
2021-22 Annual Report

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH — ESCANABA, MICHIGAN

Annual Meeting Agenda — June 12, 2022

Fiscal Year, June 2021—Mid-May, 2022

1. Opening Devotion - Pastor Michael Markwell
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of 2021 Congregational Annual Meeting Minutes..... 2-3
4. Treasurer's ReportWill be available June 5th
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11. Organization Reports
 - a. Immanuel Lutheran Church Women (ILCW)..... 13
12. Presentation and Adoption of 2021-2022 Budget.....14-15
13. New Business
 - a. Council, Boards and Committees:
Audit, Investment Advisory, Nominating
 - b. Delegates: Synod Assembly, Delta Conference, Fortune Lake 16
15. Fortune Lake Camp Director's Report 17
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17. Close of Meeting with Prayer

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

June 6, 2021

Dave Mason – Congregational President called the meeting to order at 11:21 AM.

Attendees signed in.

Pastor Dennis Meyette lead the Opening Prayer.

06-2021-01 Motion to approve the agenda. Barb Denny/Sandy Gonsowski – Motion carried.

06-2021-02 Motion to approve the 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes. Linda Mason/Marti Martin – Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report – Jim Franks explained the report. The report was printed at the end of May so that we would have something printed for the meeting.

06-2021-03 Motion to accept the Treasurer’s report. Gloria Johnson/Jodi Chouinard – Motion carried.

Financial Secretary’s Report – Included in the Annual report for personal review.

06-2021-04 Motion to accept the Financial Secretary’s Report. Marti Martin/Deb Barton – Motion carried.

Audit Committee Report – Included for personal review.

Pastor’s Report – Included for personal review.

Membership Record – Included for personal review.

President’s Message – Included for personal review.

Task Force Reports: Outreach, Children’s Ministry, Property & Management Committee, and Immanuel Lutheran Church Women’s annual report & the Treasurer’s Report for them are all include for personal review.

06-2021-05 Motion to accept the Audit Committee, Pastor’s Report, Membership Record, President’s Message, and the Task Force Reports. Marti Martin/Mary Ciminskie – Motion carried.

Presentation and Adoption of the 2021-2022 Budget. President Dave Mason mentioned that the Housing and moving expense in the budget was for \$13,000.00 and that Pastor Mike let him know that the moving expenses were going to be less than \$5,000.00.

06-2021-06 Motion to adopt the 2021 – 2022 Budget. Laurel Swanson/Leroy Scheeneman - Motion carried.

New Business:

Council, Boards and Committees:

Audit, Investment Advisory, Nominating

Delegates: Synod Assembly, Delta Conference, Fortune Lake

06-2021-07 Motion to approve all nominees and delegates at the same time. Linda Mason/Laurel Swanson – Motion carried.

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Council: Sandy Sovey is now off Church Council and is not being replaced.
Jodi Chouinard is agreeing to serve another term.

Audit: Barb Denny, Maria Caron, and Kim Pepin

Investment Advisory Board: Tom Kozar, Maria Caron, and Jim Franks

Synod Assembly: Barb Denny, and Pastor Mike

Delta Conference: Dave Mason and Barb Denny

Fortune Lake: Barb Noblet and Jodi Chouinard

Nominating Committee: Marti Martin, Pastor Mike, Gail Johnson, and Tracey Corrigan

Financial Secretary: Linda Mason remains until 2024

06-2021-08 Motion to accept all nominations for all positions. Laurel Swanson/Maria Caron – Motion carried.

President Dave Mason reminded that congregation that the Church Secretary, Christine Smauley will be retiring at the end of the year.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer lead by Pastor Dennis.

Tracey Corrigan was called to the front of the Church to be honored for her work with the Children's Ministry by the ILCW.

06-2021-09 Motion to adjourn. Marti Martin/Barb Denny – Motion carried.

