



# 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*

# **Annual Report for 2020 Congregational Meeting**

**January 24, 2021**

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# Christ our Shepherd Lutheran Church

## Congregational Meeting Minutes

### January 26, 2020

Welcome and Opening Prayer – Pastor Fritz Wiese

Process Overview - Don Livingston – President COS Church Council

Voting requirements

Robert's Rules of Order

Quorum requirements – Quorum declared with more than 55 members in attendance

Overview – A few words from Senior Pastor Fritz Wiese

Asked staff members to stand and thanked them for their service.

Recognition of the council members. Special thanks given for those members leaving the council. Marty Hagberg, Andrea Williams and Dewey Patrick were presented with mugs. Holly Monahan was also recognized. She has left council because of a move and was wished well in her new home.

Noted the new members of The Apple Tree Society.

Acknowledged a list that was presented on Christmas Eve of 10 different ministries at Christ our Shepherd this past year.

Mentioned that there will be another listening session (Q&A with the Pastors) on March 8.

Approval of Staff, Church Council and Ministry Reports – Council President Don Livingston.

Motion was made by Paul Talbott to accept the annual reports. Carol Talbott seconded the motion. No questions were raised. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Financials Review - Kevin Hawkins, Treasurer

Kevin mentioned he will turn over being treasurer to Mark Bunker in the spring of 2020.

Highlights and status of the budget plan approved in May

Income was higher mainly due to a record market. Expenses were down because of the vacancy of 2 staff positions. Currently we are about 20k ahead of budget and we have closed about 30% of the deficit. However giving is usually strongest in the first half of the budget year.

Pluses: earlier in the year we were fully staffed – new security system – new website – new computers

However 2 staff positions are currently open – additional contemporary musician and director of connecting ministry. Membership is down 3% as people have left the church – but on the upside pledges are up this year which helps in the budget process that starts in February. Kevin thanked Eric for the stewardship campaign.

It was noted that COS has received a gift of 75,000 in December to go to worship and music. These funds are in the designated funds not in the general funds.

In going over the balance sheet it was noted that the mortgage will be paid off June 1 freeing up an additional 5,500 a month in revenue (after the 10% benevolence). However building maintenance and staff raises that have been put off in years past are needed and he encouraged everyone to keep giving.

Stewardship update - Eric Jabowski – Head of Stewardship

Eric thanked everyone that pledged and encouraged anyone who has not turned in a pledge card to still fill one out. Eric also talked about stewardship as year round – a new way of living.



## Nomination of New Council Members and Representatives to SE Synod Assembly - Don Livingston

Motion by Don Livingston to approve Rick Burnett, Lisa Manthey and Sue Byers as new council members for 3 year terms. Motion seconded by Scott Jacobson. Motion was then open for discussion. Ellen Pfundt asked why there were 4 leaving but only 3 coming in. Don explained that about 20 names were called with only 3 agreeing to be on council. Next year we will strive to fill all positions. Buddy Troy asked how many council members we have. It was reported that we have 9 members plus the treasurer and 2 pastors. It was noted by Pastor Fritz that the number of council members do fulfill the requirement set forth by the constitution.

Motion was then made by Don Livingston that Gary Thompson, Judie Thompson and Gary Pederson be elected to go to the synod assembly. Paul Talbott seconded the motion. Motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

A list of current preschool board members was presented. There is an opening for someone from the congregation to serve on the board. Anyone who is willing to serve is asked to please contact Pastor Miriam.

## Highlights of the Past Year – Don Livingston

### Summary of the Survey in 2019

Don went over the priorities from the survey. Worship effectiveness was rated as the #1 priority followed by evangelism. Small groups, social services, staff effectiveness and maintaining the facilities were in the middle and palmetto road was lowest

### Questions on the Survey

Dave Byers asked a question about the children's table and why it is considered something to work on. Don mentioned in the survey various members had commented on it being distracting. Changes have been made to move back the table and also have quieter toys for the kids to play with.

## Highlights of the church council year-end report

Worship attendance was up 4% from 2018 – membership was down 3%

The net promoter score was down slightly from 2018

The number of small groups increased

The number of members involved in social services were up.

Updates in Communications include a new website and the display ad/ search campaign

Strides were made in utilizing the staff/resources with performance reviews and reducing turnover.

Facility maintenance projects were done as planned.

Q&A was opened – no questions were asked.

## COS MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND - Scott Bosecker -

Motion by Scott Bosecker to elect Stephanie Eggan to a 3 year term. Paul Talbott seconded the motion. .

Motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Motion by Scott Bosecker for Jan Christopher to serve the remaining term. Paul Talbott seconded the motion.

Motion was passed by unanimous voice vote. Scott mentioned Mark Bunker will step down as treasurer of the board and thanked him for serving.

Funds of \$3349.09 were available for distribution. 40% allocated to Joshua's Gift and the Preschool Angel Fund, 30% to the Grace (Coffee) house at the GT campus, and 30% to the disaster relief fund.

Kevin Hawkins moved to approve the report from the Endowment Committee, it was seconded by Paul Talbott. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

## New Business Question raised - Don Livingston presiding

Tor Brunso made a motion to request that before asking the city of Tyrone to Annex the Palmetto Road Property, to have TSV present a project management plan at a congregational meeting for a congregational vote.

Paul Talbott seconded the motion and it was open for discussion.

Scott Bosecker asked if council has a plan in place in regards to TSV. Don replied that before any action is taken, there is a group of 3 people representing COS (Chip Beard, Lisa Manthey, and Tom Rehak) on a committee that will bring information to the council.

Dave Byers asked to amend the motion to include that COS sells the property. There was not a second to the motion and motion was not further discussed.

Tor Brunso asked if there any downsides to annexing the property.

Dave Byers asked if it would affect the ability to sell the property

Kevin Hawkins replied he sees no downsides and no reason not to annex the property.

Don explained the process thus far concerning the palmetto road property. Results from the survey indicated that only 7% were interested in selling the property.

Al Kunig brought up that the way people viewed the possibility of selling may have changed based on new information. Don emphasized that the plan TSV presented at the previous meeting was just a draft and it can change as we work with TSV

Ellen Pfundt clarified that the TSV plan is not set in stone and the future is up to what we want.

Karl Dietmeyer mentioned he favors the motion to annex the property and get information on what are the impacts with annexing our property with Tyrone

Eric Jabowski mentioned that the site plan presented by TSV is one they came up with the assumption to dream big.

Tom Conrad asked if the Facilities Maintenance committee should have a say in the process with TSV. Don replied that it is beyond the scope of FMC but that Gary Thompson who is on the facility maintenance committee has been involved with discussions with TSV.

David Beecher asked about the procedure for calling an additional congregational meeting. Bob Spruck mentioned that the council can call a meeting with a 2 week written (email) notice to the congregation. Mary Hagberg called for a vote on the motion. Motion was seconded

A vote by hand was held 31 were counted in favor, 21 nay. Motion passed

Janet Stronach asked to consider a meeting at a different time than Sunday at 9:45 possibly in the evening when people are available.

Meeting was then adjourned with a prayer.

## SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT 2020

### Pastor Fritz Wiese

Wow! What a crazy year. It's true we can call this the "year of Covid." But just as true is that it was the "year of Christ." 2020 A.D. in which the Latin Anno Domini stands for the "year of our Lord." A nice reminder that whether Christians throughout time endure wars, famine, persecution, or a health pandemic like Covid, Jesus' faithfulness, love and grace emerge as the strongest themes!



Yes, wearing masks obscured our faces; but in our acts of love we were able to see the face of Christ in each other. Locally, Jayne Troy kept us feeding needy school children. Regionally, we partnered with outdoor camping ministries as we could. Globally, we resourced a solar-power project for our friends, sponsored school children, and fed over 30 families with a 2-month supply of food in the "80 for Haiti" initiative.

Yes, we were sick of the social distancing that separated us, but Emmanuel (God with us) inspired us with new ways to stay connected. I remember coming home Wednesday night, March 11, after a fun evening with LOGOS and LOFT at church. Turning on the TV, we saw NBA games being suspended at half-time. The threat and fear of Covid 19 was sweeping our nation and world into a new way of interacting.

That Sunday, March 15, with the whole world figuring out what level of sequestering was appropriate, we held our only worship service from my office. I preached from my chair. From the couch, Pastor Miriam, David Beecher and Sandra Bohlken lead the liturgy while Bill Porter played his guitar. We held our breath when we tried, from my phone, punching the red "go" button on my cell phone screen with never-before-used "Facebook Live." Like stepping on the moon.



