

Annual Report



**Christ Our Savior
Lutheran Church
2020**

Christ Our Savior 2020 Parochial Report

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

1192 Active Members

October 18th & 25th
*Making an affirmation
of their faith*

Alexander Augustyn
Katie Bianchi
Ramsey Botsford
Gavin Damato
Mia D'Amato
Joel Delonge
Lacey Dercola
Jake Fillinger
Jenna Fure
Nicholas Ingle
Ella Krueger
Kylie Krueger
Shannon Kurtz
Isabella Lederer
Lennon Lura
Rylynn Madden
Tyler McCoy
Brayden Mikelonis
Nathan Minerath
Elizabeth Ostdick
Liam Schiller
Ella Schumacher
Tyer Seils
Zachary Stromberg
Kendall Syslack
Noelle Urban
Margaret Watson
Lucas Wozniak



BAPTISMS

Caden Uzowulu
Ila Shoning



WEDDINGS

Noennig/Lemke



FUNERALS

Anita Oster
Bill Berdelman
James Medhurst
John Adams
Robert Potter



NEW MEMBERS:

Paul and Whitney Gilbert with Jacob and Reagan
Scott & Jody Wille with Kailey, Jenna, and Ashleigh





From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

2020 has been a year we will remember, even if we want to forget. We cannot come through this year without being impacted and changed in some way.

One impact, of course, is we have not been able to gather for worship. My heart broke at funerals that were indefinitely delayed or restricted in some way, baptisms postponed, not being able to gather for worship even at Easter or Christmas.

So many things this year have led us to try to adapt quickly; moving to worship, Bible studies, confirmation, Sunday School, meetings and everything else online has been a challenge. We would be lost without Pastor Joe's knowledge and expertise to guide us through this and troubleshoot the multiple technical impasses. Amy and Kim helped lead us in ways to remain connected with our mission partners by providing ways for all of us to share needed items. I got a lump in my throat the first time I saw a delivery truck at church dropping off cases of formula, diapers and other items you bought online and had shipped directly to church. Our musicians and worship leaders worked feverishly to try to provide all the music and worship support we are used to. Figuring out drive in worship and all the planning and preparation for that was quite a task. It was guided largely by Brad Moerke who sadly died in November this year. Brad served as our worship band leader and tech go-to guy for years. His imprint on this congregation will be felt for years. We miss him deeply. Sandy continues to hold all the administrative needs together, often remotely, so that we can continue our ministry. The work that Wade has done as the director of TACOS has been remarkable, remaining connected with and ministering to teens from all around the community, and figuring out new ways to accomplish Christ based service as they grow in living their faith.

We adapted weddings and funerals to small outdoor events in parks, back yards, cemeteries and even the back yard at church. Many of you continue to participate by reading lessons and recording other parts of worship. Many of our mission partner teams have adapted how meals are prepared and shared. I want you to know that when others see this, they ask how we do it? The answer is you. You do it. You make it happen because it matters to you and you care.

Throughout all of this, I am deeply grateful for your high level of understanding and patience both with waiting for a time we can safely return to public worship and with the various glitches we have encountered along the way.

All of this tells me the building is closed but the church is alive. A colleague described it as The Church Has Left the Building! We are adapting and enduring; knowing it is not going to be this way forever. While we look forward to the time when we can gather again we wait and adapt.

This year will probably also impact how our church and all churches work in the future. Several members have indicated they kind of like "going to church" in their jammies at home, saying I'll be there again, but I might go to church at home more. We had been doing part of confirmation online for several years before COVID hit. One of the families who joined our congregation this fall has never been present in person for worship but has connected only online. There are also some people from distant places like New Zealand, Germany, Virginia and other places who regularly participate in our online presence.

This suggests that even when we return to something like normal, we will also continue to have a stronger online presence. We don't know exactly what or how it will be at this point, but there is an openness to try new things; to adapt and respond.

As I move toward retirement in May, I can't wait to see what you are going to do next! I continue to feel blessed to be a pastor among you.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Tom Kent

Grace and peace to you, siblings in Christ!

