

# ANNUAL REPORT

2017



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

## A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

In 2017, Lutherans around the world observed the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. As the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are called to foster unity within the church and to live into God's calling together in the years ahead. Through our more than 3.7 million members and friends, we will continue to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ crucified and risen for the life of the world.

We are church together, united by a common vision.

A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ makes for all people and creation.

We are church for the sake of the world, united by a common purpose.

Together in Jesus Christ, we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully.

As we strive to live into this vision and purpose, we face many challenges. In a radically individualistic society, we seek to create and sustain life-giving relationships and communities that connect us to God and one another. In a society that is becoming increasingly secular while facing many tensions, we seek to proclaim the gospel and share the story of Jesus as a source of hope, inclusion, peace and reconciliation. And, in a world that misuses power and authority while struggling with growing inequality, we seek to follow Jesus who spoke publicly for those who were oppressed and marginalized.

As your church family gathers to make decisions about using the gifts God has entrusted to you, may you remember that by the tender love of God, by the ceaseless pursuit of the Spirit, we are members of the body of Christ. We are family. We share our lives. We love each other. By the reconciling expression of God's grace, we can live confidently and generously in this community of faith and in service of others because we are joined in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Living together in community with Christ,



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

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**Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda**  
**House of Prayer Lutheran Church Oakdale, Minnesota**  
**Sunday, January 28, 2018**

President: Dean Libby  
Vice President: Lynne Johnson  
Secretary: Karen Munos  
Treasurer: Dave Buan

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1. Call to order
2. Opening Devotions
3. Teller's Count
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Adopt Minutes of 2017 Annual Congregational Meeting, January 29, 2017
6. Reports
  - A. Approval of written Ministry Reports
  - B. Council President's Report
  - C. Pastor's State of the Congregation Report
  - D. Auditor's Report
  - E. Treasurer's Report
7. New Business
  - A. Personal: Holiday/Vacation Update
  - B. Faith Forward Capitol Campaign 2018
  - C. Delegates for Synod Conference Assembly Saturday February 24, Roseville  
Delegates for 2018 Synod Wide Assembly Friday May 18, Saturday May 19, Mahtomedi
  - D. Year of Renewal: Overview, Approval of Team and their Mission
  - E. Church Council Elections
  - F. Adoption of 2018 Budget
  - G. Announcements  
Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders March 10, 2018  
August 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly  
Other
8. Dinner Grace/Closing Prayer

# **House of Prayer Lutheran Church**

## **Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes**

### **Sunday, January 29, 2017**

The Annual Congregational Meeting of House of Prayer Lutheran Church (HOP) was called to order by President Dean Libby at 9:53 a.m. All page numbers herein refer to the pages in the published Annual Report.

Pastor Dan Streeper opened the meeting with a devotion, referring the congregation to the inside front cover of the Annual Report. Bishop Elizabeth Eaton mentions that we have the ability to grow and thrive and Pastor Dan said that we are either shrinking or growing. As a congregation, we read the Litany found on the inside front cover and closed by singing Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song, found on the inside back cover.

The teller's count, provided by Larry Lind, reported that 73 members were in attendance, more than the 52 members required for a quorum.

The next order of business was to approve the agenda found on page 2. Barb Lind motioned to accept the agenda, with a second from Corrine Petersen. With no changes to the agenda, the motion to approve the agenda was passed.

The minutes from the 2016 Congregational Meeting, dated January 31, 2016 was next considered. Bill Ham moved to approve the minutes, with a second from Gene Hults. There being no changes, the motion to approve the minutes was passed.

Next the minutes from the Special Congregational Meeting held on June 5, 2016 were reviewed. With a motion from Kris Goplen and a second from C. Linda Siluk, the motion to accept the minutes was passed.

Dean highlighted the president's report, found on page 9. He said we should be proud of our accomplishments but that we should also look forward. Our 50th Anniversary will be celebrated later this year. Recipients of the Lenten Special Offering have been considered. ELCA Good Gifts has a back pack program that provides food for families. Cowern Elementary School participates in the Sheridan Program. We would fill the back pack each week throughout the school year at a cost of \$130 per family and that back pack would provide food for the weekend. With a show of hands, many showed that they would support and participate. Dean also said he would like us to expand beyond our walls.

Next Dean asked that all ministry reports be approved, found on pages 11-21. C. Linda Siluk asked that she be allowed to expand the Christian Education report. With a motion from Jacky Hansen and a second from Audrey Orf, all ministry reports were approved except the Christian Education report. Linda updated the congregation on a recent Christian Education activity that talked about disciples. The children decorated lunch bags and they were given to the North St. Paul Food Shelf. With a motion from Monica Streeper and a second from Dave Bureau, the Christian Education report was approved.

Pastor Dan highlighted his report, found on page 22. He said there is a lot of energy for the upcoming 50th Anniversary celebration this fall. Our total benevolence for the year was 14%.

Looking ahead, we should be guided by God by participating in at least one bible study this year. He emphasized that we should work at being more hospitable and welcoming. He said that right now might be the time to try something new and that we need to do more outreach so we don't shrink. He thanked everyone for giving their time and talent in the last year. Also, he thanked the generous contributions he received for his upcoming trip to Tanzania.

Intern Pastor Kevin Hackney highlighted his report, found on page 24. He told the congregation that it is an honor to be called pastor even though he is an intern. He told us his faith has grown with the small groups that were started last fall. He asked us to consider what the Holy Spirit is calling us to do.

Dean thanked everyone for their Faith Forward Capital Campaign contributions over the last three years, raising \$242,965.71. The initiative ended on December 31, 2016, with a balance of \$61,175.57. He reminded us that we have many projects yet to be completed and that all funds have been put in a designated fund that can only be used for Capital Campaign projects. Dean said he believed we are about \$5,000 away from updating the bathrooms and we will be receiving an updated quote shortly.

The Audit Committee members are Penny Hults, Perry Johnson and Bruce Johnson. Penny reported on behalf of the committee that all accounts were found to be in order. They have provided recommendations to various accounts.

Treasurer David Buan reported that on page 33, current assets include our checking account, Global Mission and the Love Fund checking accounts with a total of \$116,393 as of December 31, 2016. Current liabilities which include Global Mission, the Love Fund and Designated Funds totaled \$99,998. The difference is \$16,395, which is the balance we have in our checking account. This looked quite different at the end of last October when we had a deficit of -\$13,000 and \$10,000 less in our checking account than the total of our current liabilities. We ended up with a net income of \$13,386, making up over \$26,000 in November and December. We begin 2017 in a much better financial shape than a year ago.

David told us the middle column on pages 35 and 36 show the actual income and expenses for 2016. Beginning at the top, operating income was \$257,618, which exceeded our projection by \$34,618. We also had benevolence income of \$19,501. In addition, we had Faith Forward income totaling \$74,452, for a total income of \$351,571. David thanked all of us for our support of the ministries at House of Prayer.

At the top of page 37 is a breakdown of expenses. David noted that benevolence of \$33,917 equaled 12.86% of expenses. Mortgage, utilities and insurance was \$46,414 or 17.60%. Our mortgage alone was \$31,086, which equaled 12.73% of expenses. Operating and office expense was \$27,931 or 10.59%. Staff, musicians and nursery was \$149,651 or 56.74%. Committees was \$5,820, or just 2.21% of expenses.

At the bottom of page 36, our total operating and benevolence expenses were \$263,733. Operating expenses excluding our extra benevolence were \$244,231. These are the expenses that we budget and these expenses were \$17,158 less than we had budgeted.

So, David said this is how we made up our Faith Factor, which was \$38,389. Our income was \$34,618 more than projected and our expenses were \$17,158 less than budgeted. The result was \$13,386 net income.

Pastor Dan explained that what the congregation pledged to give versus what was received equals the Faith Factor. A question was asked about the Capital Campaign funds and additional explanation was provided by Dean. He said it would be wonderful if bathrooms were done before the 50th Anniversary this fall. Pam Hodges motioned to accept the Treasurer's report, with a second from Jacky Hansen. A question was asked if the flooring would be done at the same time as the bathrooms. Dean said the flooring will be completed when funds are available and that they will be done last. Another question was what employees fall under the Other Paid Staff on page 36. They are the parish administrator, the custodian and the nursery attendant. With no further questions, the Treasurer's report was approved.

## **New Business**

The first item under New Business was to consider the following amendment to the Constitution: C13.04.02. Audit Committee

An Audit Committee of three voting members shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. ~~Congregation President or the Congregation Council~~. The Audit Committee shall audit the books of the congregation's primary and secondary accounts, including but not limited to checking, brokerage, ~~House of Prayer~~ ~~Preschool checking~~, LOVE fund, ~~Youth checking~~, Global Mission Ministry checking, and Women of Hope checking. Findings of the Audit Committee shall be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting and the Congregation Council shall be responsible for acting on recommendations of the Audit Committee. Primary accounts shall be audited annually. Secondary accounts shall be audited at least bi-annually. The members of the Audit Committee shall not be members of the Congregation Council or the Finance Ministry members with signatory authority for primary or secondary accounts. Term of office will be one year. Members shall be eligible for reappointment.

Dean explained that the amendment would give those more familiar with the operations of HOP the opportunity to be on the Audit Committee while restricting anyone with signing authority from serving. The motion was made by the Council. Mary Lou Hodge seconded the motion. Questions were asked to clarify who could or could not be on the committee. There being no further discussion, the motion was approved.

Next was the election of Council members. Dean thanked outgoing Council members Kris Goplen, Tim Byboth and Pam Hodges. He mentioned the three nominees: Dean Libby for President and Dawn Bottolfson and Rose Marie Flannigan for each of the At-Large positions. No nominations were received for the Secretary position and any future nomination will require a special meeting of the congregation. Dean asked for nominations for President and each At-Large position. Pam Hults moved and Dave Biedermann seconded to accept as a white ballot the three positions on page 39. There being no discussion, the white ballot was approved. With a motion from Audrey Orf and a second from Mary Lou Hodge, the motion was passed to approved Dean Libby as President and Dawn Bottolfson and Rose Marie Flannigan as At-Large positions as indicated on the white ballot. Each will serve a two year term.

Two female and two male delegates are needed to attend the Synod Conference Assembly on February 11, 2017. Dave Biedermann, Audrey Orf and Mary Lou Hodge agreed to attend. An additional male member may attend the meeting.

Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders will be held February 25, 2017. All Council members are invited to attend.

The 2016 Synod Assembly will be held May 19 and 20, 2017. One male and one female member may attend. Dave Biedermann and Dawn Bottolfson agreed to attend to represent HOP.

