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Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda
House of Prayer Lutheran Church Oakdale, Minnesota
Sunday, January 26, 2020

President: Bruce Johnson
Vice President: Tom Gualdoni
Secretary: Beverly Buan
Treasurer: Scott Hults

1. Call to order
2. Opening Devotions
3. Teller's Count
4. Approval of Agenda
5. "Year of Renewal Report" – Dean Libby and Pastor Dan Streeper
6. Motion to Amend the HOP Constitution, Bylaws & Continuing Resolutions- Pages 33-36
7. Adopt Minutes of January 27, 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting, and Special Congregation Meeting July 14, 2019
8. Reports
 - A. Approval of written Ministry Reports
 - B. Council President's Report
 - C. Pastor's State of the Congregation Report
 - D. Property Projects Capital Campaign Report
 - E. Vision 20/20 Plan
 - F. Auditor's Report
 - G. Treasurer's Report
9. New Business
 - A. Delegates for Synod Conference Assembly / Tool Kit:
Saturday, February 22, Gloria Dei, St. Paul 8am-2:30pm
Delegates for 2020 Synod Wide Assembly
Friday, May 15 – Saturday, May 16, St. Andrews Lutheran Church
 - B. Church Council Elections
 - C. Adoption of 2020 Budget
 - D. Announcements
10. Dinner Grace/Closing Prayer

Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes

Sunday, January 27, 2019

House of Prayer Lutheran Church Oakdale Minnesota

Congregational Goals: 1) Deepen our relationship with God and each other; 2) Improve Congregation Communication; 3) Simplify Ministry Efforts; 4) Establish a 5-10 Year Congregation Plan

Council Members: Pastor Dan Streeper, Dean Libby (President), Tom Gualdoni (Vice President), Sue Reibel (Secretary), Scott Hults (Treasurer), Karla Danley (At Large), Dawn Bottolfsen (At Large), Rosie Flannigan (At Large)

- 1. Call to Order:** The Annual Congregational Meeting of House of Prayer Lutheran Church (HOP) was called to order by President Dean Libby at 10:50 a.m. All page numbers herein refer to the pages in the 2018 published Annual Report.
- 2. Opening Devotion:** Pastor Dan opened the meeting by reciting the first of House of Prayer's goals which is to "Deepen our relationship with God and each other." Pastor Dan further went on to explain that in order to accomplish this goal, as a Congregation, we must actively get to know each other better by listening to each other and sharing our experiences. He continued by asking each of the congregation members to turn to a neighbor and share something important that happened in their life that impacted their faith. The Opening Devotion concluded with the recitation of the Litany and the singing of the hymn "Spirit of God, Descent upon my Heart" both found on the last page of the Annual Report.
- 3. Teller's Count:** Dave Buan reported that 65 members were in attendance. More than the 52 members are required for a quorum.
- 4. Friendly Amendment to the Agenda:** Add "Approval of the Special Congregational Meeting of April 29, 2018." to the agenda. Motion to approve the addition by Larry Goplen, with a second from Mike Nelson. The motion was passed.
- 5. Approval of Agenda with the addition:** Motion to approve by Larry Goplen, with a second from Mike Nelson. The motion to approve the agenda, as amended, was passed.
- 6. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting, April 29, 2018:** Bev Buan motioned to approve the minutes, with a second from Deb Seyfer. The motion was passed
- 7. Adopt Minutes of January 28, 2018 Annual Congregational Meeting.** Motion to adopt by Richard Pruden, seconded by Ray Goplen. There being no changes, the motion was passed.

8. Reports

- A. Approval of written Ministry Reports:** Correction: **Page 11 – Operation Christmas Child was organized by Social Services rather than Women of Hope.** With a “thank you” to all, Dean asked that all ministry reports be approved (pages 9-27). With a motion from Gene Hults and a second from Mary Lou Hodge, all ministry reports, with the correction on Page 11, were approved. The motion passed. **Summary of Ministry Reports:** Please read each report for full details – information below contains a brief summary of the activities of each Ministry.
- **Christian Education Committee:** (Page 10-11). Summary of the Faith 5 and Sparkhouse programs as they pertain to the children’s Education Program in 2017/2018.
 - **Community Festival:** (Page 12 – See page 28 for detail accounting). Total before expenses totaled \$5,271.09. Expenses, \$775.66. Balance. \$4495.34 which was distributed equally to North St. Paul Food Shelf, Sheridan Project, Cowern School in the amount of \$1,498.45 each.
 - **Faith Forward Capital Campaign:** (Page 13- See Page 28 for detail accounting). The campaign was conducted from January 2018 through December 2018. The year was divided into three parts - four months each - with contributions being matched up to \$10,000 for each four-month period. Storage cabinets, security lighting and cameras were installed, bathrooms were remodeled, and new flooring is in the process of being installed.
 - **Finance Ministry:** (Page 14-See Page 28 for detail accounting). Responsibilities are as follows: To 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.).
 - **Global Missions Committee:** (Page 15 – See Page 29 for detail accounting). Our Companion Congregation is located in Ifunda, Tanzania. Our promise is to pray for them, to help them with church project by sending \$1,000.00 each year, and to continue to build strong relationships. We have sponsored 18 students with scholarships for Secondary School. Our Christmas Community Breakfast raises money each year in order that we can continue to have a profound impact on their communities.
 - **Internship Committee: (Page 16).** The responsibilities includes providing a dedicated committee and congregation who will meet with the intern to offer encouragement, give critical feedback and coaching to better their ministry and make them a part of the ministry of their host congregation. This year we were fortunate to have Deacon Erin Morris and Intern Jenny Sung. Both interns were fabulous and were recommended for final approval for ministry.
 - **Members in Ministry: (Page 17).** Pastor Dan thanked all who generously volunteer their time to assist with weekly worship services. Positions that need additional personnel are: Worship Coordinator, AV Assistant. Pastor asks to prayerfully consider these opportunities to serve.
 - **Membership Report: (Page 18).** Membership at the end of 2018 – 345. At present, 50+ prospective members are interested in joining House of Prayer. New member Sunday will be scheduled sometime this spring.

- **Memorial Committee: (Page 19)**. Thank you to all who have remembered loved ones through your donations to House of Prayer. Funds that were donated were used to provide: A banner rack for the Altar Guild, plants for welcome pots by the front doors, Pascal candle holder, and design consultant advice for carpeting and interior finishes.
- **Property Committee: (Page 20-21)** Much has occurred this past year.
 - A successful spring clean-up on May 14th;
 - Bathroom renovation began in June and was finished for the August Festival;
 - On May 28th, we had a garage break-in which resulted in the theft tools, equipment, damage to the garage door, and the theft of our riding lawnmower – insurance covered most of the damage – we paid \$1000.00 deductible;
 - Our parking lot was updated by sealing the cracks and painting new striping;
 - A new security system was installed which included lighting, coded entry system, and cameras inside and out;
 - We still had a roof leak last summer. The company who installed the roofing came out several times and finally discovered the probable cause. So far, so good, no leak.
 - Washington County's Watershed Program installed a "Rain Garden" to filter the run-off from the parking lot before it enters the creek. No cost to House of Prayer and they will maintain the garden for two years at which time it will be ours to keep up.
- **Service Ministry: (Page 22-23)** Thank you to House of Prayer members who generously participate and support these ministries.
 - Undies Sunday; Caring Hearts Supply Drive for Homeless People; Arc's Value Village Thrift Store volunteers; School Tools Outreach; Sheridan's Story; Feed My Starving Children; Operation Christmas Child; Giving Tree; Kids in Foster Care; Gifts for Seniors.
- **Women of Hope: (Page 24 – See Page 30 for detail financial accounting)** Play a key role in hospitality related ministry. They are funded through donations, free-will offerings, Lenten soup Suppers, Bake Sale, and other church events. They provide services which include maintaining the kitchen; providing refreshments for church functions; hosting funeral receptions; providing dinners for First Communion training and New Member Orientation; pies and beverages for Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service. Other activities include: Saint Paul Area Synodical Women's spring Convention, East Central Cluster meetings, Knitting Ministry provides warm winter weather items, Nighttime Knitters for whom they provide lessons on how to knit and crochet.
- **Music Director's Report: (Page 25)** One of the greatest gifts to House of Prayer has been the dedication of those who have provided our beautiful and inspiring music each week.

- B. Council President's Report: (Page 9).** Dean reflected on the highlights of 2018. He asked that everyone look around and observe all the amazing things that the congregation has accomplished this past year. He asked that the congregation turn to the right and give the person in front of you a pat on the back. In his report he acknowledged the many initiatives in which the members of House of Prayer so generously collaborate. He highlighted the areas of 2018 accomplishments, especially

the support we have been able to provide to the North St. Paul Food Shelf, Lutheran Social Service, Cowern School and the Sheridan Project - these are only a few among many. He quoted a line from a poem that was written for last year's 50th Anniversary. The line reads, "For 50 years this house has stood, on this corner doing good." Dean said "this still holds true now and for the next 50 years and beyond." Dean suggested that the congregation consider changing the annual meeting date to later in the year when the people who go south or on winter vacation have returned. This will require an amendment to House of Prayer's Constitution. Dean bid farewell as Council President and thanked all those who will continue to do God's work. He is excited about the things that have already been done as well as what HOP will do in the future.