To prepare for writing in the annual report, I took a glance at what I wrote last year. At that time, we had just been streaming worships for a handful of weeks, and I never would have guessed just how important our digital presence would become for holding one another in community over the course of 2020.

2020 has been marked by a sense of transition for our community – a longing for disrupted familiar rhythms of the past and an expectation for what new normal we might find on the other side of



this season of physical separation. But for all the discomfort of this year, it has lead me to often consider how many of the stories of our ancestors in faith recorded in scripture were birthed out of times of disruption, exile, oppression, and generally discomforting seasons. The same promise of new life and hope that we proclaim during times of plenty and comfort continues to sound forth from the pages of scripture into the troubles of our lives declaring that God is yet with us and God's grace is still sufficient.

One of the markers of my personal experience of faith has been the unexpected ways that God shows up, bearing the fruits of steadfast love and grace. For all of this year's disruption, we have continued to be committed to the ministry God has cultivated through Christ Our Savior, and we are looking to 2021 in anticipation, both for the ways that it may bring some return to familiar practices we have missed and also for how we will continue to take the adaptations and gleanings from this time of transition in order to proclaim the gospel in new ways.

So may you experience the peace of God's promise which endures throughout the ages while also attending to the new things that God is up to in our midst. And may our Holy Parent, who is wildly devoted to you, bring you all that you need in order to persevere through our remaining time in this season of disruption and transition. I look forward to seeing more of you sometime next year.

Blessings,
Pastor Joe

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Another church year has passed, and I first want to extend my thanks to you for allowing me the opportunity to again serve as your church congregation president.

As I sit down to write this and reflect on the last year at Christ Our Savior, I can't help but let my mind shift to our immediate circumstances and how Covid-19 has changed many things. It is unclear as to how much longer this will last, but I know that we will do it together. There does seem to be light at the end of the tunnel. We are fortunate to have many highlights to reflect upon throughout the last year. We were not without challenges, but the positives were plentiful, and more importantly, the foundation on which our church stands continues to be strengthened. Despite these trying times, our current path is solid and will be for many years to come.

As Council President, I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow council members. Their willingness to serve and honest conversation made for effective and meaningful meetings. Even when our meetings became virtual, more frequent, and pressing, the entire council embraced every situation and provided countless contri-

butions. Since April in response to the pandemic, we were able to transition from broadcasting one service a week into broadcasting our 8:00 and 10:00 services over Facebook Live. In September, we began drive-in worship services including First Communion and Confirmation. We are also streaming various devotionals throughout each week. During this year, Christ Our Savior through your council applied for the Payroll Protection Program and received the funds to continue our ministry.

I would also like to thank our Pastors, Directors, and Church Staff. They all continue to work diligently to connect members with each other and various ministries virtually. Our entire staff is dedicated to helping all of us to grow and share our faith in ways that are meaningful to us and those we serve. Their tireless dedication, endless efforts, and willingness to stretch, and try new things is evident. Their creativity in delivering new and refreshing ministry proved to be highly successful and will remain a vital aspect of our congregation now and for the long-term. I would especially like to thank Pastor Tom, who announced his retirement in September, for his time and service to the COS congregation and community at-large. He will be missed by all.

Christ Our Savior has many committees and groups that meet regularly for outreach, education, fellowship, stewardship, finance, and property needs to name a few. This year, they had the added challenge of meeting virtually and/or in small, physically distanced groups. Thank you to each one of you for your volunteer time. So many people add so much to this church, and the community and world beyond with their own personal touches. You truly do embody our mission of Being Gathered in Christ, Fed by God's Word, and Sent to Serve.

Lastly, I would like to thank you - All the members of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church. Thanks to each and every one of you for embracing the necessary changes during this past year. At times like this, the isolation only makes us more appreciative of the community we have, and feel, at COS. While our staff members have proven resilient in finding ways to connect virtually, missing regular in-person interaction with those we care about, pray for and worship with leaves a notable void in our lives. If there is any silver lining to this pandemic, it is my hope that we appreciate our time together even more and realize the impact we have on each other; resulting in a deeper love of our church and God's good news.