I rejoice that today, in contrast to that first service, COS now streams with excellence both contemporary and traditional services online to four platforms that are enjoyed by worshipers joining us from not only our 30269-zip code but multiple states and even other countries from time to time. Like the rest of the world, our meetings and small group life zipped to Zoom. Our council commissioned a "Moving Forward" team to help advise them on a pathway that balanced physical safety with spiritual and emotional health for our people. Together, we've followed the Spirit's lead into being the church through a variety of opportunities, (though while restrictive compared to our usual flow, often brought a fresh and fun sense of discovery and adventure) including parking lot "drive-in" services, limited-attendance sanctuary worship, midweek devotions at Palmetto Road, recorded Faith Exploration for our children with special activity kits delivered to family homes, and so much more.

Anyone asked to write one of these "annual reports" finds the task so difficult. "How do we adequately capture all God's faithfulness among us in a whole year—especially like 2020!—in just a couple of pages??" For a fuller record, you can read my weekly "Word from Wiese" email letters launched last

March to communicate and encourage, or my council reports. Also, I'm glad my staff and ministry team colleagues will offer their own highlight memories, but here I offer a few more of mine:



➤ **A dynamic staff** responded to new Covid-related realities just as flexibly as the Bethlehem shepherds when invited to leave their fields and worship the newborn king in a very unexpected, but nearby place. **As usual, God sent fresh servants.** Bill Porter was just a few days into serving as our Director of Connecting Ministries. But when Bill shined with proactivity and know-how when it came to streaming technologies, council pivoted to create a brand-new position, Director of Worship Technologies & Presentations, and hired Bill for that role. In the fall, we were thrilled that Barbara Anderson agreed to take the baton for Connecting Ministries. Fresh face Ingrid

Hudson's done a bang-up job in bringing children and family faith formation events online and via family kits. We thank Ellen Pfundt for years of dynamic service to our families as she decided she had run her leg of the ministry race. Likewise, we were sad to say goodbye to faithful Sue Kunig as we needed to rearrange staffing resources and the Director of Operations role was eliminated, but thank Sue for her service and love of COS. Another Godsend was Will Friedrichs who wondrously showed up at the right time to serve a six-month internship as audio engineer. The able Steve Profeta took over as accountant.

- Meanwhile, **veteran leaders splendidly guided us** in our goal of transporting key COS ministries into this new day. Shelley Casey shepherded several new ways to communicate including delighting as our online worship hostess. David Beecher oversaw a new streamed traditional worship and devised what could be our best and most popular Moravian Love Feast which included participants from 8 different states. Pastor Miriam launched a weekly storybook time in addition to the midweek online devotionals. Sandra Bohlken offered Friday Fellowship with Bill P which lifted up joyful contemporary worship songs. Melissa Jacobson figured out how to keep LOGOS & LOFT rolling while also jumping in to help in all corners of the church. On and on the list goes.
- **Personally, I enjoyed driving** the "Goldilocks Gatherings" out at our Palmetto Road Pavilion each Wednesday night. Just like Goldilocks who was looking for soup, chair, and bed "just right," we offered GG outdoors as a sweet spot between something safely in-person but non-streamed. The "Word from Wiese" congregational email has been another way we've tried to communicate and encourage. The "Walk Into Wittenberg" helped us celebrate the Reformation safely as "tourists" moved safely outdoors at Palmetto Road while meeting characters from Martin Luther's home-town
- **Family-wise,** I appreciate my kinfolk helping offer three different FB live "concerts," (music for kids, camp-songs, and another "anything goes" evening). Some were viewed thousands of times and helped link folks throughout the nation to other dynamic COS ministry options.





- Richard King illustrates one of the many ways God raised up leaders to make a huge impact in 2020. **The newly commissioned COS “Tech Team”** helped guide us in new dimensions of technology and literally saved us thousands of dollars. Mark Barbour and Kurt O’Clair transformed space in the **Camp Store at Palmetto Road** from a dungy space to a new meeting room, Cross Ministry Center, and storage space among other initiatives. Jason Breckling spent hours helping with audio engineering our new venture into streamed services and represents the **COUNTLESS COS VOLUNTEERS**, impossible to name individually, who helped us to connect to Jesus’ pathway of joy and life in these challenging days. We are blessed and grateful indeed.



- In the spirit of our **Apple Tree Society**, beloved **Mechthild Vogt** left us a financial gift for worship initiatives. We’re thrilled that Bill Porter lead a team’s charge to the completion of Phase 1 Renovation of our contemporary worship space. Resources are also now available for improved lighting and hopefully other initiatives in our sanctuary for traditional worship.

- Once again, **strong lay leaders guided us like magi**. Don Livingston and

Bernice Huie completed two dynamic years of serving as council president and vice-president respectively, advancing our ministry tools with surveys and websites. Keenan Anderson completed service as chair of the Personnel Team while John Musil continues shepherding the Finance Team, a sub-team of which helped us secure one of our nation’s PPP grants in the amount of \$109,000 to help us whether these financially difficult days.

- **Special recognition** includes celebrating the immense impact of Financial Secretary Bob Blackburn and Treasurer Kevin Hawkins who each served in their capacities wisely and faithful for the larger part of a decade. We’re grateful!

On and on I could go, testifying to how God used COS to go “on and on” with joy and life to address the year the challenges of which went “on and on.” Romans 8 declares that God is working for the good in all things! Even in a pandemic! I agree. I’ll look back on 2020 and certainly lament deep losses on many levels. But I thank YOU for all the silver linings you brought to life through faith and hope. As our Stewardship Team emphasized for us this year: “At COS our connection is strong!” Indeed!



Gratefully serving Jesus with you,  
Pastor Fritz Wiese

# Annual Report 2020

**MIRIAM BEECHER**  
**Associate Pastor**



## THE NEW DECADE

2020 ushered in a new decade for this welcoming, genuine, generous, faithful community, known as Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church. We had two months of familiar life together on the path of Jesus pathway of joy and life. Every day and most nights for two months, COS was always humming with in-person activity, gathering together with purpose, aiming to reach others, and continue to grow in faith.

I call January and February, 2020BC. You know what that means: 2020 BC – Before Coronavirus. How about a quick trip down Memory Lane?

## 2020 BC HIGHLIGHTS

The CANVAS “small group” met when people could sit next to each other, share art supplies or have a piece of candy from a common bowl.

Does CANVAS jog your memory of 2020 BC? How about few highlights? Worship in-person and even included non-virtual hugs and elbow greetings were optional. There were in-person Tuesday and Wednesday Bible Studies, Sunday morning adult groups, Wednesdays FULL of children in the afternoon, Wednesday dinners, faith building opportunities youth and adult Wednesday nights, and weekend events for youth. Gift groups met and the Book Club discussed and laughed. Music enlivened every week - choirs practiced, the brass were heard on Sunday nights, flutes on Mondays, Clarinets on Sundays, bells on Tuesday, Barber shoppers on Thursdays. Other groups filled the days and weekends - New neighbors, Holy Folders, community groups, committees, Boy Scouts, AA, Al-Anon, ...all in-person, and by no means is that a complete list. Those are just some of the normal things, but there were other things, too, like a Two Sparrows Village presentation, the Annual congregational meeting, an area-wide Preschool Teacher workshop, with teachers packing the Fellowship Hall, a community Concert for “Four Hands One Piano”, and the Annual Spaghetti Dinner (another success and I think there’s still some frozen Preble marinara sauce in the freezer.) I didn’t even get into the fullness of worship life, the committed work of council, committees, teams, and staff working on behalf of the church or the staff, setting goals, planning strategies, and putting together action plans to propel us into that new fresh decade of 2020.

**To all who made 2020BC soar, THANK YOU.** Little did we know how treasured our 2020 BC congregational life was, how easy to take for granted.

## THEN CAME COVID

Then came Covid, life changed, practically within hours, and 2020AC took flight!! 2020 AC, AfterCovid.

Now here’s where the COS story could have bottomed out. Could we “do church” together without being together? Could the staff learn new skills and figure out creative ways to teach, build relationships, do the work without drowning in frustration? Would we have the tools and resources to do life together in new ways? So much to learn, so fast the timeline, so strange the world of 2020 AC, AfterCovid.

In March, we stopped in-person worship suddenly and pulled together low-tech livestream worship from Pastor Fritz's office. Thus began a whirlwind that hasn't stopped. With Covid came many changes, shifts, new words, concepts, goals, and decisions. HOWEVER, Covid DID NOT change who we are, whose we are, and our journey together on Jesus pathway of joy and life!!

Life events that bring people together as a worshipping community were reluctantly re-shaped. Weddings were rescheduled. Funerals were restricted, reshaped, or postponed. Graduation recognition moved to family driveways. Confirmation moved to Palmetto Road. Children went virtual or outside or together at Palmetto. In other words, 2020 AC did not slow us down. Staff, council, teams, congregation, we have all faced up to the challenges. THANK YOU!!! THANK GOD!!