Next the budget for 2017 was discussed. David Buan referred the congregation to pages 35-37, in particular the column on the right. Income is projected to be \$230,000, which is an increase of \$7,000 over last year. Changes to the expense budget include an increase in Synod benevolence to \$23,040, as this should equal 10% of income, which will be \$1,920 per month.

On page 36 under the executive committee, utilities were reduced to \$11,000 as LED lights should reduce our electric bill. This is a \$2,000 reduction. Insurance and assessments were reduced to \$6,000. The Worker's Compensation policy premium was reduced as a result of an audit, resulting in a refund of \$607 in 2016. Bookkeeping was reduced to \$5,400, which is a \$1,100 reduction. Technology increased to \$1,000. Fill-in pastor increased to \$875. Under staff, musicians and nursery, Pastor Dan will receive a 2% raise. There is a reduction in M-Div expenses as Intern Pastor Kevin's term is up at the end of May. There is an increase of \$6,348 for other paid staff, which consists of the parish administrator, custodian and nursery attendant. The 50th Anniversary Committee was added to the budget as they requested \$1,500 to go along with the \$1,569 that was designated from the Community Festival in 2016. David said this brings the total operating expense budget to \$263,365, which is an increase of \$1,976 over last year. The Faith Factor on page 35 was decreased by \$5,024 to \$33,365. Gene Hults moved to approve the 2017 budget, with a second from Mike Nelson. It was asked if we are considering an M-Div student. Pastor Dan said that there are none available and the contextual education program is changing. He said they are looking at other options to use interns from other congregations. Another question was why we couldn't use designated funds for other expenses. Pastor Dan explained that balances have been drawn down in some of those accounts and other balances are intended for specific needs. There being no further discussion, the budget for 2017 was approved as presented.

Pastor Dan ended the meeting in prayer. With a motion from Barb Lind and a second from Corrine Petersen, the meeting was adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Hodges, Council Secretary



## Minutes for the Special Congregational Meeting of July 30, 2017

After an opening prayer by Pastor Dan the meeting was called to order at 11:05 am by President Dean Libby. Helen Lind was appointed as Secretary and Larry Lind was asked to act as the counter. Larry reported that 59 people were present.

Dean stated that the purpose of the meeting was to address the failed HVAC unit that services the office and the narthex and informed those present that it came as a result of a Property Committee report at the July council meeting. That report was given by Dave Burau. Dean reminded everyone of the letter sent to all members explaining the bid process. Dean also stated that two lower bids had been received since the letter was sent.

Dean asked Dave to explain the bids received:

Krinke \$11,000      Schwantes \$11,000      McChesney \$8,500

Krinkie, as part of a recent repair visit, revised their bid to \$8,600 and said that they could complete the job in 4 hours using 4 workers.

Dave Burau made a motion that we replace the failed HVAC unit that serves the office and narthex and that we accept the bid submitted by Krinkie in the amount of \$8,610.00 and, to allow us to start at the earliest possible date, we use money from the reserve account and encourage the congregation to build that account back up as soon as possible through additional giving.

The motion was seconded by Mary Lou Hodge. Discussion followed.

The reserve fund currently has a balance of \$12,500.00. Experts agree that we should have 3 months operating costs in the fund. We currently have about \$20,000 monthly expenses so it's important to quickly build it up again.

It was explained that Krinkie is the company that has taken care of the other heating/cooling units, is local and is always willing to come quickly when we have problems.

It was pointed out that we had 3 choices to make:

1. We could do nothing. It was pointed out that visitors decide in the first 10 minutes of their visit if they should return and we want to be welcoming. Even if we aren't concerned about the staff and people who use our facility on a regular basis, the lack of air conditioning (humidity control) is having an effect on both the piano and organ and doing nothing would mean replacement costs in that area.
2. Wait until we raise the money before we proceed. It was pointed out that the same concerns as option #1 are in play and that it would mean that we more than likely couldn't proceed until next year.
3. We could vote in favor of the motion and move forward to solve the problem as soon as possible. There being no further questions or comments a vote was taken and those present voted unanimously to support the motion.

Dave pointed out that any donation to build up the reserve fund should contain a note stating so.

Dave will also inform Krinkie that we want to go ahead. To that end Pastor Dan and Dean Libby signed the bid.

Dean read a letter from the synod thanking House of Prayer for our contribution to Kevin Hackney's education with funds as well as a learning opportunity.

A motion was made by Jacky Hanson and seconded by Julie Burau that we adjourn. No one objected. The meeting ended at 11:20 am.

Respectfully submitted by: Helen Lind

## Council President's Report

As we begin a new exciting year at House of Prayer I am taking the time to look back one more time at the Highlights from 2017.



The President's Mystery Trip was a highlight for me and for the people who made the trip. Based on that interest I am looking at another one this year.

Our Lenten Special offering brought in offerings of \$1,286.00 which was split between the ELCA Good Gifts Project and The Sheridan Project that provides food for families at Cowren school who are in need of food to help them through weekends.

The Community Festival is always a highlight. This year we raised \$3,818.00 that was divided between the Sheridan Project for Cowren School and the North Saint Paul Food Shelf. Feel free to keep feeding Sheridan the pig to help this program.

As you can see the money we have raised through special offerings should be a highlight for all of us. We are doing good things for our neighbors in need. We also replaced the failed HVAC unit by using monies set aside for reserve. We have only paid about half of that back, so I hope that one of next year's highlights can be paying that back and building up our reserve fund to where it should be.

The biggest highlight was our yearlong celebration of our 50th Anniversary. Our monthly History minutes, the fun facts and all the preparation for the banquet, and the banquet itself gave everyone a taste of what House of Prayer has meant to our members as well as the community we live in. The past members and those who served as Pastors during our 50-year history who were able to attend and help us celebrate gave testament to what we, together with God, have accomplished.



We all should pause to fondly acknowledge all that went into that celebration as well as Undie Sunday, The Food Shelf donations, and the Giving Tree. There are also a host of other things that have been done by people who like to fly below the radar but seem to pitch in without the rest of us knowing about it. They have done so many small things that the rest of us may not notice but help to keep House of Prayer able to continue to help others.



I would now like to turn to the beginning of 2018 and another 50 years of House of Prayer. We are entering a “Year of Renewal” as part of a consortium that includes Cross of Glory in Moundsvew, Amazing Grace in Inver Grove, Trinity in Stillwater, First. Lutheran in Harris, Church of Peace in Maplewood, Shephard of the Hills in Shoreview, Farmington Lutheran, Living Waters in Lino Lakes, and House of Prayer. The group is led by Rev. Justin Grimm who is the Assistant to the Bishop for Next Generation Ministries. The plan is to spend most of the year fact finding about our congregation and our mission as well as fact finding about the communities' needs and how the two things can mesh.

In the next year there is planned development at the Imation sight on Highway 5, which will mean new people who may be looking for a new church home. We are looking for two people from the council along with Pastor Dan and two people from the congregation to serve on the committee. We are calling this a year of listening. We will listen to our own congregation, the community and the other churches that are in the consortium. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact either Pastor Dan or myself. There will be once a month meetings, the first one being held at Gustavus Adolphus in West St. Paul on January 27th.

The council has had discussion about renewing the Capitol Campaign in order to move forward on the remaining items on our to-do list. That would include the remodel of the bathrooms to bring them up to date as well as making them handicap accessible, replacing the carpeting. changing the front doors to handicap with electronic access control and installing a video monitor system, replacing all missing or broken ceiling tile caused by water damage before the new roof. It is my hope that raising the necessary funds for these important updates will be a much shorter program than the three-year program we used in the past. Please see the report on the Faith Forward/Capitol Campaign included in this publication.

This is an exciting time for House of Prayer. I am proud to be a small part of the good things we are have done and will continue to do as we grow into the future with God’s guidance.

Respectfully

Dean Libby  
Council President

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee Report

Our committee was honored to serve as organizers of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration at House of Prayer. There were several activities planned throughout the year ending with our Service and luncheon on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017. We had a bonfire get together that allowed for fellowship with one and another and the roasting of hotdogs and smores on our new firepit that was built by the boy scouts. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History minutes, videos and Trivia questions were presented each month. We had an opportunity to get a 50<sup>th</sup>

Anniversary T-shirt and used this as our theme throughout the year. Dean Libby headed up our Time capsule project where we bury mementos within the walls at HOP.



Our Service included a sermon from Rev. Joe Lees (assistant to the Bishop, previous Pastors, charter members, several special guests and music to commemorate our 50<sup>th</sup>. A picture of everyone in the sanctuary was taken before the service concluded.



It was followed by a wonderful luncheon at The Lake Elmo Inn. The History minutes video was played in its entirety and is now available for purchase in our church office. Rosie Flannigan made several beautiful cakes for the celebration which were served for dessert. Dean Libby was our MC and the Pastors in attendance spoke during the program. The HOP Musicians played a few of our favorite songs. We used a professional photographer to capture the moment and a CD of the photos is available if anyone would

like to make copies.

It has been an amazing 50 years and we feel very blessed at House of Prayer. We are now looking forward to the next 50 years. What do you envision for our church and our community?

Thank you to our helpers: Larry Lind, Pastor Dan, Sara Martin

Thank you to the committee: Ethel Bleninger, Bev Buan, Rosie Flannigan, Irene Kube, Dean Libby, Alex Odegard, Audrey Orf, C Linda Siluk, Maurice Tipcke, Dienne Wyland

Jan Odegard  
Committee Chair



## Christian Education Committee

To begin, on behalf of the congregation I want to say a big thanks to Linda Siluk for offering her service to the Lord to teach our littlest believers. For the past year and one half she has taken on task of putting together Sunday School lessons for our young people ages 3 to grade 4, prepared those lessons, offered her own supplies on occasion, and taught these Bible lessons. Thank you for this important use of your Spiritual gifts of teaching. I would also like to thank Monica Streeper and other confirmation youth for assisting with teaching and crafts in the classroom, and to music staff Penny Hults, William Mills and Paul and Betsy Hanson for assisting with children's worship and song as part of that Faith Five Sunday School time and our annual Christmas pageant. And if I have missed anyone who has helped along the way. Thank you!



