



# **2020 Annual Ministry Report**

## **Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church**

3580 North Benton Avenue

Helena, Montana 59602

406-442-7842

[www.ourredeemerlives.org](http://www.ourredeemerlives.org)

*A congregation of the Montana Synod  
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

**Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

---

**Ministry Team**

Arne Bergland	Lead Pastor
Kendra Wilde	Associate Pastor
Carol Will	Deacon
Lori Bigwood Pecarina	Lay Pastoral Associate
Jan Martin	Lay Pastoral Associate
Kevin Mathews	Lay Pastoral Associate
Lisa Williams-Mathews	Lay Pastoral Associate
Jason Callon	Director of Worship & Arts
Jackie Bartz	Director of Youth & Family Ministry
Liz Swenson	Director of Children's Ministries
Sarah Magee	Director of Finance & Facilities
Lori Walter	Administrative Assistant
Linda Keim	Organist

**Preschool Team**

Trudy Burke	Director
Wendy Vukonich	Teacher
Audra Shropshire	Teacher
Jan Kiely	Teacher
Emily Haerter	Teacher

# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

---

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Proposed Agenda 2021</b>	Page 4
<b>2020 Congregational Meeting Minutes</b>	
Annual Meeting - January 26, 2020	Page 5
2021 Proposed Budget Meeting - December 6, 2020	Page 6
<b>Ministry Reports</b>	
Arne Bergland, Lead Pastor	Page 7
Kendra Wilde, Associate Pastor	Page 8
Elizabeth Swenson, Director of Children's Ministries	Page 10
Jackie Bartz, Director of Youth & Family Ministries	Page 12
Jason Callon, Director of Worship & Arts	Page 14
<b>Preschool Reports</b>	
Trudy Burke, Director of Our Redeemer's Preschool	Page 15
<b>Committee Reports</b>	
Women of the ELCA	Page 16
Women of the ELCA Treasurer's Report	Page 17
Personnel Committee Report	Page 18
Perpetual & Seminary Scholarship Fund	Page 18
Gifts & Memorial Committee	Page 19
Financial Review Committee Report	Page 19
Advocate for Justice and Peace	Page 20
Reflections	Page 21
Community Development Team	Page 22
<b>Council</b>	
Biographies of Council Members	Page 23
Congregational President's Report	Page 25
<b>Letters</b>	
Bishop Laurie Jungling - Montana Synod, ELCA	Page 26
Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp	Page 27
<b>Financial Reports</b>	
All Financial Reports	Supplemental handout

**Agenda ORLC Annual Meeting**

**January 24, 2020**

Call to Order

Devotions and Prayer

Adopt Agenda

Approval of Minutes of Congregational Meetings

Ministry Reports

Finance Reports

Congregational Committees

Elections

Recognition of members concluding service

Closing Prayer

## **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

---

### **ORLC Annual Meeting Sunday, January 26, 2020**

Council President Clint Ohman called the meeting to order at 12:27 pm.

The motion to approve the agenda was made by Mark Langdorf and seconded by Kristi Antosh. Motion carried.

Motion to approve last year's Annual Meeting minutes and the annual Budget Meeting minutes was approved by Craig Erickson and seconded by Lori Chase. Motion carried.

Sarah Magee and Jan Martin presented the Budget overview. Those in attendance were given the 2019 Annual Financial Report and were encouraged to ask questions if they had any. They explained that December saw a positive cash flow of \$14,899.02 before paying benevolence. After much discussion, the council voted to pay our allotted benevolence amount to the Synod of \$5,642.13 for December and hold onto the remaining amount of \$5,686.55 for any shortfall in January. There were no questions at this time concerning the budget.

Nominations for new Council Members are: Ryan Holm, Clint Mingay, Cody Salo, and Lynn Voss. New council members were introduced. Motion to approve the new council members was made by Lori Pecarina and seconded by Joan Haubein. Motion carried.

Nominations for Council Leadership are:

President: Craig Erickson

1<sup>st</sup> VP: Jan Martin

2<sup>nd</sup> VP: Ryan Holm

Treasurer: -Open-

Secretary: Beth Johnson

Motion to approve the new council leadership team was made by Tami Ellis and seconded by Lori Pecarina. Motion carried.

