



From Our President

I was recently texting with Eric, my college roommate. He currently serves as a pastor in a rural Western Wisconsin community. It was clear their experiences in Wisconsin are not much different than what we are experiencing in Arizona. Even for those with deep faith, these are tricky times as doubts and fears occasionally sneak their way into our thinking.

It was a typical work morning for both of us. By typical, I mean nose down in our computer screens. Eric was splitting his focus between his congregation and our conversation while my focus danced back and forth between texts and responding to work from my seventh graders. As we continued our texting conversation, we both found comfort in the words of the apostle Paul. Both of us made these New Testament references as we continued to share anecdotes, thoughts, and feelings.

I vividly remember a sermon he gave back in Bible College as part of a preaching elective that made question my own merit and preparedness for communion. That evening, I nearly stayed in my pew and didn't commune. His sermon was heavy on the law and sprinkled with Gospel. That was over 20 years ago.

I found it comforting that in this moment, he referenced Paul and the promises that come to believers. He referred to Romans 8:28 which states, "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." That's a definitive statement that new Roman Christians needed to hear but it's a message that means just as much today for those of us who have lived in Christ for decades. All things work together for the good for those who love God! Continue to love God and live in God's love. Good will come from this situation as long as we stay in that love.

Paul follows this up with these words: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor thing present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39) Take comfort in these words. While we don't know when when this situation will end, nothing of this world can separate us from God.

Remain steadfast. Be in the Word, be in prayer, be in contact with others via phone calls, emails, Zoom, Face Time, or whatever means you use. We have God's promises through Christ just as those believers in the early church.

~ Micah Swenson, Council President

Council Minutes from March 18, 2020

Attendance: Pastor Sharon, Donna Woodruff, Marcia Shanahan, Micah Swenson, Jan Graham, Dave Tjiemeland, Jim Converse, Sue Bro

Absent: Marie Parkinson

Call to Order: Micah called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m.

Devotions: Micah gave the devotions.

Correspondence: Thank you note from Lutheran Refugee Services for Spirit of Joy Lutheran church donation. Thank you note from the Navajo church in Northern Arizona.

Secretary Report: Council approved the report as submitted with no corrections.

Finance Report: Possible disruption in giving because of COVID 19. Decided the counters to check if members are bringing their giving/pledges to the church office and to count and deposit the funds. The Financial Reports were approved by the Council as presented.

Pastor's Report: February worship services each Sunday and Lenten services. 2 Assisting Ministers with a possible 3rd. February Religion and Science Lectures were successful. Attended 4 Clergy/Conference Meetings. The Anniversary celebration planning is continuing. Eleanor Bohm Memorial was on February 29, 2020. Social Technology will be put into use during the 2 to 3 weeks the church will be practicing Social Distancing. Suggestions made to celebrate Easter the first Sunday after Social Distancing. One week vacation from June 22 thru June 29, 2020. Continuing Ed 2020 is scheduled from July 23 thru August 10, 2020 for the Germany for Luther Tour. Bike Trip will be in conjunction with the Tour. Three Sunday's will be covered by supply Pastor.

Education: Videos will be shared at the end of Spring season or in the Fall because of the COVID 19 social distancing.

WELCA: The High Country Conference is scheduled for April 25, 2020. There is a possibility this conference maybe canceled or rescheduled.

OutReach/InReach: The Cost of a Banner will be investigated, to be hung on the frame in the church front lot. The Cost will be brought to the Council for approval prior to purchase. Cleaning of the Narthex will be completed along with cost comparisons for a corkboard to be used for flyers etc. Want to have our best foot forward when inviting people to come to our church. Prior to the Easter Services, canvassing will be completed to invite our community to join us for services and the Brunch. The chamber Mixer will be held at Spirit of Joy April 2021.

Social Ministries: All of the events are on hold due to COVID 19 social distancing.

Property: March 15, 2020 the roof repairs will be completed. During the repairs it was noticed the flat roof was having issues again, and will be repaired. Dave and Patty Tjiemeland are

donating the screens to the East windows of the Fellowship Hall. Dave is hoping that someone will step forward to be the "Property" person.

Youth: Easter Egg hunt is on hold due to the COVID 19 social distancing.

Old Business: A Stewardship letter to prior members will be drafted and reviewed by the Council prior to sending. The membership directory is being review for Charter members and inactive members. Pictures of current members are needed for the Picture Directory. Council discussed and agreed to rent the facility to community organizations to assist with the finances of the church.