I also want to thank the various people who, this past year have led Bible Studies and Small group education. Some that I am aware of include: Pam Hults, Melinda Berosik, Tim Byboth, Benita Gemechu, and others who diligently begin committee meetings with prayer and devotions. As, Proverbs says, "train up a child in the ways of the Lord..." we are ALL children of God and we all need training in how to live our lives and serve the lord. This is a lifelong process and an important part of our Christian spiritual journey. To that end, our own adult study is critical so that we can, in turn, pass along that knowledge and wisdom to our children in Sunday School and Confirmation. In many ways there is no more important work that we do. This is first level discipleship.

As your pastor and spiritual guide, if I am to be honest, I am going to have to give us a C- as a congregation for our current grade in our efforts to educate ourselves and then to pass this information along to our young Christians. This should be an effort that we are all engaged in both personally, as well as, a congregation. You may or may not have heard me say that studies show it takes at least eight (8) mentors to spark vibrant faith in our youth so that "when they are old they will not depart from it." If that is our measuring stick for the number of adults needed to work with each of our youth, we have work to do.

So rather than dwelling on what we could have done, let me simply map out what I hope we will strive to do in the future. It is my hope that people will get involved with the planning of the education program at House of Prayer. Currently, in addition to Linda Siluk, I am the only one involved in the ongoing planning of education at House of Prayer. We are in need of an active group of people to help decide upon needed adult education programs for Sunday mornings. Education that will help to train us how to 'train up our children'. I want you all to know that I find great joy in teaching and want to be part of this, but I cannot do it alone. We also need additional teachers, mentors and guides for our youth and confirmation education.

This next year, I promise that I will, in addition to teaching weekly Bible Study and Confirmation, teach a number of classes focused on prayer and discovering our spiritual gifts. It is my hope that these classes will help us all to discover how we might be part of training up our

children. It is also my hope that we can get 80% of our congregation involved in education efforts from participation to teaching and planning. I encourage you to pray this year about how you might become involved in education this year and participate in at least one four to six-week small group Bible or book study!

Christian education equals spending time with your Lord and savior Jesus Christ!

Respectfully, Pastor Dan Streeper

## **Faith5 Family Time- Sunday School Report**

I have been facilitator for Faith 5 Sunday School since the fall of 2016. I am a retired elementary teacher who still does occasional subbing from preschool to fifth grade. This year we have 7 registered students aged 6 to 11 years. I've spent time learning how to develop a weekly plan that met the needs of our children and their families. I followed two programs, the Faith5 practice and the Sparkhouse online program. The Faith5 practice involves saying our highs and lows, studying a Bible reading, discussing this reading, making a prayer, and saying blessings. The Sparkhouse curriculum follows a reading taken from one of the pastor's readings for that particular Sunday and adds related activities. I intertwined these two programs to make it workable for our students. This format includes roles for assistants, parents, and other adults to help with this ministry.

Each week we start with the student and their families coming in after the 8:30 am service to eat a snack and do an activity. Around 9:45 we start with the chapel service. Each week the chapel service is led by our wonderful music team, William Mills and Penny Hults. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month, Paul & Betsy Hanson lead the chapel service.

As mentioned last year, we have tried to simplify our Christian Education program for students who are under confirmation age. We have less time for teaching lessons because of the routines of the Faith 5 practices. We have at least one session off each month. I have been doing the teaching for most of these sessions except for the scheduled art sessions. Then I tried to get two adults to teach those lessons, and I became a helper. These art projects ideas come from the SparkHouse online website. These projects are usually related to the Bible readings for that day or close to it.

Every week the children learn about life in the church by helping Pastor with the sending message at each service. The children have also assisted in the service by pairing with siblings or parents to perform, to usher, to lector, or to do prayer duties.

In November our students started getting into the Christmas spirit by filling some boxes for Operation Christmas Child project. The congregation also helped. Thank you to the Women of Hope for organizing it.

In December children practiced a Christmas program called Christmas Pageant. William Mills was our leader and I helped with props, etc. Many of the children had reading parts including some confirmation students who volunteered. The audience participated by singing the Christmas carols with us. Also, we want to thank Pastor Dan, Monica Streeper, Ruth Byboth, and Alex Odegard for their extra help.



The Christian Education Committee is still seeking more individuals to become committee members, to help in the Sunday School classes, or to teach in one of the art sessions. I had cancelled our last committee meeting because there weren't enough people to attend.

We thank the many members who have volunteered to teach, help with music, and support us. A special thank you to all the parents and grandparents who trust us with your precious children. We continue to ask the entire congregation to pray for and support the children of House of Prayer.

I plan to resign at the end of this school year, in May 2018. I have enjoyed being a facilitator for these past 2 years. I plan to continue to do other activities for our church.

Respectfully submitted on the behalf of the Christian Education Committee,

C. Linda Siluk

# Community Festival

Thank you to everyone who helped make our 2017 Community Festival a great success this year. Over 30 very energetic people volunteered their time and effort. Nice Job!

Also, thanks to the folks who donated all the delicious food. We had tons of goodies, from pickles and coleslaw to beans and cakes to go with our roast pork and chicken. Excellent!

There was a great selection of articles to bid on at our silent auction this year. The variety was awesome. Thank you to everyone generous enough to donate something.



The weather cooperated, and we had a picture perfect day. The bouncy house went up and didn't blow away (thank you Pastor Dan and Monica). Beautiful music was provided by Paul and

Betsy Hanson (thank you). We had lots of fun activities & games.

We served over 240 people from our congregation and the surrounding community. Special thanks to all of our committee leaders who worked very hard: Tim, Ruth & Steve Byboth- kitchen, Dave Burau-setup/takedown, Paul and Betsy Hanson-Music, Chuck Bauer-buns, Rose Marie Flannigan-cakewalk, Larry Goplen & Troop 515 -sweetcorn, Dean Libby, Jan Stiles & Kris Goplen-silent auction, Lori Libby-raffle, Dean Libby & Dave Biedermann- skits, Bev-publicity, Alex Odegard- Bocce ball, Helen Lind-Games, Barb & Larry Lind – Funnel cake booth, Jim Edison-silent auction & meat, Bruce Johnson- raffle donations, Boy Scout Troop 515-everything else. Well done everybody!



Thank you again to everyone who attended and helped out at this year's HOP Community Fest.

Bill Ham  
Committee chairperson

## Revenue and Expense

### Income

Beginning Balance	0.00
Contributions	870.00
Raffle	388.00
Cake Walk	309.00
Silent Auction	1482.00
Food Sales	279.00
Freewill Offering	1814.05
<b><u>Total Before Expenses</u></b>	<b>5142.00</b>

### Expenses

Meat, Sweetcorn, Kitchen Supplies, advertising.	-1324.37
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**Ending Balance** 3817.63

### Distribution

Cowern School - Sheridan Project (backpacks).	
North St Paul Area Food Shelf	1272.54
HOP 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	1272.54

**Total Distribution** 3817.63

## **Faith Forward Capital Campaign Report**

The Faith Forward/Capitol Campaign was a three-year campaign to raise funds for some much-needed upgrades in the building. The campaign ended on the first of one year ago on January 1, 2017. As most of you know we were able to upgrade all lighting to LED and change to a more even lighting in the sanctuary. We replaced our leaky roof, and we also added the AV system which has added a new dimension to our worship. When the program ended we did not have the funds to continue with the other phases we had planned at the beginning. Those phases included the update of our bathrooms and to make them handicap accessible and to replace all carpeting. At that time, we had not included any work on our main doors but now, by necessity, have included the possibility of making them handicap ready by installing wireless wall mounted activation switches and installing a new intercom/doorbell at the exterior and a video monitor-door release button at the reception desk.

At the time the campaign ended we voted to move any monies we had given but not spent into a designated fund to only be used on future upgrades on the facility, which we did. Since that time an additional \$9,005.25 has been added to that fund which means that through everyone's generosity we have a total income for the campaign of \$251,463.71. The total funds remaining as of December 31, 2017 was/is \$70,180.82.

During the past few weeks we have been getting bids for the bathrooms, the carpeting, the entry door, and the replacement of the suspended ceiling tile that was damaged during our "Leaky Roof" period. As this report goes to print, those bids are still being fine-tuned but will be ready to share with the congregation at the annual meeting. We are excited about presenting an idea on how we can collect the remaining funds needed to move ahead with our plans and make our facility as comfortable and welcoming as we possibly can. We look forward to hearing your input.

Respectfully,

Dave Buan  
Dean Libby

## **Finance Ministry**

This is the third year that we have had a Finance Ministry Board. It was added as a bylaw at our Annual Meeting on January 2015 and its responsibilities are as follows:

**The Finance Ministry shall oversee any financial accounts intended for longer term than annual operating budget, including any accounts that hold securities (stock, bonds, mutual funds, insurance policies, etc).**

The current members on the Finance Ministry Board which were appointed by the HOP Council are Scott Hults, Mike Nelson, Dave Burau, Dave Buan, Janet Pruden and Perry Johnson. The ex-officio members include the Church Council and Pastor Dan.

The primary financial firm that handles transfers of stocks for HOP is RBC Wealth Management located in St. Paul. The financial donations received are added to a HOP account at RBC. In the case of stocks the Finance Ministry Board will meet and decide when the stocks will be sold. The proceeds from the sale of stock have been used for general operating expenses as well as our Faith Forward Fund. All of the proceeds from stock sales are added to a money market account. As HOP needs operating money the Finance Ministry Board meets and decides how much is to be forwarded to HOP from the money market account.

David Burau  
Chair Person

## Ifunda Companion Congregation Report Global Missions Committee

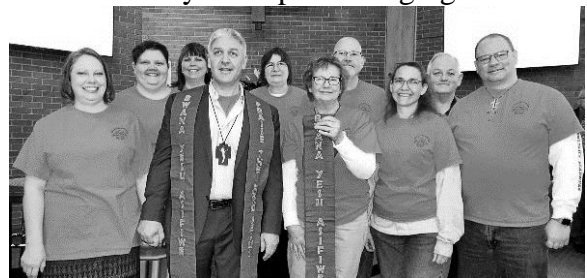
We continue to receive great blessings from a partnership with our Companion Congregation in Ifunda, Tanzania. They pray for us daily and have enriched our lives in countless ways since our partnership began in 2000. Our promise to our partner congregation continues to be to pray for them, to help them with church projects by sending \$1,000 (funded through our church budget) each year and to build relationship with our partners.



We sponsored 18 students with scholarships for Secondary School in the Iringa Diocese. The gifts for education that you at House of Prayer have given over the past sixteen years have blessed the families of Ifunda beyond measure. As our friends in Iringa like to remind visitors, given how extended families work in Tanzanian culture, each scholarship received has a ripple effect that directly impacts the lives of ten other people. Asante Sana (Thank you) to all for your generosity in walking beside these students and helping them to have a profound impact on their communities. Cost of education keeps rising in Tanzania as well. The cost to educate a secondary student is currently \$400.



