Hopeful planning for the future

From the Church Council:

Hilary Gebauer shared a reflection on our sanctuary as a sacred space, particularly in this new COVID-19 era that has kept us from gathering in-person. She invited us to be mindful of our connections to our church and, especially, to one another.

We received several updates since we last met in June (Council took a summer break in July):

1. The Call Committee reported that their search process is moving along well. Although they are not able to share specific details at this time, they will seek ways to update the congregation when they are able.

2. Pastor Haaland and Elena Hilding provided an update on the Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation programming. It feels very exciting to move forward with this. This year the two programs will likely be mixed together versus having two separate programs. A gathering was held in August to lay groundwork with the group to talk about baptism and do an art project together. They expressed that this is a wonderful group of young people and a joy to work with. Pastor Jensen shared an update on Children’s Ministry. Two committee meetings have been held recently to do some planning. Last year, there were 22 children involved in the Sunday School program, with an additional 10 who were a bit too young to really be involved up to this point. Moving forward, there will be a vision to create four age-specific cohorts. However, some of this might be challenging due to a shortage of teachers and volunteers.

3. The Property Committee reported that the boiler project is basically completed. There are required city and state inspections that will need to be scheduled and passed before everything is wrapped up. Utility rebates will be applied for, as well.

4. Colin Watkins provided an update on the discussions and work of the Racial Justice Task Force. The team is working on visions and plans that may guide our congregation’s support of racial justice.

Finally, we discussed the complicated issues related to COVID-19 and when we will be able to gather in person again. Despite all of our desires to do so, within our building’s sacred space, the Council decided to continue suspension of in-person worship and general use of the buildings through the end of the year. We also voted to establish a Coordination Team to guide our planning and preparations for safely gathering. A more detailed update on these items will be provided in a separate congregation letter email. We will continue to seek ways to support our community during these challenging times. We closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Online Worship and Virtual Gatherings Continue

This week the pastors, staff and Council of Christ Church sent a congregational email/letter to every household to update you on the difficult, but not surprising decision we made to continue worship and congregational gatherings online. It is not possible to gather safely at this time. However, we will be launching Fall Programming and continue to offer meaningful worship every week. See all pages in this issue of the Courier to learn more about what is being planned. Please share your ideas and let us know how you want to be involved. If you are in need of pastoral care or service, please contact the church office. Our congregational life and ministry is vital and God is present “doing a new thing” in even these challenging times. God bless you with faith, hope, community and peace in all the days to come.

Pastor Eva Jensen

Call Committee Update

The call committee met in August for a lovely in-person, but physically distanced, gathering. It was so nice to see each other. Zoom meetings are effective but they lack the personal contact we feel we need. After confering with the synod and Pastor Jensen regarding protocol for our call process during the pandemic, we decided that we could safely meet with our remaining candidates in person either in the courtyard or the gymnasium.

We have narrowed the field of candidates for second interviews which will be scheduled in September. We believe these candidates best fit our needs and desires. We also offered individual building tours to candidates so they have a better feel for the uniqueness of Christ Church.

We ask for your continued support and prayers through this exciting time.

Call Committee members are Sarah Brunsvold, Kate Haugen, Kevin Reuther, Luann Skrivseth, Bob Victorin-Vangerud and Hillary Watkins
**September Birthdays**

9/2 Julie Parkos, Hillary Watkins
9/8 Ivy Young
9/11 Jeff Weispfenning
9/12 Barb Revsbeck
9/13 Siri Caltvedt
9/14 Prince Faulk
9/17 Dori Brandon
9/19 April McMillan, Vanessa Rempel
9/26 Kevin Olsen
9/28 Mirko Hall

_Happy Birthday, everyone!_

**September Calendar**

*Note: All meetings and gatherings remain virtual except *

Sep. 1 Committee meetings
Sep. 5 Knitters & Crocheters
Sep. 6 At-Home Worship
Sep. 7 Labor Day
Sep. 10 Executive meeting, Safe House meal
Sep. 13 At-Home Worship
Sep. 15 Council meeting
Sep. 18 Shelter meal
Sep. 19 Ben Cherland ordination, Courtyard *
Sep. 20 At-Home Worship
Sep. 26 Anna Murphy & Ian Thackray wedding *
Sep. 27 At-Home Worship

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**Lectionary Readings for September**

**September 6**

**Fourteenth Sunday in Pentecost**

Ezekiel 33:7-11
Psalm 119:33-40
Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 18:15-20

