

St. Luke Lutheran Church



109 Oak Ave., Ithaca, NY 14850
2020 Annual Report
May 2, 2021

The Rev. Laurie Carson, Pastor
Vicar Hieraal Osorto

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Pastor's Report
Pastor Laurie Carson

{The Lord} said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."
2 Corinthians 12.9

The author of this verse, Paul, had been asking God to take away the "thorn in his side." We don't know what that "thorn" was; it may have been a disease or something else that caused him distress. Eventually Paul came to realize that it kept him from getting too full of himself. It caused him to continually remember that he was doing God's work, not his own.

Throughout this past year, we have been continually reminded that we are doing God's work, not our own. Even as we were in isolation, struggling to make it through each day in weird circumstances, the people of St. Luke continued to pray, reach out, stay connected, feed and clothe neighbors far and near, and support the ministry of this congregation.

We've also come back again and again to the fact that God's grace is sufficient for us. Things may not be as they were, but we are enough. The Gospel is being shared, and the risen Christ is with us.

We grieve those who have died. We lift in prayer those who need healing. We hope for a time when things feel a bit more "normal." We take what we've learned this year into the future.

A recent text exchange about this past year went like this: "We held our heads above water and managed to get this far." "Yeah. We survived a year of isolation. That's a solid milestone."

Some may complain that it was a "wasted" year, but I beg to differ. We cared for the neighbor and trusted God. Sometimes that is enough. Maybe the take away is that, always, that is enough.

I think that a giant "Thank you" letter is appropriate here. Forgive me if I leave anyone out.

Thank you to:

- Michelle Gray, Tam Devlen, and Jim Hedlund for caring for the building when it was empty of activity.
- Council members, for meeting more often and longer than is "normal," holding sacred conversation, and making some tough decisions along the way
- Erik Kibelsbeck and Vicar HieraId for helping us to jump right into the world of Zoom, and for tapping into their connections so we could start webcasting from the church building when the time was right
- Andy Antal and Nicole Nelson for volunteering each week, helping to be sure the tech is in order
- Confirmation mentors for keeping Confirmands connected to St. Luke
- Confirmands for spending that much more time in online gatherings
- The kids who participate in Kokoa Klatch each week, and the adults who help make it happen
- Erik and Vicar HieraId for being awesome colleagues and support for me

- Erik for leading pandemic music with such skill
- Musicians for recording, sending back, singing with masks, and all that's involved in worship music these days
- Readers, both oldsters and newbies, who have taken the risk to read over Zoom
- The prayer chain, as they hold confidential matters in prayer
- Everyone who dropped off food and hats/gloves/mittens for in-gatherings to help our neighbors
- All who cooperate when entering the building by signing in, wearing masks, respecting distance
- Everyone who sends me notes, flowers, cards, e-mails, etc. They keep me going
- Vicar HieraId for holding Campus Ministry together, on top of a continually increasing workload at IC and a study load that's out of this world
- All who are being patient as we work through the details of a safe return to in-person gatherings
- And all the people who will come to mind after I submit this

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Laurie Carson

MEMBERSHIP SUMMARY for 2020

<u>Membership</u>	<u>BAPTIZED</u>	<u>CONFIRMED</u>
Members at the end of 2010	919	650
Members at the end of 2011	935	722
Members at the end of 2012	943	725
Members at the end of 2013	949	729
Members at the end of 2014	958	735
Members at the end of 2015	955	730
Members at the end of 2016	957	730
Members at the end of 2017	957	730
Members at the end of 2018	967	740
Members at the end of 2019	965	744

Members received during 2020

By baptism of children	0	0
By baptism of adults	1	1
By affirmation of faith	0	4
By transfer from ELCA congregations	0	0
By transfer from other Lutheran congregations	0	0
From non-Lutheran congregations	0	0
Statistical Adjustment	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total members received this year	0	0
 Baptized members who were confirmed in 2020	 +1	 +5
TOTAL		