Our annual Community Christmas Breakfast raised \$4,290.10. It was a great day with over 200 people attending. Thank you to all the workers who cooked, served, donated to the silent auction, made crafts, helped with advertising, etc. Not only did we raise money to help our congregation in Ifunda, but it was a wonderful time with family, friends and people from the community. All the money raised will be used to help our partners at Ifunda Lutheran Church in Tanzania.



On February 1, 2017 a group from House of Prayer traveled to Tanzania for two weeks. This was the eighth time we have visited Ifunda. Pastor Dan & Monica Streeper, Mike & Maren Nelson, Barb Lind, Tim & Ruth Byboth, Camille Chasteen, Cliff Weixel and Gene & Pam Hults were members of our travel group. This group of people care deeply about our partnership and its people. What a joy it was to be a part of this group as we spent time with our congregation in Ifunda in worship, Bible study and prayer. These visits are vital to our partnership.

Thank you for supporting this important mission of House of Prayer Lutheran Church.

Gene and Pam Hults  
Global Mission Chairs

## Internship Committee



For the past two years our Internship committee has met regularly, providing support and evaluation for Intern Pastor Kevin Hackney. We used the Luther Seminary Lay Internship Committee Guide to aid us in this opportunity to influence the development of a future pastor.

During Kevin's two year internship at House of Prayer, he did a great job helping with the new audio-visual system, providing us with some imaginative and effective video. The Bible Study groups he started were very well received and attended.

Thanks' to all members of the House of Prayer congregation for including Kevin, Kendra and Zoe into our House of Prayer family and to everyone that shared comments and feedback with Kevin during his time here. In March 2017 Kevin was recommended for pastoral ministry in the ELCA.

Committee members: Nathan Bruun, Pat Edison, Julie Ham, Jan Odegard and Audrey Orf. Thank you for your participation and support.

Bill Ham  
Committee Chairperson

## Internships / Teaching Congregation Ministry

As an intern supervisor, 2017 was a transition year for our partnership with the Luther Seminary Internship office and our role in ministry as a teaching congregation. In May, we said goodbye to Intern Pastor Kevin Hackney after his part time two-year internship ended. You can read Intern Committee Chair Bill Hams report for specifics about that relationship. As is typical in internship relationships, we all learned many things about God, ministry and one another. Thanks to Bill and the committee and to Kevin for all your work with Kevin in his training.

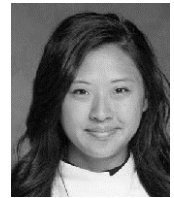
With the end of Intern Pastor Kevin's time with us and curricula changes at the Seminary, there were no available half-time interns for the 2017-2018 academic year which would fit into our congregation's budget. As a result, there were no plans to host another intern. Then, as the 2017 spring progressed, we discovered that St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi had been granted two full-time interns with the potential for a third if "Pulpit Space" could be found for them. Through conversations with St. Andrew's, we agreed to co-sponsor one to three interns, and were able to provide places for their interns to preach and to work on 'small congregation' ministry training.





To our delight, we have had the pleasure of two of their interns agreeing to work with us for from 10 to 15 months part-time as they complete their internship training. Beginning in October, Deacon Erin Morris, a member of the St. Andrew's staff who is a seminary student at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque Iowa, joined us. Deacon Erin is undertaking an 18-month embedded internship program (meaning that she is on staff at St. Andrew's), and is required by Wartburg to do some of her internship in another ministry setting. We are delighted to have her with us as she brings a depth of youth and family ministry knowledge to our ministry at House of Prayer. She will be with us to preach at least once a month and to work on her ministry emphasis which we have yet to develop, and to focus on leadership of a smaller congregation. One of her areas of expertise centers on hospitality and, as we consider our need for outreach this year, this will be a wonderful gift.

Our second part-time pastoral intern is Jenny Sung. Jenny is a Master of Divinity student at Luther Seminary and will be with us during her yearlong internship primarily to preach once a month through the summer of 2018 and to also explore the leadership and organization of ministry in an average size congregation.



As a reminder, the responsibilities of a teaching congregation include the ability to provide an adequate salary for the intern, with some health and other benefits, but more importantly an environment from which to learn, be mentored and coached and to experiment in ministry. This means that the primary purpose of a teaching congregation is to provide interns with an environment for learning and practicing ministry. This includes providing a dedicated committee and congregation who will meet with the intern to offer encouragement, give critical feedback and coaching on ways to better their ministry and make them a part of the ministry of a place. Our job is to help train interns not just give them a place to work.

Respectfully, Pastor Dan Streeper

## Members in Ministry

Given the feedback we have received from many members and the complexity of managing a Members in Ministry schedule to meet individual needs, we made a few changes to the Members in Ministry scheduling process in 2017. We asked everyone to update their desired Members in Ministry position assignments and then began providing a six-month Members in Ministry Schedule and an accompanying Members in Ministry Directory. This new method allows us to better utilize the time and talents of all members while also providing members with appropriate notice of the positions for which they have been called.



In addition to the changes in the way the schedule is created, we have also made a few changes here in the office. First, we now ask members who have a scheduling conflict to assist us by finding someone to replace them on the schedule. This change has freed up time to allow office staff to work on other weekly tasks. Second, we have welcomed Mary O'Malley to the Members in Ministry team. Each week, Mary makes calls to everyone who has been called to a position for the upcoming weekend. Mary, a new member to House of Prayer in 2017, has been a great help and has allowed the scheduling and reminding process to go much more smoothly each week.

We want to give thanks to God for each of you and thank you for offering your gifts in ministry to assist with our House of Prayer weekly worship. We say it all the time, but our worship cannot take place without member participation. Thank you for everything you do each week to make House of Prayer such a wonderful place to praise God.



As we look to next year, I would like to make a special plea to those of you who feel called to serve as a Worship Coordinator. While we especially need more Worship Coordinators for the 10:45 am service each week, we could also benefit from additional people to join to help with the 8:30 am service. Worship Coordinators help to make Sunday morning go smoothly by taking care of facility and hospitality needs. As a Worship Coordinator for the 8:30 am service, you would open the building, turn on lights, ensure communion is set out, set up the coffee, juice and treats, and ensure that all other Ministry positions have been assigned and that all members assigned to those positions have arrived at church. Should someone not arrive, you would ask others to help fill that position. As a Worship Coordinator for the 10:45 am service, you would do all the same things as mentioned above, except you would close the building, turn off the lights, and ensure that communion has been put away. Please prayerfully consider this opportunity and contact the office if you feel you have been called.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sara Martin, Parish Administrator

## Membership Report



An examination of the parish records indicates the following statistics regarding the status of our congregation:

### Members

1. Membership, end of 2016.....	513
2. Members received during 2017	
a. By Baptism: Child (15 years and under) .....	6
b. By Baptism: Adult (16 years and over).....	1
c. By Affirmation of Faith.....	5
d. By Transfer.....	8
e. From other sources/statistical adjustment .....	0
Total members received this year.....	20
3. Baptized youth confirmed in 2017 .....	0
4. Members removed during 2017	
a. By death.....	5
b. By transfer .....	1
c. For other reasons/statistical adjustment .....	8
Total members removed in 2017.....	14
Membership adjustment due to updating records.....	174*
5. Membership, end of 2017.....	345
6. Average weekly worship attendance.....	116

\*see Pastor Dan's membership report below

### Members Added in 2017

#### **Baptisms:**

Otto Mark Danley	March 26, 2017	Railan Princeton Anothai Mao	July 9, 2017
Olivia Mae Olson	May 21, 2017	James Elmer Stevens	July 23, 2017
Sophie Serey Mao	July 9, 2017	Ingrid Mathea Pennaz	July 30, 2017
Laila Chanel Mao	July 9, 2017		

#### **New Members:**

Patricia Bludorn	May 14, 2017	James Morgan	May 14, 2017
Ginger Gualdoni	May 14, 2017	Patricia Morgan	May 14, 2017
Thomas Gualdoni	May 14, 2017	Mary O'Malley	May 14, 2017
Sally Hendrickson	May 14, 2017	Samantha Reps	May 14, 2017
Katie Jacobson	May 14, 2017	Stevie Reps	May 14, 2017
Tommie Jacobson	May 14, 2017	Barbara Zehoski	May 14, 2017
Dolores Jensen	May 14, 2017		

### **Members Removed in 2017**

#### **Deaths:**

Edythe Smeed	Jan 12, 2017	Sandra Capra	Sept 29, 2017
George Audette	Jan 26, 2017	Bradley Wigand	Sept 30, 2017
Nathalie Casey	July 21, 2017		

#### **Transfers:**

Kim Facile	Aug 17, 2017
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#### **Other: (moved or unknown):**

Nicole Capra	July 11, 2017	Rachel Brown	Aug 8, 2017
Frank Stowers	July 11, 2017	Mary Facile	Aug 17, 2017
Gary Laska	July 17, 2017	Daniel Beitzel	Sept 1, 2017
Pamela Hodges	July 25, 2017	Julia Freeman	Dec 6, 2017

#### **Other Funerals (non-members, held at House of Prayer):**

NONE

Let me begin by saying that we have a wonderful strong committed membership. That is a fabulous base from which to undertake our ministry for the Lord. In terms of size or numbers which is not the most important aspect of membership in Christ's church, (things like commitment, love of the Lord and neighbor are much more important for Christian congregations) our membership size is actually about average for congregations in the ELCA. So, we are neither small, nor mega (obviously). And yet as our congregational vitality survey this past year reminds us we are on the cusp of either becoming 'small' and losing momentum or of revitalization and some measure of growth.

Having said these things, I want to make you aware that you will notice a significant change in our reported membership numbers this year. This is because we simply cleaned up our records and data base information. I am pleased to report that the numbers in this report are the most accurate of my time with you at House of Prayer since 2010. This past summer Office Administrator Sara Martin, others and I undertook a large project to contact all members of the congregation that were not active on a nearly weekly basis, to discern their level of commitment to House of Prayer. This was done for multiple reasons. So that our new 50th Anniversary Directory could be as accurate as possible, so that we would have accurate mailing lists and records and be in communication with one another, and also importantly so that the ELCA and other organizations have accurate information about who we are as a congregation. This at times makes a difference in the fees we pay for memberships and other considerations like representation at Synod Assemblies.