Submitted by: Deb Barton

Financial Secretary’s Report – End of the Fiscal Year (June 1, 2021 – May 8, 2022)

This report is only for 49 weeks since the meeting is June 12, 2022

Giving 0..... 19	\$17-18..... 1	\$46-504
Under \$1..... 4	\$19-20..... 0	\$51-553
\$1-2 6	\$21-22..... 1	\$56-601
\$3-4 6	\$23-24..... 2	\$61-701
\$5-6 3	\$25-26..... 2	\$71-800
\$7-8 5	\$27-28..... 0	\$81-902
\$9-10 1	\$29-30..... 2	over \$902
\$11-12 2	\$31-35..... 3	
\$13-14 0	\$36-40..... 6	
\$15-16 0	\$41-45..... 4	Total Giving Units 80

**Immanuel Lutheran Church
Audit Committee
Reporting for June 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021 Records**

The audit of records for the fiscal year June 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021 has not been completed yet. To get current, we will plan on auditing fiscal year end May 31, 2021 at the same time as we work on the audit of records for the current fiscal year June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022.

Submitted by:

*Barb Denny
Kim Pepin
Maria Caron*

Pastor's Annual Report

About a year ago, I began my call at Immanuel Lutheran Church. It was June 14th that I began my call here at Immanuel. So, as I write this annual report it is also a reflection on the first year of our ministry together.

It has been a year of learning. Over the last year, much of what I have tried to do is to learn. Learn about Immanuel and its rich history. What are the successes she has had over the years, what are things that we can continue to learn from? I have learned about you all. I have enjoyed getting to meet many of you, to sit with you at coffee hour, to serve alongside you, and to hear the stories of how God is at work in your life.

At the same time, I hope you have learned about me as well. As you continue to learn the ways I approach things. As I share pieces of my life with you, and even a bad joke or two. As you watch me continue to grow into the office of pastor and as a leader in the Delta County Community. As we continue this journey together, I hope that we can continue to build trust in each other.

Over the last year I have been proud of what we have been able to accomplish together. The things we have done well are too great to number, but these are highlights:

- We revamped our children's ministry. With the help of Traci, we have found a good foundation for our children's ministry going forward.
- The worship and music committee has also taken a strong step forward. With the direction of Tim and the help of the members of the team, we have brought in new elements of worship while also bringing back some familiar ones. I am proud of the work that the committee is doing and the ways it continues to shape our ministry.
- We have transitioned staff in our office. We thanked Chris for the years of service to this congregation & wish her and Robin well in retirement. We thank Morgan for her skills and gifts she brought to us & we wish her well as she moves on to her next position, mid-June. We look forward to seeing how God will bless us through our next administrative assistant.

As we look to the next year of ministry together, rather than set out specific goals there are areas, I would love to see us focusing on:

The relationship Immanuel has with the community. As we continue to come out of the pandemic, I think it's important to ask; "How are we as a ministry engaging the community? Do we have presence in the community beyond our physical location?"

Grow deeper in our own faith and foundations. I hope that we find new ways to continue to provide support for faith development of our members.

I look forward to the next year. I hope that it is as fruitful as the last year has been. I feel that Immanuel has a bright future ahead of it and I am privileged to call myself its pastor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Mike Markwell

Membership Record for 2021-2022

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

June, 2021—May 22, 2022

* In-person 2,765
 On-line worshippers 4,212

Total Worshippers 6,977

**Weekly Average: In-person 41
 On-line 62
 Total 103

.
 ** Based on weeks in this fiscal year

Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Lent and Good Friday are included in these numbers.

PARISH REPORT

Baptisms

Walker James Levesque.
 Baptized May 15, 2022

Deaths

Shirley Casperson. Born June 16, 1934
 Died June 9, 2021.

Elma Thinglum. Born January 24, 1919.
 Died July 7, 2021.

Marriages

New Members

Students Confirmed

First Communicants

High school Graduates

Gabby Chouinard
 Avry Corrigan

MEMBERSHIP RECORD

May 23, 2021	Active	134
	Inactive	29

	Total	163

May 22, 2022	Active	131
	Inactive	54

	Total	185

President's Message

The apostle Paul, as he entered many communities, would greet them with “I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus.”