## **A FEW OF THE 2020 AC HIGHLIGHTS**

- March 11 is an important date, because that's when everything changed. Suddenly, we worshiped only on FaceBook. Suddenly we needed new equipment to do a good job of online worship. Suddenly, Bill Porter saw his time taken up managing technology instead of connecting ministry. Suddenly, we could not have Staff Meetings or other committee or Council meetings except on Zoom. Suddenly, none of our music groups or Sunday School or preschool or Wednesday youth groups could gather inside the building. Suddenly, the office was closed. Suddenly, we had to start wearing masks any time we came to the church. Life was different.
- I have to say, the staff have done a good job of adapting, coping, and handling frustration. Hardly any ministries just shut down. From that week in March on, some kind of worship has happened every Sunday. By July 31 we even invited you to sign up to come to worship in the building (and we were always within the limit). Every week we sent out Worship Guides and suggestions to help you participate from home. Several people waded in to work out the details. And we have had no out-and-out disasters!
- After Lenten services were over, we started offering Wednesday evening Vespers, where short video or live services had music and scripture and some kind of feature. In an early week, you learned about all the ladies who made masks—some even took orders. You heard about Jennifer Archer-Denton's Lent blog. You heard Ashleigh Shriner speak of her faith in going off to college. You saw examples of ministry through art that Tina Patrick and Tracee Daniel do behind the scenes. And then Pastor Fritz started offering outdoor Vespers at Palmetto Road.
- You got to hear Sandra Bohlken and Bill Porter and others on Fridays. You heard recordings by a lot of our musicians, from young to older, every Saturday and Sunday before worship. You saw us do special services during Holy Week and Easter.
- You got phone calls checking in to see if you were doing okay during lock-down, and if you needed anything the church could provide. After two rounds of these massive undertakings, we welcomed Barbara Anderson to head Connecting Ministry.
- You saw Sunday School go virtual. Ingrid Hudson stepped in to re-make Sunday School. Online teaching videos and activity bags needed more volunteers to deliver them. Before the year was over, special things like a visit from Santa were happening. Melissa immediately converted L.O.F.T. and Logos into online experiences that many of our youth enjoyed. I started recording children's books by scanning the books' pictures so they would be vivid and easy to see on screens. Altogether, we have shared 20 books of many types.
- I have to salute Shelley Casey, who made you aware of many of these things. You could not take advantage if you didn't know what was coming!

## ISN'T IT AMAZING?



## THE BLESSING OF THE COS STAFF

This congregation has so much for which to be thankful; one area deserving huge gratitude is Personnel. I am grateful, proud, humbled by the talented hard-working staff of COS BC and COS AC. They are dedicated, intentional, faithful people serving God's call to serve at COS.

In this ever-changing, stressful Covid year, there were some changes in the staff. Special thanks go to those who experienced staff changes in 2020.

First, thanks go to the excellent **ELLEN PFUNDT**, Director of Children and Family Ministry for several years. Close to when Covid changed things Ellen announced her "retirement." Thankfully, she gave us several months of transition leeway. Little did we know just how fortuitous her gift would be. It was not until the fall, that the right person was found for that position. Praise God, **INGRID HUDSON** said yes! Whoo hoo!

Next, remember that even before Covid,, COS had been without a Director of Connecting Ministries for some months. Our wait was over and the congregation hired **BILL PORTER** to put his own spin on that position. His start date was March 3, same week Covid shifted our way of doing life together as a congregation. Ever since Bill arrived, he did start putting his own spin on his work but ended up connecting COS in a different way. In the course of 4 to 5 months Bill Porter resigned Director of Connecting Ministry and was hired as the Director of Technology in Worship Presentations. What a godsend! Bill arrived just when we needed to make a major shift quickly.

More staff transition. in May. For years, **SUE KUNIG**, served COS admirably as the Director of Operations. Sue's position covered a wide array of responsibilities and details. Sue worked hard and served this congregation with love and dedication. In May the staff position was discontinued. About the same time, **BOB DAVIS** left his position as COS Accountant. This man of lifelong faith served with spark and humor for nearly 3 years. A new accountant, **STEVE PROFETTA**, was hired and jumped right in with kindness, expertise, and care.

By the fall, the new tech-related position was filled by Bill, and the now open position of Director of Connecting Ministry found a new champion, **BARBARA ANDERSON**. She has come into that role with excitement, kindness, humor, and an attitude of encouraging others.

## SAVED THE BEST FOR LAST

You, ALL OF YOU, are the best! YOU have been through a rough year, Yes, there's much to celebrate, much to be grateful for, much to learn, but the truth is, it's been a stressful year for the world. YOU have been thought of, prayed for, and loved even in these months of sight unseen. YOU are gifts of God, YOU are treasured, YOU are people of God who desire to be light and blessing to others. I say it every year: THANK YOU. Yet, this year it is sweeter and deeper than ever: To all of you, THANK YOU!! Love, Miriam



## THANKS BE TO GOD. FOR BAPTISM!

**IN 2020, CHRIST OUR SHEPHERD CELEBRATED NINE CHILDREN IN THEIR BAPTISM INTO CHRIST.**

Five children not only had their parents making promises to them, but also grandparents, and in two families great grandparents as well. What more marvelous way to celebrate the joyous value of passing along the faith one generation to the next!! All families were surrounded by a strong ensemble of people promising their love and support.

*“Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.  
You belong to Christ, in whom you have been baptized. Let your light shine before others!  
We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share, giving thanks  
and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.”*

### **Josie Elaine Hendrix**

PARENTS: Abby & Patrick

#### GRANDPARENTS

Ted & Susan Reissing

#### GREAT-GRANDPARENTS

Joan & Ed Jachino

### **Lucy Anne Nicholson**

PARENTS: Jeremy & Karli

#### GRANDPARENTS

Gary & Chris Pederson

### **Ethan Christian Murphy**

PARENTS: Kaylee & Christopher

### **Tyler Emmett Hendrix**

PARENTS: Abby & Patrick

#### GRANDPARENTS

Ted & Susan Reissing

#### GREAT-GRANDPARENTS

Joan & Ed Jachino

### **Hudson James Easterbrook**

PARENTS: Kristen & Vincent

#### GRANDPARENTS

Bob & Bernice Huie

### **Violet Eliane Morales**

PARENTS: Michael & Jessica

### **Nolan Timothy Brown**

PARENTS: Josh & Ashley

#### GRANDPARENTS

Tim & Heather Dohany

#### GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Jean Dohany

### **Eleanor Mancil**

PARENTS: Chris and Kristen

#### GRANDPARENTS

Barb and Tom Kenny

### **Lofton Donahue**

PARENTS: Matthew & Emily



## THANKS BE TO GOD FOR LIFE!



RON LINTON



PAUL SWANSON



JAN ZUERNER



HOWARD  
BOURDEAU



GENEVA  
BOURDEAU



HENRY  
QUAY



ETHEL  
HANFT



DELORIS  
BERGSTROM



LAURA  
JOHNSON



BOB  
ATKINS

*\*Wayne  
Wigner not  
pictured.*

**IN 2020, ELEVEN\* DISCIPLES OF THE CHRIST OUR SHEPHERD FAMILY ENTERED THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT AND CONTINUE THEIR JOYOUS JOURNEY WITH CHRIST.**

*Due to Covid restrictions, we could not celebrate as fully as other years.*

*These wonderful, faithful people shared time, talents, and gifts with COS for many years.*

*These eleven include a couple of charter members, council president, and the leader of the Columbarium installation. Among these eleven are those who served in a choir, as an usher or greeter, a Holy Folder, on Altar Guild, in small groups, Go-Getters, and other groups and committees.*

*They are loved and missed especially as devoted worshippers.*

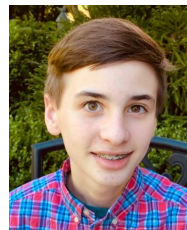
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## THANKS BE TO GOD. FOR CONFIRMATION!

**IN 2020, THREE 8TH GRADERS CONFIRMED THEIR BAPTISM INTO CHRIST.**

**Oliver Ravita, Ethan Williams, and Mikayla Eggen**

*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. With the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ROMANS 10:9-10*




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## THANKS BE TO GOD FOR BLESSING WEDDINGS!

**CONGRATULATIONS**

*Mr. & Mrs. Bryan and Brittany Kenny*





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0  
2  
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**BEFORE MARCH 11:** February **Mission Trip:** Bill, Pat, John, Delee, Tom, [Home Owner whose home was repaired], Buddy, Bernice, Richard, Mary, Tor

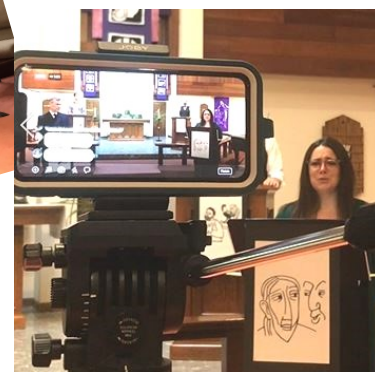
**BEFORE:** Scott spoke at one of the last Lenten services we were allowed to attend in person.