Members removed during 2020

	7-	7-
By death	7	7
By transfer to other ELCA congregation	0	0
By transfer to other Lutheran. congregation	0	0
To non-Lutheran congregation	0	0
For other reasons & statistical adjustment	0	0
Total members removed this year	-7	7

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP END OF 2020	959	742
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<u>Worship attendance</u> (weekly ave.)	*2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
AVERAGE FOR YEAR	<i>*(online)</i> 90	86	82	88	105	170	175	170	170	165
8:12 started August	<i>*(on-site)</i> 86	10.5	13	15						

Church Council Members and Committee Chairs

Office **2020 – September 2021**

Church Council

Chairperson of Council	Don Tennant
Vice Chair	Amit Patel
Treasurer	Jim Hedlund
Vice-Treasurer	Roland Bonawitz
Secretary	Beverly Dodici
Member at Large	Janelle Alvstad-Mattson
Member at Large	Sarah Linfors
Member at Large	Jay Muenzen
Student Member (1 year term)	Sophie Sparrow
Seat shared by	Jay Muenzen
	Linda Webster

Chairpersons of Standing Committees

Campus Ministry	Sonja Meberg & Kyra Savard Graeb
Congregational Life	Linda Muckstadt and Susan Wohlhueter
Finance	Jack Muckstadt
Nominating	Neil Mattson
Parish Education	Heather Patel & Christine Muenzen
Property	Matt Kline
Social Missions	Carol LaBorie
Stewardship	Brad Wendel
Worship and Arts	Diane Conneman

**Annual Report
Campus Ministry
Pastor Laurie Carson**

Campus Ministry took new forms this year:

- A tremendous outpouring of food for the IC food pantry
- Offering individuals safe, isolated places to work and study in the building
- Storing the belongings of students who had to leave town quickly when Cornell closed last spring
- “Care boxes” for campus-bound IC students
- Vicar HieraId shared leadership of Bible and book studies with students, deftly guiding spiritual formation with these young adults
- Pastor Laurie provided leadership for the memorial service of a Cornell student
- Both Pastor Laurie and Vicar HieraId have been involved in Cornell United Religious Works (CURW) and ELCA LuMin

We are discussing ways to safely share “Study Hours” treats with students in May.

As campus ministry colleagues around the country meet via Zoom, we’re sharing the hopes and dreams that we have for the fall. We’re also realizing that, essentially, we’ll be starting from scratch. That is both a challenge and an opportunity for Campus Ministry in 2021.

Annual Report
Congregational Life Committee
Susan Wohlhueter and Jo Ann Ekdahl, Co-Chairs

Shrove Tuesday celebration through the St. Luke website.

Pastor Laurie Carson began by telling the history and present celebration of Shrove Tuesday.

Music Director, Erik Kibelsbeck played several joyful recordings of parade music including one of the Ithaca College Jazz Ensemble's rendition of "When the Saints Come Marching In".

Several members of the congregation explained their food celebration including types of pancakes.

It was an enjoyable 40 minutes of exchanging ideas and music.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Wohlhueter and Jo Ann Ekdahl
Congregational Life co-chairs

Annual Report 2020
Finance Committee
Steven W. Magacs

Budget

The committee looked upon the upcoming year 2021 as a reset of 2020 as originally envisioned. Meaning, the programs and expenses imbued in the budget for the year 2020 that never had a chance of being fulfilled due to the pandemic lockdown could get another chance in 2021. The 2021 budget therefore looks very much the same as that of 2020. The committee did not make any predictions on when live, in-sanctuary, in-person services would resume along with our programs. The 2021 budget therefore presents the best-case scenario of the church returning to normal for the full year.

The 2021 budget also does not reflect any positive ramifications deriving from the \$1.3 million gift that was received after the 2021 budget was drawn and presented to Council for approval. Over the course of the past five years at least, the committee has contemplated the options and accounting procedures to follow in fund management, hypothetically, were St Luke Lutheran ever to be the recipient of such sizeable largesse. In this new (for us) financial reporting territory the treasurers and committee will be making accounting decisions in 2021 mindful of the donor's wishes.