I feel as we enter the sanctuary on Sunday mornings, we also give thanks for the grace given to us and the blessings that have been given to each one of us. We, as a congregation, have been blessed with a new leader, Pastor Mike. After another year of Covid we continue to worship and praise God.

This may be another time to take stock of the blessings He has provided. I am excited to see everyone on Sunday morning and to sing praises to God. There is a lot going on with our committees as we serve out communities. The past couple of Sundays we have been listening to the message of stewardship and how it relates to each one. Each one of us is called to serve in one way or another. Don't hesitate to ask “where can I help?”. I give thanks for each person of our community of faith, including the Facebook community. We have a lot going on and ask that everyone continue to pray for our church.

As our former pastor, Dennis, would close his message, he would always say (from the Isaiah text), “I am creating something new, do you see it?” Can you see it?

May God continue to bless everyone,

Dave Mason

President

Annual Outreach Report for June 2021 to June 2022

As this year continues with slightly less issues from COVID 19 and we gradually came back to our normal lives, somewhat, we continue to look for new way to service our church and community.

Active team members:

Barb Noblet
 Mary Ciminskie
 Jean Chapman
 Gail Johnson
 Debbie Barton
 Sandy Gonsowski
 Sandy Sovey
 Lynn Burak
 Pastor Mike
 Loren and Donna Woerpel

Beginning Balance: \$304.70

Deposits:

Dividend Income (\$3,800)
 Ann Jefferson Fund (\$820.22)
 Monetary Donations for Diapers
 (Mission of Hope) (\$1937.50)
 Harvest Table Donation (\$75)
 Advent Tree (\$839)
 Total: (\$7,471.72) \$7,776.42

Expenditures:

Honor Flight (\$500)
 Gas Cards (\$300)
 -(Member in Need)
 Lutheran World Relief (\$300)
 -(Vaccination Project)
 Saykly's (\$536.50)
 -(Diapers-M of H)
 Bill for purchase old Diapers (\$1278.17)
 -(M of H)
 Lutheran World Relief (\$600)
 -(Haiti Earthquake \$300)
 -(Hurricane Ida (\$300)
 Foster Closet (\$400)
 HATI (\$200)
 Gas card (\$70)
 -Blood Drive
 Rapid River Fire Victim (\$300)
 ELCA Good Gifts (\$839.00)
 Lakestate (\$200)
 United Way (\$200)

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Pregnancy Services (\$200)
 Troop 411 Boy Scouts (\$300)
 -(toward purchase of tent)
 ELCA Relief for Ukraine (\$300)
 Community Action Agency (\$300)
 -(Walk for Warmth)
 ELCA World Hunger (\$200)
 -(match from Lenten Soup
 Suppers)
 Gas Card (\$100)
 -(Blood Drive)
 Total: (\$7,123.67).



Ending Balance: \$652.75

Once again thank you to Mary Ciminskie for Zooming our meetings from Florida and keeping minutes for us.

This year Sandy Sovey once again led the Diaper Drive for Mission of Hope. Mission of Hope originally planned to be held at Ludington Park but had to change to the mall because of the weather at the last moment. Thank you to all the members that helped haul diapers there after church that Sunday. Also, thank you to all that helped hand out diapers that day.

Sandy also organized a Trick or Trunk Event for Halloween. It was a lot of fun and serviced the Community. We could use a few more cars for the year.

Jean Chapman once again led the Fall Harvest Project. We collected about \$500 worth of groceries that were brought to The Salvation Army.

Jean also led the Foster Closet Drive. Along with the items collected a monetary gift was sent.

Sandy Gonsowski led the Operation Christmas Boxes. We did this online this year.

Barb Noblet led the Bay College Meals with the help of her faithful crew. We did two meals, filling 50 containers that were picked up by Pastor Tony (Campus Ministry Director) He said we will be back at the campus for meals next time.

Barb also headed up two blood drives, one in May and one in October.

Lynn Burak led the Advent Tree Ornaments Project. Congregational members could purchase an ornament with pictures of farm animals, school supplies, etc. The money raised was then donated to the ELCA / Good Gifts Project.

We have kept busy this year and are planning future opportunities for everyone at Immanuel to help serve the church and our community. Many thanks for your help with these projects and we hope you continue to look for ways to help.