**AFTER MARCH 11:** Council meeting on Zoom: Fritz, Miriam, Sue, Eric, Don, Mike, Bernice, Kevin, Molly, Robbi, Mark, Rick



**AFTER:** Palm Sunday, ↑ the Sanctuary before new AV equipment arrived; Kendra in worship drama →



**AFTER:** Middle School LOGOS and High School Loft meet every Wednesday night for learning, encouragement and LOTS of laughter!!



**AFTER:** "Congregation" when all but leaders watched from home

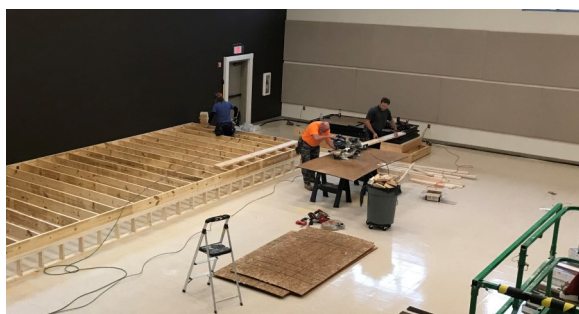


**AFTER:** Some of the Tech Team after worship: Richard, Brad, James, Bill, Jason, David, Fritz



**AFTER:** watching Wieses lead a "Goldilocks" Vespers at Palmetto Road

**AFTER:** (below left) new stage under construction; (below) by Advent the new Fellowship Hall stage was finished. Zach, Sandra, Fritz, Eli, Dana, Bill





## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT: MINISTER OF MUSIC

What can I say about 2020, and how do I do it briefly? I could say that it started off “normal,” with no warning of what was to come. On February 23, COS hosted a duet piano recital by Pam Martin, and the National Lutheran Choir presented a concert on tour in Atlanta. Ash Wednesday happened. Bill Porter became the newest staff member. And then “normal” was no more. Bill’s first Sunday, March 8, was the last Sunday COS offered in-person worship until the end of July. My calendar is full of crossed-out plans.



The photo of me in the corner is from one of the many videos I made for a variety of purposes. Besides recording music to share, Miriam and I began online Wednesday Vespers featuring COS ministries. One included women who served here who are now serving as pastors. Later on we previewed hymns for the next Sunday. Pastor Fritz also offered “Goldilocks” services at Palmetto Road. Speaking of Palmetto Road, it found new uses.

Here is a photo from a baptism in that beautiful setting. ▶



Bill Porter’s steering was vital to worship’s going online. Initially in Pastor Fritz’ office, the setting moved to the sanctuary quickly. Modifications to the liturgy were made, and by fall a service in contemporary style was also broadcasting weekly from Fellowship Hall at 9:45. Many purchases of equipment were necessary, some of them made quickly. New volunteers were enlisted and trained. Lenten and Holy Week special services were online, and on Easter was our first “hybrid” service, with the first portion pre-taped and Communion live-streamed.



Meetings of all kinds started taking place via Zoom. Staff and Council meetings, as well as Gift Groups and various committees, moved to this safe medium. Some groups met at Palmetto Road in the open air.

July marked Pastor Fritz’ ten-years’ service at COS, and we managed to note it and honor him. Another summer special event took place when Sarah Juhasz was given her own set of handbells, donated by friends who love her and admire her ringing. Sarah has departed for a new career as an Air Force nurse with specialized skills and experience.



Our children’s ministries were forced into changes. New children/family director Ingrid Hudson will tell you about her creative Sunday School and special events. Wednesday afternoons were different, too.



sKIDdles, our preschool singers, met outside and occasionally on Zoom. M&M’s spent their time ringing handbells and chimes, and coming together for learning experiences. The ringers were spaced six feet apart, and all faithfully wore masks. They agreed to form a group to video-record carols for the children’s online pageant.

By fall it became obvious that a Love Feast with a sanctuary full of worshipers was not going to happen. Our musicians were flexible in making our first *virtual* Love Feast come about. Handbells and organ recorded what became the accompaniments for an online choir; child soloists from previous years agreed to record a solo stanza of “Morning Star, O Cheering Sight,” and guest singers from eight states sent us videos. Nineteen Sanctuary Choir singers recorded five anthems, singing 10’ apart. An ensemble, “COVID Cantati,” sang three anthems. The COS Flute Choir was represented by “Palmetto Road Pandemic Pipers,” who went there with Karl Dietmeyer to videotape carols. Sandra Bohlken not only was a soloist, but she and her brother Bill sang a duet. Gary and Christie Pederson made a new video of his GraceFlock Christmas anthem. And “Plaid Pajama Players” made their first appearance ever: this new group played Boomwhackers and Choir Chimes, along with resonator bells and percussion instruments, to offer something unique! Sarah Juhasz and Mr. Dietmeyer organized and led. Once again, Bill Porter proved himself indispensable.



I guess nobody was surprised when two of the Christmas Eve services took place in the parking lot. Three others were live-streamed. It seemed a fitting end to a year full of innovation and new realities.

Respectfully submitted,



## Children and Family Ministry Annual Report 2020

INGRID HUDSON,  
Director of Children and Family Ministry



We had a wonderful year with the children and families of Christ our Shepherd Lutheran Church! Starting in September, we began Virtual Sunday School for ages preschool-5<sup>th</sup> grade. Students have been able to view pre-recorded Sunday School lessons, listen to great music, pray together, and create a craft- all from home! This program is only made possible by a wonderful group of volunteers who helped assemble and deliver Sunday school materials to each family every month.

**SKIDdles** also continued this year using the parking lot as our new meet-up space! SKIDdles is a musical group for children who are 4 and 5 years old. This group is hosted by our wonderful and talented Barb Anderson. We sang, played, and had fun fellowship together each week. This group of children also participated in our Virtual Christmas Pageant this year.

Parents were also able to connect each week using the Zoom platform during **Parents' Corner** every Friday. Parents met each other, discussed current and future children's ministry events, and simply checked in on one another!

**Walk by Faith** was also a successful weekly outdoor meet-up. Walk by Faith is an intergenerational group that met weekly to discuss a simple devotional all while taking in the scenery of beautiful Lake Peachtree. We were able to view the fall foliage and feel the crisp fall air. It is going to be fun to continue into the winter and spring months too!

Children and Family ministry also called for some fun! While traditional trunk or treating was not an option this year, we created a similar fun event for the children of our church and preschool community. The children wore their costumes, decorated their vehicles, and **paraded through the church parking lot**. At the end, Pastor Miriam and Ingrid greeted each family with a bag of candy and special "pumpkin prayer". This prayer reminded our children to shine bright from within!

In December, we were able to host a **drive-by breakfast with Santa!** Children and families received a to-go style breakfast, beautiful candles for the children to use at home for Christmas Eve virtual services and, of course, a visit with Santa- all from their car! The children also brought canned food items to donate to our local food pantry. It was a wonderful event for children and adults alike!

Finally, we put together a **Virtual Christmas Pageant**. It was a collaboration of children's musical groups and several families within our church. Each family filmed a different scene of the Christmas story. Between scenes, there was music performed by various children and musical groups of the church. We were so thankful that we were able to tell the Christmas story once again through our children and families.



Ingrid looks forward to many more events in the coming year and is so very thankful for the families, volunteers, staff, and precious children of our church and community!

Submitted by,  
Ingrid Hudson



HOLY WEEK IN A BOX



VIRTUAL SUNDAY SCHOOL



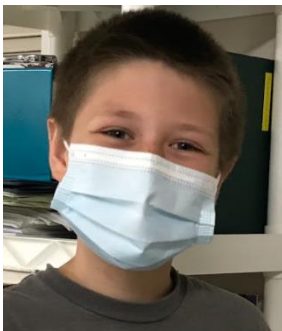
WALK BY FAITH



"Trunk or Treat" PARADE through the Parking Lot



Drive-by BREAKFAST WITH SANTA



M&M'S with David Beecher & Team



VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT





MELISSA JACOBSON,  
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY  
2020 CONGREGATIONAL REPORT

Such a year it has been. Covid thought it would bring us down, but we made sure that did not happen. We put together a list of guidelines for our students to follow and they have handled them amazingly! I could not be more proud of these amazing students!

Even though Covid put a damper on the fun activities we could do we have managed to have fun this year!



In October our high schoolers were able to carve pumpkins at our annual pumpkin carving party! As always they were super creative with their designs. They carved pumpkins while we roasted the seeds. Some had never tasted roasted pumpkin seeds before! We had three different flavors!