- C. **Pastor's State of the Congregation Report:** (Pages 26-27) – Also see page 29 for Love Fund Financial Report detail accounting. He began his report with "*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.*" Pastor Dan reflected on a year of Jubilee and the completion of our Faith Forward Capital Campaign in 2018. He cited that a 50th Jubilee year, according to scripture, is to be a year of Sabbath rest and simple life . . . to that end, we cared for many in the community and focused on the ministries we love and let other things take a season of rest. Some of the highlights are:
- **Service Ministry** – their efforts to care for others are a great sign of our love of Christ shared with others;
 - **Global Mission Ministry** – one of the most robust and successful partner ministries in the Synod;
 - **Summer Community Festival and Winter Community Christmas Breakfast** – great successes, raised Money for important ministry efforts;
 - **Weekly Worship and wonderful Worship Music efforts** – thanks to Music Director William Mills, accompanists Penny Hults and Ginny Johnson, Paul and Betsy Hanson, and all our musicians, instrumental and vocal, for such an important and joyful component to our worship life. They are incredible! Also, to the Altar guild members and all who make worship a success each week.
 - **Capital Campaign** – completion of efforts to bring House of Prayer facility up to date. Thanks to Dean Libby for shepherding these important facility efforts.

2019 Challenges:

- **Mission and Outreach** – Churches across the US are shrinking – House of Prayer is not an exception. We must work on outreach and church growth. With new neighborhoods in Oakdale and Maplewood, we need to reach out to people new to the area and to the non-churched in the community. The average age of residents in the community is 39, the average age of House of Prayer members is around 58.
- **Create a 5-10 Year Plan for Ministry** – Every ship needs a course or direction - we will need input from everyone for this effort to be successful.
- **Education** – fewer and fewer people know the Bible. Over the last three years one of our goals has been to deepen our relationship with God – we continue to have much work to do in this area.

Pastor Dan finished his report with "I am personally not worried about God's church! God will make a way! I simply want to be part of the new things god is up to and I hope that you do too!"

- D. Year of Renewal – 5-10-year plan:** The Listening Committee wants to hear from everyone – our positives and our negatives. In one of the sessions he heard about from a person who came to House of Prayer and was welcomed – but when they came in and sat down, someone told them that they were sitting in their seat. He pointed out that we are all on the welcoming committee and we all need to be aware of the face we present.
- E. Auditor's Report:** (Pages 28 and 29) Audit Committee members are Perry Johnson, Bruce Johnson, Mike Nelson. The committee reports that all accounts were found to be in order.
- F. Treasurer's Report:** (Page 31-37) The following report is as of December 31, 2018:
 - Current Assets (page 31) include Premier Bank Checking/Savings Account, Premier Bank Global Mission, Premier Bank Love Fund, and RBC for a **Total Checking/Savings** = \$123,846.91. Other Current Assets include Mission Investment Loan deposit for a **Total Other Current Assets** = \$106.21. **Current Assets Total** \$123,953.12.
 - **Total Current Liabilities** include Accounts Payable of \$113,367.84.
 - **The Total Net Income for 2018** is -\$14,690.91 (Page 32)
 Motion to approve the Treasurers Report, Mike Nelson. Second, Julie Hamm. Motion approved.

9. New Business:

- A. Delegates for 2018 Synod Wide Assembly, Saturday, February 23, Augustana Church, West St Paul:** Janet Pruden, Mary Lou Hodge; Two lay males (TBD).
- Delegates for 2018 Synod Wide Assembly, May 17-18, St Andrews:** Dorothy Anderson, Mike Nelson
- B. Church Council Elections:** Outgoing Council members; Dean Libby; Sue Reibel, Dawn Bottolfsen, Rosie Flannigan. Candidates for Council Positions are: President (2 years), Bruce Johnson; Secretary (2 years), Bev Buan; Treasurer (1 year), Scott Hults; At Large (2 years), Dave Biedermann. Nominations were asked from the floor. There being no discussion, a motion was made by Mike Hansen to accept the ballot as it stands. Second, Gene Hults. Ballot approved. Hearing no further nominations or discussion, motion passed.
- C. Adoption of 2019 Budget:** (Page 35-37) Correction on Page 37 – 2019 Budgeted Expense - Under Staff, Musicians, Nursery the dollar amount should read \$165,360. Scott Hults presented the proposed budget for 2019. The income projection is \$253,229 which is an increase of \$16,019 over last year. See pages 35 and 36 for details. Motion to approve Mary Kay Meisner, second Barb Lind. Motion passes.

D. Announcements:

- Devotional Booklets and T-shirts are available in the office.

10. Friday, February 1st, new carpet will be installed in the Music Room.

11. Dinner Grace/Closing Prayer - Pastor Dan ended the meeting in prayer and the congregation sang “Be Present at our Table.” With a motion from Michael Hansen and a second from Gene Hults, the meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Reibel
Council Secretary

House of Prayer Special Congregational Meeting

July 14, 2019

10:50am – Call to Order

Congregational Goals: 1) Deepen our relationship with God and each other; 2) Improve Congregation Communication; 3) Simplify Ministry Efforts; 4) Establish a 5-10 Year Congregation Plan

This congregation meeting was called to discuss the funds needed to complete the “Property Projects” that are listed below.

A quorum was meet with 67 present.

The **agenda** was:

1) Call to Order; 2) Prayer; 3) Review the 6 projects; 4) Vote on Projects & Tithe; 5) Adjourn.
A motion was made to approve the agenda by Larry Goplen and seconded by Gene Hults.

A **prayer** was said by Pastor Dan thanking us for maintaining the facility and working with the community. Also, for opening our hearts & minds as the Lord’s will dictates.

President Bruce Johnson lead the meeting and **explained each of the items**.

Project #1: Presented by Bruce Johnson & Dave Burau

Wall Repair & Tuck Pointing (URGENT)

Cause: Former Roof Leaks & Winter Water Damming.

Description: Bruce Johnson & Dave Burau explained the damage that was done to the building. The scoffer is not routing the water properly. The mortar has loosened, and bricks have cracked. They need to be repaired or replaced as needed. The damage is in 2 corners of the sanctuary. We do have heat tape on the roof, but it is not working property.

Bids: Three bids were obtained

Recommended Bid: \$2,760

Project #2: Presented by Bruce Johnson

Parking Lot Lights Repair/LED Replacement

Need: Many of our Halogen Lights are failing.

Explanation: Bruce Johnson explained that this is for 4 light poles. LED lights operate a lot cheaper. Fixtures and installation would have been \$7,500.

Bids: Three bids were obtained

Recommended Bid: \$4,800

Excel Rebate: -\$1,834

Property committee will install the lights.

A Lift will be rented & miscellaneous costs: \$500

Total Project Cost: \$3,466

A question was raised about when the Excel rebate will end. The answer is whenever they run out of money for the rebate program.

Project #3: Presented by Bruce Johnson

Security Camera Installment

Need: Vandalism of our garage/garden area.

Description of work & justification: Bruce Johnson explained that we have had vandalism already. Someone broke into the side garage door and stole the lawn mower. We are currently only keeping the lights on till 2 a.m. because of the cost. In the future the lights will be on from dust to dawn.

Bids: One bid was obtained from the same company that won our Faith Forward Capital Campaign bid 2 years ago. There were 4 bids then.

Recommended Bid: \$915

Perry Johnson asked if there was a APP to notify someone if there was a problem. That would be researched. The problem we have is that there are so many cars going thru the parking lot that it creates a problem. We already have one camera in the south parking lot. The camera will be mounted on the light pole and a electrical connect will need to be installed.

Project #4 Presented by Bruce Johnson & Pastor Dan Streeter

Altar Furnishings Refurbishment

Need/Purpose: The Altar was falling apart; we will refinish or cover all our altar furnishings with the lighter Oak wood.

Description of work: Members of the congregation will do the work at cost of materials.

Estimated Material Cost: \$1,200

Bruce Johnson explained how he will be covering the Altar with a light oak wood as well as the Lectern, Baptismal Font, Offering Table and adding a cover facing to the Communion Rail. We will have an 8-inch Communion Rail and more room for kneeling. The carpeting on the Altar will be done in the next week. The carpeting has been paid for already.

The wiring will be installed under the flooring. We will still be able to use the paramount's that we have. Bruce Johnson will be doing the woodwork.

Project #5

Organ Replacement Presented by William Mills

Need/Purpose: The organ has begun to fail.

Explanation: Our organ "Big Al" is malfunctioning. Notes don't work and the volume pedal has died. William has researched several companies.

Repair or Replace: Yes, the organ could be fixed but there would be no guarantee and may continue to need future repairs.

Bids: 4 bids were received

Recommended Bid: Hauptwerk \$11,500 (includes the console) This organ fits our needs.

Bid #1: Hauptwerk Software System; This is a turnkey system. It has 3 keyboards (they are not attached) and 1 pedal board. This system is component based. This is a touch screen system.

The man in Duluth will build the organ for us. If we decide we don't like a part of the organ we can replace one area only. Each component has its own warranty. We won't need our keyboard anymore.