Submitted by Barb Noblet Team Chair

Children's Ministry

Children's Ministry Annual Report
May 10, 2022

Children's Ministry this year has transitioned from during Sunday service, to a monthly get together one Friday night per month. While having CM during service hours we were typically getting only two children, which were my two boys. We would periodically get one or two more students, but it varied. Pastor Mike and I decided to go a different route and try a monthly evening get together. We transitioned in January. Unfortunately, that first night had to be cancelled as I was at the hospital with my mom. I have personally invited children who have been registered for Sunday school in the past, but none have attended.

We had CM in February where our lesson was **Jesus is the Light of the World**. We had a bible story and candle lighting with Pastor Mike. We ordered pizza for supper and had cookies from Sandy Sovey. We made glow in the dark lanterns made from mason jars and made paper lanterns. We played flashlight tag. We had four children attend.

There was no CM in March as it fell during the local school district's Spring Break.

In April we had **Love Your Neighbor** as our lesson. Pastor Mike did a bible story and a mapping activity about our neighbors. We ordered pizza for supper and Pastor Mike baked us brownies! We made a paper heart craft where we put people's names on each one and talked about the fact that some "neighbors" are easy to love, and some are not. We played a game called "I Love My Neighbor, especially My Neighbor Who...". We had five children attend, one of which was one of our confirmation class students who came to help.

We are not planning on having Vacation Bible School at our church as we do not have enough attendance. Instead, we will be sharing info about other VBS programs that kids may attend.

Moving forward, I would like to continue the monthly get togethers. We obviously need to come up with a new plan for getting children to attend, which will need to be discussed over the summer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Traci Corrigan
Children's Ministry Director

Property & Management Committee Report

As I write this we are amid a few projects, such as our kitchen renovation and trying to get bids on our leaking roof. Our flat roof is old and needing replacement as you can see by the totes that we have in the hall to collect the water. So far, I have one bid which was submitted, and it was astronomical, at least to me! These bids will be discussed at church council and brought forward for a congregational vote. All bids and proposals will then be discussed and probably be voted on at this time.

As I mentioned previously, we are just about done with our kitchen project as our countertops should be installed this week and with our new lighting and brighter paint, things are shaping up quite well! Thanks to all who donated for this project and to those who volunteered to get this done.

We also have an issue on our property with all the dead Ash trees that need to be cut down. Again, to get this done by a tree service is quite expensive and we are looking at other options. If someone has an idea, please let property know. We shut the boilers down for the season and we have our three-year boiler inspection due this July, again more expense. We always seem to have something going on here as I am sure most churches do and if anyone would like to join our property committee or just volunteer their time with some of the skills that you have, it would be much appreciated.

One more thing is that we need to get the rest of the trim painted on the exterior of the church. Do I see any hands going up????!!

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Kozar, property co-chair

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN (ILCW)

ANNUAL REPORT JUNE 2021—MAY 2022

Women of the ILCW shared in the following ways over the last year:

*Our books were **audited** on May 15, 2021, through April 30, 2021, by Sandy Gonsowski and Gail Johnson.

***Walking Together Book Study** group continue to meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month meeting at church in the fellowship hall at 11:30 a.m. We recently finished reading "*Twelve Ordinary Men*" by John MacArthur. We found it quite interesting. Our disciples were all very common people just like you and I. We will be starting a new book "*WHEN THE GAME IS OVER IT ALL GOES BACK IN THE BOX*" by John Ortberg. If you want to join us, purchase a book, and join us on a 1st or 3rd Wednesday.

*Our ILCW group continues to send out **cards to our shut-in's**, with Barbara Noblet leading this endeavor. Please let her know of anyone we should send cards to. At Christmas we were able to deliver small gifts to our shut-ins that were purchased or donated by the congregation. We thank the congregation for their donations. Barbara Noblet and Barbara Denny delivered along with help from Pastor Mike. It's such a joy to visit with them.

*Again, our **Lenten Breakfast and Musical Program** had to be cancelled due to Covid 19.