President Clint Ohman recognized the council members who are completing their terms of service, including Danica Boe, Lori Chase, Tami Ellis, Ron Pecarina, and Eric Spangenberg.

Pastor Arne closed us with prayer.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tami Ellis

ORLC Secretary

# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

## **2020 Church Budget Meeting December 6, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by Craig Erickson at 11:03 am via Zoom.

Opening prayer was led by Pastor Arne.

A quorum was present.

The proposed 2021 budget was presented and discussed by Beth Johnson and Sarah Magee.

Questions/Comments:

Consider contacting Growing Trees about getting trees for boulevard/parking lot.

Question about the reason for the increase in benevolence to Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp (FLBC) for 2020.

The reason is that we've had more money in our account in 2020 to forward to FLBC as compared to past years; this is the case for all benevolence partners.

Motion is already on the floor to approve the 2021 proposed budget. A Google docs hyperlink was sent through Chat function of Zoom on vote to approve the proposed 2021 budget.

**Motion passed to approve the 2021 proposed budget: 72 yeas with no nays.**

Pastor Arne led the closing prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 am

# Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives

## **Report of the Lead Pastor Rev. Arne Bergland**

In the reading from 2 Peter that we read in worship on December 6<sup>th</sup>, it says, "In accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where all righteousness is at home" (2 Peter 3:13). It is in God's promise that we have certain home. It is in God's promise that we are able to carry on even in times like these.

It was sometime in July that I found myself walking through the sanctuary, noting how nothing had moved since before Easter. It felt sort of like a ghost town. How many of us have not seen each other for months and months? One parishioner said to me at one point, "I have not been in a car with someone else since March." While we have not been to church with one another, our church has not been closed. Our ministry with and for one another has continued in a variety of new and old ways. As each of us finds ways to connect with one another we continue to be church family alongside each other. All of us have found creative ways to continue to be the church for one another. I have been blessed to work with a creative, passionate, and compassionate staff. They have been able to adapt our ministry to meet the changing times. In order to do that, they have had to learn new skills and practices on the fly.

Our Ministry staff, Pastor Kendra, Jason, Jackie, and Liz, have gone above and beyond in seeking ways to reach out to our church family. Our Administrative staff, Sarah and Lori, have worked tirelessly to meet the congregation's needs during this strange year. Our custodian, Ralph, has also worked diligently to see that the church building is clean and safe. I am grateful for their hard work and passion for ministry. Our preschool staff, Trudy, Wendy, Audra, Jan, Emily, and Taylor have been particularly challenged and yet have found the ways and means to serve our preschool families.

Beginning in March, we adopted a policy that we would move forward with an abundance of caution. Many of our members are in that group of most vulnerable to Covid 19. Regarding worship in person, we decided to follow the school district guidelines as closely as possible. Masks, social distancing, washing hands, disinfecting of surfaces are all standard practices. Initially, we shut down in-house worship and learned to offer video worship. We offered worship in the parking lot for several weeks in the late summer. A special thanks goes out to Tom Johnson for bringing his wagon to church every Sunday to serve as a platform from which to do worship. Musicians, readers, and worship assistants all had to adjust to our new ways of doing things. Our annual VBS became an at-home program, as has Sunday School. Our High School youth ministry has met under radically altered protocols. Our Bible camp experience also looked quite different, but we were able to offer it even so. We have tried many ways to do in-church worship on a limited basis. We recognize

the need to gather and be with one another. As we are able, we will continue to make efforts to do so. At the risk of missing some names, I would like to offer gratitude to a number of folks. If I have missed anyone, I hope that the other reports will include them.