And, we will continue to update our records regularly so that we can maintain accurate membership records. We will also be updating our faith records including baptismal dates and other important church records as well. Thank you for your patience as we do this important work.

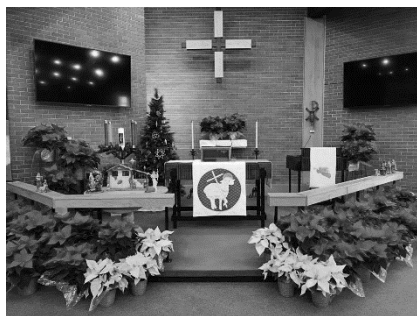
Respectfully, Pastor Dan Streeper

## Memorial Committee

Many families made memorial gifts to House of Prayer in remembrance of loved ones this year. We wish to thank these families for contributing to the memorial fund which has been established to use money donated to beautify and enhance our worship and church. The memorial committee is responsible for deciding how these gifts are spent. Suggestions for items needed for our church are given to the committee and/or families may designate their contributions for things they would like to see the church have.

Members who serve on this committee are myself, Pam Hults, Irene Kube, and Dienne Wyland. If you are interested in being a part of the memorial committee, please give your name and contact information to me or another committee member.

In 2017 memorial money was spent on:



Attendance pad holders  
Pew reserved cloths in both white and burgundy  
Entry carpet mat in narthex  
Lighted Christmas tree  
Door plus frame as you enter the Sunday School area  
Picnic tables

To al the families who have remembered your loved one through donations to House of Prayer this year, we wish to acknowledge the sorrow of your loss and thank you very much.

God's blessings,  
Mary Kay Meisner

## Property Committee



2017 was another busy year for HOP's property concerns.

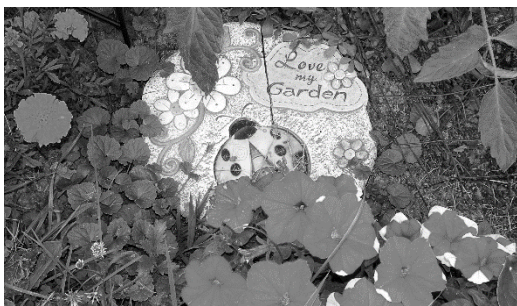
This year's annual spring clean-up on April 29th accomplished a number of outside items including the parking lot, brush removal and landscaping. Many of the inside items, windows, sanctuary, kitchen, etc had already been completed.

Our aging boiler was inspected in February. Several items were noted and corrected: properly install a support for a boiler safety valve discharge pipe, install a vent line for the boiler gas regulator and removal of combustibles within 3 feet of the boiler. The boiler inspector then issued a certificate of operation for the boiler.

We lost an evergreen tree on the east side of the Community garden from high winds in March. The tree branches and limbs were removed and properly disposed. The stump remained. I happened to see the Oakdale Park and Recreation people in the adjoining parking lot and asked them if they would remove the stump. In our conversation I noted that the tree was actually on the property line between Oakdale and HOP. They said they would see what they could do. A few days later as I was driving through the parking lot I saw that the stump was gone and an evergreen seedling had been planted.

Thanks, Oakdale!

One of the largest property expenditures in 2017 was the replacement of the HV/AC unit located over the office area. Late last summer the air conditioning unit failed because of numerous leaks in the cooling lines resulting in a nasty freeze-up of the cooling unit. The initial expenditure of \$9,291 was covered by the availability of sufficient operating funds. An appeal was made to cover those costs. To date \$4,894 has been given.



The Community Garden has been expanded to include more garden plots this year and a chain-link fence installed around the garden to keep the rabbits and other critters out. Almost all were rented this summer and they had a bounteous harvest. Dean Libby installed an electric line down to the creek to run a submersible water pump to supply water to the gardens. Worked great! Thanks Dean!



With winter coming I happened to see an older plow truck (93 Chev 1500) for sale in Lake Elmo on Inwood Avenue. It was in much, much better shape than our current plow truck and drove like a dream. The price was right, \$2500 and it didn't take much arm twisting to convince the Executive Board to buy it. The old plow truck had many issues and was on its last legs. It had a leaking gas tank due to vandalism, no muffler or catalytic converter, again vandalism, and other issues. Believe it or not we sold it for \$950. We received a donation for \$500 as well as some monies from the 50th Anniversary to almost cover the cost of the new plow truck.

During the summer months the plow truck has been stored at Jim Edison's storage facility in Lake Elmo. During the winter it is stored in the HOP garage when not in use. This arrangement has virtually eliminated the possibility of vandalism.

In 2018 we may need some additional maintenance on our 50-year-old boiler. Some of the temperature controls have been acting up. Some of the shrubs around the church are old and dying off and need to be replaced as well. The list of what needs to be done is never ending. Additional donations are always welcomed.

A special thanks to all the HOP volunteers as well as the Boy Scouts who have helped with lawn mowing, plowing snow, housekeeping, landscaping, general maintenance and much more.

David Burau

Property Chair

## Service Ministry

The Service Ministry members donate their time, creativity, and hard work to offer a variety of outreach and charity opportunities. These members, who help coordinate the projects, include June Berosik, Rosie Flannigan, Lori Libby, Mary Kay Meisner, Maren Nelson, Deb Seyfer, and Jan Stiles. Ministry Representative to Council – Rosie Flannigan.

We want to thank you, the House of Prayer members,  
for your participation and generous support of these ministries in 2017.

**Undies Sunday** - Underwear, socks, sweatshirts and sweatpants were collected for the staff at Cowern Elementary School to have available for their students. We achieved our goal to collect sufficient items for up to 40 boys and 40 girls. (Jan. 2017)

**Caring Hearts Supply Drive for Homeless People**  
HOP collected 6 cartons and 2 large garbage bags of personal hygiene products, over-the-counter medications, and cotton socks for distribution by local programs to benefit homeless children, women and men. (Feb. 2017)



**North St. Paul Food Shelf** - HOP members generously support this mission throughout the year, donating items and volunteering time for the food shelf. March is the annual “Food Shelf Month.”

**Feed My Starving Children** – Twenty (20) people from HOP were among the volunteers who packed cartons of meals (May 20) for distribution to starving children around the world.

**Arc’s Value Village Thrift Store** – Four individuals worked a two-hour volunteer shift (June 17) at this Thrift Store, which generates funds for The Arc Greater Twin Cities’ programs that help adults and children with disabilities, their families, and the community.

**School Tools Outreach** - We collected school supplies for Cowern School children, to help ensure a good start to their school year! HOP delivered 35 filled backpacks, as well as additional supplies.



**God’s work, Our hands.** was a dedicated day of service (Sept. 10). We made 24 fleece blankets for Camp Noah; and filled 50 Blessing Bag / Care Kits for members to give to people they meet.

**Sheridan's Story** – Sheridan's goal is fighting child hunger by supporting a child (and family) with a consistent supply of nutritious food every weekend of the school year. Two-person teams from HOP deliver food packages to 21 children at Cowern Elementary School every week. (Sept.-May)

**Operation Christmas Child** – Children and adults at HOP worked together to fill over 53 colorful OCC gift boxes to be distributed worldwide. (Nov. 12)

**Red Kettle Bell Ringing** – Fifteen (15) volunteers braved cold, windy weather to staff a four-hour shift (Dec.7) for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Bell Ringing, at the Oakdale Cub Foods.



**Giving Tree** - HOP members provided gifts for 19 people, including four families in the Kinship Care Program at Lutheran Social Services and two HOP families. You helped others have a blessed and Merry Christmas. (Dec. 2017)

**Gifts for Seniors** - Established in 1994, this group provides donated gifts and life-affirming personal contact to isolated seniors in the Twin Cities area. HOP members again filled more than a barrel with items for this effort. (Dec. 2017)

How wonderful that HOP members embrace these opportunities to carry on God's ministries in our community and around the world! This report is a reflection of a congregation with a truly generous giving spirit. We will continue to carry out God's work through 2017 and beyond.

**God Bless You!** *Service Ministry Committee*

## Women of Hope

### *What is Women of Hope?*

*As a community of women, created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to:*

*Grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.*

***God's Blessings!*** to all the creative and generous women at House of Prayer! ***Thank You!***



**Women of Hope** plays a key role in hospitality-related ministry at House of Prayer by maintaining the kitchen, including stocking it with supplies; and additional service to the church and its members as needs arise, providing refreshments for church functions not covered by any other ministry. Hospitality commitments included hosting four funeral receptions; serving lunch for the Annual Congregational Meeting; refreshments and supplies for Sunday social hour; Lenten Soup Suppers; Confirmation Day reception; and dinners for First Communion training and New Member Orientation. After the Thanksgiving

Eve Worship Service, pies and beverages were provided for the fellowship time. WOH funds come from family donations for funeral receptions; free-will offerings for Sunday social hour, Lenten Soup Suppers, and other church events; plus the annual Bake Sale. WOH members disbursed funds to support efforts within the church, in the local community, and internationally.

***Disney: The Lion King, Jr.***, was a stage production at the Maplewood Community Center; and 70 people from House of Prayer attended a performance.

***Lift High the Cross with Kindness and Love*** was the theme for the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Saint Paul Area Synodical Women's Spring Convention, held May 5-6, 2017.

**East Central Cluster**, of which House of Prayer is a member, again held two meetings for women from its member churches. These Cluster meetings provide an opportunity for fellowship; and to learn of news and activities at the Cluster member churches, as well as at the Synod. Besides a business meeting, there is a guest speaker. The monetary and material giving is usually related to the guest speaker's presentation topic.

**The Knitting Group at HOP** continues producing warm and colorful hats, mittens, scarves, and baby blankets. Cowern School was a recipient of the much-needed winter weather items. The baby blankets are gifts for baptisms.

**Officers in 2017:** Irene Kube (President), Deb Breister (Vice President), Julie Burau (Treasurer), Deb Seyfer (Secretary), Dawn Bottolfson and Rose Marie Flannigan (Purchasing), Rosemary Jensen (Historian), and Bev Buan (Hospitality Chair).

**WOH CONTACTS:** Irene Kube 651-739-1450 [gikube@hotmail.com](mailto:gikube@hotmail.com); Deb Breister 651-773-3920 [327djbcl0@centurylink.net](mailto:327djbcl0@centurylink.net); Deb Seyfer 651-398-6115 [debann2695@yahoo.com](mailto:debann2695@yahoo.com)

# Music Director's Report

## Children's Music

As with previous years we have been focusing on teaching the children hymns during our Sunday School opening chapel service. This year we have been working toward a better understanding of Liturgy in our practice. As we continue to educate the whole congregation on the work we do in worship we will continue to help the children better understand and participate in their own ways. This year's Christmas Pageant was designed to help the children understand the roles that each of the elements of the Christmas story played in sharing the Good News of Christ's birth.