*Even with a short season of quilting we managed to donate 40 **quilts** and 24 **personal care kits to Lutheran World Relief** in October. Rylee Mason received a graduate quilt made by our ladies. We meet on Monday mornings at 9 a.m. We will try another evening time again this Fall, so if you're interested contact Barbara Denny and we'll try to pick an evening that works.

*Our **Tri County Cluster Meetings** were cancelled, as was our Fall **SWO Convention and Fortunate Lake Retreat**. However, on September 16-18, 2022, our convention and retreat are now scheduled with a theme of "Celebration of Women". They have scholarships available if you're interested. The office will be getting information very soon.

Officers for the ILCW are President, Barbara Denny; Vice President, Gail Johnson; Secretary, Cindy Charbonneau; and, Treasurer, Maria Caron. Our **meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of every other month starting at 5:30 p.m.** All the women of Immanuel are considered members, so please join us.

Respectfully Submitted,
Barbara Denny, President

Immanuel Lutheran Church Women

Treasurer's Report April 30, 2022

Balance as of April 30, 2021 \$ 1,986.63

ILCW Account Savings & Checking

April 2021 Balance \$ 719.72

April 2022 Balance \$ 790.61

Quilters Account

April 2021 Balance \$ 1,198.60

April 2022 Balance \$ 1,233.27

Pasties Account

April 2021 Balance \$ 68.31

April 2022 Balance \$ 118.31

Balance as of April 30, 2022 \$ 2,142.19

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria Luisa Caron

Treasurer

Immanuel Lutheran Church Spending Plan			
CATEGORY	2022 Budget	2023 Budget	
Enabling Ministries	\$ 139,473	\$ 141,718	102%
Worship	\$ 3,100	\$ 3,100	100%
Instrument Maintenance	\$ 550	\$ 550	100%
Music, Supplies, Copyrights	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,300	100%
Worship Supplies	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	100%
Other	\$ 250	\$ 250	100%
Evangelism	\$ 1,425	\$ 1,425	100%
Advertising	\$ 450	\$ 450	100%
Brochures, Web Site, & Supplies	\$ 675	\$ 675	100%
Hospitality	\$ 100	\$ 100	100%
New Member Ministries	\$ 100	\$ 100	100%
Other	\$ 100	\$ 100	100%
Synod Ministries	\$ 14,280	\$ 14,280	100%
NGLS General Benevolence	\$ 12,600	\$ 12,600	100%
Fortune Lake Camp	\$ 1,320	\$ 1,320	100%
Other	\$ 360	\$ 360	100%
Church Administration	\$ 16,650	\$ 16,650	100%
Utilities	\$ 11,500	\$ 11,500	100%
Supplies, Postage, & Equipment	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	100%
Synod Convention & Delta Conference	\$ 800	\$ 800	100%
Interest fee	\$ 100	\$ 100	100%
Other	\$ 250	\$ 250	100%
Staff Support	\$ 102,265	\$ 104,415	102%
Supply Pastor	\$ 500	\$ 500	100%
Pastor	\$ 77,130	\$ 77,884	101%
Base Salary	\$ 38,400	\$ 39,100	
Housing Allowance	\$ 13,000	\$ 13,000	
Social Security Allowance	\$ 3,932.00	\$ 3,985.65	
Education Allowance	\$ 900	\$ 900	
Mileage	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200	
Health Insurance & Pension	\$ 19,698	\$ 19,698	
Church Secretary	\$ 9,555	\$ 9,945	104%
Custodian	\$ 5,200	\$ 5,720	110%
Choir Director	\$ 8,560	\$ 8,936	104%
Base Wage	\$ 8,160	\$ 8,486	
Education allowance	\$ 400	\$ 450	
Organist	\$ 160	\$ 270	169%
Financial Secretary	\$ 580	\$ 580	100%
Quilters	\$ 115	\$ 115	100%
Treasurer	\$ 580	\$ 580	100%
Tax Obligation	\$ 1,753	\$ 1,848	
Medicare	\$ 332.27	\$ 350	
SSI	\$ 1,420.73	\$ 1,497	
Church Obligation	\$ 1,753.00	\$ 1,848	105%