William would ask that someone from our building committee build casters for the new organ so that it can be moved.

All the updates are included. The software cost is \$500, and it has been around for about 10 years. If we would build a larger sanctuary would this organ work for us. Yes, we would just change the speakers. He would like the speakers built into the system.

We would rent the organ for one month (\$500) to determine if we like it. This rental would be part of the total cost. This fee will be incorporated into the total price if we purchase it.

Larry Goplen asked about the sound system. William stated that it is very good.

It was asked if there are any churches that have this system and the answer is no. They are mainly built for homes.

The footprint of the organ will be just slightly larger. This is a windows-based system.

Cost **\$11,500**.

Bid #2: Uhanus System: This is a similar type of organ to #1 but it is all together and can't be changed or replaced. The lowest model is **\$15,400**.

Bid #3: Rodgers System: There lowest model is **\$24,000**

Bid #4: Allan System: The lowest model is **\$14,000**. A comparison to ours is **\$20,000**.

William explained that the organ is the lungs of the congregation.

It was asked if our current organ could be sold. Yes, but the companies would have to come here to see it first for any pricing.

If money was no object the best systems would be the Inspire by Rodgers for \$25,000 or the 2nd version of the Chapel by Allan \$30,000.

Project #6 Presented by Bruce Johnson

Replacement of the Flagpole to Commercial Grade Fiberglass Poles:

Need: The wind damaged the current one's this past winter

Explanation of Work: One of the poles were bent and broke off. They were too shallow enough.

Timing: The work must be done before or after the frost/frozen ground.

Estimated Cost: \$800

Summary of Costs:

Sanctuary Walls:	\$ 2,760
Parking Lot Lights	\$ 5,300
Security Camera	\$ 915
Altar Refurbishing	\$ 1,200
Organ Replacement	\$11,500
Flagpole Repair	\$ 800
Total Estimated Cost	\$22,475
Less Energy Rebate	<u>-\$ 1,834</u>
Total Cost w/Rebate	\$20,641
First Fruits 10% Tithe	<u>\$ 2,065</u>
Total Project for the Lord	\$22,706

Pastor Dan stated that we can **reassess this project if needed at the January annual meeting**. A member asked for clarification on how many voting units we have (approximately 120) and what is a voting unit (it is a family).

Pastor Dan said a **prayer** before we voted.

The council has made a motion as follows:

The council recommends and motions that we work to raise this money by the end of the 2019 year. We will initiate projects as the money comes in, in project urgency order. We will move ahead with the organ trial period once the money is raised. People will need to designate their giving to “Property Projects” on their check memo line or giving statements.

A hand vote was taken, and the motion passed by all.

The council also made a motion as follows as to where the Tithe Funds will go:

The council motions that the congregation vote between the following four charities to decide which 2 will receive the Lord’s Tithe. Each person should vote on 2 groups.

Irene Kube seconded the motion.

1. Lutheran Social Services – Youth Services	25 Votes
2. North St. Paul Food Shelf	24 Votes
3. Sheridan’s Project	34 Votes #2 50%
4 Dinner with A Purpose n/k/a Compassion with Action Team Not Walking with A Purpose per Jan Odegard	Majority of Votes #1 50%

Larry Goplen and Perry Johnson recommended that the **payout should first be done on the wall repair and tuck pointing and then the Tithe second as the money is received.**

Shirley Grendahl asked if there were any matching funds available. The council will research this.

Pastor Dan gave a **prayer of thanks**.

The meeting was **adjourned** by Jackie Hanson and seconded by Kerry Cook at 12:00.

Respectfully submitted:

Beverly Buan
Secretary, HOP

Council President's Report

My first year as council president is coming to an end. It has been a busy year doing something new and exciting. Seeing all that goes on at House of Prayer has shown me a congregation who is very active and so willing to step up and pitch in to do what House of Prayer does.

Besides providing a place to worship God we do God's work with outreach to help fund peoples needs. Charities receiving our support include Lutheran Social Service-Homeless Youth, Compassion with Action, the Sheridan Project and No. St. Paul Food Shelf. We also provided help to many with funds from the Love Fund.

Community Outreach through the Community Festival in August and the Christmas Pancake Breakfast in December had very good attendance.

The Pancake Breakfast free will offering provides funds to help our sister congregation in Ifunda, Tanzania.

Advertising with the post card mailings for the Christmas Pancake Breakfast and Christmas Worship appeared to be effective. Attendance at the breakfast was up about 25%. It was also noted that many non-HOP faces were seen at the breakfast and Christmas services. The Trunk and Treat also was a huge success with Facebook advertising. This is what we had hoped for.

Our Capital Campaign starting mid-summer for needed property projects brought forth donations exceeding our goal by early December. The parking lot lighting was installed, the Altar Refurbishment is underway, and the new organ is scheduled for January, 2020. We still have other projects that will be done this coming Spring and Summer.

A big job well done was the painting of the church interior with a skillful crew of artists.

Not to be forgotten are the many hours put in with the Spring Cleanup inside and outside the church: grass cutting, clearing snow and the important work provided by the various committees.

The Vision 20/20 Prayer effort was started in the fall to ask God for guidance in shaping the future 5 Year Plan for House of Prayer. I believe the future looks very bright.

Respectfully,

Bruce Johnson

Christian Education Report:

“Train children in the right way, and when they are old, they will not stray.” – Proverbs 22:6

To begin, I want to thank everyone who assisted/s with the training of our children and the leading of Bible Studies and faith education for our congregation. This is part of our responsibility as Christians to teach people who are new to the faith and to continue to learn and grow in our own faith, sharing it with others as we mature in faith. So, to all who have led or assisted in the leadership of this training, thank you for your efforts! Special thanks to Linda Siluk who lead youth classes during the Spring of 2019 and to Monica Streeper who either assisted or led youth classes this fall.

Beginning the fall of 2019, we tried a new approach to our education efforts. Monica Streeper and I led the youth Sunday School efforts for children 3 years old through 4th grade. We joined together with Beaver Lake Lutheran and Holy Cross Lutheran (as we have for the past three years) to teach our confirmation aged students. This also included a youth offering called “the Rock” for youth grades 3 through 6 (pre-confirmation). This joint confirmation effort has increased the size of our youth confirmation classes to around 2 dozen youth. Creating a much more engaging environment for confirmation.

Once the youth have been confirmed they are invited to monthly youth events involving the three churches. And these older high school youth are also involved in helping to lead “The Rock” kids activities and devotion time.

Our adult education time between services on Sundays has included a list of guest teachers from around the Twin Cities. Teaching faith topics such as Centering Prayer, and other Spiritual Disciplines, to health issues such as stress and care giving, as well as community issues including, human trafficking, and community organizing.

There have also been a handful of lay led prayer and Bible Study teams, centering on how to pray and parts of scripture.

It is my prayer and hope that this is an area that continues to grow. For many of us, we have not endeavored to grow in our faith since the time of our own confirmation. And yet, God, through the Holy Spirit, continues to challenge us in our faith and understanding of the world inviting us to grow in faith throughout our lives.

As you will hear in other reports, as our prayer life has grown this year, we have begun to see the fruits of those prayers. The same can be said of the growth in our faith learning and life. I would like to invite us all to either get involved in a prayer group, bible study or consider teaching one of our faith classes. There is no better way to learn, than to teach faith to someone else!

Again, thank you all for your efforts in these areas! – Pastor Dan

Community Festival

Thank you to everyone who helped make our 2019 Community Festival a great success this year.

To all the HOP Congregation members & Scouts (and parents) who volunteered their time and effort on Sunday, August 18th 2019... Great Job!

A big thank you to everyone who attended this year's HOP Community Fest.

We really appreciate all the folks who donated the delicious food and fantastic selection of items to bid on at our silent auction and raffle this year. Thanks to everyone who contributed! Also, thank you to our friends at Bethel Church for their support.

The weather cooperated and we had a perfect day for our festival. Raffle prizes were won by: Ray Johnson (Handmade Bench), Joanie Gahler (Quilt), Julie Burau, Lori Libby and Isaac Johnson (cash). The team bocce ball championship was won by Andrew and Jacob.

We served over 247 people from our congregation and the surrounding neighborhood.

After expenses, we distributed \$4079.79 to our community. The proceeds were divided evenly between North St Paul Food Shelf, The Sheridan Project at Cowern School and Compassion in Action (homeless assistance).

Again, thank you all. Fantastic job everyone!

Revenue and Expense	
Income	
Beginning Balance	0.00
Contributions	837.00
Raffle	459.00
Cake Walk	308.00
Silent Auction	1583.00
Food Sales	103.00
Freewill Offering	2030.00
Total Before Expenses	5320.00
Expenses	
Meat	420.00
Sweetcorn	65.00
Kitchen/Festival Supplies	465.79
Face Painting	20.00
Newspaper Ad	132.42
Bouncy House	137.00
Total Expenses	1240.21
Ending Balance	4079.79
Distribution	
1/3 North St Paul food Shelf	1359.93
1/3 Sheridan Project	1359.93
1/3 Compassion In Action	1359.93
Total Distribution	4079.79

Bill Ham

House of Prayer Community Festival

Property Projects Capital Campaign Report

The following is an update of the Property Projects approved at the July 2019 Congregation meeting.