## Adult Choir

We continue to practice diligently with an eye toward improved musicianship and understanding. We are also dedicated to improving our fellowship as well as our consistent participation in worship. We continue to also work to improve our vocal technique with exercises and evaluations both from the director and from each other. As is our tradition, we have also participated in the National Lutheran Choir's annual Tune Up and we look forward to participating again this year.

## Handbells

Our constant outreach from our bell choir has proved successful in bringing in several new members who have never played bells before. This has allowed us to participate in worship more often and to greater effect. We look to continue to provide easier learning opportunities for new members as well as focusing on helping our more experienced members to grow and learn new and varied repertoire. We also hope in the coming seasons to participate even more in worship with smaller ensembles and easier accompaniments.



## HOP Musicians



Our worship leaders continue to provide a high level of professionalism and dedicated leadership every week in worship. We are growing both in numbers as well as musically all the time. As we improve it allows us to dig

deeper into the meaning of the music that we present in worship and it allows us to better and more effectively lead the congregation. Our celebration of the 50th anniversary of House of Prayer also allowed us to revisit some of the Church's most popular and best loved hymns. We look forward in the next year to learning new music and pushing ourselves to learn and grow so that we can best participate in the growth of deeper and more meaningful worship at House of Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, William Mills

## Pastor's State of the Congregation Report

*"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."  
1 Thes. 5:18*

Greetings Sisters and Brothers in Christ of House of Prayer,

I am excited to be writing this state of the congregation report this year, because there are many things for which we can give thanks to God. Looking back at 2017, it has been an amazing and wonderful year. A 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. A year of celebration and service. One of looking back and remembering all those that have gone before us that have given of their time and talents to serve the Lord and make the House of Prayer congregation a meaningful place for faith. It has been a year of faithful service of the Lord! We have witnessed to our love of the Lord, through our care for one another and our deep desire to make this community and the world a better place. These things are exciting!

As you have read the many reports, I hope you join me in a feeling of wonder. We should be joyous as we consider the many ways we have served the Lord this year. Through the Lord we have accomplished great things. We have fed and clothed people both near and far; most notably through our deepening relationship with Cowern Elementary School and through our Tanzania partnership. We have provided school supplies for children, items for the homeless, given our time at the North Saint Paul Food Shelf, and the list goes on and on. Please see the Service Ministry Report and others for specific stories. Indeed, all things are possible through the Lord who gives us strength! God is working to foster hearts of concern for our neighbors! Maybe, we need to set our sights even higher?

As I reflect, I also see that here too within our walls we are caring for one another; for families who have lost loved ones – in particular we have lost: Edythe Smeed, George Audette, Nathalie Casey, Sandy Capra, and Bradley Wigand this year. These families, I know have all been touched by your outpouring of support and love throughout this year. I hope that you will continue to support them as they encounter other important birthdays and anniversaries in the year to come. This is the kind of ongoing love that makes a difference. We have cared for this aging facility, replacing heating and air conditioning units, and are continuing our plans to update rest rooms and other aging parts of our facility. So much to be thankful for.

So, I want to be sure to thank you *all* for sharing your amazing talents and gifts that have come from God. I want to especially thank our music staff and musicians, for their weekly offering of time and talents. What a gift we have here of music to offer to God in praise! Thank you too, to the many Members in Ministry servants who help to make our worship meaningful and special for everyone. When we share the work of worship with so many, it allows us all to worship each week!

I want to specifically thank the Council for the work that they do behind the scenes to take care of the administrative needs and concerns of the congregation so that we can focus on ministry! This is so important, and I don't know that these faithful servants get the recognition they deserve for the work they do. Please be sure to thank outgoing Vice President, Lynne Johnson,



Treasurer David Buan, Secretary Karen Munos, and At Large Member Bill Ham, for the work they have done on the council! I also want to thank our office staff and volunteers for all they do to communicate and keep our ministries running and everyone informed day to day – so important!

Financially, I am pleased to share that we are on the most solid footing we have been on during my time at House of Prayer. And, I want to thank all of you for giving joyously from your heart to the ministry of House of Prayer. We are making an important difference for the Lord in this community and in the world! Thank you!

*“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” Isaiah 43:19*

A state of the congregation report would not be complete without some thoughts on things we need to work on and for our future together. In fact, my Epiphany Star Word was “Sharing”. In the spirit of sharing, here are my personal goals for 2018, goals which should be all our goals:

1. **To assist in the deepening of member relationships with the Lord:** To this end, I will strive to offer a number classes on prayer, discovering spiritual gifts and how to share your faith this year. I will also strive to pull together others to help with the Christian Education ministry of this congregation, and work to train small group leaders to help with this effort. Please see my specific comments in the Christian Education section of this Annual Report.
2. **To increase House of Prayer involvement in ministry:** This year along with my education focus I hope to visit as many families as I can in your homes. To get to know one another more deeply so that I can learn where my efforts can best be utilized and to coach you where your gifts may be used as well. This will be part of our Year of Renewal listening efforts.
3. **To look toward our future:** It is my personal goal to see that at the end of this year our Year of Renewal efforts have borne the fruit of a five-year plan for the congregation. Our 2017 Vitality Survey results suggested that we must consider new ways to reach out into the community if we are to survive and thrive in the years to come. Indeed, if you look closely are our membership numbers you will see that they are way down. This did not happen suddenly as our report suggests but has happened over time since well before my call in 2010. Outreach and looking to the future will take time, prayer, listening to God, to one another and to the community if we are to understand the ‘New Thing’ God is up to at House of Prayer. And, I will need your help to accomplish these things. Again, I am sharing! 😊

Sisters and brothers of House of Prayer, we have much grateful for. Our church is healthy, but we have work to do especially in the areas of education, outreach and physical plan if we are to maintain a healthy congregation into the future. The great news, is that GOD is already doing a new thing here at House of Prayer and in this community. We simply need to listen and follow!

Respectfully in Christ,  
Reverend Daniel J. Streeper

## **Community Festival Financial Report**

Beginning Balance, January 1, 2017	\$0.00
Income	\$5142.00
Expenses	\$1324.37
Disbursements	<u>\$3817.63</u>
Ending Balance, December 31, 2017	\$0.00

## **Faith Forward Capital Campaign Financial Report**

January 1, 2017 Balance	\$61,175.57
Donations made during 2017	\$ 9,005.25
Expenses during 2017	\$ 0.00
December 31, 2017 Balance	\$70,180.82

## **Financial Ministry Financial Report**

### **RBC Wealth Management 2017 Account Summary**

Total Account value on 1/1/2017	26,783.97
Total Account value on 12/15/2017	61,021.10
Monthly withdrawals in 2017	1250.00/Mo
Medtronic Stock sold 60 shares	4986.48
Medtronic Dividends	345.40
Total undesignated gifts received 2017	34,422.55
Medtronic stock retained, 165 shares	13,551.45

### **Mission Investment Fund - HOP Mortgage 25 year**

5 Year Adjusted Secured Loan  
Last re-financed 11/17/2013 with an interest rate of 4.125%  
Next interest rate adjustment 12/1/2018  
Current loan balance: 274,512

## **Global Mission Partnership Ministry Financial Report**

Beginning Balance, January 1, 2017	\$ 8,566.45
Total Disbursements	\$14,378.10
Total/Income/Deposits	\$10,865.56
Ending Balance, December 31, 2017	<b>\$ 5,053.91</b>

Deposits to this account include Breakfast proceeds, other fund raisers and donations by individuals (some outside the congregation from family and friends). Monies raised are used for financial support for our partners in Ifunda. This account is also used for travel to Tanzania. Individuals pay their own expenses to this account. No donations are ever used for travel.

## **Love Fund Financial Report**

Beginning Balance December 31, 2016	\$632.16
2017 Donations (credits)	\$2,574.00
Help for those in need (debits)	\$-2,302.00
Ending Balance December 31, 2017	\$904.16

A big thanks to all who give additional monies to this special ministry fund. As a reminder the purpose of this fund is to help people who are in emergency need of assistance and all other options have been exhausted. It is offered as a pay it forward fund. We encourage those who receive aid to pay it forward when they are back on their feet, but there is no requirement for repayment.

We began the 2017 ministry year with \$632.16 in this fund, and received \$2574.00 in contributions. We distributed \$2,302.00 leaving a balance of \$904.16. I would like to thank our Office Administrator Sara Martin for helping to manage food and gas gift cards and for scheduling appointments to meet with those in need. In addition, I want to thank Karla Danley for balancing our checking account on a regular basis.

This year we helped 13 different families who were in need of rent/utilities/medications/auto repairs or other similar types of assistance that without this support might have led to either eviction and homelessness, the loss of a job or the inability to afford doctor prescribed medications. The assistance offered in these areas totaled: \$1,424.00. The remainder of the expenditures in the Love Fund were distributed through various Cub, Target, and Holiday gift cards primarily for food or gas. People were aided 45 times in this way throughout 2017. During the year members of the House of Prayer Congregation were assisted 13 times in many of these areas but mainly for assistance with food and groceries.

Respectfully Submitted, Pastor Dan Streeper

## **Women of Hope Financial Report**

Beginning Balance, December 31, 2016	\$1,595.96
Income	\$1,624.95
Expenses	<u>\$1,372.03</u>
Ending Balance, December 31, 2017	\$1,848.88

# Treasurers Report and Balance Sheet

2:09 PM

House of Prayer Lutheran Church

01/05/18

## Balance Sheet

Accrual Basis

As of December 31, 2017

	Dec 31, 17
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Checking	112,876.42
Global Mission Checking	5,153.91
Love Fund	929.16
Total Checking/Savings	118,959.49
Other Current Assets	
Mission Investment Loan deposit	105.23
Total Other Current Assets	105.23
Total Current Assets	119,064.72
Fixed Assets	
Building	1,086,000.00
Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment	80,000.00
Garage and Contents	29,000.00
Land	185,169.00
Total Fixed Assets	1,380,169.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1,499,233.72</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
Designated Funds	
Beautification	679.12
Bell Repair & Supplies	307.92
Christmas Garden	382.72
Community Garden	315.00
Faith Forward	70,180.82
Global Mission	5,153.91
HOP Flooring	1,594.56
HOP musicians	825.00
Hymnals/Bibles	82.72
Love Fund	929.16
Memorial	3,666.36
Sanctuary Enhancement	1,228.57
Sendafo Ministry	510.00
Sheridan Story	269.82
WAPO	39.00
Worship & Music Guitar	402.02
Youth	5,888.81
Total Designated Funds	92,455.51
Payroll Taxes Withheld	1,382.92
Total Other Current Liabilities	93,838.43
Total Current Liabilities	93,838.43
Long Term Liabilities	
Mortgage	274,511.98
Total Long Term Liabilities	274,511.98
Total Liabilities	368,350.41
Equity	
Opening Bal Equity	884,559.16
Retained Earnings	237,598.07
Net Income	8,726.08

2:09 PM

**House of Prayer Lutheran Church**

01/05/18

**Balance Sheet**

Accrual Basis

As of December 31, 2017

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	Dec 31, 17
Total Equity	1,130,883.31
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,499,233.72

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## **Proposed Staff Policies and Procedure Changes**

### **House of Prayer LC, Oakdale MN**

The following Policy was recommended by the Personnel Committee and the Council Executive Committee for the December 14, 2017 Council Meeting and approved by the Church Council on the same date, pending congregation approval at the January 28 2018 Annual Meeting.