staying w/synod guidelines

new old

\$12.75 \$12.50

\$11.00 \$10.00

\$372.35 \$340.00

3 weeks 2 weeks

Cover for Chior director Vacation

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Savings Budget	\$ 32,600	\$ 31,400	96%
Outreach Ministries	\$ 6,450	\$ 5,250	81%
<i>Gods Fund</i>	\$ 2,400	\$ 1,200	50%
<i>Outreach Service Projects</i>	\$ 3,800	\$ 3,800	100%
<i>Hope At The Inn</i>	\$ 250	\$ 250	100%
Youth & Family	\$ 3,850	\$ 3,850	100%
<i>Adult Education</i>	\$ 200	\$ 200	100%
<i>Children's Education</i>	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200	100%
<i>Programs & Trips</i>	\$ 600	\$ 600	100%
<i>Scholarships</i>	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	100%
<i>Vacation Bible School</i>	\$ 300	\$ 300	100%
<i>Picnic</i>	\$ 350	\$ 350	100%
<i>Other</i>	\$ 200	\$ 200	100%
Youth Camperships	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	100%
<i>Camperships</i>	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	
Property Maintenance	\$ 20,800	\$ 20,800	100%
<i>Insurance</i>	\$ 3,400	\$ 3,400	100%
<i>Snow/Yard Services</i>	\$ 3,400	\$ 3,400	100%
<i>Supplies, Services, & Minor Repairs</i>	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	100%
<i>Capital Expenditures</i>	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	100%
BUDGET TOTAL	\$ 172,073	\$ 173,118	101%

2021 - 2022 Council Members, Officers, Delegates and Staff of Immanuel Lutheran Church

<i>Name</i>	<i>Term</i>	<i>Elected at this Annual Meeting</i>	<i>Term Expires at this Annual Meeting</i>	<i>2020-21 Nominating Committee Nominations for 2021-22</i>
Current Council Members				
Jodi Chouinard	2nd	2021	2023	
Ralph Johnson	1st	2019	2022	Ralph Johnson 2nd term
Kathy Stewart	1st	2019	2022	Charlene Scheeneman
Vacant (up to 4 additional mem-				Need nominations
Current Congregational Officers				
Dave Mason (President)	2nd	2021	2023	
Gary Corrigan (Vice President)	2nd	2021	2023	
Deb Barton (Secretary)	1st	2019	2022	
Jim Franks (Treasurer)		appointed		
2022 ELECTED POSITIONS AND STAFF OF IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH				
Audit Committee				
Barb Denny	2nd	2021	2024	
Kim Pepin	2nd	2020	2023	
Maria Caron	1st	2020	2022	Need Nomination
Investment Advisory Board				
Jim Franks	1st	2019	2022	Jim Franks 2nd term
Tom Kozar	1st	2019	2022	Tom Kozar 2nd term
Maria Caron	1st	2020	2024	
Synod Convention Delegates for 2023				
Jim Franks, Barb Denny, Pastor Mike Markwell				Pastor Mike Markwell and need nominations
Fortune Lake Delegates				
Barb Noblet and Jodi Chouinard				Need nominations
Delta Conference Delegates				
Dave Mason and Barb Denny				Need nominations
Nominating Committee for June 2023 meeting				
Pastor Mike Markwell and Traci Corrigan				Pastor Mike Markwell, need nominations
STAFF				
Pastor: Mike Markwell		Financial Secretary: Linda Mason, appointed until 2024		
Administrative Assistant: Morgan Verbrigghe. Last day is June 7, 2022				
Custodian: Misty Mason		Music Director: Tim Worth		



**Camp Director's Report
For FLLC Annual Meeting - April 2022**

*Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.
-Matthew 11:28 (NRSV)*

We need camp more than ever. If there was one predominant message we've heard from folks returning to camp, this was it. The past two years have been challenging on so many fronts. We need a place set apart, a place where we can encounter the living Christ, set down our burdens, and rest. We need authentic relationships; we need to know that we are not alone. We need to unplug and re-center in the beauty of God's creation. We need to inhale the pine-scented air, soak in the water and remember our baptism, and know that we are loved. We need camp.