My middle schoolers received Advent boxes to complete at home during the Advent season. It had an activity to do each week along with scripture to read. My middle schoolers enjoyed the activities and I enjoyed seeing their completed activities. Since they completed them at home the whole family was able to participate!



These activities were fun to do, but we did hard work at church also. Our middle schoolers have been studying the Old Testament; we discussed youth depression and suicide and what to do if a friend tells you they want to hurt themselves and discussed how our faith helps us make good decisions.

Our high schoolers have discussed topics such as: how to know a good friend from someone that is using you, happiness and finding fulfillment in your life from other than material things, and much more.

I know Covid has been a bummer this year, but I can't say enough how proud I am of all my students! I am excited to get back together in the church when it is safe to do so.



# The 2020 Annual Report

## Contemporary Worship and Music



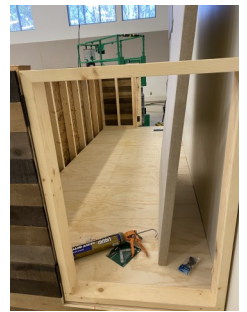
We started 2020 together in our regular worship space. When life threw us some curves and we weren't able to gather together in person we were grateful to be blessed by the talents of Bill Porter who helped us gather together in worship and praise online. Bill also brought expertise in redesigning our worship space and in our time apart we have been hard at work to bring you an updated worship space. I look forward to gathering in person again so we can all celebrate all that God has given us in our updated space.

Our temporary space set up for online worship. >



< Phase 1 of our 3 phase plan is complete the Sunday before Christmas!

With our sound booth being moved to a new home in the center of the back wall >



None of this would be possible without the behind the scenes Tech crew for Sunday morning worship! >

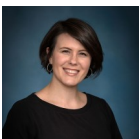
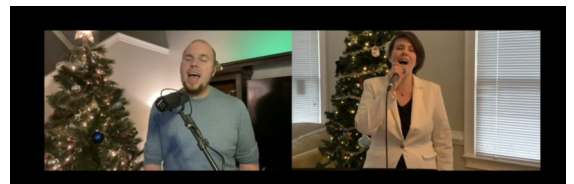


We have been so blessed by our wonderful Contemporary musicians who have been able to come lead worship on a rotating schedule on Sunday mornings AND who have come up with creative ways to lead us virtually through our Friday Fellowship videos.

<



Bill and I were thrilled to represent our Contemporary Worship style during our first ever Virtual Moravian Love Feast >



I miss seeing all your faces and am so grateful to be a part of our loving community here at COS. Thank you for all your prayers and support as we work to stay "together" as best we can in these Corona times.

Cheers to a new year and hope for gathering in person again soon!

Sandra Bohlken

Director of Contemporary Worship and Music

# Annual Report 2020

**SHELLEY CASEY**  
**Communications**



## **COS Website**

We have added many new features and updates to the COS Website this year. This was to make communications to our Congregation and Visitors easily accessible and up to date. We worked with ReachRight Studios, our website host, with all of the website projects.

- **COS added a new ‘Prayer’ Page to give people a chance to reach out with prayer concerns. This was beneficial because we began this spring with virtual Worship and we did not print weekly Bulletins with Connect Card inserts. Google Ads were created to promote page.**
- **COS added a ‘Live’ Page that included a feature to watch our virtual Worship Services live and included access to our archived sermons. Google Ads were added to promote page.**
- **Our ‘Serve’ Page was updated with a new photo carousel and updated layout to reflect the areas we were continuing with and despite Covid, were able to positively impact through service. Google Ads were created to promote page.**
- **An updated ‘Home’ Page was created to display our new Worship formats and a new pop-up navigation bar was installed for our In Person Worship services that included our weekly worship guide and a link to our RSVP Toolbox that allowed members and guests to sign up for the 11am Worship services and other activities at our Palmetto Road campus. Google Ads were created to promote page.**
- **We created a new ‘Christmas’ page in December that outlined the opportunities offered for the Advent season. The page included the Moravian Love Feast, Virtual Worship, Ho Ho Hybrid Worship service Info & RSVP and our Children’s Pageant and Worship service premiere. The page is dormant now and will become active again in November before our Advent season begins. Google Ads were created to promote page.**
- **ReachRight Studios helped us fill out a Google Ad grant that allowed COS to utilize up to 10k a month in grant money for advertisements with Google. These advertisements are created each month and targeted to reach people on the internet within 35 miles of COS. The monthly advertisements were geared towards COS opportunities and programming. Our goals are to grow visitor traffic and bring visitors in to COS. ReachRight continues to maintain our Google Ad grant and we (Don Livingston & Shelley Casey) meet monthly with ReachRight to go over data. Recommendations for online content, website updates/pages and ad directions are discussed each month.**

## **Facebook**

We began streaming our Live Worship services mid-March in order to reach our members and friends of COS because of Covid closures. Initially, COS had one service using a cell phone on Facebook Live in Pastor Fritz’s office. The worship leaders began working towards a more professional platform by adding a streaming service using Vimeo that could help with casting our worship onto Facebook, YouTube and our Website Live. Vimeo also holds and stores all of our videos.

The COS Worship Leaders began offering content in addition to our Sunday Worship. This included:

- Midweek Worship on Wednesdays at 6:30pm (Hosted by Pastors and/or the Beechers)
- Wednesday morning chapel time with Pastors in the spring of 2020.
- Storytime with Pastor Miriam on several Thursdays each month
- Friday Funnies - Humorous cartoons and posts intended to brighten the day of COS Family & Visitors
- Friday Night Camp Songs- The Wiese family hosted several sing along nights on Facebook.
- Friday Fellowship- Praise & Worship music coordinated by Sandra Bohlken that included members of COS & guest singers.
- Saturday & Sunday Hymns of Hope- Music pieces from David and COS members that were posted Saturday morning and Sunday mornings before worship.

## **Instagram**

We were able to use our COS Instagram account to mirror the posts of our Facebook account. We continue to work towards growing our followers.

## **Constant Contact Emails**

We continued with our weekly COS Updates sent out each Thursday. Updates from Pastors and Council were sent out as separate emails as needed.

The COS Staff and volunteers reached out to COS Members through Care Calls to verify our email database in order to make sure our members were receiving our communications.

We have continued to improve the overall look of our Constant Contact emails. We have also improved the ease of use by including links, sign-ups and access to videos with a click of a button.

Lenten and Advent Devotions were sent out with Constant Contact.

## **New to 2020:**

- Word from Wiese – A new weekly email from Pastor Fritz
- Weekly Worship Guide – This email was sent internally to staff and it contains our weekly worship guides, RSVP links, Social Media links and communion instructions. We took the link and added it to Facebook each week to highlight Sunday services and provide resources for worship.
- Sunday Congregational Guide with Video Links – This weekly email was created to access more people than just Facebook followers. This email contained the links for worship guides, Sunday worship services, Midweek worship services, Storytime, Friday Fellowship and Hymns of Hope. Our goal was to create a one stop source of content to reach those who *a:)* Could not access Facebook or have a Facebook account or *b:)* Wanted to share our programming with others or *c:)* Wanted to watch our videos at a later time. You do not need to have any account memberships to access the links in the Sunday email.

***\*\*A big thank you to our volunteer, Jean Dohany, for editing and scheduling our Constant Contact emails each week after they have been created and formatted. Her amazing attention to detail and flexibility with the schedule is truly a blessing to COS.***

**Submitted by,  
SHELLEY CASEY,  
COMMUNICATIONS**



## Connecting Ministry Annual Report 2020

**BARBARA ANDERSON**  
**Director of Connecting Ministry**



I began the job of Director of Connecting Ministries on November 9, 2020. Beginning a new job in the midst of a pandemic is an odd thing. Especially a job whose focus is “connecting” people during a time when we are distancing ourselves from others for safety’s sake!

Following is a list of some of the more important things that have been accomplished since that date:

Attended a Zoom meeting with the director of the Haitian Timoun Foundation and worked with Pastor Fritz in making a plan to get the word out about their \$80 for Haiti Thanksgiving drive to provide food for families. \$80 feeds a family in Haiti for 2 months. Their goal, across the country was to raise enough to feed 100 families. COS raised enough money to feed 25 families!!!!

Coordinated with contributors to provide devotionals which were emailed Monday-Friday during the season of Advent. These were in the form of writings and musical videos.

Worked with Pastors Fritz and Miriam to analyze the results of the Third Round of Congregation-wide phone calling. When it was discovered that the calls had not been completely finished, made all calls to complete task. Returned results to Pastor Miriam. A complete analysis of the calling is still to be done.

Worked with Pastor Fritz to coordinate and attend the first session of a New Member Zoom Class. This class consists of 5 family units. That is amazing to me, during this time of pandemic.

