera surveilled the garage. The second high-resolution camera records the traffic coming off Century into our parking lot. That camera has the resolution to read license plate numbers day or night. Assured Security's cost for the cameras and installation was \$2927.92. This completes the installation of all the security cameras for the security system.

All the items listed above, were paid for with funds from the Property Fund Project

Covid 19 mitigation systems added this year

Five auto-cleaning duct mounted air purifier units have been installed in the ductwork which feeds the Sanctuary, office, and Fellowship Hall. The units are manufactured by Global Plasma Solutions. The cost of the five units was \$3100. Bruce Johnson and Dave Burau installed the units which were somewhat challenging, but we figured it out pretty quickly.

Installed a plexiglass enclosure for the Secretary office. It's the Taj Mahal of Covid 19 enclosures! Thanks to Dean Libby designing and installing the enclosure.

Purchased a disinfecting fogger for use before and after in-house services as well as when other groups use the facility.

Acknowledgements

A special thanks to Larry Goplen mowing and trimming the church grounds **all summer!** It always looked wonderful.

Thanks to everyone keeping the shrubs trimmed, parking lot weed free, dealing with pesky bees under the sidewalk, maintaining the parking lot signage, landscaping and the list goes on.

David Burau
Property Committee

Service Ministry

Committee Members: Dorothy Anderson, Rosie Flannigan, Lori Libby, Mary Kay Meisner, Deb Seyfer, Jan Stiles

* **January** - “Undies Sunday” began the year of helping others. Church members donated socks, underwear, shirts, and pants for Cowern Elementary School staff to have available for students’ needs. The donations were supplemented with items purchased using a Thrivent Action Card. On delivery day, staff revealed they had just inventoried what they had available and were deciding what they would need to purchase.

* **February** - “Caring Hearts Supplies Drive Homeless People” is an annual effort to collect non-prescription medications (Advil, Band-Aids, cough syrup), as well as personal hygiene and personal care items (lip balm, lotion, deodorant, soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste). Good quality white socks were purchased using a Thrivent Action Card. Collected items are made available to clinics and street outreach groups serving homeless children, youth and adults.

* **March** - The emphasis was on “Food Shelf Month.” The Governor’s shelter-in-place order (eff. March 16) interrupted the donations routinely made by church members. Once the North St Paul Area Food Shelf reopened, people dropped donations at that site. The church’s Little Library (on 40th Street) was divided into the Little Library (lower shelf) and the Little Pantry (upper shelf), for non-perishable food. Both shelves continue to have regular use. During the winter months, the non-perishable items cannot include anything in containers that can burst open when the item freezes (soups, bottles of juice, cans / jars / single-serve packets of fruit or pudding).

* **July & August** - The annual “School Tools” drive was held, to collect vital school supplies for students at Cowern. Backpacks were purchased with the funds from a Thrivent Action Card. With an uncertain format for the start of the 2020-2021 school year, the Committee provided all collected items to the school, but did not pre-fill the 21 backpacks. Ms Kyliah Thompson, the new social worker at Cowern, provided families with backpacks and supplies needed to start their school year.

* **November & December** - The “Giving Tree” tradition continued in 2020 but had to be reimagined due to the pandemic. Instead of brightly colored packages containing items from wish lists, most Giving Tree recipients received a mix of gift cards. Three Thrivent Action Cards and the many, MANY cards from church members were used to support families through Washington County Foster Care Services; Kinship Family Support Services (LSS); and families / individuals connected with House of Prayer. In total, we had at least \$2,500 to enable us to brighten the holidays of 8 adults, 16 children (ages 2-17), and numerous foster children.

THANK YOU! Your caring nature and generosity benefit many. God bless you!

Woman of Hope

What is Women of Hope?

As a community of women, created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to:

Grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

God's Blessings! to all the creative and generous women at House of Prayer! **Thank You!**

Women of Hope plays a key role in hospitality-related ministry at House of Prayer by maintaining the kitchen, including stocking it with supplies; and additional service to the church and its members as needs arise, providing refreshments for church functions not covered by any other ministry. Hospitality commitments included hosting three funeral receptions; serving lunch for the Annual Congregational Meeting; beverages and supplies for Sunday social hour; Lenten Soup Suppers; Confirmation Day reception; and dinners for First Communion training and New Member Orientation. WOH funds come from family donations for funeral receptions; free-will offerings for Sunday social hour, Lenten Soup Suppers, and other church events; plus, the annual Bake Sale. WOH funds support efforts within the church, in the local community, and internationally. (note: the above listed would be a normal year/pre-pandemic times.)