With the return of in-person activities, while other sectors of society struggled to get participants to come back, camp is thriving. We welcomed 397 campers in Summer 2021 despite our self imposed half-capacity limits to mitigate the spread of Covid. While neighboring businesses couldn't find the personnel they needed to provide basic services, we have remained fully staffed with a skilled, experienced group of year-round and seasonal staff. While some organizations have been challenged with heavy financial burdens, we have met all of our obligations while continuing to improve our facilities and plan for the future. Events like Fall Fest, as well as regular giving from faithful donors, have sustained us. Additionally, we continue to attract dedicated people to serve on our board and committees and to volunteer their services for the sake of Fortune Lake's ministry. We have been blessed. Our campers, staff, association congregations, volunteers, and donors have all demonstrated that we need camp more than ever, and they've shown up to make it happen. We are grateful!

As we look to the future, there is much to be excited about. We are poised to see a strong return of some programs that had taken a hiatus, especially Victory Camp (for adults with special needs) and congregational day camps. New opportunities that are being offered include LEGO® Camp and Musical Theatre Week. We invite you all to join us on August 6 when *One Wonderful Day: An Original Musical about Fortune Lake* will premiere at the historic Crystal Theatre. This production was originally scheduled for Summer 2020, but it is finally happening and will be bigger and better than we ever dreamed!

We long to be a place of rest for you. Consider how we might creatively partner to ease the heavy burdens for those in your congregations and communities. Take the leap and sign up for one of our camps or retreats. Or, reach out to Charlotte Strom, our new Guest Services Coordinator, who is prepared to work with you to develop the experience you're looking for. We all need camp more than ever, and we're here to provide balm for your weary souls.

Grace & Peace,

Amanda Rasner, Camp Director



*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen.*

~Hebrews 11:1

Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,

As this Year of Hope 2021 comes to a close, we shift our focus to Faith for the year 2022. Faith is, of course, connected to Hope as our Faith in the Spirit of the Living Christ is the source of our faith and our hope.

While each generation has been marked by its own challenges, it's hard not to feel like our time in history is somehow exceptional, perhaps because we are the ones who are living it. The past couple of years have certainly been distinctive.

We are living in a time of contrasts and simultaneous opposites:

Weariness and opportunity
Grief and creativity
Loss of traditions and forging something new
Polarization and common mission
Apart but together

Living in the tension of seemingly opposing forces is exhausting. And yet, perhaps it is only in that in-between space that we are able to move forward, like walking a ridge line, carefully balancing between two valleys that drop steeply to either side. Every step must be calculated and considered to avoid careening down a slippery slope.

I do believe we entered this pandemic thinking that somehow it would end, and we would all go back to the way things were. Now, I am thinking that it is not about looking for an end, but rather shifting into a new way of being.

Included in the charges given to a pastor at an ordination is this exhortation:

“So, discipline yourselves in life and teaching that you preserve the truth, giving no occasion for false security or illusory hope.”

I do not wish to give illusory hope, encouraging you to hold on for some near or distant day when the pandemic will be over, and things will get back to “normal.” The shifting and adapting we are doing now may well be permanent and not just a temporary adjustment for extraordinary circumstances.

As we travel the ridgeline of 2022, I encourage you to join me and the whole synod in a focus on Faith. The whole point of being church, the whole reason God created the church in the first place, was to share the good news of Jesus. When so much of the future remains uncertain, we have this core mission to guide our steps.

For 2022, I believe we will find blessing as we dig into what we believe, why we believe it, and what difference that belief makes to who we are as people trying to follow Jesus, and what it means for how we live in the world. Whether you join a Synod-wide Lifelong Faith Formation class or participate in a small group Bible Study in your congregation or with a group of friends, I ask you engage in a new effort, a new discipline, to deepen your faith, and I promise to do the same. Together, we will walk this narrow path through the tension that 2022 brings and find our way into becoming the future church and God is bringing into being.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Katherine Finegan

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