	Net Cost	Actual Cost
1. Sanctuary walls, brick repair and tuckpointing	\$2,760	Spring *
2. Parking lot LED Lighting	\$3,466	\$2,831
3. Security Camera – Garage Area	\$ 915	Spring*
4. Remodel Altar and other Altar items	\$1,200	Ongoing*
5. Replacement of Flag Poles	\$ 800	Summer*
6. New Organ	\$11,500	January*
7. 10% Tithe	<u>\$2,340</u>	<u>\$2,326.20</u>
*Final Cost TBD	TOTAL	\$22,981

By the end of November, we had received all of the funding needed for the Property Projects as well as the Tithe. Through December 8th, the total amount received was \$31,977.25. Amazing, thank the Lord!

In addition to the total received for the Property Projects, not all of the rebate from Xcel Energy has been received. That is anticipated to be about \$1,475. We expect that in the first quarter of 2020, hopefully.

The 10% tithe was split between the Sheridan Project and Compassion in Action Team.

Submitted by David Burau

House of Prayer Finance Ministry Report

The Finance Ministry Board 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, Perry Johnson, Dave Buan and Doreen Biedermann. The ex-officio members include the Church Council and Pastor Dan.

The primary financial firm that handles transfers of stocks and money market funds is RBC Wealth Management located in St. Paul. The following is the financial activity For HOP's account at RBC.

Beginning account value January 1,2019

Medtronic stock (165 shares)	15,008.40
Money Market cash account	<u>42,950.36</u>
Total	57,958.76

Money coming into HOP account in 2019

Interest	101.49
Dividends	343.20
Other income	<u>56,403.30</u>
Total	56,847.99

Withdrawals from Money Market cash account

General Operating Expenses	49,787.05
Faith Forward Matching Fund	15,233.16
Faith Forward Tithe	<u>6,000.00</u>
Total	71,020.21

Year-end account value November 30,2019

Medtronic stock (165 shares)	15,008.40
Money Market cash account	<u>42,950.36</u>
Total	57,958.76

David Burau
Chairperson

HOUSE of PRAYER 2020 Vision / Mission

One of our congregational goals for the church council in 2019 was to begin the development of a 2020 Vision / Mission for House of Prayer. The purpose of this is to provide a focused direction and pathway for the ministry of HOP as we move into the future. Having a well-defined and clearly articulated vision and mission is integral in growing the effectiveness of our future ministry. Our goal is to align our vision and mission, as well as our various current and future ministries, programs and activities with what we believe to be God's will for the overall ministry of HOP.

We have 2 guiding principles for the HOP 2020 Vision / Mission...

- 1) It is God focused
- 2) It is God led.

For this to be God focused and God led, it must be built on a foundation of prayer. We trust and believe that it is through answered prayer that we will gain an understanding of God's will for HOP ministry. To quote theologian and minister Dr. Charles Stanley "We cannot see God at work if we are not prayerful people. Prayer centers our attention on Him."

As prayer is the foundational and first step in the development of our 2020 Vision / Mission, we have asked the congregation to pray daily for our HOP ministry and this work, as we collectively develop our 2020 Vision / Mission. A laminated prayer card has been provided, and is available, to each person in the congregation to use if they wish.

The prayer reads:

Amazing God, we ask for your guidance to develop a clear 2020 Vision for House of Prayer ministry. Help us to recognize and understand your will, and to share these insights with each other. Empower and energize each of us to use our gifts to accomplish your mission. In Christ's name we pray. Amen!

Looking forward to 2020, our next steps will include

Thank you for your continued prayers and support for our HOP 2020 Vision / Mission. And thank you for the wonderful ministry work you do at HOP. It is truly gratifying and inspiring to see God at work in HOP!

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

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 eighteen 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 \$3,511. It was a great day with 215 people attending, 45 more people than last year. 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. The Women of Hope provide the bake sale. This adds much to the morning. The profits from the bake sale are used to fund the various projects of the Women of Hope.

We will be traveling to Ifunda on January 29 and returning on February 14. Mike & Maren Nelson, Barb Lind, Larry Lind, Dave Biedermann and Gene and Pam Hults are the mission partners going to Tanzania. You can follow our trip at www.hopifunda.com

Gene and Pam Hults

Global Mission Chairs

House of Prayer Special Check Account – Global Missions

Beginning Balance, January 1, 2019	\$ 9,471.19
Total Disbursements	\$42,944.01
Total/Income/Deposits	\$35,972.82
Ending Balance, December 31, 2019	\$ 2,500.00

Deposits to this account include 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.

Internship Report

During the 2019 year, we wrapped up a shared internship with partner St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi hosting Intern – Deacon Erin Morris. Erin ended her time with us in May as she received a call St. John's Lutheran Church, in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

We also hosted second career Intern John Swanson for a time beginning in June through the end of August. John was part of the Luther Seminary trial MDivX program. A new two-year internship program intended for students on a fast track through seminary. This newly granted program, in the first of two, two-year trial periods is intended to immerse interns in a ministry context, while attending seminary full time and helping to reduce the costs involved with seminary. During his time with us, John discerned that this was not a call for him.

Respectfully, Pastor Dan Streeper

Membership Report

Membership Statistics:

1. Membership, end of 2018	345
2. Members received during 2019	
a. By baptism (15 yrs. and under)	3
b. By Baptism (16 and older)	0
c. By Affirmation of Faith	5
d. By Transfer	9
e. From other sources/statistical adjustment	1
Total members received during 2019	18
3. Baptized youth confirmed in 2019	1
4. Members removed during 2019	
a. By death	4
b. By transfer	9
c. For other reasons/statistical adjustment	1
Total members removed during 2019	14
5. Membership, end of 2019	349
6. Average weekly worship attendance 2018	114
7. Average weekly worship attendance 2019	107

Members added in 2019:

Baptisms (3):

- Walker, Isabelle – June 30, 2019
- Allan, Austin – November 3, 2019
- Mao, Gracie – November 24, 2019

Transfers (9):

- Jim and Mary Bunde
- Tom and Sharon Jones
- Margie and Alan Kobow
- Linda and Jack Kostohryz
- Kathy Peterson

Affirmation of Faith (5)

- Janet Fischer
- Adenike Kazeem
- Steve Lutz
- Sok Mao
- Molly Stennes

Members removed in 2019:

Deaths (4):

- Maynard Nuessmeier – March 16
- Charlotte Gauthier – March 29
- Steven Andrew Erickson – June 7
- George Earl Steffer – November 14

Transfers (9)

- Steve Byboth
- Tim and Ruth Byboth
- Kathy Epling
- Julia Freeman

- Jim and Patty Morgan
- Shannon Ross
- Isabelle Walker

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

- Steven Elwood Jensen – March 17
- Charles Steven Ruppert – June 25

You will notice that our overall membership numbers increased by four, while our actual average worship attendance dropped by nine. This is due to the increased average age of our membership and because more of our members are traveling during the winter months.

Oakdale Parade, Soup Supper and Christmas Pancake Breakfast



Memorial Committee Report

In 2019 memorial money was spent on:

Material to recover the admin desk in the office

Foam and material to recover the chairs in the nursery

Plants for the narthex

An adjustable speaker podium for Pastor Dan and visiting pastors

Plans for future expenditures include new serving carts for the kitchen and some kind of console to match the welcome center and replace the table that is currently in front of the office window.

The memorial committee wishes to thank the families who donated funds to House of Prayer in memory of loved ones. Monies given to memorials are used for the enhancement of worship and our church.

If you have suggestions for purchases in 2020, please give them to any of the committee members: Pam Hults, Irene Kube, Dienne Wyland, or Mary Kay Meisner. Suggestions may also be given to Pastor Dan Streeper or council members.

To all the families who have remembered your loved ones through donations to the memorial fund, we wish to acknowledge your sorrow and join you in the celebration of lives well lived. Thank you for your gifts

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Kay Meisner



Property Committee

2019 was another **banner** year for HOP's property projects and concerns:

Painting

Thanks to Dean Libby organizing the painting projects in the church. So far, all of the planned rooms to be painted have been done. Narthex, Fellowship Hall, front and back hallways, AA meeting room, Office, Sunday School room, Pastor's office and Intern's office. Painting the brickwork was the most time consuming. In some cases, two coats were needed. Thanks to our many painters.

Chair Rail

As the painting was completed, chair rail was installed in the Fellowship Hall and the AA room. The walls were getting marked up from the chairs that were stacked up against walls. Any future markings should easily be re-painted.

Parking lot lights

All of the lights have been installed and they work great! Premier lighting sent us 10 lights and we used 9. As a result, the estimated cost of \$4800 was reduced to \$4325. We are anticipating a rebate from Excel of about \$1834. That will bring the total light cost down to \$2941. In addition to the cost of the lights we rented a lift from Oakdale Rental. Figuring out how to remove the existing fixtures was quite a challenge. Once that was accomplished, the installation went much faster. The cost for two days for the lift was \$340.