**Motion:** The Church Council resolves to adopt the following House of Prayer Staff Holiday and Vacation Policy. Annual holiday dates will be updated yearly by the Personnel Committee.

#### **House of Prayer Staff Holiday and Vacation Policy**

##### **Holidays**

- The Church office will be closed on the following Federal and Religious Holidays:
  - New Year's Day
  - Martin Luther King Jr Day
  - The Monday Following Easter
  - Memorial Day
  - Independence Day
  - Labor Day
  - Veterans Day
  - Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday.
  - Christmas Day and the Day Following. (Two days at Christmas.)
    - 11 days in total
- In-the-event-that, a holiday falls on a staff members regular or scheduled day off, the following or prior day may be substituted (For example, when a holiday falls on a Monday and that is the staff member's weekly day off, Tuesday or Friday may be substituted.)
- In 2018 these dates will include: Monday, January 1; Monday, January 15; Monday, April 2; Monday, May 28; Wednesday, July 4; Monday, September 3; Monday, November 12; Thursday and Friday November 22 and 23; Tuesday and Wednesday, December 25 and 26.

##### **Vacations**

- Will be accrued according to individual staff member's letters of hire or call and adjusted upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee and Church Council. Staff members may request vacation time by contacting your direct supervisor.

##### **Religious Festival Holiday Expectations:**

- It will be expected that all Ministerial/Music Staff be present to work during the following Religious Holidays:
  - Ash Wednesday
  - Maundy Thursday
  - Good Friday
  - Easter Sunday
  - Christmas Eve
  - Christmas Day

## **Resolution to Amend the Constitution**

House of Prayer made no amendments to the constitution or bylaws during the 2017 year. However, please note that we will need to update the constitution during the 2018 year to be consistent with the changes made at the 2016 ELCA National Assembly.

### **2018 Church Council Elections Ballot**

These are the positions that are currently open.  
A ballot will be made available a week prior to the elections.

Vice-President (2 years):

Secretary (1 year):

Treasurer (2 years):

At Large #1 (2 years):

At Large #2 (2 years):

Ad Hoc Year of Renewal Team (1 year)- will consist of at least the following members:

- The Pastor
- 2 Council Members
- 2 members of the congregation

Synod Conference Assembly Delegates (1 year/1 meeting, Fri and Sat May 18-19, 2018): will consist of at least the following members:

- The Pastor
- 2 Male Lay Members
- 2 Female Lay Members

St Paul Synod Assembly Delegates (1 year/1 meeting, Sat Feb 24, 2018): will consist of at least the following members:

- The Pastor
- 1 Female Lay Member
- 1 Male Lay Member

Churchwide Assembly Delegate (1 year/ 1 weeklong conference, all expenses paid, Aug 2019):

- 1 lay member may run for election at this year's conference assembly to be held Sat Feb 24



# House of Prayer 2018 Budget

## 2017 / 2018 Budget Information

### Operating Income

	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2018 Budget
Envelopes Current	220,000	235,711	226,110
Loose	2,300	18,226	2,500
Facility Use	1,700	3,910	3,000
Envelopes Other	5,000	7,885	5,000
Thrivent Choice	1,000	583	600
Other		7,092	
<b>Total</b>	<b>230,000</b>	<b>273,407</b>	<b>237,210</b>
<b>Faith Factor</b>	<b>-33,365</b>		<b>-29,954</b>

### Other Income

#### Benevolence from Other Income

Community Festival	3,818
Designated Income	1,877
Food Shelf	100
Lent Special	1,286
Sheridan Story	847
Operation Christmas Child	64
Ifunda Scholarships	5,600
Disaster Response/LIRS/Haruma	627
<b>Total Benevolence</b>	<b>14,219</b>

**Total Operating Income** **287,626**

### Operating Expense

#### Benevolence Expense

	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2018 Budget
Saint Paul Synod	23,040	22,985	23,700
Seminary Scholarship	1,000	1,000	1,000
WAPC Membership	600	600	600
Cowan School (Sheridan Story)		2,493	
Ifunda Companion Congregation	1,120	1,120	1,120
Ifunda Scholarships		5,600	
Operation Christmas Child		64	
Food Shelf / World Hunger		1,389	
ELCA Good Gifts (Lenton Special)		643	
Lutheran Disaster Response		150	
LIRS / Haruma Orphanage		477	
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,760</b>	<b>36,521</b>	<b>26,420</b>

\$1.50 per baptized members

# Operating Expense (Continued)

## Executive Committee

Mortgage	31,200	31,086	31,200
Utilities	11,000	11,207	11,500
Insurance & Assessments	6,000	6,468	6,500
Designated Expense		3,418	
HOP Bookkeeping	5,400	5,087	5,400
Supplies & Postage	5,000	3,618	5,000
Copier Maintenance	4,000	3,883	4,000
Telephone	1,350	1,040	1,350
Synod Assembly	400	345	400
Technology	1,000		1,000
Pastor Continuing Ed	700	1,000	800
Christ In Our Home	250	111	150
Lutheran Magazine	180	179	180
Discretionary	1,000	250	1,000
Council Retreat	150		150
Bank Charge	130	196	200
Fill-in Pastor	875	775	875
Miscellaneous		378	

<b>Total</b>	<b>68,635</b>	<b>69,041</b>	<b>69,705</b>
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## Staff, Musicians, & Nursery

Pastor Base & Housing	62,909	62,570	65,425	4%	
FICA	4,813	4,787	5,005	7.65%	
Pension & Insurance	18,865	17,507	18,865		
Auto Reimbursement	2,100	2,100	2,100		
CYF Intern					
MDIV Intern (All Intern Expenses)	5,600	4,521	4,000		
Music Director	9,450	9,450	9,734	3%	
Other Paid Staff	Salaries	38,200	36,522	39,346	3%
	FICA	3,645	3,517	3,755	
Musicians (Includes FICA)	12,640	13,021	13,412	3%	

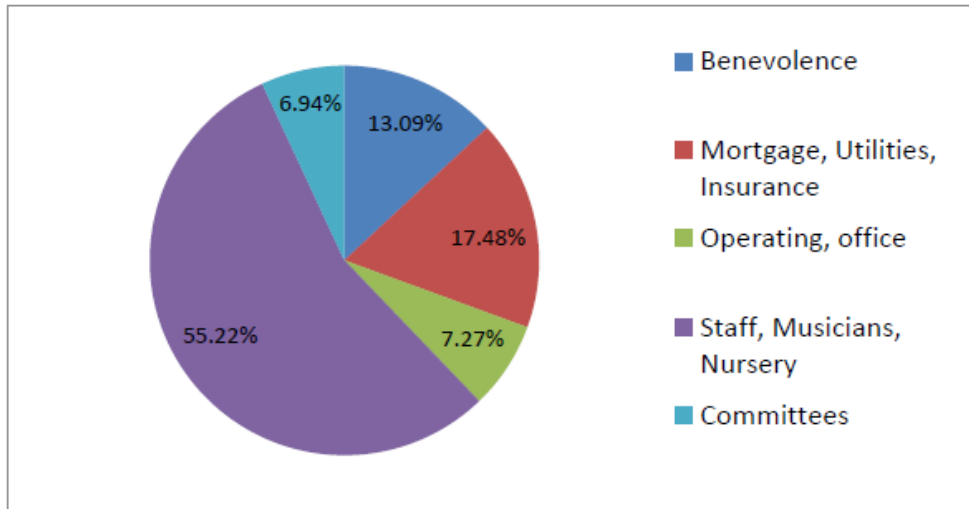
<b>Total</b>	<b>158,222</b>	<b>153,995</b>	<b>161,641</b>
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## Committees

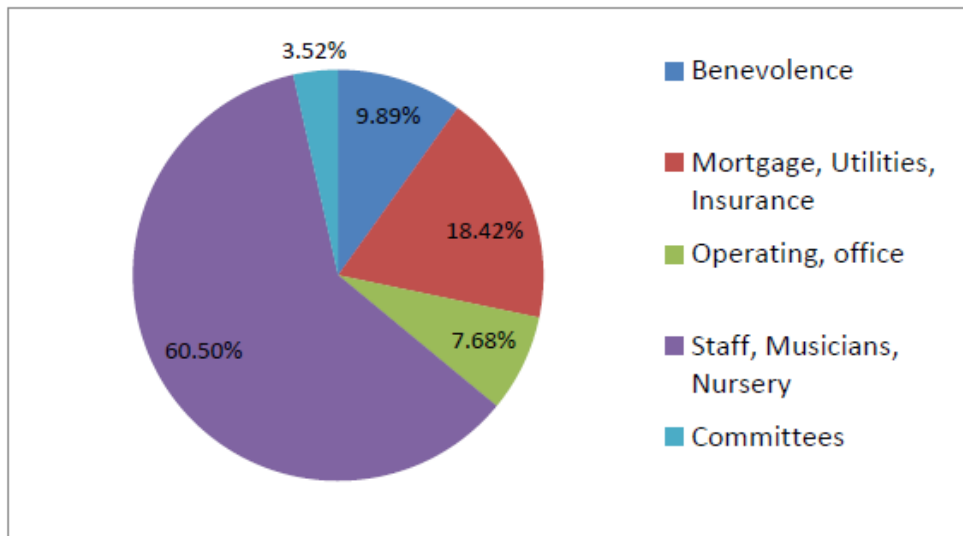
Property	2,000	12,600	2,000
Worship & Music	3,000	2,743	3,000
Christian Ed	1,948	1,368	1,948
Stewardship	1,000	441	1,000
Outreach	850	552	1,000
Social Ministry	200	75	200
Youth	250		250
Community Garden			
50th Anniversary	1,500	1,564	