Investment portfolio

The committee reviewed the church's diversified portfolio of stocks, mutual funds and index funds. 17% of our portfolio is in stocks which produced a 2.4% yield in 2020; 25% in exchange-traded and closed-end funds, yielding 3.9%; 18% in mutual funds, yielding 1.9%; and 39% held in cash. We saw dividend and interest income of \$8,994.

Audit

Upstate New York Synod requires an annual audit of our financial books. I am performing the audit this spring, verifying that our financial house is in order. Records are organized and well maintained. Bank statements and internal financial reports are easily retrieved for analysis.

Our treasurers

It is our treasurers, Jim Hedlund and Roland Bonawitz, who keep our records organized and well maintained. The committee appreciates Jim and Roland's nimbleness in a time of drastic change and especially to their attentiveness to our meeting the requirements for emergency government financial assistance, specifically the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

Respectfully submitted by
Steven W. Magacs

Annual Report
Music at St. Luke Lutheran Church
Erik Kiblesbeck, Music Director

“Re-imagining” might be the word of the year, as we been doing primarily online worship for over twelve months now. I believe in the Lutheran tenet that the voice of the assembly is the primary musical expression, and my main focus has been to facilitate that, even as the assembly is not physically assembled. My sincere thanks to those choir members who have faithfully recorded their voices along with the organ track I email them and sent it back to be digitally assembled so that the hymn and other service music might still be part of our service. We have begun recording some of these in person (masked and distanced) now as well. Truly choral anthems are difficult to achieve in the format, as well as being unsatisfying to produce. But we have had various folks create music nonetheless in simpler ways, and we appreciate those efforts all the more.

Finding myself at the nexus of worship and technology planning, I shepherded the design and implementation of our webcasting equipment. An ever-evolving set of parameters has meant it has not been a dull process, but hopefully it is serving the needs of worship in these times. Deep thanks to Andy Antal for massive amounts of work on implementing this and for running the services along with Nicole Nelson and our staff webcasters Morgan Volk in the fall and Peter Jensen in the spring.

Music at St. Luke also re-imagined things, with a new Youtube channel featuring an online Bastille Day video, a video about the innards of the organ, Jeff Snedeker’s recital on his chamber organ, and a livestream of Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* in Lent. We *still* look forward to a concert by Princeton University organist Eric Plutz, celebrating Louis Vierne’s 151st birthday year (was supposed to be 150, but alas...), and have high hopes for the Bastille Day concert and a full fall.

At the intersection of *Music at St. Luke* and the church itself a new opportunity presented itself, with the offering of a non-concert series, the Wednesday night Compline services. These have been on the *Compline from St. Luke Ithaca* You Tube channel most weeks from 8:30-8:55 p.m. A distanced vocal quartet has dipped into the monastic tradition of fixed and rotating chants, with a piece of reflective music for voices and an organ voluntary included. This is a fully sung prayer service intended to connect beyond time and place. I hope to make this a hybrid in-person and online series with a fuller choral ensemble going forward.

Respectfully submitted by,
Erik Kiblesbeck, Music Director

Annual Report
Parish Education Committee
Heather Patel, Christine Muenzen, and Pastor Laurie Carson, Co-chairs

Cross Generational Advent Event: This went virtual this year, with families receiving packets of craft supplies, advent calendars, and devotions via the Masked Pastor Express. Children and families gathered via Zoom for fellowship and creative time before church.

Proclamation “2020 Style”: Our children and families flexed their creative muscles and diverse talents to create a wonderful retelling of the Christmas story. Parents helped their children submit their own interpretation of the Nativity to be displayed while the Confirmands told us all about Christ’s birth, in their own words. It also featured musical performances by many of our youth.

Kokoa Klatch for Kids: Church School continued to meet via Zoom before the service, for a Bible Story and lots of chatter.

Catechetics: The confirmands have been continuing to meet (in person or online). A large part of this ministry has been meeting regularly with mentors, either in person or online as everyone is comfortable.