- First of all, our **council president** Craig Erickson. Craig has led the church council through these challenging months. He has also applied for a number of relief grants that made our ministry possible this year.
- **Our Deacons and Lay Ministry Associates** Carol Will, Jan Martin, Lisa Williams-Mathew, Lori Bigwood Pecarina, Kevin Mathews. These lay leaders have stepped up to the plate in a wide variety of ways. Their good work has significantly contributed to our ministry this year.
- **Church Council** members - Craig Erickson, Jan Martin, Clint Ohman, Beth Johnson, Tom Johnson, Shawn Juers, Drew Sielbach, Ryan Holm, Clint Mingay, Cody Salo, and Lynn Voss. The council has been instrumental in guiding the congregation through the challenges of 2020.
- **Property management team** - Herb Kulow, Gretchen Krumm, Jerry Hoover, and Bonner Armstrong - This team has walked us through the issue of our street assessments. Their work has saved the congregation over \$30,000. Secondly, they have worked with a variety of civic partners in a process to determine the use of our vacant properties. Because of their work, we should be able to initiate a plan in 2021 that will lead us to develop this property.
- **Generosity team** (formerly known as the Stewardship committee) - Craig Erickson, Jan Martin, Mark Redfern, Karen Armstrong, Mark Robertson.
- **Personnel committee** - Sharon Redfern, Ingrid Childress, Lynda Hanson, Bob Oldenburg, and Jan Martin. This Committee has been working on personnel policy revisions. These revisions are important to our staff functions and will clarify a number of issues for us.
- **Community Garden** - Thanks to Ben and Carol Olmstead for their years of guiding this ministry. This year a new chair stepped up. Thanks to Carolyn Meyer for her work. Also, thanks to our "indoor gardener" Vicky Downhour.

Thanks go out to all these and many more who have seen to our congregation's mission in this challenging year. We are blessed by their vision and commitment to the faith!

In service to the Gospel,  
Pastor Arne Bergland

# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

## **Report of the Associate Pastor Rev. Kendra Wilde**

### **Provide Compassionate Care**

Our congregation continues to provide compassionate care for those in need despite the challenges of 2020. A team of people to make care calls to people who are shut-in, living alone, or have medical conditions was created in March. Some of our Eucharistic Ministers were still able to make visits. Prayer shawls were distributed, and our prayer chain was quite active. Our Funeral Reception Team was able to minister prior to mid-March. We were able to join with St. John's to offer communion on a twice-monthly basis at Touchmark (assisted by Lori Bigwood-Pecarina and Sharlene Kolb). We sent cards of encouragement to members and friends of the congregation in education in the fall and to health care professionals in the spring. Susan Bergland is working with bakers in the congregation to prepare plates of homemade cookies to be delivered to shut-ins in the congregation in December.

It is my responsibility to administer the emergency assistance fund, which the church uses to assist people in crisis. In 2020 we assisted several individuals in crises in significant ways. I am so thankful that we have this fund.

The Memory Loss Support Group continued to meet in 2020. Jane Peachy and Lori Bigwood-Pecarina lead it. It continues to be a helpful group for those experiencing memory loss and/or caring for someone with memory loss.

I held a funeral planning workshop in January. Planning your own funeral and for the funerals of our loved ones can be a great work of love, giving guidance to those who live on after we are gone.

### **Encourage Life-Long Discipleship**

Liz Swenson and I adapted our "Come to the Table" first communion instruction to an online class in the spring. We also tailored our "Walk Through the Bible" class with students and their parents to make the learning meaningful and safe.

Our WOW Confirmation Program underwent a significant transition this year, with the largest transition being the creation of Spark worship on Wednesday evenings and the creation of Confirmation University beginning in the fall.

Spark Worship features a sermon based on the Revised Common Lectionary (as it is on Sunday) and a shift away from camp-style music as a regular feature. Matty Vukonich assisted with rebranding for the service.

We were able to get away for a WOW Retreat at FLBC in February. Our theme this year was "Walk on Water." We had 16 Wowites, eight high school counselors, and five adults for a fun, faith-filled weekend. We also celebrated the Confirmation of 13 young people on June 11. Thanks be to God!

Confirmation University (CU) launched in the fall of 2020. CU is a confirmation model that does the following:

- Allows kids to complete confirmation requirements when they have scheduling conflicts with other activities.
- Provides more options for kids to learn how to fulfill their baptismal calling using their gifts and interests by enrolling in electives
- Allows for more meaningful interaction between the generations of our congregation
- CU will now be the confirmation program of Our Redeemer's and is replacing WOW.

For adults, I led a virtual and in-person conversation about Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson in August. The book challenged us to reflect on the American criminal justice system, the restoration of offenders to society, and the moral tension between law and order and mercy.