Knitting Ministry / Yarn Craft at HOP would normally meet on (Wednesday, 9:30 am) and produces prayer shawls; lap robes; warm and colorful hats, mittens, and scarves; and baby blankets. The baby blankets were gifts for baptisms. (due to covid, this group is not meeting)

Disbursement of funds

The Women of House of Prayer have disbursed their treasury to many worthwhile projects such as: Love Fund, Sheridan's Project, Women of Ifunda, Tanzania; Ifunda Scholarships, kitchen supplies, ELCA dues and convention delegate fees and offerings.

Financial Report

Beginning Balance, December 31, 2019	\$2,617.27
Income	\$ 649.75
Expenses	\$ 337.83
Ending Balance, December 31, 2020	\$2,929.19

Officers in 2020: Deb Breister (President), Linda Siluk (Vice President), Julie Burau (Treasurer), Irene Kube (Secretary), Lori Libby (Purchasing), Rosemary Jensen (Historian), and Bev Buan (Hospitality Chair).

W O H CONTACTS:

Deb Breister 651-233-6771 327djbc10@centurylink.net

Linda Siluk 651-770-1355 clindasiluk30@aol.com

Irene Kube 651-739-1450 gikube@hotmail.com

Music Ministry Report

This year has been difficult. Without exception our Music Ministry has been deeply impacted and for the most part, has come to a halt. But as always, the song of the Church goes on. We have been fortunate to be able to try several different forms of online worship and have worked to provide appropriate music for these services. Thanks to all our music staff we have been able to provide a truly worshipful experience in our sanctuary, in our congregation's homes, and even in our parking lot. It has not been easy or smooth sailing but thanks to the work of our musicians and all of those who have helped us with the technical aspects of streaming worship, we have made it a success.

We have also been able, this year, to raise capital for and purchase a new organ for our sanctuary space. The new instrument is a custom-built console from Arnolds Custom Organs and is a three-manual console that runs the Hauptwerk - Virtual Pipe Organ computer program. The new organ allows us variation in sound we have never been able to have before. It has been a huge asset in enriching our worship over this time of the pandemic.

We have greatly missed our HOP Musicians, our Handbell Choir, our Sanctuary Choir, and our Funeral Choir. The pandemic simply will now allow for these groups to meet together to make music. When the vaccine is widely distributed, we look forward to being able to sing and play together again.

Though we cannot make music together we are working to be able to do Virtual Choir recordings. These recordings mean that we can at least join our voices digitally. Our first effort for Thanksgiving was a success and we look forward to creating a few more for the Christmas Season.

My final thoughts in summation are these: I want to thank every musician at House of Prayer that has participated with us and helped us to be able to really provide something meaningful to our congregation. We as the musicians of House of Prayer want to extend our gratitude to the people who work with our sound and technology to make our worship possible. We also want to thank the tremendous support that we have received from our congregation as we work hard to try to provide a meaningful worship experience for everyone. Your comments and support have helped us make it through a very difficult time and as we are separated from those we love and from the experience of making music together that leads us all into worship.

Re-Entry Team – HOP COVID 19 Preparedness Plan

In June, a Re-Entry team was established for the purpose of developing a plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that at House of Prayer we maintain and implement strategies and procedures to protect and preserve the health of our members, staff, and visitors. The entire church will have an ongoing role in implementing this plan to mitigate transmission of COVID-19 within our facility and our community.

This plan has been developed with church staff and by a dedicated small group of members meeting via Zoom, as well as utilizing results of a survey of the entire church membership. Guidance and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Minnesota Department of Health, and Minnesota Governor's guidance have been incorporated into the plan as appropriate.

Team members are: Barb Lind, Chairperson, Tom Gualdoni, Anna Streeper R.N. (Consulting Nurse; North Memorial Hospital, Covid19 Floor), Joyce Klomp, Irene Kube , Alex Odegard , Dienne Wyland ,Rev. Dan Streeper, Rev. Dr. Nick Albasha (Pastor, Bethel), Florence Kerubo (Bethel Treasurer), Dick Nyaosi (Bethel Elder)

The Plan is built around successive phases for re-opening the facility, ranging from everyone staying home, staff returning, drive-in worship, small group gatherings, limited indoor worship and finally fully re-opening. The time frame of each phase is dependent upon the spread of the disease and the successful mitigation factors used to control and eventually stop the spread.

Sign-in forms for people and groups utilizing the facility have been developed and are in the building, cleaning expectations and instructions for each group using the building are in each groups' sign-in booklet, signage is displayed, and hand sanitizing and cleaning supplies are in various areas in the building. A floor plan has also been developed for the sanctuary when limited worship is permitted.