**September 13**

**Fifteenth Sunday in Pentecost**

Genesis 50:15-21
Psalm 103:1-7 8-13
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35

**September 20**

**Sixteenth Sunday in Pentecost**

Jonah 3:10-4:11
Psalm 103:1-7 8-13
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 20:1-16

**September 27**

**Seventeenth Sunday in Pentecost**

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32
Psalm 25:1-9
Philemon 2:1-13
Matthew 21:23-32

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**Check Out What’s Inside!**

Birthdays ............... 2
Calendar .................. 2
Lectionary Readings .... 2
Fall Programs Launch . 3
Sundays in September ... 3
Words from Leaders ... 4
Closeup ................... 4
Meet the Cleaning Crew . 5
Silver Polishing ........ 5
Lamp Updates ........... 5
Lawn Mowing ............ 5
Zoom Book Conversation . 5
Christ Church Helpers . 6
Topical Graphics ........ 6
Helping at Holy Trinity . 6
Little & Middle Courier . 7
Mask! Masks! Masks! .... 8
Fall Programs are Launched

Beginning on September 13, we will be hosting **Zoom gatherings every Sunday** after worship – coffee and conversation, Forums, and sometimes a congregational conversation or meeting. We will continue to connect with one another in meaningful ways that strengthen our relationships and community life, our faith, service and engagement in the world.

**Service and interest groups will continue to stay connected:**
to make beautiful stationary and cards, discuss books, knit and crochet, deliver home delivered meals, support the Sheridan Story, care for the church building and grounds, bring leadership to racial justice commitments and learning. New groups could be formed. Do you have a new interest that you would like to share with friends in faith at Christ Church?

**Children of Christ Church** will gather for fun, friendship and play. Stories and songs of faith will be shared. Families with children will be supported through gatherings on Zoom and other creative programs of mutual interest.

**Worship Leaders will continue to contribute to online worship:** prayer writers will write and record prayers of the church, choir members will offer recordings as possible, altar care will continue and all will be prepared for the time when we can physically gather together again.

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Sundays in September

**September 13 - “God’s Work. Our Hands” Sunday**
This is a day of service for the whole of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will not be planning a group service project this year. However, we’ll be lifting up the theme of “God’s Work. Our Hands.” in worship, and we encourage everyone to think about ways they might use their hands (and hearts and minds) to serve God’s beloved world.

If you need a little inspiration, perhaps you’d like to consider volunteering with The Sheridan Story to pack a few of the thousands of bags of food they will give away to local school children and their families this school year (www.thesheridanstory.org). Or perhaps you’d like to contact Cathy Sieving (cathysieving@gmail.com) about being a volunteer with Meals on Wheels? Or sign up to deliver a meal to Safe House shelter for homeless youth? (contact Pastor Haaland at ehaaland@christchurchluth.org)

**September 20 - “Welcome Sunday”**
On this day when we typically begin the program year with a big welcome to young and old, we plan to gather young and old with a special Zoom meeting to bless our children and their families as the school year begins. It seems that children and all who care for them could use an extra blessing this year.

**September 27 - “Resisting Hitler’s Values” forum with Melinda Quivik (via Zoom!)**

*Melinda writes:*
I have been learning a lot from a book called *Preaching in Hitler’s Shadow: Sermons of Resistance in the Third Reich.* The author, Dean Stroud, is a professor emeritus of German studies at the University of Wisconsin—LaCrosse. An ordained Presbyterian, he has long studied Hitler’s Germany.

I want to share with you his description of the divided church in the Nazi era—on one side, the “German Christians” who supported the Third Reich; on the other, the “Confessing Church” that would not bow to Hitler. The theological differences are enormous and instructive for our time when we, too, are faced with Christians of deeply divided convictions. Some of us struggle over how to respond to the cries for racial justice, environmental issues, economic inequality, and much more, while other Christians bow to values that seem opposed to those Jesus taught.

As I learn about the beliefs of Christians who supported Nazism, I am struck by the similarities—even in language—used by some Christians today in our nation. I will also offer some thoughts on how the sermons Stroud includes (from preachers like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth) spoke to the issues they faced—standing up to preach the gospel while being threatened with imprisonment or death. I will leave time for group discussion.
A Word from Pastor Jensen and Matthew Courtney

Dear Members and friends of Christ Church, Your regular offerings of financial gifts to Christ Church Lutheran are essential to the on-going life and ministry of the congregation. As you are able, please send your contributions to the church office or sign up with Simply Giving to set up automatic payments. We understand some of you may be experiencing financial losses during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic and you may need to make adjustments in your giving. We give thanks to each of you for your contributions of prayer, care, and financial support that sustains our life as a congregation. Let us know how we can support you as active participant in our congregational life.