### **Empower Leaders for Ministry**

Jeff and Jan Martin continue to serve as LPAs (Lay Pastoral Associate) in the Montana Synod and meaningful ways at Our Redeemer's. Kevin Mathews, Lisa Williams-Mathews, and Lori Bigwood-Pecarina were commissioned as LPA in August and are finding ways to minister.

First call pastors in the Montana Synod are assigned a mentor pastor. I am serving as a mentor for Pastor Halcyon Bjornstad, the pastor at New Life Lutheran Church.

It was a joy to participate in the Ordination service for Taran Denning on October 31. Our congregation formed Taran's call to ministry, and it is good for us to be a sending church. Taran is serving in Spokane, WA.

### **Outreach**

I'm thankful we were still able to offer Spooky Spaces, our take on Trunk or Treat, this year. It was smaller even than in years past, though we were able to stay within the health department's regulations to have an event with 50 or fewer people.



## **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

### **Worship**

It has been a year like no other (I hope!) for worship. The pressures of the pandemic on being able to gather safely in groups have challenged us to frequently adapt our worship space, worship theology, and worship type, i.e., in person or online. I give thanks for your willingness to participate as you are able. I yearn for that day when we are able to safely worship together in person.

When we were able to gather for worship, we were provided with handmade cloth facemasks by Janet Erickson, Bonnie McFarland, Carol Calkins, Dodie Heffner, Maureen Foster, and Brenda Gustafson.

A bright note for me in worship has been our shared worship opportunities with St. John's and New Life for Christmas Eve and Easter. Though they were only virtual gatherings, it is good when we can share our resources and lift our voices together.

We offered a "Blue Christmas" day of prayer and worship service this year. It happens on the "longest night" of the year, December 21, when there are the most hours of darkness all year. It's a time to come together for prayer and lament, to mourn the losses and griefs of the year, and to share comfort and hope. Now, more than ever, it seems like a good time to come together to share our struggle and hurt - and also hear a message of hope.

---

2020 has taught me many things as a Pastor:

- I can find peace when I can allow God to be God for me. I'm not in charge.
- I have hope when I trust in *God*, whose promises are unchanging. My hope is misplaced when it lies in human institutions or promises.
- I have been oriented away from the future. It is good to live in this moment and take the long view of history - particularly our history as God's people. When we place ourselves within the story of God and God's people, we have a reason for our hope. We are part of the same story as Abraham and Sarah—who are blessed by the inconceivable. We are part of the story of the Hebrew people freed from slavery. We are part of the story of people who went into exile and returned home. We are part of the story of those who witnessed Jesus' crucifixion and see all sin and death overcome in Jesus' resurrection. When we take this long view, it helps us see God is faithful. God is steadfast. God is with us.

I give thanks to God for you and the creativity, kindness, and generosity this year has brought out in us. I also give thanks for the challenges we have faced this year and how these challenges have forced us to trust in God more deeply, see one another's struggles more clearly, and connect more authentically. May we continue to learn from 2020 as we welcome another day of living as God's people.

In Christ's Service,  
Pastor Kendra Wilde

# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

---

## **Report of the Director of Children's Ministries Liz Swenson**

This last year has been filled with many obstacles for Children's Ministries, but as a staff and a church community, we have redesigned our programming to make it accessible to all kids at ORLC, wherever they may be. Throughout this challenging year, one thing has become clear to me; children are resilient and flexible and always willing to adjust with a smile. The children of ORLC continue to show so much interest in learning all that they can about our faith. I feel so blessed to lead them on this journey! As always, I appreciate all of the wonderful volunteers and fellow ministry staff that help make it possible to serve the PreK-5th grade youth of ORLC.

Here are a few highlights from the last year:

**WOW Retreat:** Although I did not go on the WOW retreat in February, I helped Pastor Kendra and Jackie plan craft projects for the retreat. I found two crafts that coincide with the theme; Jesus Walks on Water. I created material and direction sheets and put together examples for their use with the middle schoolers!

**WOW on Ice:** In January, all elementary, middle school, and high school youth went ice-skating at the Memorial Park skating rink! It was a great time for fellowship, hot drinks, and fun.