It has been a pleasure and an honor to act as your Church Council President. I look forward to working for and with you in 2021.

Yours in Christ,
Maria Liedtke
Council President



We the Council of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church offer to you the budget for 2021.

Coronavirus has brought uncertainty and with it challenges. As a congregation, we realize now is a time of great demand on our church. Our congregation realizes the needs of our community, and your church continues to evolve to meet those needs in new and creative ways. We continue to work towards providing services for the congregation while still attempting to undertake the outreach you have deemed so important. That being said, we have been able to maintain our budget close to last year's level, while allowing for increased spending on items such as technological enhancements which will better allow us to service our congregation in these unprecedented times. Additionally, the security you have provided through the employment of our staff is rewarded with the hard work, dedication and ingenuity they provide us every day. We are grateful for your continued support in these challenging times, and offer this budget to you for your evaluation and approval.

Mike McCurdy
COS Treasurer

Music in Ministry Annual Report December 2020

This has certainly been an interesting year for Music in Ministry due to the pandemic, but we have worked during this challenging time to offer familiar music that is appropriate for connecting virtually. We continue to strive to bring you music that ties into the Gospel and the pastors' weekly sermons, knowing that music can bring people together during this unprecedented time.

Since last spring, our musicians have been meeting once a month to record hymns and, on occasion, special music, for the following month's virtual services. Rest assured, we are following protocols put in place regarding social distancing and mask wearing. For the record, it is not easy singing with a mask on – bigger and deeper breaths are needed!

Our song leaders and guitarists have also participated in our drive-in services to bring you live music. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to see all of the familiar faces at our drive-in services and love participating in those, even though it is in a smaller way than usual.

Since last May, we have been hosting Choir Zoom meetings every other Wednesday night at 7pm for those who are interested. It is one way we can continue to spend time together as we all miss singing together as a choir family!

In November, Brad Moerke, our Music Ministry Band Director passed away. Not only was he an integral part of our Music Ministry, but he had such a love for Christian music! Brad reached out and mentored many musicians over the years and always created opportunities for those who wanted to play or sing with us. His knowledge of all things musically technological is a

great loss as well. He was a special member of our choir family, a dear friend, and will be greatly missed. Our hearts go out to his family.

Wishing you and yours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

In Christ,
Linda Brackmann
Eileen Swierczek



2020 Memorials

God's Work Supported By Memorial Funds

The Memorials Fund was established to support purchases of special equipment and services for enhancement of worship and congregational activities. Additionally, memorial gifts may be designated for special purposes such as youth enrichment or outreach activities.



Memorial Gifts

Special memorial gifts received in 2020 were given in memory of the following individuals:

In Memory of Anita Oster

Designated for The Quilters:

From: Charles Oster, Nancy Klingbiel, Diane Shenefield, Sam & Dennis Mayek Sue DiDenato, Sue Markwald, Phyllis Roeber, and Joan Singer

Designated for General Expenses

From: Doreen Reske, Duane & Anne Dupuy, Michael & Jayne Popp, Allen & Christine Bucek, Steven & Sherri Jasinski Eleanor & Wayne Snyder, Charles Oster, Claire & Dave Moe, Geraldine Oster, Trauty Werner, Jean & Jeff Paulkner, and Steven & Suzanne Loucks

Outreach - Monetary gifts to deserving causes such as Sussex Outreach Services, Hephatha Lutheran Church, Serenity Inn, and Bread of Healing Ministries