Confirmands include: Claudia Carrillo, Adam (Zeke) Gossen, Grace Kitch, Nellia Mattson, Faith Quigee, Natalie Muenzen, Mary Dewalt, Keira Hektor, Anabel Parz

Thank you to mentors Monica Vakiner, Nicole Nelson, Anne Gossen, Sonja Meberg, Joan Godwin, Heather Patel, Janelle Alvstad-Mattson, Christine Muenzen, and Kayla Mosebrook.

Masked Pastor Express: The Masked Pastor Express delivered bags with Bible-related lessons and activities (and, of course, goodies) several times during the year.

First Communion: The 2021 First Communion group will be meeting outdoors in May 2021 with Pastor Laurie. In this group are: Celeste Campbell, Hravn McNamara-Kelleher, Hannah Patel, and Madeleine Patel.

Adult Forum: Over the course of several weeks during the summer of 2020, several adults shared in a study of the Lutheran understanding of Holy Communion.

Summer Plans: We’re hopeful to be able to plan more consistent outdoor fellowship opportunities this summer, as we are able.

Respectfully submitted by,

Heather Patel, Christine Muenzen, and Pastor Laurie Carson
Co-chairs of Parish Education Committee

Annual Report
Property Committee (Building Care)
Don Tennant, Council Vice Chair, Property Committee Liaison

This past year the building has had little use but has required big cleaning and Covid related entry protocols for staff and visitors. Stations were set up for masking, hand sanitizers, contact tracing sign in sheets, etc. Following CDC guidelines (and beyond) the main sanctuary has been used for Zoom Church Services, some limited musical activities, and a live but spaced confirmation service. The lack of ventilation has prevented the use of the lower level (eg Fellowship Hall). To mitigate this we purchased two large (and noisy) HEPA Air Purifiers which will allow us to meet the recommended air turnover rates in that space in a pinch.

The roof has also been a focal point this year as bats appeared in the church. Inspection revealed some major holes and generally disrepair of the sloped roofs on the entire building. The flat portion of the roof, however, seemed more serviceable. Council therefore endorsed a plan to replace the sloped roof (~ 11,000 sq. ft). Thanks to Matt Kline and Tammy Devlen for arranging for several inspections and a slew of bids for the job. We recently signed a contract with Lakeside Roofing, a Kanga Roof installer, who will start work this summer. The bids were all over the place, but we were able to secure a price of \$87K, which includes full coverage of ice & water shield underlayment (Matt's suggestion) to assure a long leak-free future.

Jim Hedlund has kept us informed regarding the new construction taking place next door at 411-415 College Ave (CTB building). We experienced no damage from this project. But we were alerted that there will be another large project several doors away in the other direction at 121 Oak Ave. Jim has contacted the planning and development board and asked them to follow the same vibration monitoring protocol. They agreed to this stipulation.

In the coming months we will also be looking at replacing the circulation pumps on the main heating system and may be looking at some repair to the stonework under the wheelchair ramp. We will keep you posted.

Respectfully submitted by,
Don Tennant

Annual Report
Social Ministry Committee
Carol LaBorie, Chair

Our first project of the year was “Souper Sunday” and the Hunger Walk in February. We raised \$2,300 for the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard, and St. Luke’s members were very generous with food donations as well.

By mid-March, the pandemic forced cessation of all in-person activity. We met via Zoom teleconferencing to carry out our mission virtually. We continued our focus on food insecurity, encouraging congregational support of local and regional programs that included the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard, the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, Loaves and Fishes, and the Ithaca College and Cornell University food pantries. We also encouraged the congregation to assist with stocking the many Mutual Aid Tompkins blue food cupboards located throughout Tompkins County. Communication was done via the New Humanity newsletter and the weekly bulletins.