Thanks to the light installers

Aerial crew – Bruce Johnson and Dave Burau

Ground Crew – Larry Goplen and Dean Libby

Altar Carpeting

New carpet has been installed. The altar electrical wiring was routed underneath the altar to eliminate wiring on top of the old carpet. In addition to that, the altar metal supports were re-welded to make it more stable. Thanks Dean.

Altar refurbishment

Included in the Property Projects approved in July, was refurbishment of the altar area. Included, was a new altar top, Communion rail and baptismal font. Bruce Johnson agreed to design and install of these items. The estimate for the materials needed was \$1200. The Communion rail has been installed and the new altar was installed before Christmas. Thanks Bruce. They look elegant!

Shrubs

Many of our shrubs around the church perimeter have lived their useful life and need to be replaced. Some have died and been removed. I would like to get a group together to see what could be done. Any ideas are welcome.

Tuckpointing

I have contacted Greg Berry at G. B. Masonry regarding the tuckpointing. He indicated they were extremely busy this time of year. Because of the late weather conditions, he was not able to get to our project this Fall. Hopefully, next Spring this project can be completed.

Plow truck

Our plow truck is failing, and we very likely need a new one. There are a number of issues that suggest it may not last much longer. We are looking at a used plow truck at Northwestern University as well as considering outsourcing the plowing.

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

Dave Burau

Property Committee



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 Dorothy Anderson, Rosie Flannigan, Lori Libby, Mary Kay Meisner, Deb Seyfer, and Jan Stiles. Ministry Rep to Council – Barb Zehoski.

We want to thank you, the House of Prayer members,
for your participation and generous support of these ministries in 2019.

Undies Sunday - Underwear, socks, sweatshirts and sweatpants were collected for Cowern Elementary School to have available for their students. We exceeded our goal to collect enough items for up to 40 boys and 40 girls. (Jan. 2019) *Thrivent Action Card: Bev Buan*

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. 2019)
Thrivent Action Card: Lori Libby

Boots for Kids, a new partnership between the North St Paul Area Food Shelf and local churches, collected new and gently used winter boots for school children. Monetary donations were used to purchase boots from the Shoe Bus, enabling the Food Shelf to exceed its goal for 2019.

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.”

Arc's Value Village Thrift Store – Ten individuals worked a two-hour volunteer shift (April 13) at our area Thrift Store, which generates funds for The Arc Greater Twin Cities’ programs that help adults and children with disabilities, their families, and the community. *Our area Thrift Store has now closed.*

School Tools Outreach - School supplies for Cowern School children helped ensure a good start to their school year! HOP delivered 24 filled backpacks, as well as additional supplies. (July-August 2019) *Thrivent Action Card: Mary Kay Meisner*

God's work, Our hands. was a dedicated day of service (Sept. 8). We made 13 fleece blankets for Camp Noah; and made 400+ simple sandwiches for the 363 Days Food Program to distribute to homeless. *Thrivent Action Cards: Pam & Gene Hults*

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 21-24 children at Cowern Elementary School every week. (Sept.-May)

Red Kettle Bell Ringing – Seven (7) volunteers staffed a four-hour shift (Dec. 5) for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Bell Ringing, at the Oakdale Cub Foods.

Giving Tree - HOP members provided gifts for 17 people, including five families in the Kinship Family Services Program at Lutheran Social Services and two HOP families. You helped others have a blessed and Merry Christmas. (Dec. 2019) *Thrivent Action Card: Dean Libby*

Foster Care Families – Partnering with Washington County Community Services, HOP donated 6 large garbage bags of gift items for some of the children/youth and families in foster care. (Dec. 2019) *Thrivent Action Card: Lori Libby*

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 filled a barrel with items. (Dec. 2019)

It is a rich blessing that HOP members embrace these opportunities to carry on God's ministries in our community and around the world! This report reflects a congregation with a truly generous giving spirit. We will continue to carry out God's work through 2019 and beyond.

God Bless You! *Service Ministry Committee*

Woman 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 three funeral receptions; serving lunch for the Annual Congregational Meeting; beverages 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 funds support efforts within the church, in the local community, and internationally.

Hospitality was the theme for the *32nd Annual Saint Paul Area Synodical Women's Spring Convention*, held May 3-4, 2019.

East Central Cluster, of which House of Prayer is a member, has joined with the North Central Cluster to hold meetings for women from the member churches. 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. Following a business meeting, there is a guest speaker. The monetary and material giving is usually related to the guest speaker's presentation topic.

Knitting Ministry / Yarn Craft at HOP continues meeting weekly (Wednesday, 9:30 am) and produces prayer shawls; lap robes; warm and colorful hats, mittens, and scarves; and baby blankets. Cowern School and children in Washington County foster care were among the recipients of the much-needed winter weather items. The baby blankets were gifts for baptisms. **Nighttime Knitters** meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month (6:00-8:00 pm); and provides the tools for people wishing to learn to knit/crochet.

Disbursement of Funds

The Women of House of Prayer have disbursed their treasury to many worthwhile projects such as: Love Fund, Sheridan's Project, Ifunda Scholarships, kitchen supplies and coffee pots, Thanksgiving pies, ELCA dues and convention delegate fees and offerings.

Financial Report

Beginning Balance, December 31, 2018	\$2,590.34
Ending Balance, December 31, 2019	\$2,617.27

Officers in 2019: Irene Kube (President), Deb Breister (Vice President), Julie Burau (Treasurer), Deb Seyfer (Secretary), Lori Libby (Purchasing), Barb Zehoski (At-Large Rep to Council); Rosemary Jensen (Historian), and Bev Buan (Hospitality Chair).

Women Of Hope Contacts:

Irene Kube 651-739-1450 gikube@hotmail.com
Deb Breister 651-233-6771 327djb10@centurylink.net
Deb Seyfer 651-398-6115 debann2695@yahoo.com

Music Director's Report

Adult Choir

In 2019 the Adult Choir has transitioned to a project-based model. This model allows for people to participate when they are available and to step back when their schedules are more demanding. For the first couple projects of this year we have had good participation and the model has allowed for more appropriate music choices for the ensemble at hand. This year, during the Advent season, the House of Prayer Choir performed a premier by local composer Zach Busch. The piece was well received and has added in our growth as an ensemble.

Handbell Choir

Like the Adult Choir, the Handbell Choir at House of Prayer has moved to a project-based model. While some of the projects have fewer participants than we have typically had to it is clear that with greater ability to commit to particular rehearsals will mean better attendance and more speedy progress. In the future we would like to continue to grow our participation but being included in hymns and other more functional parts of worship.

HOP Musicians

The HOP Musicians are indispensable to worship at House of Prayer. Their leadership means that we have been able to add new and varied hymns to the congregation's repertoire as well as improve the supported singing of all members of the worshiping body. We have also been able to introduce new liturgies this year, an area on which we focused. Adding these new and varied pieces to our repertoire allows us to constantly keep a fresh and engaging musical life vibrant at House of Prayer.

Further Notes

In an exciting step forward House of Prayer has decided to purchase a new organ to replace our currently flagging model. The new organ will be a modular/component-based machine that can be updated as needs change and technology evolves. We look for delivery and trial of the new organ in late January of 2020. On a personal note, I would like to extend my gratitude to House of Prayer as you have supported me both last year in my trip to Rome to sing at the Vatican and this year in my trip to Scotland to sing for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Without the support of House of Prayer and the provision of paid time away these projects, which have been so meaningful, would not have been possible.

William Mills

Music Director

Pastor's State of the Congregation Report

Greetings, sisters and brothers of House of Prayer!

“Call to me and I will answer you and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.” Jeremiah 33:3

“And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” – Luke 11:9

These verses about prayer jumped out at me as I was considering how to summarize our 2019 year and consider what we face together as part of Christ’s church in the world for 2020. While I believe prayer has always been important here, it seems that we are truly becoming our namesake, a House of Prayer, this year!

Since we began praying our Vision 20/20 Prayer at the end of August, we have begun to see God moving in a number of amazing ways in our ministry together. Here are some things we have witnessed: (and I hope you have too!)

- Trunk or Treat. – This year during our 9th Trunk-or-Treat event, we had somewhere between 800 and 1000 guests visit House of Prayer. This includes both kids and parents. Prior to this the most we have ever had at this event was 300 people.
- You may or may not know about our Love Fund. This is a fund used to help people who are in need of assistance in some way, both members and non-members. This year more money (over \$9,000.00) has come into this fund and gone out than ever before. We have helped over 30 people and families from both inside and outside House of Prayer with food, gas, rent assistance, auto repair, and even immigrants with legal assistance. I cannot begin to share how appreciative the recipients are and the difference this makes in their lives. Some are also able at later dates to come and contribute back to this fund.
- Our Property Projects efforts and accompanying Charity gifts. At the end of August, we held a special congregation meeting discussing nine different property projects that needed attention. These included sanctuary tuck-pointing, chancel altar-area refurbishment, and replacement of our organ, to name a few. The funding needed for all these projects and for a tithe of 10% to go to Sheridan’s Story/Cowern Elementary School to feed hungry students and Compassion in Action homeless in Saint Paul totaled \$24,000. Through prayer and your generous giving we reached and exceeded our goal by early December 2019.
- Community Christmas Breakfast. This year our number increased by about 50 participants. Including people, we have not seen before and people who have also visited us during Christmas worship services.
- Finally, we have been hosting Benita Gemechu and her music students at House of Prayer. Since that began this past fall, we have seen some of those families in worship sharing their music with us, as well as, had some attend children’s Sunday School.