In Memory of Carol Deede

From Waltraud Werner

In Memory of Jim Medhurst

From David & Claire Moe

In Memory of Jim Barber

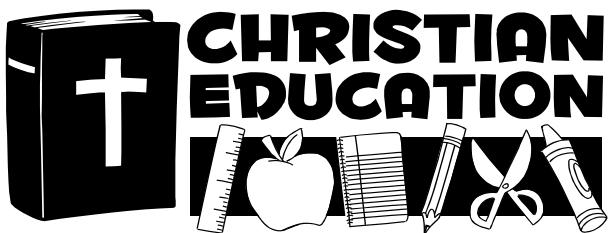
From Phyllis Barber

In Memory of Don Kapp

From Sandra & Dennis Cawood

In Memory of Bradley Moerke

From Patricia Brandt, Brian & Joanne Wampole



Education and Youth Ministry 2020 Annual Report

This annual report is unique! I would love to give thanks and praise to God for seeing us through this crazy strange year. I would also like to thank all of the parents, children, and youth who have been flexible and willing to try new things.

Sunday School Ministry

This past year, we started a new service group called Families in Ministry. It's for Sunday school children and their families who would come to church at 11:00 a.m. on the third Sunday of the month for a late lunch and a service project. We were able to make snack bags and deliver them to the families who are staying at the Ronald McDonald house. We helped with the World Hunger Project for Pine Ridge. We went Christmas caroling at a nursing home. We also made Matthew 25 bags to be distributed to the men who were receiving services at the Milwaukee Guest House. We made sandwiches to be delivered to the Milwaukee Guest House. Along with Sunday school this past year, we also had two opportunities for family drive-in movie nights which were a huge success!

Confirmation Ministry

This past year, we were able to make 3000 sandwiches to be delivered to the Milwaukee Guest House during the months of January and February. We also collected and donated 1 half a ton of food to the SOS Food Pantry. Half of this new ministry was another service project that we participated in every month on the fourth Tuesday in conjunction with their kid's praise ministry.

In October, 29 ninth graders affirmed their baptism through confirmation on October 18th and 25th 2020. We give thanks for each one of them!

Youth ministry

In January and February, high school youth helped to make 3000 sandwiches for the Milwaukee Guest House. We did that in conjunction with the high school football team, members from the national honor Society, along with our youth.

We were unable to participate in a summer mission trip. We were blessed to work with the Guest House, and we provided them with over 500 lunches this past summer!

We have been truly blessed to serve Jesus together this past year and we are looking forward to many more opportunities in 2021.

Blessings and Peace,
Kim Lewin
Director of Education and Youth Ministry

TACOS Annual Report

As is true for most everything in 2020, COVID-19 rocked the TACOS world and changed so much for our program.

When the world went into shutdown, it forced us to change our very being and how we operate.



What we did in 2020:

Pre-COVID-19 Highlights

- Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp, Winter Wonderland Retreat
- Hephatha Sunday Meals in addition to Tuesday ministry
- Growth in Middle School group
- Continued service project work with CCOS partners
- Developing work on youth gathering retreats, suicide prevention walk with Hamilton School District, Youth Mission Day, etc. (Cancelled due to COVID)

Started TACOS Virtual Mode

- Weekly activities distributed in text, emails, and social media platform posting
 - Activities included motivational posts, devotion/bible study discussions, and fun question videos
 - Core group of around 30 youth receiving direct communications and email connections with over 100 parents/families
- Created communication groups for TACOS youth and built up personal communication bank for families and youth.

Maintained service projects with ministry partners like Hephatha

- Food drives for Hephatha
- Service projects with ERAS Senior Network etc.

Working to build the TACOS resume for future funding options

What worked well?

Adaptability to change!

- We were able to successfully transition online without too many hitches.

Engagement with existing TACOS community maintained

What were the challenges

- Very hard to grow the ministry during a global pandemic
- Strained relationships with CCOS partners
- It's hard to measure objectives when social engagement is the main metric

What are some continued goals

- Develop/maintain/enhance COVID-19 protocols and practices for TACOS until it is safe to gather again
- Grow our online community and work on including other TACOS demographics (ministry partners like Hephatha and parents)

Adult Discipleship Highlights

Worship Assistants

We started the year strong with a full schedule of worship assistants. Unfortunately, when the pandemic hit in March, most of our worship assistant roles were suspended as we moved to online worship services.