<b>Total</b>	<b>10,748</b>	<b>19,343</b>	<b>9,398</b>
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<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE</b>	<b>263,365</b>	<b>278,900</b>	<b>267,164</b>
OPERATING INCOME OR (LOSS)		8,726	
Total from Profit & Loss Report		264,681	



2017 Actual Expenses		
\$	36,521.00	13.09% Benevolence
\$	48,761.00	17.48% Mortgage, Utilities, Insurance
\$	20,280.00	7.27% Operating, office
\$	153,995.00	55.22% Staff, Musicians, Nursery
\$	19,343.00	6.94% Committees
\$	278,900.00	100.00%



2018 Budgeted Expenses		
\$	26,420.00	9.89% Benevolence
\$	49,200.00	18.42% Mortgage, Utilities, Insurance
\$	20,505.00	7.68% Operating, office
\$	161,640.92	60.50% Staff, Musicians, Nursery
\$	9,398.00	3.52% Committees
\$	267,163.92	100.00%

## Bishop Lull's Annual Report to Congregations January 2018

*Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.' Matthew 9:35-38*

Dear Partners in Ministry,

On Christmas Eve more than 400 persons gathered for worship at Luther Seminary. All belong to the newly launched African National Ministry mission start, led by Pastor Gilo Agwa, and co-sponsored with the Presbytery of the Twin Cities, our Presbyterian counterparts. These women, men, and children are Anuak immigrants, who have moved to Minnesota to flee the tribal violence directed against them in Ethiopia and South Sudan. In their homeland they were members of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, which shares a Lutheran and Reformed identity. Here, they are part of one of our newest mission starts as a synod. Their joyous celebration of Christ's birth reflects the new hope that God raises up for people again and again across the globe.



2017 was a year for remembering and highlighting our common witness with other Christians. There were many poignant observances of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation. In congregations and schools, Martin Luther emerged as a lively and contemporary witness to the centrality of grace in our lives of faith and the call to recognize God's active presence in our world today. The Saint Paul Area Synod joined the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Area Synod to inaugurate this observance with a Service of Common Prayer on January 22nd. This quincentenary concludes with a similar service of Evening Prayer at the Cathedral of St. Paul on Sunday, January 21, 2018 at 7:00 pm. In between these two services there have been lectures and art exhibits, renewed interest in the writings of Luther, and much good music.

God continues to call us into a plentiful harvest. This past year, five persons were ordained as pastors and one new deacon was consecrated in this synod. They include Pastor Peter Christ, senior pastor at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Roseville; Pastor Wendy Steger, associate pastor at Shepherd of the Valley in Apple Valley; Pastor Erik Doughty, chaplain at Southview Acres Senior Residence and St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church in Saint Paul; Pastor Janet Karvonen-Montgomery, associate pastor at Incarnation Lutheran Church in Shoreview; and Pastor Maggie Novak, pastor at Bethesda in Inver Grove Heights. Deacon Abby Matter was consecrated and serves at Roseville Lutheran Church in Roseville.

Much of the synod staff's time is invested in the vocational formation of candidates, who desire to serve the church as pastors or deacons. In 2017 there were 37 candidates in the Saint Paul Area Synod. In addition, the synod works with call committees during times of pastoral transition. This includes mentoring the teams that create the Mission Site Profile for the congregation, orienting and supporting the call committee with names of

prospective candidates for the vacancy, and overseeing the work and pool of interim pastors who serve in times of transition. During 2017, 19 call processes were completed with 25-30 vacancies at any given time.

During 2017 three communities of faith completed a time of discernment with the synod and reached the decision to close. This is some of the most serious work we do as a synod for such a decision is not an inconsequential matter for carrying forward God's call for us to be about God's harvest. Services of Holy Closure were held for Pueblo de Fe (a mission start) on July 23; for North Emanuel in Saint Paul (a 126 -year old congregation) on September 17; and for Light of the World in Lakeville (a 10 -year old congregation) on October 14. Members, as well as financial legacies, from these faith communities continue to enrich other congregations within this synod. In a sense, the Spirit has replanted those laborers into other contexts for witness and service.

Renewing congregations and reequipping leaders (rostered and lay) remain the key programmatic priorities in our synod budget. In 2017, eight congregations participated in the structured program known as A Year of Renewal. They include Family of Christ, Lakeville; Luther Memorial, South Saint Paul; Holy Cross, Oakdale; Saint Anthony Park, Saint Paul; St. Stephen the Martyr, White Bear Lake; Atonement, New Brighton; Lakeville, Maplewood; and Zion, Cottage Grove.

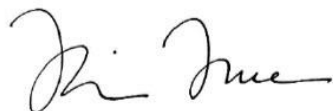
In addition, many congregations worked with members of the synod staff on shared ministry endeavors, vitality surveys, racial justice projects and skill-building for carrying the good news of Jesus into the communities in which we live and work. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus assures the disciples that God's harvest is plentiful. Then as now, the task for disciples is often that of preparing to be a faithful laborer in God's work.

On a personal note, it was a privilege for me to represent this synod at the consecration and installation of Bishop Blaston Gaville as the new bishop of the Iringa Diocese in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania in June. Like our sisters and brothers in our other companion synod in Guatemala, the testimony of Christians in these global setting is inspiring and clear. From mountain villages to city churches, I was reminded that God is in charge and that the life of faith brings joy and hope amid the challenges of daily life.

For the staff of the synod, 2017 has been a year of continuity. What we are able to do together as a synod of 112 congregations and mission starts is enhanced and amplified by the talent of those who serve as your synod staff. They include Michael Gold, office assistant; Alicia Rodriguez, office manager; Chloe Ahlf, communications coordinator; Greg Triplett, financial administrator; Joe Lees, assistant to the bishop for vital congregations, vital partnerships; Justin Grimm, director for evangelical mission and assistant to the bishop for next generation ministries; Krista Lind, assistant to the bishop for vocational formation; Anna Marsh, executive assistant to the bishop; Peter Harrits, director of Bega Kwa Bega and assistant to the bishop; and Tom Jenkins, stewardship coordinator (part-time). I know you join me in thanking them for all they do.

Always at year's end it is a gift and a joy to look back at all that God has accomplished in and through us. I am grateful for your prayers and your confidence in our common work.

Yours in God's service –

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Patricia Lull', with a stylized, flowing script.

Bishop Patricia Lull

## Notes

## Notes



## LITANY

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Amen.**

God has joined us to one another, in congregations, in our denomination, and with Christians around the world. As church together, we faithfully strive to participate in God's reconciling work, near and far.

**Together, we are partners in ministry.**

We plant new congregations and renew existing ones; we work with ethnic ministries to reach all God's people; we develop and share resources for God's work when we gather.

**Together, we are partners in ministry.**

We support The Lutheran World Federation's global communion of churches and send more than 200 missionaries to more than 40 countries; we facilitate dialogue and common action among communities of other faiths that God's love may spread far and wide.

**Together, we are partners in ministry.**

We equip current and future leaders through our colleges, universities, seminaries and lay ministry schools; we engage in hopeful conversation about current economic, environmental, political, public and social issues.

**Together, we are partners in ministry.**

Christ has freed us *from* sin and death, even from ourselves, so that we can live with and for our neighbors; in worship we cry out to be forgiven, fed and equipped that our faith may be aligned with our lives and our lives with God's good purposes.

**Scattered into the world, we do God's work.**

Sent into the world – in every relationship, in every daily task, in every corner of life – we provide daily bread for our neighbors, nurture hope and faith, and work for a healed, reconciled and just world.

**Scattered into the world, we do God's work.**

On the highway and in the skies, in jails and in offices, in the unemployment line and at the mechanic's shop, in kitchens and in classrooms, shopping for toys or hoping to find our next meal, in nursing homes and in the voting booth, God is at work, providing for our needs and for our neighbors' needs.

**Scattered into the world, we do God's work.**

Gracious God, you call us together, and you send us out. Give us strength to be your people, both when we gather and when we scatter. Deliver us from service of ourselves alone, and deliver us from service to the welfare of our congregations that we may do the work you are calling us to do, alone and together. Whether in our daily lives or in and through our congregation, may we always seek common good. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ



1 Let us tal - ents and tongues em - ploy, reach - ing out with a shout of joy:  
2 Christ is a - ble to make us one, at the ta - ble he sets the tone,  
3 Je - sus calls us in, sends us out bear - ing fruit in a world of doubt,



bread is bro - ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.  
teach - ing peo - ple to live to bless, love in word and in deed ex - press.  
gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Im - man - u - el) ev - 'ry - where!



Je - sus lives a - gain, earth can breathe a - gain, pass the Word a - round: loaves a - bound!

Text: Fred Kaan

Music: Linstead, Jamaican folk tune; adapt. Doreen Potter

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## REFLECTIONS ON OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE AND OUR WORK TOGETHER

Whether we are gathered in our faith community or sent into our daily lives, we remember that we are a new creation through God's living word by the power of the Holy Spirit, and we are to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed. As we live into God's word and deed, we are also reminded to be faithful stewards of God's creation and gifts. Faithful stewardship is about holding to God's purpose and ensuring the responsibilities and resources that God has entrusted to us are used with great care and with accountability to God, to each other and those served by the church.

With the adoption of Strategic Directions 2025 in 2017, the goals and priority areas for the ELCA as a whole church are identified. These goals and priorities are based on a shared trust and hope that the future is in God's hands. As stewards of God's grace, we are responsible for the time, talents and resources that will make these goals and priorities attainable in the many expressions of the church. As you consider your goals, priorities and resources for the years ahead, please consider how the following strategic directions are connected to your ministry.

1

### **A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people**

(Acts 1:8, 1 Peter 2:9-10, Matthew 28:16-20, Romans 1:16)

2

### **A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and the church**

(Philippians 2:4-11, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, Romans 6:3-4, Mark 10:13-16)

3

### **An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings**

(1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 2:14-20, Acts 10, Galatians 3:26-28)

4

### **A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world**

(2 Corinthians 5:14-21, John 13:12-15, Isaiah 58:1-11)

5

### **A well-governed, connected and sustainable church**

(1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 2 Corinthians 4:1-2, Micah 6:8, 2 Corinthians 9)