With a vaccine(s) now developed and usage beginning, let's continue praying for an end to this pandemic soon, as well as praying for all those who have been and are currently affected by the enormous toll it has taken.

We eagerly and prayerfully look forward to the time when we can all gather and worship together as a church family in our House of Prayer Church building.

Respectfully Submitted, Barb Lind – Chairperson.

Pastor's State of the Congregation Report

Greetings Brothers and Sisters of House of Prayer,

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and will give birth, and they will call the child Emmanuel... a name that means, ‘God is with us!’” – Matthew 1:23 TFET

I write you on the afternoon of Christmas Eve, amid the anticipation of celebrating the coming of the baby Jesus. As I reflect upon this past year, I am not certain I have the words to describe it. Today's scripture simply jumped off the page at me today. During a year when we have had to isolate from one another... the words “God IS with us!” reach deep into my heart.

It has been a difficult year for sure. A year that began with great promise. We were planning for the development of a 5-year plan for ministry “Vision 2020” with the hope that we would involve the entire congregation in creating a plan to move forward with our ministry. The world however, had different plans as we all are too aware.

And so, we have spent the past 9 months adapting to whatever the world has thrown at us. And God has been with us! As I report to you about the State of House of Prayer looking forward to year 2021. Personally, I have never been more excited about our prospects for ministry. God continues to bless all that we do. Worship attendance is up overall. Surprise! We have more people worshipping with us each week on-line than we have had worship live in our sanctuary on a Sunday morning. This means that we are reaching people who might never have set foot inside the building at House of Prayer. God is at work! And, we are now capable of broadcasting our worship services and education classes on line going forward. This is something we will now always do as part of our regular ministry opportunities!

I want to personally thank our Worship Music and Tech teams for their creativity and flexibility so that we have been able to continue to provide regular weekly worship. As Paul says in Romans 8:39 “nothing can separate us from the love of God...” and nothing will keep us from worshipping and doing God's work in the world. To make this happen the Council has approved the hiring of a Technical Consultant to help us with this additional production. You will hear more about that position as part of our budget conversation. Mike Nelson has been filling this role.

Our service ministry remains strong. Please see Deb Seyfer's report on many of these projects. In addition, we have been contacted by Castle Elementary and they will be utilizing House of Prayer as a Tutoring site for students from the apartments across the street who could use additional learning support. So, our community support of local education efforts continues to grow, and we continue to feed many in need of food both at Cowern and at the North St. Paul Food shelf.

While you have been worshipping from home, we replaced our building boiler and have made several other minor building repairs and upgrades so that when we return, we will continue to

have a healthy and safe environment for worship and ministry. Please see the property committee and Bruce Johnson's report as President for more details here.

You will also hear great news from Scott Hults our congregation treasurer. We have done a wonderful job with giving this year covering all our expenses and leaving us in a solid financial position as we move into 2021. In particular, please notice the amount of charitable giving House of Prayer has done with our Sister congregation in Tanzania, the Love Fund and so many other areas. Thank you, God, for your many blessings to us and for our ability to share them with others! Loving God and Loving People!

So, as we move into 2021, it is very difficult to project what it will bring. And yet, we continue to faithfully do God's work knowing that God IS with us as we do! As our Vision 2020 prayer says: *"Amazing God, We ask for your guidance to develop a clear 20/20 vision for House of Prayer ministry. Help us to recognize and understand your will, and to share these insights with each other. Empower and energize each of us to use our gifts to accomplish your mission – In Christ's name we pray, Amen!"*

Knowing and trusting that God will make it possible for us to come back together to worship -in person- very soon. This year, please consider how God might be able to put your gifts to good use for ministry EVEN NOW! Consider at least one new way that you might serve God and serve people at House of Prayer, in the Oakdale community, in your own neighborhood, or even as far away as Tanzania.

I personally look forward to seeing you all in the Sanctuary again very soon and to finishing the work we started on setting our House of Prayer ministry priorities for 2021 and beyond.

In the meantime, God's health and blessings to you, and remember that God loves you and IS with us in everything we do!

In Christ's loving service,

Pastor Dan Streeper

Serving as Pastor of House of Prayer Lutheran Church, Oakdale MN.