One role that was not suspended, but took on a different look, was our Lectors. I appreciate how our lectors were so flexible and adapted quickly to recording their readings for our online worship services. Thank you to all our virtual lectors this year!

New Member Orientation & Reception

This Spring, we were unable to welcome new members due to COVID-19. But this fall, we made a few changes to our new member orientation and reception to maintain social distancing. This allowed us to welcome 9 new members (two families) to Christ Our Savior at our drive-in worship service on October 11th, 2020.

Thrivent Action Teams

Despite the pandemic, we still were an active congregation, meeting the needs in our community through our outreach ministries. This year, we completed 32 Thrivent Action Teams! With each action team, we receive a \$250 gift card from Thrivent for seed money, which was a total of \$8,000 that has gone to benefit our ministries. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to complete Thrivent Action Teams this year.

**Outreach ministries with an asterisk received funding from a Thrivent Action Team*

Bible Studies/Book Group Studies

Women's Inspirational Book Group - This spring, half way through our study "Made to Crave: Satisfying Your Deepest Desire with God, Not Food" by Lisa Terkeurst, we moved to an online format and completed our study via Zoom. Over the summer, this group met outdoors by the firepit for the book study, "The Circle Maker: Praying Circles Around Your Biggest Dreams and Greatest Fears" by Mark Batterson.

Zoom Book Study- Over the summer, Pastor Joe lead the online book study "White Fragility" by Robin DiAngelo in response to racial injustice in the news & in our world.

Wednesday Book Group - This group began the "Love Does" study by Bob Goff in February, but their weekly meetings were put on hold due to the pandemic in March.

In addition, many of our Bible/Book studies such as Serendipity Bible Study, COS Book Group, Men's Breakfast Bible Study, and Cold Treats & Hot Takes took place in January and February. In March, they were

suspended due to social distancing required during the pandemic.

Fellowship Ministries

JOY Group – Our 55 & older adult ministry toured Raised Grain Brewing Company on February 9th. They were schedule to see "The Music Man" by the Falls Patio Players in April, but this event was cancelled due to the pandemic.

In the Middle – This 30s, 40s, & 50s group participated in the Annual Candlelight Ski/Hike at Pike Lake Beach on February 8th.

CHEFs - Met in the COS Kitchen to prepare home meals on Sunday, January 12th & Sunday, February 9th.

COS Quilters - This dedicated group made 192 quilts this year, a new record! 140 quilts were donated to Lutheran World Relief, 40 quilts to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, and 12 quilts to Street Angels to be distributed to the homeless in Milwaukee.

Mask Making - Our quilters switched gears during the pandemic and made 4,200 masks through Just One More Ministry in connection with local firm Rebel Converting. They also made over 100 homemade masks that were donated to hospitals and long-term care facilities in our area.

Church Beautification Teams - This year, both our Adopt-A-Garden and Yard Care/Lawn Mowing Team did an amazing job maintaining the church property. Thank you to everyone who pulled weeds, planted flowers, and mowed the lawn!

Outreach Ministry Highlights

Before COVID-19 pandemic

Mac-N-More* – In January, we collected a huge pallet of nutrient rich food along with mac-n-cheese to benefit Cross Lutheran - Bread of Healing Food Pantry.

Souper Bowl Sunday – In February, our youth collected \$1,178 for our Sussex Outreach Services Food Pantry following our worship services.

Bread of Healing* – We served a healthy meal to over 150 people at Cross Lutheran Church during our monthly meal ministry on Wednesday, January 15th & Wednesday, February 12th. Our March meal was suspended due to the pandemic.

Community Banquet* - We prepared a meal at St James Catholic Church on Thursday, February 13th through our participation with the Cooperating Churches of Sussex. This ministry was suspended the rest of the year due to the pandemic.

FebrU-WEARY “Brief” Appeal - During the month of February, we collected 683 pairs of NEW boys’, girls’, men’s, and women’s underwear to benefit our ministry partners.