And these efforts do not even include our ongoing service efforts which you can read about in the Service Ministry report. God is deeply at work in our ministry and is answering our prayers and those from our community and leading us into the future. We simply need to have eyes for what God is up to, making a difference in people’s lives.

As we look forward to 2020 and a new decade there are a number of areas for us to consider and challenges that we face.

The landscape of religion and life is changing in the U.S. There are fewer and fewer people attending church. We are facing this here at House of Prayer too. As a result, it is becoming difficult to sustain important ministries. Ministries like the Sheridan Story – feeding kids and families at Cowern Elementary or staffing the North Saint Paul food shelf. As a result, the Council plans to work, through prayer with God and with the congregation, to create a 5 year plan for ministry that will guide us into the future. I fully believe that when we are doing Christ's work of caring for 'the least among us' those in need in our communities and striving to make the world a better more equitable place, God blesses our work. To that end, this year we should strive to:

1. Develop a 5-year mission and ministry plan. This will require input from everyone in the congregation if we are to make this successful. As we have been praying for God's guidance, we will all be blessed with insights about how to make this happen. Together we will devise the best way to move forward so that we are all invested and engaged.
2. Increase our Mission and Outreach Efforts – To this, we need to ask ourselves, in what ways might we become known in this community as THE Church that cares about our community and makes a difference?
 - a. This will likely involve better communication efforts, teaching the community about our incredible Service Ministry offerings and getting people involved in these efforts.
 - b. We should reach out into areas in our community being newly developed, such as the Imation development area in eastern Oakdale, to reach new individuals and families.
3. With the median age of the population in Oakdale at 38 and our congregation in the upper 50s, we must explore new ways to invite and engage young people in ministry. Some possible ways to do this might include:
 - a. Becoming more accepting of everyone who comes through our doors.
 - b. Exploring new worship opportunities and collaborations with other congregations.
 - c. Participating in faith-based community organizing to get at the root of issues like poverty and racism.
 - d. Another possible ministry area that continues to bubble up at House of Prayer, are all the differently abled families we serve. God might be calling us to be a community of faith with a special place for the differently abled?
4. New Faith Education Efforts – We also must to continue to pray and to deepen our own faith lives through education and training. If we are tired and unable to take on this effort, we must look into ways to bring people to House of Prayer who can lead us.
5. Continued Prayer – Most importantly, whatever we do, it is obvious that we must continue to take all our needs, and concerns to the Lord, asking for wisdom and guidance.

This year may we strive to listen, communicate and continue to do the Lord's will together! May God continue to bless all that we do! Respectfully in Christ – Pastor Dan Streeper

Love Fund Financial Report

Love Fund Report

2018 Year End Balance (Bank Balance)	\$ 762.19
2018 Adjustment from Love Fund Designated/HOP General (12/31/2018)	\$ 1,732.19
2019 Donations (credits)	<u>\$10,822.74</u>
2019 Totals	\$12,554.93
2019 Assistance/Help for those in need (debits)	<u>\$ 9,868.72</u>
2019 Account Balance	\$ 2,686.21
2019 Adjustment from Love Fund Designated/HOP General (01/04/2020)	<u>\$ 1,030.00</u>
2020 Year Starting Balance (as of 1/4/2019)	\$ 3,716.21

God tells us time and time again; God will do whatever we ask... “*Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*” – Mark 11: 24
Even so, I continue to be amazed with the many ways we are able to bless others through this fund.

First, I want to thank all the members/participants of House of Prayer who have contributed to this fund. For those who do not know, this fund is used to help anyone in need of emergency assistance when all other options have been exhausted. The money is gifted with no-strings attached, and people may pay the money back if they are able in the future. But it is not required. I would like to thank Office Administrators Sara Martin and Kim Kramer for helping to manage gift cards for gas and food, triaging requests for assistance and helping to make referrals.

This year, the amount of assistance provided through this fund was incredible! Thank you all!

We helped over 30 people and families from both inside and outside House of Prayer with food, gas, rent assistance, moving expenses and auto repair. As many of you know we also aided Nikki Kazeem with legal assistance as part of her Asylum and Immigration process. A large portion of the current balance is designated to help with additional legal fees for Nikki. We also used this fund to gather donations as a gift for the Hult’s neighbors who lost their home to a fire in November. Those donations also totaled nearly \$1,000.00

Finally, a significant number of gifts went through this account for the Sendafa Orphanage in Ethiopia, as part of the Gemedchu Music fundraiser for the Orphanage there.

This ministry of “helping the ‘least’ of these” (Matt 25:40) and showing love to our neighbors, is at the very heart of our Christian ministry. It is something I am personally very grateful to you all for being a part of! May God continue to bless us so that we can be a blessing to others.

In Christ’s service,

Pastor Dan Streeper

2019 SPECIAL BENEVOLENCE GIVING

Lent Special Offering

HOP Love Fund	\$1,439.75
LSS Youth	<u>\$1,439.74</u>
Total	\$2,879.49

Community Festival August

Sheridan's Project	\$1,359.93
North St. Paul Food Shelf	\$1,359.93
Compassion with Action	<u>\$1,359.92</u>
Total	\$4,079.78

Property Projects July-October (TITHE)

Sheridan's Project	\$1,163.00
Compassion with Action	<u>\$1,163.00</u>
Total	\$2,326.00

Christmas Breakfast

Global Mission	\$3,511.00
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TOTAL SPECIAL BENEVOLENCE GIVING \$12,796.00

Treasurers Report and Balance Sheet

7:18 PM
01/06/20
Accrual Basis

House of Prayer Lutheran Church Balance Sheet As of December 31, 2019

	Dec 31, 19
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Premier Bank	47,820.67
Premier Bank Global	2,500.00
Premier Bank Love	2,686.21
RBC	51,793.73
<hr/>	
Total Checking/Savings	104,800.61
Other Current Assets	
Mission Investment Loan deposit	106.80
<hr/>	
Total Other Current Assets	106.80
<hr/>	
Total Current Assets	104,907.41
Fixed Assets	
Building	1,086,000.00
Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment	80,000.00
Garage and Contents	29,000.00
Land	185,169.00
<hr/>	
Total Fixed Assets	1,380,169.00
TOTAL ASSETS	1,485,076.41
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable	2,840.97
<hr/>	
Total Accounts Payable	2,840.97
Other Current Liabilities	
Deferred Giving Income	51,793.73
Designated Funds	
Alter Memorial	874.10
Bell Repair & Supplies	307.92
Christmas Garden	290.00
Community Breakfast	55.00
Community Festival	562.50
Community Garden	555.44
Confirmation	35.60
Food Shelf Dee	100.00
Global Mission	4,104.30
HOP In house Outreach	2,000.00
HOP musicians	850.00
Ifunda Scholarships	420.00
Ifunda Support	200.00
Love Fund	3,716.22
Memorial	4,458.53
Other	49.94
Property Update Project	23,562.25
Sendaflo Ministry	510.00
Sheridan Story	1,589.28
WAPO	39.00
Worship & Music Guitar	402.02
Youth	7,220.50
<hr/>	
Total Designated Funds	51,902.60
Payroll Taxes Withheld	922.75
<hr/>	
Total Other Current Liabilities	104,619.08
<hr/>	
Total Current Liabilities	107,460.05

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Accrual Basis

House of Prayer Lutheran Church
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2019

	<u>Dec 31, 19</u>
Long Term Liabilities	
Mortgage	274,511.98
Total Long Term Liabilities	<u>274,511.98</u>
Total Liabilities	381,972.03
Equity	
Opening Bal Equity	884,559.16
Retained Earnings	232,287.50
Net Income	-13,742.26
Total Equity	<u>1,103,104.38</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>1,485,076.41</u>

House of Prayer 2020 Budget

2019/2020 Budget Information

Operating Income

	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	notes
Envelopes Current	228,525	223,581	234,489	offering pledges
Loose	6,000	16,913	9,000	
Facility Use	12,000	6,400	6,000	
Envelopes Other - Debt Reduction	5,604	9,030	-	
MDIV Intern Grant		5,180		
Thrivent Choice	600	1,802	1,500	
Other	500	2,383	1,000	
Total	253,229	265,288	251,989	
Faith Factor	(30,965)	(21,142)	(46,163)	

Other Income

Benevolence from Other Income

Community Festival	4,080
Designated Income	4,285
Community Christmas Breakfast	3,511
Lent Special	2,879
Ifunda Scholarships	6,670
Love Fund	9,383
Total Benevolence	30,809
Total Operating Income	296,096

Operating Expense

Benevolence Expense	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	
Saint Paul Area Synod	25,323	23,700	25,199	SPAS 10% Tithe Challenge
Seminary Scholarship	1,000	1,000	1,000	
WAPO Membership	660	630	660	\$1.50 per baptized members
Cowern School (Sheridan Story)		4,623	2,500	
Ifunda Companion Congregation	1,250	1,120	1,120	
Food Shelf		1,360		
Love Fund		10,823		
Other		5,054		
LSS Youth		1,440		
Total	28,233	49,750	30,479	
	11.15%	18.75%	12.10%	Benevolence as % of Income