In Christ’s service and on behalf of your pastors, staff and elected leaders,
Pastor Eva Jensen and President Matthew Courtney

Treasurer’s Report

Our financial results show more of the uncertainty we anticipated as a result of the pandemic and related economic challenges impacting us all. Member Giving, Loose Plate and Building Use revenues are all lower than budget again for July and YTD through July 31. Our expenses are also lower than budget YTD, but the decreased income is outpacing the lower expenses. As a result, are now showing an overall budget deficit through July 31 YTD (see chart on facing page).

A bright spot to highlight is the truly generous response to the needs of our wider community made especially clear following the killing of George Floyd and the devastating events that followed even within a few blocks of our church home. This outpouring of love and generosity shows we - members and friends of Christ Church Lutheran - step up as we are able when there is a need. We volunteer our time, help our neighbors and give a bit extra when we can. We are hopeful for your continued, generous support for our life and work together at Christ Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Bradford C. Hubert, Treasurer

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Courier Closeup — Mary Bode

This month’s Closeup features Mary Bode who has been a member of Christ Church Lutheran for 37 years.

When did you start attending Christ Church Lutheran and what brought you here?

After spending 25 years as a member of Mount Olive Lutheran Church, where my uncle was organist, where funerals were held for my father and mother, and where I was married, it was time for a change. In 1983, my husband Joel, daughter Sarah, and I found Christ Church. Pastor Neibacher preached the Gospel and the worship was liturgically familiar. We joined in time for Sarah, a Kindergartener, to attend Rally Day. We lived in St. Paul at the time and I still do. Thirty-seven years and a few speeding tickets later on the way to church, here I am.

What about our church keeps you coming back?

I love that we come from many communities and blend into one. I love that we know our children’s names, each other’s joys and concerns. I love that members willingly pitch in to help. When I call and say “This is Mary Bode,” you ask, “What do you need?” I love the light, the peace and calm of the architecture.

Do you have any stories to tell or special memories of your time here?

Christ Church is special. This caring community walked with my family for three years during my dear husband’s fight with terminal cancer. He was 41. Christ Church was there for us in every imaginable way. I am grateful to this very day.

What do you do when you’re not in church?

I love to spend time with my daughter Sarah, her husband Dave, and grandchildren Eli (11) and Cora (7). They live outside of Portland, Oregon, on a hobby fruit farm. I am not sure when it will be safe to travel again, but visiting them will be my first priority.

What can you tell us about yourself that we may not have known?

I was born 70 years ago to loving parents, Herb and Helene Mueller, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where my father was associate pastor at Holy Ghost Lutheran Church. A call to Mount Olive Church in Minneapolis followed. When my father was 39 years, he died of a sudden heart attack leaving my mom with four children ages 10, 8, 6, and 12 days old. Three years later my mom died of cancer. My father’s sister Ruth and her husband Paul Manz became guardians for me and my siblings, raising us as their own, alongside their three sons.

Do you have anything else to share?

I am respecting the advice of Dr. Michael Osterholm, my COVID compass. We will need to learn new ways to be a COVID safe community, but our joy will be to learn together. I look forward to that day. Until then, know that I pray for you, my friends of Christ Church, to be safe and well.

“Closeup” is a Courier feature to help us get better acquainted with our fellow members. If you would like to share your story in “Closeup,” call Donna Lindberg at 651-552-8499.
Meet the Christ Church cleaning crew

Christ Church has contracted with Edwin Marquez and his crew to keep the building spic and span. The crew’s main tasks are to clean the bathrooms that get the most use these days, to vacuum the church offices, and to dry mop and wet mop the education wing floors. They are doing a great job, and it’s nice to team with them. We welcome Edwin, Marta and Aidee!

Preserving our church silver

Thanks are due to Pat Baehler and Ann Davis for keeping the altar silver polished! Even when we’re not present in the sanctuary, tarnish happens . . . Their diligence means that the silver will remain lovely for when we can return to church. Thanks again, Pat and Ann!

 Updating our antique lamps:
 Welcome (again) to the light!