COVID-19 impacted our community greatly as businesses and services closed, and many people lost their jobs. There was and still is a great need for food assistance. Diane Conneman and Social Ministry coordinated a food drive for the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard, and with the help of Tammy Devlin and Michelle Gray, collected over 700 food items and won a Thrivent grant of \$500 for the Kitchen Cupboard. St. Luke also provided volunteers to assist with no-contact food distribution at the Kitchen Cupboard when scheduled. The Fill the Bus campaign for the Food Bank of the Southern Tier was cancelled due to the pandemic. \$150 that was not used for study hour snacks was donated to Loaves and Fishes, and the snacks that were stored in the church kitchen were donated to the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard, since study hours were cancelled. The remaining \$120 in the Social Ministry budget was donated to the Food Bank of the Southern Tier.

The Adopt-a-Student program moved to the virtual setting due to the pandemic, and there were no group dinners for students and adopted families during 2020. Study hours were also not held in 2020.

The Peace by Piece Quilters continued to work individually at home and also met outdoors when weather allowed to make quilts for Lutheran World Relief, producing 128 quilts.

Coffee Club is an opportunity for members of our congregation to purchase fair trade coffee, tea, chocolate, and olive oil. This benefits the growers by helping them earn a fair wage. Luke and Beth DeWalt, coordinators offered pickup and delivery of orders, although sales were sparse.

No in-person advocacy events such as postcard signings were held during 2020.

This year there was no tree to display our Mittens ‘n’ More donations, but thanks to Tammy Devlin and Michelle Gray and the generosity of our congregation we were able to collect 154 mittens, scarves, gloves, and hats that were delivered to Enfield Elementary school in January 2021 when they resumed in-person classes after being back to online instruction for a couple weeks before the holidays. We were pleased to hear from the new principal that there is a free food cupboard and refrigerator at the school, and that Enfield students will be included in the summer meal program.

Our committee would like to thank the congregation for your outstanding commitment to love your neighbors by supporting the Social Ministry programs.

“Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.” (Dr. Cornel West)

Respectfully submitted,
Carol LaBorie, Chair

Annual Report Report from the Treasurers

Report from the Treasurers: 2020 Annual Report and January – March 2021

2020 results: St. Luke's 2020 financial results are summarized and compared with 2019 in the table below. 2020 saw a surplus of precisely \$29 compared with a deficit of \$10,398 in 2019. Income was lower by \$25,569 while expenses were lower by \$35,996.

St. Luke Lutheran Church

2020-2019 comparison	2020 budget	2020 actual	2020 over /under	2020 % budget	2019 actual	2020 - 2019
Income						
Congregation offering	271,760	240,242	-31,518	88%	266,721	-26,479
Grants	13,360	13,860	500	104%	14,360	-500
Alumni, parent, other gifts	2,600	5,492	2,892	211%	3,456	2,036
Miscellaneous income	3,000	864	-2,136	29%	1,490	-626
Total income	290,720	260,458	-30,262	90%	286,027	-25,569
Expenses						
Staff	186,558	168,624	-17,934	90%	194,577	-25,953
Programs	16,520	8,423	-8,097	51%	16,634	-8,211
Office administration	22,591	14,359	-8,232	64%	19,808	-5,449
Property	34,650	37,623	2,973	109%	35,256	2,367
Benevolence	25,400	26,400	1,000	104%	25,150	1,250
Capital reserve	5,000	5,000	0	100%	5,000	0
Total expenses	290,719	260,429	-30,290	90%	296,425	-35,996
Surplus or deficit	1	29	28		-10,398	10,426

In somewhat more detail: member giving in 2020 was \$31,518 below budget and \$26,479 lower than in 2019. Grants were \$500 above budget because NLCM sent 13 month's grants instead of 12, but lower than 2019 because the Synod grant was reduced. Alumni were most generous. Miscellaneous income comes largely from building use contributions, which were negligible in 2020.

Staff expenses were below budget because we over-budgeted and were lower than 2019 because Pastor Bair retired in 2019. With no use of the building for more than nine months due to the pandemic, program expenses were substantially below budget, as detailed below. Administrative expenses for supplies, conferences for PLC and Vicar Heral, and the Sunday shuttle were below budget. Property expenses included the costs of sanitizing the building almost daily and \$9,610 costs for webcasting equipment.