Operating Expense (Continued)

Executive Committee

Mortgage	32,196	41,225	32,196	Principle \$225,000	4.875%
Utilities	13,000	10,647	12,000		
Insurance & Assessments	6,500	7,355	6,340		
Designated Expense	-	2,788			
HOP Bookkeeping	5,400	5,877	5,400		
Supplies & Postage	5,000	4,309	5,000		
Copier Maintenance	4,100	4,321	4,300		
Telephone	1,500	1,372	1,400		
Synod Assembly	400	365	400		
Technology	1,000	660	1,000		
Pastor Continuing Ed	800	545	800		
Christ in Our Home	150	147	150		
Lutheran Magazine	180	134	180		
Discretionary	1,000	564	1,000		
Council Retreat	150	-	150		
Bank Charge	200	162	200	checks + Int expense	
Fill-in Pastor	875	500	875	5 wks pulpit supply @ 175 ea	
Pastor Sabbatical 2020	1,400	1,400	1,400	Budget 1/3 of Sabbatical	
Miscellaneous	100	0	100		
Total	73,951	82,369	72,891		

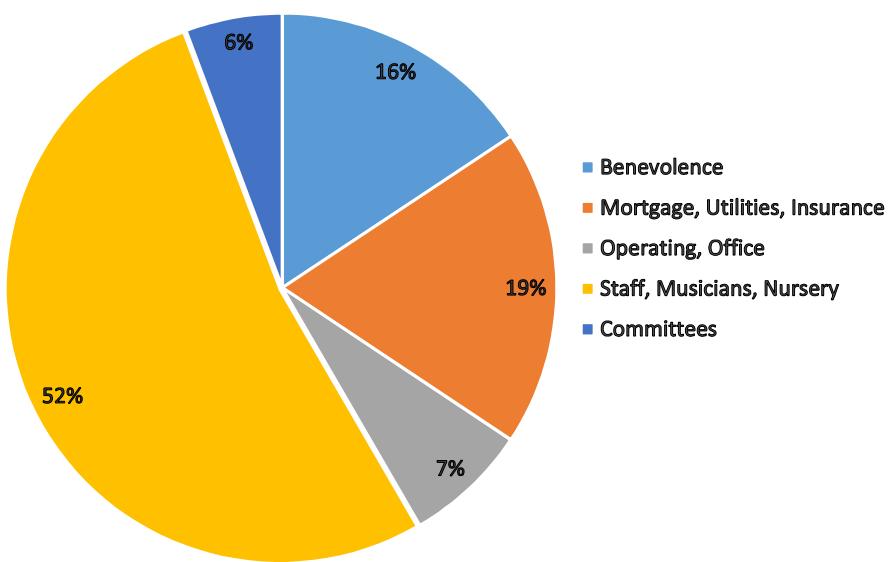
Staff, Musicians, & Nursery

Pastor Base & Housing	70,005	69,640	72,105	3%
FICA	5,355	5,288	5,516	7.65%
Pension & Insurance	18,818	21,746	22,516	
Auto Reimbursement	2,100	175	2,100	
MDIV Intern (All Intern Expenses)	4,000	6,359	3,000	Scholarship/mileage/other
Music Director	10,415	11,169	11,267	3%+HSA+Am Choral dues
Other Paid Staff - Salaries	37,284	34,782	44,312	3% + Express Agency fees
- FICA	3,649	3,669	4,252	7.65%
Musicians (Includes FICA)	13,734	14,199	14,063	3%
Total	165,360	167,029	179,132	

Committees

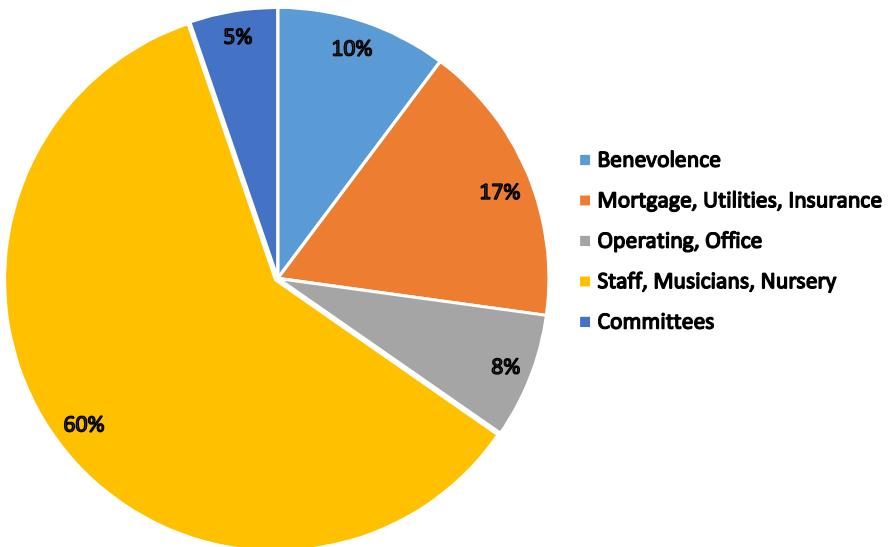
Property	6,000	4,474	6,000
Property - Equip Replace Desig Fund	2,000	6,000	1,000
Worship & Music	3,500	5,808	3,500 Bibles (\$2k in '19)
Christian Ed	2,200	542	2,200
Stewardship	1,000	377	1,000
Outreach	1,500	711	1,500
Social Ministry	200	-	200
Youth	250	179	250
Total	16,650	18,091	15,650
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSE	284,194	317,239	298,152

2019 Actual Expenses



Benevolence	\$ 49,750	16%
Mortgage, Utilities, Insurance	\$ 59,226	19%
Operating, Office	\$ 23,143	7%
Staff, Musicians, Nursery	\$ 167,029	53%
Committees	\$ 18,091	6%
	\$ 317,239	100%

2020 Budgeted Expense



Benevolence	\$ 30,479	10%
Mortgage, Utilities, Insurance	\$ 50,536	17%
Operating, Office	\$ 22,355	7%
Staff, Musicians, Nursery	\$ 179,132	60%
Committees	\$ 15,650	5%
	\$ 298,152	100%

Motions to Amend the Constitution

House of Prayer Council has made a motion to approve the attached changes to the House of Prayer Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions. The changes made were adopted by the Triennial National Church Wide Assembly.

Motion One reflects the Synod changes.

Motion Two reflects the House of Prayer changes found in chapters 10-14.

See the attached motions.

Motions to Amend House of Prayer Constitution, Bylaws & Continuing Resolutions 2020

Motion #1

Ratify the ELCA-mandated amendments (adopted by the triennial church-wide assembly) to the House of Prayer Constitution, Bylaws & Continuing Resolutions.

Rationale

Every three years, the ELCA gathers representatives in a church-wide assembly, where (among other things) amendments to the ELCA, all synod, and all congregational constitutions are considered. Neither the ELCA nor the St. Paul Area Synod has the authority to directly amend the House of Prayer constitution, but there is a clear expectation that we will amend our constitution to align with the larger church.

The most recent church-wide assembly was in Milwaukee in August, 2019. The amendments adopted at this assembly are numerous, but they boil down to these six things.

1. Changing “the” to “this” in 69 places.
2. Lots of housekeeping (like re-numbering a section, but not changing any language in that section).
3. Strengthening/clarifying language in several sections, most of which doesn’t really affect House of Prayer.
4. Additional provisions to clarify the role of a “deacon”: a minister of Word and Service. (See C9.21ff)
5. Allowing for tele-conference participation in congregational meetings. (Section 10.08)

These amendments have been recommended by the Constitutional Review Mission Team and endorsed by the Congregation Council of House of Prayer.

Motion #2

The Congregation Council of House of Prayer recommends the following changes be made to the Constitution, Bylaws & Continuing Resolutions to stay aligned with the ELCA updates:

1. Amend the title of the Constitution to read:
House of Prayer Constitution, Bylaws & Continuing Resolutions
2. Change the date on the Introduction to January 26, 2020 and add 2012, 2017 & 2020 to the years the Constitution has been amended.
3. Wherever it states, “the congregation” change it to “this congregation”.
4. Wherever it states “synodical” change it to “synod”.

We also propose that the following changes be made to Chapters 10-14:

C10.01. **Change paragraph** as directed by the Synod to:

~~Delete: The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified by the Congregation Council, as specified in the bylaws.~~

Add New Paragraph: This congregation shall have at least one regular meeting per year. The regular meeting(s) of the congregation shall be held at the time(s) specified in the bylaws. Consistent with the laws of the State of Minnesota, the bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.

C10.02. **Paragraph should read:** A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president of this congregation, or may be called by the president of the congregation upon the written request of ten percent of the voting members. **(Add this as the 2nd sentence: The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop.)** The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

C10.03. **Paragraph should read:** Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail **(Add: or electronic means, as permitted by state law,)** to all (voting) members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. **Delete: The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient.** Electronic notice of meetings may be provided in addition to notice by regular mail.