Guest House Sandwich Making* – During the months of January & February, our confirmation youth made a total of 3,460 sandwiches. Due to increased food scarcity during the pandemic, our youth made even more sandwiches (over 700) and 350 lunches to feed the hungry this summer.

Hygiene Bags During Lent* – We made over 30 hygiene bags during Lent for Bread of Healing Clinic at Cross Lutheran Church.

Fish & Chicken Fry Fundraiser*- Our Fish and Chicken Fry fundraiser on March 6th was a success. We brought in \$1,120 and the proceeds were donated to Bread of Healing.

During COVID-19 pandemic

Serenity Inns* – During January & February, members prepared and served a meal to the men in recovery. Once social distancing went into effect, we continued with our meal ministry and delivered meals to Serenity Inns. In addition, we held spring, summer, and fall clothing drives, and non-perishable food collections throughout the year.

Hephatha Lutheran Church*– In January & February, youth participated in our monthly meal ministry. In March, this meal was suspended due to social distancing. We continued to support our ministry partners with several drives this year including: Baby Sanctuary Drive (March), COVID Food Drive (April), TACOS-Food Drive (May), School Supply Drive (August), Sunday School Care Packages (September), Winter Outerwear Drive (October), Hephatha Stockings (December).

SOS Food Pantry – Throughout the year, we collected food items to support our SOS Food Pantry.

SOS Garden Share – Instead of a garden share in our narthex, due to social distancing, we donated our garden produce to our local food pantry in Sussex.

Outreach for Hope - On July 19th, we held a Bike/Walk/Ride event at COS following our drive-in worship service. Mike Groh, interim director, spoke at the event and we collected \$419 to support this ministry.

SOS Operation Backpack*- In August, we collected over 1000 items during our school supply drive.

Pine Ridge Indian Reservation – We donated 40 quilts to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in September along with items collected for their Christmas gift boxes.

Lutheran World Relief* – Our quilters have been hard at work all year long. In October, we donated 140 Quilts to Lutheran World Relief to provide shelter, comfort, and warmth to those throughout the world.

Milwaukee Rescue Mission Cereal Drive* – In September, we collected 259 boxes of cereal along with Living Christ in Germantown. The cereal was donated to the Milwaukee Rescue Mission to make emergency food baskets for individuals in need during the pandemic.

Friends of Luther Manor – We raised \$305 during our Friends of Luther Manor annual fundraiser this September.

Luther Manor Cookie Drive*- In October, we held a cookie drive and collected 147 packages of cookies that we donated to residents at Luther Manor to let them know we care in this time of social distancing.

Socktober* – During October, we had our annual sock drive. We collected 285 pairs of socks to benefit our ministry partners in the community.

Take & Heat Chili Drive-Thru Fundraiser* – On November 1st, we held a chili fundraiser and raised \$560 to benefit the Bread of Healing ministry at Cross Lutheran Church. This created a new opportunity for our Bread of Healing meal on December 9th as we made to-go chili bags for feeding the hungry.

Bread of Healing Peanut Butter Collection*- In November, we collected peanut butter for the Cross Bread of Healing food pantry due to a food shortage.

Giving Tree* - This Advent, we relocated our Giving Tree to the east entryway. We became innovative as we painted a Christmas Tree on our window, attached all the tags to the windows, and placed bins for donated gifts. We adopted 3 families (12 children) through Christmas Clearing Council in Waukesha. We were blessed to be able to deliver over 50 gifts to them. In addition, we distributed over 80 gift cards to our ministry partners including Serenity Inns, Hephatha Lutheran Church, Cross Lutheran Church, Eras Senior Network, and Sussex Outreach Services. These gift cards were distributed to those in the community experiencing hardship this year at Christmastime. Thank you to everyone who donated gifts this Christmas season. Your generosity blessed so many people!

**Outreach ministries with an asterisk received funding from a Thrivent Action Team*

Amy Berken
Director of Adult Discipleship and Outreach



Social Outreach Ministry