Tim Hagen has secured new shades for the Nessen lamps in the Concordia Room and the Kretzman Library. They are the exact same shades and color they originally were, but many decades of hot bulbs darkened them. Tim installed new LED bulbs that won’t damage or discolor the shades, and will also save money over time. Thanks so much, Tim!

Next Zoom Book Conversation: Educated, by Tara Westover

Saturday, October 17 at 10:00am (via Zoom)

A next book has been chosen by the Christ Church Book Discussion Group! Any and all are invited to join a conversation about Educated, the bestselling memoir by Tara Westover. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Haaland (ehaaland@christchurchluth.org) for information about the Zoom gathering at 10:00am on Saturday, October 17.

Here is a description from the publisher:

“An unforgettable memoir about a young girl who, kept out of school, leaves her survivalist family and goes on to earn a PhD from Cambridge University.

Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara’s older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she’d traveled too far, if there was still a way home.”

Pastor Erik Haaland
Christ Church Lutheran
Throughout the summer, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, our neighbor at 2730 E. 31st St., has hosted a food and supply distribution center for anyone who suffers from the lack of local retail options after the May riots. Christ Church members and friends have been very generous with in-kind donations, money and time. Recently, Kevin Olsen and Donna Lindberg helped at the center, and Pastor Haaland, Kris and Dave Denton, and Melinda and Fred Quivik picked up 1,000 diapers at Costco (in two sizes!), packed their cars, and dropped them off at Holy Trinity, in the rain, no less! Thanks to all of these wonderful people, and to everyone who donated money!

Congregation Connectors, Round 2

Earlier this summer, a team of Christ Church members and friends signed on to call people from the congregation, to find out how folks are doing this summer and to make a point of contact as we remain distanced from each other. This fall, they’ll be back on their phones, so listen for a call! Thank you to this team for their outreach and good will!
Jesus said, “Let the children come!”
At Christ Church Lutheran, we welcome children and their families to the font, to the table, and to worship.

Tyler says “Welcome back!”
After a busy summer working at Shetek Lutheran Ministries in Slayton, MN, how good it is to be more fully back at Christ Church! We are right in the heart of planning what our fall will look like for Children’s Ministry. The Children’s Ministry Committee, Pastor Jensen, some parents, and I have already had a couple of fruitful conversations this summer about our hopes and expectations for our Sunday School and other program offerings. The plan is to keep programming for 5th grade and below virtual until it becomes safe enough to gather in small groups with social distancing and masks. As one parent said to me over the summer, these virtual children-and-family events will help us all find joy in being a community again after so many months apart. We plan to kick off the Sunday School year on September 20, the week after God’s Work, Our Hands Sunday. Families, be on the lookout for more specific information coming soon.

Also, we are always looking for more volunteers to help with our children’s programming! If you have experience with technology, teaching, leading songs and games and crafts, or if you just have a passion for working with kids, there is a place for your help! Reach out to me at childrensministry@christchurchluth.org if you are interested in serving Christ Church in this way.

Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation kickoff event
Pastor Haaland, Pastor Jensen and Elena Hilding met with the Confirmation youth on Sunday, August 9th, in the sanctuary and courtyard to begin their confirmation journeys. We started at the baptismal font, since at its heart, confirmation is about exploring the meaning of our baptisms and saying YES! to the ways those baptismal waters shape us. We look forward to adding several more members to our group when the journey continues September 13th via Zoom.

ELW #446
I’m going on a journey, and I’m starting today.
My head is wet, and I’m on my way.
Christ’s mark is on me; it’s on you, too. It says he loves me, and he loves you too!
I’m becoming this day a saint of God.
It really doesn’t matter what roads I trod.
Wherever I go, God’s been there too.
God’s love has touched me and will carry me through.
There are other saints who have said amen.
They’ll keep me faithful to my journey’s end.
Along the way I want to be the kind of person that God set free.

Baptism Birthday
Prince’s baptism month is September. Happy baptism birthday, Prince! You are God’s beloved child forever.
A parade of masks! We are safe AND stylish!

Birgitte & John Christianson

Elena Hilding

Bob & Ute Swenson

Marge Meffert

Bob & Ann Davis

Britt Dougall

Phyllis Dunstone on her 93rd birthday!

Tim Hagen

Our “Female Figure, 1951”

Drew Benson & Matthew Kunnari

Luann & Gary Skrivseth

Tyler Egge

Ina & Marina Gorzig

Kris & Dave Denton

Laurel Jacobson

Hilary Gebauer & Nora

Mary Bode