Called every ministry and bible study group leader in the congregation to discuss their program, past and present, along with post-pandemic plans. These included, but are not limited to:

- MOTH
- TEXT TALK
- Wednesday Night Supper
- ROMEOS
- Book Club
- Sarah’s Circle
- Grounds cleanup/Landscaping
- Prayer Shawl
- Senior Connections
- Youth and Family Ministry (Grades 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)
- Children Ministry (Birth-5<sup>th</sup> Grade)
- Camping ministry
- Congregational Disaster Coordinator
- Holy Folders
- Altar Guild
- Chill and Chat
- Awesome Angels
- Social Services
- All Bible Study leaders

Ongoing work with other staff and council to analyze data from the stewardship survey, congregational survey, and information about our Constant Contact emailings.

I'd like to take a minute here to state, as the newest member of the COS staff, the high regard I hold for the Pastors and staff who have lead us, thus far, through this history making/changing time. The things that have been accomplished, the problems that have been solved, the amazing solutions that have been put into place, the new technology that has been mastered, and the sheer number of hours spent analyzing data and deciding the best and safest way to move forward while providing the congregation such an array of ways to remain connected, is truly MIND BOGGLING. We should gather them together and give them a standing ovation.

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Anderson

# Annual Report 2020

**LINDA VOLCKMANN**  
**Office Administrator**



## Facility Maintenance Team

The FMT has been very busy this year. While the beginning of the year came to a screeching halt due to the needs forced upon COS because of COVID, many congregational members along with council members and staff members prepared the church for being able to support services in very different ways. Furniture had to be moved out and stored in several rooms to limit surfaces that had to be cleaned. Our cleaning company was charged with using specific CDC recommended solvents in cleaning all surfaces and rooms being used.

Since groups could no longer meet in our main buildings, FMT moved ahead with work on the Palmetto Property to make it even more welcoming than it has already been. Several projects supported by the Church Council moved forward. The building was completed providing a large meeting room that can be used by all kinds of groups. Another room was finished giving the Cross Ministry a room to produce the crosses COS has become known for. In order to secure the building and give peace of mind to those meeting there, cameras have been purchased and installed on the building. This will allow us to know if anyone who should not be on the property is. Additionally several trees that the insurance company felt should be removed were. The fence on the end of the property will be strengthened to keep trespassers off the property. Several other projects are being discussed to make the Palmetto property more inviting for not only Christ Our

Shepherd membership, but also for our community. We would be remiss by not thanking Mark Barbour who took it upon himself to keep the property grass cut all summer. We will be looking for help from other members to relieve Mark of this huge effort next summer. And to Kurt O'Clair who spent an amazing number of his personal time completing the building. These men have been wonderful stewards of the property.

On Peachtree Parkway, we have replaced lights in both the Preschool and choir room. The Fellowship Hall has had major reconstruction on the stage for our contemporary services. This spring we will be looking at replacing HVAC units and when it will be prudent to have the outside of the church painted. During the summer we had many members volunteer to cut the lawns and keep our weeds under control.

Like all "Homes" maintaining God's house is necessary and requires not only financial support but people resources as well. Consider volunteering to help us keep COS a home in which we can be proud.

The formal FMT members are: Lisa Manthey (Council Representative), Ethan Williams, Tom Conrad, Eileen Conrad, Wes Saunders, Mark Barbour, Kurt O'Clair, and Linda Volckmann (Staff Representative).



However, when we have projects we have unbelievable support from COS membership. An examples of this was when our insurance company advised we should have a bunch of trees taken down on the Palmetto Property. John Mussil was instrumental in getting us a fantastic price to have 21 trees felled. The cost was very low as long as we could have volunteers cut the trees in pieces and moving them after they were cut down. All of this work was accomplished in a very short period of time. Thank you John for finding the contact and heading up this project.

I wish to also thank Jean Dohany who has continued to come into the office with appropriate Covid precautions to help me with additional office duties. I look forward to the time when all of our Office Volunteers and Holy Folders can return to our normal routines.

### **Administration Tech Team**

With the August 2020 contract of Liberty Tech, our outside technical support company, coming due we formed a Tech Group to look into our uses of technology in office administration. This is a separate Tech Group t than the one working with Worship. Our Office Administration Tech Group includes: Richard King, Jeff Hartman, David Turk, Kelvin Joiner, Erik Jakubowski, Pastor Fritz, Pastor Miriam, and myself as Staff contact. The charge for this Tech Group was to look into not only the company we were utilizing for tech support, but also into all our technical needs going forward for the next coming years and how we could spend our resources in the best way possible. In September after much research we changed tech support companies and contracted with Integritek. We continued looking at all the services we were using and costs involved. Several changes have already been made including our phone service. We can now use cell service in the church offices, which is a huge improvement for staff. Thus far we have calculated savings the first year (September 2020 – September 2021) at \$20,336. And saving the second year at \$38,742.

It has been a tremendous pleasure working with these very fine gentlemen. Richard King has taken on the chairmanship of this group. Richard had just retired when this project began and has put multiple hours at church working through the many improvements we have made.

I look forward to our continued work on ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Volckmann

Office Administrator

## Church Council President's 2020 Annual Report

Given all that transpired this year, I think of one of my favorite Bible verses from Psalm 23 v4.

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

We started the year with one set of plans and expectations, given COVID change our circumstances, we modified those plans and expectations. As I reflect back on the year, 3 highlights stand out:

1. we have a committed and flexible council. Each member started with a set of responsibilities for the year, then adapted either what they did and/or how they did it and still made an impact;
2. we took care of each other, our neighbors, and financial matters;
3. the wisdom, stories, lessons, and testimonials shared by each council member as a devotional at the beginning of each council meeting demonstrated the depth and faithfulness of this team.

Below are the highlights in roughly chronological order...

### January

- We welcomed **new council members**: Rick Burnett, Sue Byers, and Lisa Manthey; said “thank you” to those members rolling off after 3 years of service: Dewey Patrick, Andrea Williams, and Holly Monahan; and, continued with current members: Don Livingston, Bernice Huie, Robbi Martin, Mike Oliver, Molly Breckling, Eric Jakubowski, and Kevin Hawkins.
- Council spent time at their annual retreat focused on the **top priorities**, divided up responsibilities, and jointly developed plans with the staff during this annual retreat.
- We welcomed **Two Sparrow Village** to COS for an information session where TSV shared their vision and status of their planning efforts. Thru the course of the year, plans for TSV changed: Christian City made a building and property available to TSV; several significant one-time gifts enabling TSV to get started. God is good. The scope with COS at Palmetto Rd property will be different than before and will be defined in 2021. Thanks to Chip Beard, Tom Rehak, and Lisa Manthey for service on the COS-TSV team.

### February

- Council and staff continued with developing plans for the year in key areas: **ensuring full staffing**, with approval of director of Connecting ministry and 2<sup>nd</sup> contemporary worship leader (part time); evangelism plans; facilities; external communications and Google online ad grant.
- **1st Google Ad Grant Campaign** starts in February where display ads drive traffic to COS Website.

### March

- **Mandatory shut** down of many businesses due to COVID pandemic.
- The staff demonstrated “find a way” attitude holding **1st live streaming service** using an iPhone on the couch in Pastor Fritz’s office. The quality of live streaming services grew over the next 9 months and now includes both traditional and contemporary services.

### April

- Council partnered with Pastor Miriam and team, to **call everyone** in the congregation to check in.
- Council applied for a **PPP Loan**; a prudent option to explore. Thanks to Kevin Hawkins (outgoing Treasurer) and Mark Bunker (incoming treasurer).

### May

- Council chartered a team led by Bill Grabill, Mike Oliver, and Robbi Martin to look at requirements for **returning to in person worship**, how long to continue live streaming, how to handle Small Groups, and what ongoing data council and staff showed look at.
- Council partnered with Pastor Fritz to determine **staffing needs** given COVID Government direction on large group gatherings and the need for technology and live streaming. We reduced focus in one role, shift responsibilities around and created a new role for technology.
- Council aligned on a **2020-2021 budget** (prepared by Finance) reflecting our ministry plans.

## June

- Council holds its **1st congregational meeting via Zoom** approving the budget and ministry plan.
- Return to in person worship team recommends to Council with **full set of safety protocols**, cleaning requirements, number of worshipers, and 2 data points to follow weekly.
- **COS pays off the mortgage** on the 101 Peachtree Parkway Property. Example of outstanding financial stewardship from our talented finance team. God is good.
- Social Services team adjusts their protocol on collecting food and assembling lunches to deliver the **Summer Lunch Program**; demonstrating their “find a way” attitude. God is good.