C10.06. **Paragraph should read:** All actions approved by this congregation shall be by

majority vote of those (**Add: voting**) members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.

C10.08. **Add this paragraph:** This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings, may be provided electronically.

Chapter 11 has been restructured with basically the same language with these exceptions.

C11.01. **Add: a)** The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.

Add: b) Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.

C11.02. **Revise paragraph to read:**

The officers shall be elected by the congregation by written ballot and shall serve for two years. The term shall begin on the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

C11.03. **Paragraph should read:** No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms (**Add: in the same office.**)

C12.04. h **Change:** “partnership with” to “support of”.

C12.05. d **Change first sentence read:** The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of no more than 2% in excess of the approved budget only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation’s full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in ~~partnership~~ (**Add: collaboration**) with the synod and churchwide organization.

C12.05. e **Paragraph should read:** The Congregation shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of ~~benevolence~~ (**Add: mission support**) monies to the synod treasurer. (**REMOVE: or its successors**)

C12.13. **Add this paragraph:** The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 13 has been restructured with basically the same language with these exceptions:

C13.02.03. **Delete:** House of Prayer Preschool Board

C13.04.02. **Regarding the Audit Committee:** **Remove:** Preschool & Youth from the accounts that need to be audited. They have been merged into the general budget.

Delete: Secondary accounts shall be audited at least bi-annually.

C13.04.07. **Delete:** This paragraph is about the Preschool Board.

C13.04.03. **Paragraph should read:** When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a call Committee of at least six **voting** members, but not more than ten members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.

C13.04.08. – 13.04.17. Renumber paragraphs: starting with C13.04.07 and ending with C13.04.16. (Caused by the deletion of Preschool Board C13.04.07.

2020 House of Prayer 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): **Tom Gualdoni** _____

Treasurer (2 year): **Scott Hults** _____

Vote for only 2 At Large Members:

At Large #1 (2 years): **C. Linda Siluk** _____

At Large #2 (2 years): **Nikky Kazeem** _____

At Large #3 (2 years): **Bill Ham** _____

At Large #4 (2years) **Steve Lutz** _____

Delegates for Conference Assembly and Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders (1 year/1 meeting, Sat Feb 22, 2020): will consist of at least the following members:

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

Delegates for St Paul Synod Assembly (1 year/1 meeting, Fri and Sat May 15-16, 2020): will consist of at least the following members:

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

Bishop Lull's Annual Report to Congregations

January 2020

2019 Annual Report of the Synod

by Bishop Patricia Lull | January 2020

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ... " Matthew 28:19 and

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself ... " Matthew 22:39

Dear Partners in Ministry,

The end of one calendar year and the beginning of a new one provides an opportunity to look back with gratitude at all that has been accomplished and to look forward in hope to all that God will do through the church in the coming year.

2019 was the year we proclaimed ourselves to be a "Both/And" synod. That is not an official designation, but it is a way to remember our dual call to live out both the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:35-40). At the center of our common life in this synod are both evangelism and care of neighbors. Both are so essential to our identity as Christians that these are life-long goals for everyone and not just a one-year emphasis or commitment for the congregations of this synod. In fact, the common work we undertake as a synod can pretty much be highlighted in these mandates.



Leaders & Learning

This past year 20 pastors and deacons were installed in new calls within this synod. While most pastors and deacons serve in one of our 112 congregations and new mission starts, we are fortunate to also have many chaplains and persons in specialized ministry calls within the Saint Paul Area Synod. There were three ordinations of new pastors this past year. Pastor Jenny Sung was called to St. Andrew's in Mahtomedi and the Depot Church in Hugo. Pastor Nouk Vagh now serves at Hmong Central in St. Paul. Pastor Liesl Spitz was called to St. Timothy in St. Paul.

2019 was also the inaugural year for a five-year grant the synod received from the Lilly Endowment to encourage rostered ministers thriving in ministry. While much of the year was a time for planning, led by Project Director Anna Marsh from the synod staff, nine pastors and eight mentors were selected to participate in the Second Act Cohort, which strengthens the ministry of rostered ministers in their fourth through tenth years of service. They will begin their two-year learning process in 2020. All that is learned through the Lilly grant will influence the support given to all rostered ministers in the coming years. Using their rich and varied gifts, our rostered ministers teach and preach, lead our congregational singing, connect us to our neediest neighbors and witness through the example of their faithful service and holy living. Annual meetings are an excellent time to thank those who have been called to rostered ministry.

In 2019 there were 47 persons in this synod's candidacy process, an increase of 6% from 2018. Some of these candidates will serve within this synod and others will travel far from the Twin Cities to serve Christ's church in

another synod. Helping these 27 women and 20 men prepare for their vocations is a great joy and a big responsibility. This is work we share with home congregations and internship sites, seminaries and contextual learning congregations. Does your congregation have an active practice of talking with children and youth about their vocations? Do you pray regularly for those who will serve the church in the years to come? If you need resources for those practices, the synod staff can help.

Global Mission

The Saint Paul Area Synod is well known for its connections to global mission. The vast majority of congregations have a formal relationship with our Bega Kwa Bega partnership with the Iringa Diocese in Tanzania, with the work of Iglesia Luterana Augustina de Guatemala, or with another vital mission site outside this country. In 2019, 167 persons in 16 delegations traveled to Tanzania and several dozen persons visited congregational partners in Guatemala. This includes six synod pastors, who joined 14 Tanzanian and two German colleagues for the Pamoja Leadership Summit in Iringa last February where evangelism was a main topic.

Young adults from the Saint Paul Area Synod continue to find life-changing experiences through a year of service in the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program. In 2019 they included Amelia Schurke (Mexico) and Maddie Lindahl (Senegal), who completed their service mid-year. Seven more young adults began their year of service in 2019. They are Rebecca Martin (Uruguay), Emily Ronsberg (Rwanda), Nicole Schloesser-Becht (United Kingdom), Emily Shane (United Kingdom), Kristian Carlson (Madagascar) and Courtney and Chris Garza (Argentina). Please continue to pray for others to hear this call to leave a familiar home to engage with God's global church.

Local Mission

As a "Both/And" synod, we also invest deeply in the local mission of the church through congregational renewal, stewardship training and outreach into the neighborhoods that surround our church buildings. Eight congregations participated in a structured program of revitalization called "Year of Renewal," sponsored by the synod. They included Elim in Scandia; Faith in Rosemount; Immanuel in St. Paul; Immanuel in Almelund; Newport in Newport; Fish Lake in Harris; Shepherd of the Hills in Shoreview and Saint Mark in Circle Pines.

Acknowledging the changing landscape in which congregations wrestle with issues of weekly worship attendance and the secularization of many values about money, the synod has increased its intentional training efforts for biblical stewardship. A newly formed Stewardship Committee met regularly this past year and a variety of resources will soon be found on the synod website, www.spas-elca.org. In addition, 10 congregations enrolled in a program entitled "Stewardship for All Seasons," which is leading to a deepened understanding of financial giving as a faith practice. They include Arlington Hills in St. Paul; Christ the King in New Brighton; Amazing Grace in Inver Grove Heights; Gethsemane in Maplewood; Pilgrim in St. Paul; Chisago Lake in Center City; Grace in St. Paul and Mount Calvary in Eagan. If your congregation seeks to expand its own stewardship practices, the synod staff can help.

Churchwide Assembly

In August 2019, 24 persons from the synod participated as voting members at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee. Like the synod and your congregation, the ELCA as a whole practices a form of participatory decision-making in which lay and clergy deliberate the future direction of the church. The Churchwide Assembly is also a time for study, worship and inspiration about being "church together."

Together with nearly 1,000 others, these voting members adopted the ELCA's new Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment and a social statement entitled "Faith, Sexism and Justice." Bishop Elizabeth Eaton was reelected to a second term as Presiding Bishop and Deacon Sue Rothmeyer was elected Secretary of the ELCA. The successful completion of the ELCA's \$250 million campaign was celebrated. Other matters taken up by the Assembly are detailed at <https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8003>.

Serving Together

At the close of one year and the beginning of another, it is always timely to thank those who serve on staff or in key volunteer roles in a congregation and in the synod office. We could not be as focused, deliberate, helpful and innovative in our response to God's call without the labor of many colleagues.

I am especially grateful for those who serve with me on the synod staff. They include Michael Gold, office assistant and synod statistician; Alicia Rodriguez, office manager; Chloe Ahlf, communications coordinator (through mid-March 2019); Mary Smith, communications coordinator (from mid-March 2019); 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 April Trout, short-term volunteer with Bega Kwa Bega in Tanzania. I know you join me in thanking them for all they do.

God has asked much of us as the church. In each place where we gather, God blesses us with local opportunities to both invite others into the life we share in Jesus Christ and to work for healing, justice and peace with the neighbors near at hand. And God also invites us from those streets and avenues to embrace the global reality that is integral to being the people of God, locally and globally. Thank you for finding a way to do that in 112 different and lovely congregational styles within the Saint Paul Area Synod.

Yours in God's service –

Bishop Patricia Lull

Notes