We received substantial funds in 2020 from two unexpected sources. First, at the urging of Synod, we applied for and received a PPP "loan" in late spring. The purpose of these loans was to help businesses during the pandemic. The loan amount was based on two and a half months of 2019 expenditures for salaries and utilities. The loan was forgiven if a business spent its loan on salaries and utilities within a specified time. We did that, so our loan of \$37,500 was not repaid: free money. We did not need it in 2020. We expect to use it to cover part of the roof repair expense – see the final paragraph of this report.

Second, we received a gift of \$1,300,000 from an anonymous donor. Of this, \$50,000 could be used for operating expenses in 2020 and subsequently as needed. Nothing was

needed in 2020. The remaining \$1,250,000 is an endowment to provide income to St. Luke in perpetuity. The funds are invested in a separate Morgan Stanley account. Income from them can be used as needed for current expenses, but only as authorized by the donor.

The 2020 year-end balance in our Tompkins Trust checking account was \$119,242 and in our two Morgan Stanley investment accounts was \$1,513,350. We had no liabilities. The year-end combined liquid reserves of \$1,662,592 in these two accounts were \$1,383,126 higher than in 2019. Our Morgan Stanley investments produced a 2020 net gain of \$19,890 in the regular account and \$26,430 in the endowment account.

Programs 2020	budget	actual	over/under
Parish education	6,350	2,081	4,269
Worship & Arts	8,000	5,700	2,300
Congregational Life	1,000	174	826
Stewardship	75	0	75
Social Missions	270	270	0
Campus Ministry	825	197	628
Total	16,520	8,422	8,098

St. Luke has both “on-budget” and “off-budget” income and expenses. The on-budget income and expenses are reported previously: income from offering, alumni and parent gifts, and grants; expenses for staff, programs, administration, property, and benevolence. All the off-budget funds except Thanks and Memorial have a specific purpose and receive contributions designated for that purpose.

Descriptions of the major funds and their year-end balances follow.

Second Pastor fund: used for Pastor Laurie’s salary and benefits through July 2019, when these expenses moved to the regular budget. The remaining funds are held in reserve to cover pastoral expenses for an overlap of Pastor Laurie and a newly-called pastor.

balance 12/31/20: \$46,605

Friends of Music at St. Luke fund: to support musical events outside of worship services.

balance 12/31/20: \$2,370

Music fund: for singer and instrumentalist expenses exceeding the \$2,200 annual budget.

balance 12/31/20: \$15,175

Thanks and Memorial fund: for any purpose approved by Council; contributions from memorials and similar gifts, usually undesignated.

balance 12/31/20: \$37,661

Capital Reserve fund: for major unbudgeted building expenses; \$5,000 is added to the fund annually from regular income.

balance 12/31/20: \$9,885

Thrivent Choice: contributions from Thrivent designated by members, for quilting and social ministry.

balance 12/31/19: \$863

**St. Luke Lutheran Church
2021 March**

Final Income – actual	budget full year	budget thru March	actual thru March	over /under	% budget thru March
Congregation offering	277,242	69,311	61,006	-8,305	88%
Grants	14,360	3,590	1,500	-2,090	42%
Alumni, parent, other gifts	2,600	650	300	-350	46%
Miscellaneous income	2,000	500	298	-202	60%
Total income	296,202	74,051	63,104	-10,947	85%
Expenses					
Staff	194,027	48,507	43,639	-4,868	90%
Programs	16,520	4,130	920	-3,210	22%
Office administration	20,605	5,151	3,440	-1,711	67%
Property	34,650	8,663	6,764	-1,899	78%
Benevolence	25,400	6,350	7,000	650	110%
Capital reserve	5,000	1,250	1,250	0	100%
Total expenses	296,202	74,051	63,013	-11,038	85%
Surplus or deficit	0			91	