## July

- The return to live worship implementation team, led by Pastor Miriam and Sue Byers, **prepare all safety protocols**: cleaning, temperature screening, social distancing in the church, wearing masks requirements, weekly reservations,
- **July 26, we held our 1st in person worship** services in 4 ½ months. A recognition being together is an important spiritual need just like staying at home is an important public health need.
- Live worship continued for 5 ½ month until January 3rd with **no COVID issues**. High positivity rates and COVID duress on hospital capacity in December causes us to pause in January.

## August

- Pastor Miriam and team, made a **2nd round of congregation calls**, a fruitful way to stay connected.
- Staff demonstrates their creativity with **expansion of more worship** opportunities, Goldie locks in person, outside, small group worship on Wednesday night at Palmetto road.

## September

- Council, Personnel, and Staff continue with **ensuring full staffing**: finalizing responsibilities for Director of Worship Technology, welcoming a Director of Children and Family services, and beginning the search for Director of connecting ministry. Thanks to Molly Breckling and Keenan Anderson.
- Council approves funding for internet access and security cameras at **Palmetto Road**. Thanks for Lisa Manthey and the Facilities Management Team for pushing for this recommendation. A big thank you to Mark Barbour and his team for the significant volunteer work to maintain and improve Palmetto Rd over the summer time.

## October

- Facilities management team and key leaders, plan for updates to the **Fellowship Hall** space in 4th quarter and plan for improving **Sanctuary lighting** in 1st quarter using a one-time gift.
- Review schedule funded of maintenance projects for HVAC and exterior painting, etc)
- Launch our **Annual stewardship** campaign. Thank you to Eric Jakubowski for his leadership.

## November

- Pastor Miriam, Care Calling team, and Council make **round 3rd of congregational calls**. A learning for the year, our contact data (both phone numbers and email addresses) needs to be updated. We are not reaching everyone with email nor live stream nor even phone calls.
- Sent out 3rd annual **worship effectiveness survey** to the congregation. Helpful insights on what to improve and what the congregation views Council’s priorities for 2021. Thanks to Rick Burnett.

## December

- Completed 10th month of **learning on quantity of traffic and quality of traffic** generated to COS website organically and from Google Ad Grant (free online ads). In 2020, COS received \$49,600 in online ads, creating 116K impressions, leading to 9K clicks going to our website with 500 visitors spending 2+ minutes on the site. We learned which website pages generate the most traffic for nonmembers and for the congregation. Numerous enhancements were made to website content including adding Live Stream tab. Thanks to Shelley Casey and ReachRight, our online agency.
- Identified new council members candidates to come on in 2021. Thanks to Rick Burnett.
- Making the decision to **switch Christmas Eve services from in person to drive in**; as well as pause on January in person services given the rising COVID positivity rate and hospital capacity.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Don Livingston



## **The 2020 Annual Report**

### **THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

One of the functions of the Finance Committee (FC) is to analyze and manage the financial health of the church and to provide a monthly snapshot of COS's financial status to the Church Council. To keep the congregation informed, financial information appears in the online weekly update. COS continues to have a great group of people on the FC who dedicate their time and talents to assure the financial strength of COS.

That being said, this has been a different and at times a difficult year in taking care of the Church's finances.

The fiscal year end for 2020 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020), on the income side came in at 96% of budget and expenses were 94% of budget. This left a \$26,644 loss for the fiscal year. Action has been taken to offset losses of income by applying for and receiving a PPP loan (Payroll Protection Program) that has been offered to churches and businesses.

As the pandemic continued, giving to the church was down significantly compared to budget in the first six months of fiscal year 2021. Please see the Financial Reports section of the annual report for details. Between the PPP loan and deferred maintenance, so far we have been able to maintain a full staff and ministry programs even with lower giving. However, if giving does not recover, we may face painful decisions about next year's budget.

COS had many changes in 2020 dealing with Finance.

Kevin Hawkin's position as Treasurer has been taken over by Mark Bunker. Kevin will stay on with the FC as a member. Kevin has done a tremendous job as the Treasurer for COS and the FC thanks him for his guiding efforts and putting in many hours as a volunteer to keep the finances in good shape. We thank him for staying with the group and providing his time and talents to COS. The good news is Mark Bunker has agreed to take over and that is keeping the Treasurer position in great hands. We can't thank him enough for agreeing to step in and take over the position. In a very short period Mark added his touch and has shown his abilities. We look forward to working with him.

Bob Blackburn's position as Accounting Clerk has been taken over by Bill Volckmann. Bob has been in the position for over 10 years. We thank Bob for his dedication and abilities performing the duties required and thank Bill for agreeing to take over the volunteer position. Bob is staying on with the FC.

Many volunteer hours have been put in by both of these outstanding individuals.

In addition, Steve Profeta has become the new Accountant for COS effective at the end of May 2020. Steve is retired from Hella Corp. He brings skills and dedication to keep COS's books up to date and accurate. Steve has already made numerous improvements to our processes and his "can do" attitude is greatly appreciated.

Per our Church governing documents an Audit is in process. This year we are including an outside Accountant who has looked over the books and has given suggestions as required. That part is finished and an additional internal Audit steps are nearly complete to finish the project. Thanks to all involved for getting this done, especially Dave Pfundt, Minka Fulton, and George Pilch who have volunteered to be the Audit committee this year.

The mortgage was paid off in 2020. Repairs are ongoing and Fellowship Hall and other areas have been updated. There are many projects waiting to get started. Palmetto Road has been ongoing with projects being accomplished, spearheaded by the Facility Management Team (FMT) and a volunteer crew. Mark Barber has been leading a volunteer team keeping the property looking beautiful and better all the time. A special salute not only to Mark Barber but also Kurt O'Clair. Kurt and others have worked on the building and it is now a functional facility that can be used for meetings and other needs. The FMT has also coordinated the installation of security lights and other systems for security and safety



Members of the Finance Committee include: Mark Bunker - Treasurer, John Musil - Chairman, Rick Burnett – Council Rep, Bob Spruck - Recording Secretary, Bill Volckmann – Accounting Clerk / Finance Secretary, Members - Buddy Troy, Pam Gould, Kevin Hawkins, Bob Blackburn, Sue Kunig, Steve Profeta - COS Accountant, Pastor Fritz, and Pastor Miriam.

Respectfully submitted, John Musil – Chairman, Finance Committee

## 2020 Stewardship Annual Report

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

While the COVID restrictions of 2020 certainly curtailed many of the stewardship-themed events we had planned, there were a number of wonderful things that DID happen, and I am more excited than ever for our future! Most of our interactions with coworkers, friends and family became virtual, rather than physical. Recognizing that fact, the Stewardship Campaign logo played off the imagery of a wifi symbol. Just like many of us search for a strong wifi symbol whenever going to a new place, this year we all searched for a strong foundation and connection to guide us through the pandemic. Fortunately, Christ remains our rock, our solid foundation, and the source of our connections. That's why our campaign theme was **"Christ Our Shepherd, Our Connection Is Strong!"**



Even though there were significant restrictions on us last year, the COS family can be proud of the many accomplishments we had as well. Here is just a brief mentioning of some of our highlights for the year, all made possible by your tremendous spirit of volunteerism and financial stewardship:

- The mortgage for the main campus was fully paid off.
- The Palmetto Road property was transformed into a beautiful, peaceful oasis, and the camp store was completely renovated into a wonderful location to hold our cross-making ministry and group meetings.
- The Fellowship Hall received a complete overhaul consisting of a new stage, sound booth, and lighting.

Far more important than these physical updates however, was the spirit of love and outreach that COS members continued to display this year despite the pandemic.

- We developed multiple high-quality online worship opportunities weekly that allow COS to share God's love to a far broader audience than we had ever imagined.
- We maintained local outreach support to Joshua's Gift, the Bread Run, Redeemer Soup Kitchen and more.
- COS continued its strong support to synod outreach activities
- Your generosity supported dozens of needy families in Haiti and provided holiday meals and Christmas gifts to underprivileged families right here in Fayette County.

In a first for COS, this year's stewardship campaign was mostly conducted virtually, with the vast majority of our responses coming in via an interactive online survey. As of January 10<sup>th</sup>, we've received 134 individual responses from 119 different families, which is similar to last's year's response rate. Just as exciting, over 25 of those were new responses compared to last year—we're grateful and humble that you feel a connection to COS and a desire to connect our community to Jesus' pathway of joy and life!

All of the stewardship responses have been forwarded to the pertinent staff members at COS. If you indicated an interest in a new volunteer opportunity, you should be contacted by the appropriate ministry team leader in the near future. If you gave COS permission to start or update an automatic giving schedule for you, please check your online account to be sure that it reflects your desires. Contact Bill Volckmann at (770)883-7409 or [finance@coslutheran.org](mailto:finance@coslutheran.org) with any questions concerning your financial stewardship.

Once again, thank you so much to the COS family for your support and generosity. Your time, your talents, and your desire to share a portion of your financial blessings with COS will allow us to continue to spread God's love throughout our community and beyond!