Love Fund Financial Report

Love Fund Report

2019 Year End Balance (Bank Balance)	\$ 2,686.21
2020 Adjustment from Love Fund Designated/HOP General (01/04/2020)	\$ 1,030.00
2020 Donations throughout the year (credits)	<u>\$12,572.00</u>
Totals	\$16,288.54
2020 Disbursements / Assistance for those in need (debits)	<u>\$ 6,115.32</u>
2020 Total Account Balance	\$10,173.22
2020 Love Fund Designated–Held for NK Legal Fees	<u>\$ 3,000.00</u>
2020 Year Ending Available Balance (as of 12/31/2020)	\$ 7,173.22

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” Mark 11: 24 God, continues to answer our prayers and requests to help those in need in our community. And this year, especially during a worldwide pandemic, I am reminded of Acts 4:32 where Luke tells us that early Christ followers *‘Shared everything they had and held it in common,’* so that those in need could be provided for. This is what you are doing through this fund, caring for one another and your community! Let me commend everyone who contributed to this fund for your generosity!

For those who do not know, this fund is used to help anyone in need of emergency assistance when all other options have been exhausted. The money is gifted with no-strings attached, and people may pay the money back if they are able in the future. But it is not required.

This year, the amount of assistance provided through this fund was the largest ever during my time at House of Prayer! Thank you!

This year we helped over 35 people and families from both inside and outside House of Prayer. Together we provided food, gas, and rental assistance. We helped to cover medical and dental expenses, as well as, childcare, moving, and auto repair expenses. As many of you know we also aided Nikki Kazeem with legal assistance as part of her Asylum and Immigration process. A large portion of the current balance is designated to help with additional legal fees for Nikki. This year nearly \$2500.00 came in to help Betty Tuolee recover after the fire in her apartment complex. She wants to make sure you all know how grateful she is for your generous assistance! In addition, the Council voted to donate \$500.00 to the Saint Paul Area Synod to assist with local foods shelves that have been in need during this pandemic year.

Thank you deeply for your generosity.

In Christ’s service,

Pastor Dan Streeper

2021 Budget Presentation and Vote

Addendum to follow.

Biographies for Council Positions

Bio for Bruce Johnson

• Resident of Oakdale since 1989. • Previous church affiliation - North Heights Lutheran, Roseville Lutheran and Saint Andrews Lutheran. • Member of House of Prayer since 2008. • President of church council 2019 - 2020.

Bio for Beverly Buan

I have been a member of House of Prayer since 2009. I have greatly enjoyed not only the members but the ways that the members help in the community. I have been an officer of the Women of Hope and also Secretary of the Council for the past two years. I have been the Fellowship Chairperson for several years which includes funerals, receptions, first communion suppers, pot lucks and assisted as needed with Sunday School.

Professionally I was in the Real Estate business for almost 25 years most of them as a Closing Account Executive helping people buy or sell their homes.

Bio for Sebastian Schoonover

I'm 39 years old. I have 4 wonderful children (Tyrell, Hailey, Kayla and Donovan) with my significant other Lynn Pariseau. My family and I have been attending House of Prayer since 2006. We live in Wisconsin but still travel in because we like HOP so much. I have volunteered at numerous events at HOP and try to make it a place that other people like as much as we do.

Bio for Margie Kobow

I grew up on the Eastside and attended Johnson High School. I went to the U of M for Dental Assistant and worked as an Office Manager for 40 years in an orthodontic office. I retired in January of 2020. I was married in 1971 and had two boys. My oldest was killed in a car accident in 2007 and my youngest is married with two boys (Evan and Dylan). My grandchildren are my world. I met Alan in 2003 at Alfred Murray Dance and we got married in 2008. We both love ballroom dancing and traveling. My favorite trips were Italy, Oregon, Vancouver and Banff. We have also taken several cruises. This Sept. we went to Utah and the Grand Canyon. I enjoy walking, biking, and hiking in the state and national parks. I love nature. We joined HOP in 2018 and love the people and the music. P.S. I am getting a mini dachshund this Spring, can't wait.

Bio for Bill Ham

Julie and I have been members of the House of Prayer congregation since 2012. We live in the Hayden Heights neighborhood of St Paul and I am serving a 2nd term on the church council. Previously, I have been involved helping with our pig roast/community fest. Currently, I am working very hard at being retired.

2021 House of Prayer Council Elections Ballot

These are the positions that are currently open.