Pro-rated offering thru Mar			60,395	-8,915	87%
Pro-rated total income			48,157		65%
Pro-rated surplus or deficit			-14,856		

Programs	budget full year	budget thru March	actual thru March	over /under	% budget thru March
Parish education	6,350	529	273	-256	52%
Worship & Arts	8,000	667	1647	980	247%
Congregational Life	1,000	83	0	-83	0%
Stewardship	75	6	0	-6	0%
Social Missions	270	23	-1000	-1,023	-4444%
Campus Ministry	825	69	0	-69	0%
Total	16,520	1,377	920	-457	67%

The table above gives our 2021 financial results through March: an actual surplus of \$91. If we include only one-fourth of two large lump-sum contributions received by March 31 we have a pro-rated deficit of \$14,856.

There is no Synod grant income because the first installment, due in March, has not arrived. Program expenses are down as the building closure continues and are detailed in the second part of the table. Social Missions received a donation of \$1,000 with no stipulations on its use. Property and administrative expenses are down. Staff is under budget because some fringes are paid quarterly or annually.

The March 31 balance at our Tompkins Trust checking account was \$153,857 and our Morgan Stanley investments were worth \$1,588,736, up \$36,995 for the month.

We signed a contract with Lakeside, aka Kanga Roof, for roof repair at \$85,800. We have funds available to cover this expense. Work is expected in July, to take less than two weeks.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jim Hedlund, Chair

Roland Bonawitz, Vice Chair

Annual Report
Worship and Arts Committee
Diane Conneman, Chair

At best, this has been a different year in more respects than I want to review. Our first Committee meeting was on January 7, when we discussed and approved recognizing youth as Scouts and involving them in participating in the service. Then we approved a RIC Sunday the end of January as Council had challenged us to be more assertive since we are a Reconciling in Christ Congregation. Finally we decided since the cost of weekly flowers has not been covered by member donations, we would discontinue the use of flowers during the Lenten Season as a symbol of penitence. The number of lilies and poinsettias used for Easter and Christmas will be evaluated.

After that things began to change. We received guidelines for worship and distribution of Communion from our Synod, ELCA, and the Lutheran World Federation. We all wanted to have Communion as usual but knew that could not be. We had Zoom discussions and email exchanges. We explored options for continuing to meet at church and how to have communion safely. With the speed of Covid 19 and the increasing number of deaths, meeting at church was not possible. A re-entry Projection was written on May 1, 2020. It had guidelines for entering the church for very special reasons, the possibility of limited worship in July and more involvement in September which of course did not happen. We have had communion delivered to those requesting it in July, October and at Christmas, using prepackaged wine and bread. As I am writing this we have had communion available for Easter, 2021, and a small number of people went to the church for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Spring, 2020, we never expected to be worshipping via Zoom for this long.

We need to thank and share our appreciation all of our staff. Erik Kibelsbeck, gets an extra thank you for his work in enhancing our worship with recorded hymns sung by the choir, developing the Compline service and coordination of volunteers to be worship assistants and readers. He worked with Andy Antal to coordinate the technical side of worship. He recruited Morgan Volk and Peter Jensen, IC sound recording tech majors, to help, and Nicole Nelson is also part of this team.

A special thank you to our loyal volunteers who responded to Erik's requests for help. This includes Sophie Sparrow, Ev Nelson, Jeff Snedeker, Janelle Alvstad-Mattson, Nicole Nelson, Douglas Booth, Lauren Mossotti-Kline as Assisting Ministers. Dave Wohlhueter, Aara Edwards, Beverly Dodici, Sonja Nelson, Don Tennant, Patrice Pastore, Suzanne Snedeker, Mary Parz, Louise McGee, Rhonda Kitsch, Susan Hoskins, Nellia Mattson as Readers.

I want to end with a message that Pastor Laura Daly shared with us last spring:

God loves you wherever you are.
Your prayers count and are heard.
You are precious, beloved and indispensable.
Wherever you are and we are, the church is everywhere.
Proceed with caution out of love and concern
for all of God's children.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diane Conneman