Respectfully submitted,  
Eric Jakubowski

PS- if you haven't done so yet, there's still time to complete your 2021 stewardship survey. Please go to <https://coslutheran.typeform.com/to/PrnJCO8W>, pick up a packet from the church lobby, or contact me at [stewardship@coslutheran.org](mailto:stewardship@coslutheran.org).

## **The 2020 Annual Report**

### **Social Services Ministry**

GOD’S WORK, OUR HANDS: This IS the Social Services Ministry at COS. Detailed below, you will find an overview of the many programs that have touched lives. A sincere and genuine thank you to Christ Our Shepherd members for making a difference!

**January** – 76 pair of gloves, 166 pair of socks and 18 hats were provided for the homeless population at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Atlanta.

**February** – Tackle Hunger!

A nationwide effort to feed people who are food challenged through the Souper Bowl of Caring! COS donated their monies to Joshua’s Gift (\$318.75). Joshua’s Gift was also the Ministry of the Month. Donated food items totaling \$489.93 were used to fill backpacks.

**March, April and May** – Due to COVID, there were no ministries during these months.

**June/July** – Summer Lunch Program

The Summer Lunch Program looked quite different this year but it didn’t matter as food was distributed to 76 families in need on Monday mornings for nine weeks. Our neighbors and friends, St. Andrews in the Pines Episcopal Church, partnered with us again this year. Here are statistics from this summer:

1. Nine weeks of food distribution beginning Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup> and ending Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup>
2. Seven routes were driven and food distributed by 11 different drivers with 12 various assistants
3. Brown bags of perishable food were packed every Friday morning at 11:00 AM by five or six packers wearing masks and gloves. Drivers arrived at COS every Monday morning around 9:45 to pick up their bags for delivery
4. Three trips to the Midwest Food Bank were made to secure extra food
5. COS and St. Andrews congregations gave generously to support this ministry through specific food items and monetary donations
6. Thrivent generously donated a gift card that was used to help purchase fresh fruit

**August/September** – Backpacks and School Supplies for DFCS

The church helped prepare middle and high school children for Brick-and-Mortar learning as well as Virtual School. Forty backpacks and 33 calculators were donated and \$406.00 in school supplies were also given to DFCS.

**October** – No ministry



## **November**

Thanksgiving Baskets were assembled for Summer Lunch Program Families as well as families served by the Real Life Center. Thanks to the generous support from our church family, 30 baskets, complete with turkeys, were given to those in need.

## **December** - GIFT TREE

This marvelous ministry is undertaken with a sincere, genuine caring for human hurt, need and hope! The GIFT TREE helped 14 families which included 18 children. \$3,170 worth of gift cards were shared.

## **Other Projects**

Joshua's Gift is an ongoing ministry at COS that exists to feed under resourced school children by providing backpacks filled with food for the weekend. This is our eighth year working with three Fayette County Elementary Schools: Fayetteville, Huddleston and Peachtree City. We are presently only assisting one of the schools with hope that during the second semester, we will help resource the other two.

The Bread Run Team (Buddy Troy, Heidi Byerly and Bill and Jim Volckmann), and many substitute drivers deliver day old bread and pastries to Redeemer Soup Kitchen and the Atlanta Mission three days a week. Publix at Starr's Mill and Publix in Tyrone donate the items. This team has been vigilant in making sure this food gets to where it needs to go!!! Never a week missed!

Redeemer Soup Kitchen – This ministry is not active at this time.

Respectively submitted,

Jayne Troy

2020 ANNUAL REPORT  
COLUMBARIUM MINISTRY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Christ Our Shepherd Columbarium provides a peaceful and reverent location for the inurned remains of Church members and their extended family. The Columbarium is located just off the Narthex and provides a private and tasteful environment with numerous Vault and Niche configurations for the preservation of remains in a convenient and secure location. Numerous opportunities are available for annual, periodic, or permanent memorialization of a deceased loved one. In addition, memorials can be designated for use in the Columbarium or for other Ministries of Christ Our Shepherd.

In 2020, ten Rights of Inurnment were purchased and five Committal (interment) Services were conducted. Rights of Inurnment are available to be purchased for 73 of the total 210 Niches.

Consider purchasing a niche for yourself and/or a family member as part of your estate planning or when the need arises.

Application Packets are available in the Church Office. For more information or for an Application Packet, contact Bob Spruck, Chairman of the Columbarium Board of Directors.

## **The 2020 Annual Report**

### **Landscape Committee**

The Landscape committee consists of volunteers who meet two days a year to do maintenance on the church property. The dates are approximately 4-6 weeks prior to Easter and Christmas.

This year, due to Covid-19, we relied on volunteers to work independently at their convenience on projects, including pulling weeds, cleaning out debris, trimming shrubs and pruning.

We are fortunate to have Art of Landscaping contribute workers and equipment to complete several projects, including the removal of a huge area of overgrowth in the front of the church. AOL has put down pine straw and has been very generous in their assistance as needed.

On October 31<sup>st</sup>, the scheduled clean-up day, we had six volunteers show up to help. Others who could not join us that day were able to complete projects over the following weeks.

Richard King has been extremely helpful in spraying the weeds around the property and mowing/blowing. Fred Herber and Wes Sanders have spent a lot of time removing the overgrowth along Hwy 54.

The number of volunteers who show up on the clean-up dates have dwindled considerably in the past few years. It would be helpful to be able to hire a company to maintain the property on a monthly basis.



## **The 2020 Annual Report**

### **COS Book Club**

The COS Book Club met in the church library for our monthly meetings in January, February and March.

We had been meeting continuously since May 1999 on the second Thursday of every month except during the summer.

It was decided that due to a rise in Covid-19 cases, that we would suspend our meetings until a future date when it would be safe.

We resumed meeting on Sept 10 with a small group at the church. Everyone wore a mask and we spread out around the room for the book discussion.

We met again in Oct at the church, however, it was decided after that meeting to postpone gathering for our discussions until Spring 2021.

We stayed in communication by email and selected book titles for the group to read through May 2021.

There was discussion about meeting at the Palmetto Road location, however, not enough members were willing to meet there.



## **The 2020 Annual Report**

### **Sarah Circle**

The COS Sarah Circle held our monthly meetings in January, February and March that included guest speakers and fellowship. We did not meet between April and September, however, the board communicated with the membership and asked everyone to stay in contact with and pray for one another as we all were learning how to navigate the challenges of Covid-19.

In October, we decided to meet in the Fellowship Hall and had thirteen in attendance. Pastor Miriam was our guest speaker. We asked her to update us on how Covid-19 had impacted the church and congregation, and to update us on the opportunities through Advent. At the meeting, everyone wore a mask and we arranged the chairs in a socially distanced circle. Packaged desserts were served and we each answered the question “if not for Covid 19, I never would have\_\_\_\_\_”. The answers were humorous, poignant and entertaining.

The November meeting was held in the Fellowship Hall a week later than normal due to election day. There were ten in attendance and we discussed concerns about continuing to meet with the dangers of the pandemic increasing. We agreed to send Christmas cards to all the senior members on a list provided by Pastor Miriam. Plans were made for a few members to meet on Nov 23 and decorate the Beecher’s home.

Our group contributed to several ministries that we support on an annual basis. The board members had several conversations regarding future meetings and decided to postpone them until later in 2021.

We cancelled the annual December meeting and party and communicated our recommendations to the membership. There were discussions about meeting at the Palmetto Road location but not enough members were comfortable with that idea.



## **The 2020 Annual Report**

### **Cross Ministry**

The year began with Bill Volckmann working with Wayne Martin in Wayne's barn making crosses. Then COVID interrupted that work. When a door closes, God opens a window, and that window was opened for the Cross Ministry with Ron Bowman donating all of his cross making equipment to Christ Our Shepherd.

It was decided that room could be made at the Palmetto Road Property to have the Cross Ministry work done there. And so, FMT made a special room for just that purpose.

The room was completed and a ribbon cutting was held opening not only the Cross room but the entire building which had been completed following a Goldilocks Devotion. Complying with CDC Covid guidelines, it is hoped that the Cross Ministry will again begin producing crosses the first quarter of 2021, and give instructions to anyone who would like to learn to make the crosses.

If you would like to learn to make crosses, please let Linda Volckmann know in the church office and one of our cross makers will be in touch with you.

Several members having been giving crosses out to delivery people and others they meet outside of COS. One of our nurses gave a bag of crosses to the Chaplain at Piedmont Newnan when the COVID crisis was very bad in March. Many of the nurses at that hospital asked for one to add to their badge. Our current cross makers are: Ron Bowman, Wayne Martens, Buddy Troy and Bill Volckmann



# 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  
Text © 2003 Augsburg Fortress

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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.**