Vote for 1:

President (2 years): **Bruce Johnson** _____

Vote for 1:

Secretary (2 year): **Beverly Buan** _____

Vote for 2 At Large Members:

At Large #1 (2 years): **Sebastian Schoonover** _____

At Large #2 (2 years): **Margie Kobow** _____

Vote for 1 At Large Member to complete a term:

At Large #3 (1 year): **Bill Ham** _____
(To Complete Steve Lutz's term)

**Bishop Lull's Annual Report to Congregations
January 2021**

2020 Annual Report of the Synod

by Bishop Patricia Lull | January 2021

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

Dear Partners in Ministry,

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours in God's service –
Bishop Patricia Lull

Notes

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OPENING LITURGY

LITANY

L. O God of all power and love ...

C. ... we give thanks for your unfailing presence.

L. O God of all power and love, we give thanks ...

C. ... for the hope you provide in times of uncertainty and loss.

L. O God of all power and love ...

C. ... we ask you to send your Holy Spirit to enkindle in us your holy fire.

L. O God of all power and love, we ask you ...

C. ... to revive us to live as Christ's body in the world.

L. O God of all power and love, we ask to be ...

C. ... a people who pray, worship, learn, break bread, share life, heal neighbors, bear good news, seek justice, rest and grow in the Spirit.

L. O God of all power and love, we ask you to be with us ...

C. ... wherever and however we gather. Unite us in common prayer and send us in common mission, that we and the whole creation might be restored and renewed, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Build Us Up, Lord



1 Build us up, Lord, build us up; set in
2 Build us up, Lord, build us up; let our



us a strong foun - da - tion. Lead us to do your
lives re - flect your glo - ry. Cast a - way all our



ho - ly will; form and shape your new cre - a - tion.
doubts and fears; help us tell the world your sto - ry.



Build us up, Lord, build us up; as we
Build us up, Lord, build us up; help us



guide and teach each oth - er, help us to share your love with the
bear good fruit for you, Lord, give us vi - sion and keep us



world: ev - 'ry sis - ter, ev - 'ry broth - er.
sure. Grant us faith that's stead - fast and true.



Refrain
Grow - ing in Christ, we plant seeds for the king - dom; we fol - low in



faith what's be - gun! Lord, set in our hearts the pow'r of your



word to spread the news of your Son!

Text: Mark Glaeser, b. 1956, and Donna Hanna, b. 1952
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In the early verses of Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul writes to the Christians in Ephesus, a city on the Aegean Sea at the mouth of a river and at the intersection of three trading routes. The letter was written about ten years after the church had started. During the early years of this congregation, Jews and Gentiles from several ethnicities and nationalities had come together to form “one body.” Paul was aware that they had done well and commended them for their faith and love.

The word “one” appears more than seven times in the first four verses. This reflects the importance Paul gave to being called into the “unity of Christ.” He wanted to note that, although many of the church members came from far off, there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” This oneness reflects God’s gift of reconciliation in Christ.

A second emphasis from Paul was that, as believers, they were to “bear with one another in love.” This would require humility, gentleness and patience as each of them practiced their faith. It would require tolerance to “maintain unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

A third emphasis was that each person had been given gifts by God and that these gifts were given to increase the whole. Because the Ephesian church was a young congregation and its members were just beginning in their faith journey, their understandings were often tossed to and fro. But as they grew in faith, each person contributed to building up the body of Christ.

The fourth and final emphasis was that by “speaking the truth in love,” each person must grow into Christ. This means taking time to learn about one another and their gifts. Knowing these gifts, we can do God’s work both within and beyond the faith community. When there are decisions to make or relationships to reconcile, we know to begin with prayer and reflection, always desiring to speak the truth in love — not for our own benefit but for God’s glory, that we might become more complete.

As our members and friends gather today, whether face-to-face or online, we are reminded of our calling into “unity in Christ.” We come from many places and work in many contexts, and yet we recognize “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”

Whether new to a worshiping community or further along the journey, we realize that humility, gentleness and patience are required both in the good times and especially in times of uncertainty and struggle. God wants us to be more complete through our work. Christ provides the way. The Holy Spirit is with us for guidance and courage. Each of us has been given the gifts to be complete, and through our faithfulness we will grow stronger and work together as one body.

LET US PRAY: LORD, LET THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL DWELL IN US DEEPLY. MAY WE EMBRACE THE RECONCILING POWER OF ONENESS WITH CHRIST. MAY THIS ONENESS GUIDE OUR CONGREGATION AS WE LIVE INTO THE NEW REALITIES OF THESE TIMES. AS WE MEET NEW PARTNERS IN MINISTRY, MAY WE TAKE TIME TO GET TO KNOW THEM WITH PATIENCE, HUMILITY AND LOVE. HELP US TO SEE HOW SHARING OUR GIFTS WILL MAKE YOUR WORK EASIER AND MORE FULFILLING WHILE BRINGING ALL OF US CLOSER TO CHRIST. MAY THE BLESSINGS YOU GIVE EACH DAY STRENGTHEN US TO A LIVING, DARING CONFIDENCE IN YOUR GRACE. AMEN.