New Business: Council met on March 14, 2020 to discuss cancelling all in person church events due to the COVID 19. The Bishop and Synod have recommended that all events be cancelled until April 2, 2020. The Council approved the cancelling of all in person events. Pastor Sharon explained to the Council that she plans to have Sunday and Lent worship streaming live.

A list of those members without e-mail was divided among the Council, so that phone calls can be made to these members during the Social Distancing to keep them informed of church happenings.

Micah will be organizing a cleaning of the church during the Social Distancing due to COVID 19.

Clarkdale Police want to use our facility for a Community BBQ after the Social Distancing. They want to personally meet and great those residents in the areas that they patrol. The Council voted approval for this event.

Joy Pack Update

During this time, with schools closed, the Joy Pack Ministry continues. Each week, beginning in April, weekend packs have been provided for 35, food-insecure children in the Oak-Creek Cornville School. Bags are delivered to the school office for pick up on Friday. Packs not picked up are delivered to the homes, thanks to a school employee.



Following social distancing guidelines, Sid and I are taking care of the packing and deliver of the bags.

The Verde Valley Neighborhood Food Project's bi-monthly green collection event on April 11, a major source of food donations for the Joy Pack Ministry, was modified and donors were asked to make a monetary contribution instead. Some food items were collected, sorted, and distributed. The money collected is to be distributed to the organizations that particeple in the green bag collection. Chelee Skinner, from the Verde Valley Neighborhood Food Project, notified us that \$300 was given directly for the Joy Pack Ministry. Plus, we will receive \$1,000 from the general contributions. Thank you to all the neighborhood green bag donors who generously support the local organizations helping feed the food-insecure people in our community.

We are so blessed and thankful that this ministry can continue to provide weekend food packs through the end of this school year.

~ Mary Stelpstra



May Birthdays

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 5 – Carolyn Ward | 21 – Cheri Steinke |
| 7 – Kerri Ash | 21 – Dee Codner |
| 11 – Fred Saunders | 24 – Violette Hansen |
| 15 – Loma Jenkins | 25 – Marlene Swenson |
| 16 – Marianne Brennan | 28 – Sandy Roby |
| 17 – Sue Bro | 29 – Judy Haslow |
| 19 – Paddy Baribeau | 29 - Torrey Barcanic |



Anniversaries

4—Jim & Sharon Ferkin
 25—Lisa Simpson & Luke Hoedl
 30—Dave & Patty Tjelmeland

MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATUS

| <u>Financial Status</u> | <u>Month of March</u> | | <u>Year-To-Date 2020</u> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Income (Total Offering) | \$ 25,813 | | \$ 58,303 |
| Needed Income (Budgeted) | \$ 22,226 | | \$ 66,677 |
| Over/Under Budgeted Income | \$ 3,588 | | \$ (8,374) |
| Net Ordinary Income after Expenses | \$ 10,537 | | \$ 12,759 |
| Change in Bank Balances | \$ 5,011 | | \$ (2,783) |

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Remaining Mortgage Balance | \$ 285,636 |
|----------------------------|------------|

Please note: The difference between Net Ordinary Income and the Change in Bank Balances is the principal portion of our mortgage payments.

Thank you for continuing to financially support the mission of Spirit of Joy! Thanks to all of you who are continuing your regular giving even as we are staying home and to some very generous annual gifts, we ended the first quarter on stable financial footing. Giving for the month of March was up 69% over the month of February which stayed the financial decline we experienced in the first two months of the year. While our year to date giving and our actual cash balances are below where we were at the end of the first quarter last year, we are managing our budget. In addition, to help stay the course during this difficult time, we are taking advantage of the opportunity to pay interest only on our mortgage for the month of April and May. As you are aware, we have paid ahead on our mortgage in the past and the Mortgage Investment Fund made the offer to forgo principal payments to help congregations manage cash flow in these uncertain times. Please be assured this does not increase our mortgage costs or our ability to reset the mortgage as scheduled in July of 2021. It does, however, provide us some cash flow relief at the present time. If we are able later in the year to "catch up" on any principal payments extended during this time, we will do so. Please stay well and continue to provide for yourselves, your community, and your church in whatever ways you are able.

The Finance Committee