**First Communion:** Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, we could not hold the Come to the Table classes this year. Come to the Table typically includes Communion 101, the Sedar Meal, and First Communion on Maundy Thursday. Pastor Kendra and I decided to go forward with an online version of the Communion 101 class this year. I sent out the Fed and Forgiven handbook that we use to teach the course, and then Pastor Kendra graciously made a lesson video. We shared it with all children and then held a Zoom meeting to ask any questions they had and play a game that reflected on what was taught during the video! We had three children participate in the class. Last year's first communicants (now fifth graders) will be invited to attend the Sedar Meal in the spring of 2021 since we were unable to find an alternative to this event this year. On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, these three children were finally able to receive their First Communion during the 9:30 outdoor service! It was such a joyful event.

**Holy Week at Home/Easter:** In the spring, when ORLC decided to discontinue services during Holy Week and Easter to assure the health and safety of all members, Jackie Bartz and I collaborated to create a way for us to learn, worship, and celebrate together. We provided families with scripture readings, activities, and prayers for each milestone during Holy Week in the packet. Unfortunately, due to the lockdown, we could not provide materials for families and instead sent out the packet in E-news and email. The families who chose to access the Holy Week at Home packet had very positive experiences with it! We were happy to provide this to families during these challenging times.

**Wednesday Matinee's:** Throughout the spring and summer, on Wednesdays, Jackie Bartz and I hosted a Zoom movie party for all youth Age 3- 12<sup>th</sup> grade! Most children who attended were Sunday School and KidzEd families. We only showed movies that were rated PG and tried to offer as many recently released movies as possible. This activity was a great way to reach out and interact in person with each of the kids. We spent

about a half-hour total at the beginning and the end chatting and checking in with each child who attended. We continued this activity until school started at the end of August. The children seemed to enjoy it.

**Children's Ministries Facebook:** I decided to create a Children's Ministries Facebook page to stay in better contact with Sunday School, KidTime, and KidzEd families while we are not together as a church community. Facebook was a great way to keep in touch with and communicate better with families. I can post lesson videos and promote important events and information that I need to get out to families. The page has about 30 likes; I look forward to seeing this number continue to grow. Please feel free to check out my Facebook page – ORLC Children's Ministries: <https://www.facebook.com/orlcchildrensministries>.

**Staycation Bible School (Superheroes of the Bible):** Instead of holding a one-week in-person VBS, we provided 35 families with Bible stories and faith-centered activities throughout the summer from home (June 15<sup>th</sup>-August 21<sup>st</sup>)! To give a reprieve to children and families, there was no online instruction. Our theme was Superheroes of the Bible. Those who signed up picked up a monthly "take-home" kit with all of the materials needed to participate! Each two-week period we explored one Bible story and how it relates to a Superhero and his/her story. We provided two simple and fun activities for the family to do each week. Each family was provided with the flexibility to do the activities wherever and whenever. We encouraged families to do these activities together during a time that worked best for their schedule. Throughout the summer, and following all social distancing guidelines, we held three get-togethers as a VBS group. We had a Chalk Decorating Competition, a Scavenger Hunt, and a Children's Concert. Parents attended the event with their children. We had 3-5 families attend each event; it was a blast! It was so exciting to be able to offer something to the children this summer.

**Family Room, Kids Worship Bags & Thrivent Action Grant:** During the summer and early fall, when worship had reconvened in person, we were no longer providing Nursery Care, KidTime, or the Prayground, during the worship service. This decision was made to assure the health and safety of all, as we did not feel confident that social distancing protocols could be followed in these areas. Instead of these children's ministries, we added a Family Room and Kids Worship Bags during the worship service.

The Family Room (in the Great Room) was provided for families with children who found themselves needing to step out during worship. The room included chairs, tables, and a TV streaming the live worship service so that families could still participate from the Family Room. The Family Room was available as an option in place of the nursery. As always, we encouraged children to be a part of worship and made sure they felt welcome to do so with the congregation.

Each child who attended worship was given a worship drawstring bag of items that they were encouraged to bring to church with them each week! The bag included items like; a children's worship reflection book, utensils, craft supplies, bible-based coloring, and more. In addition to this take-home bag, children were provided with a weekly packet of activities

## **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

focused on the gospel lesson. They needed their worship bag to have the necessary utensils to take part in the activities. Children were encouraged to take this packet with them or dispose of it at the end of the service. Finally, we encouraged families to bring along their Children's Bible to the service so that the kids could follow along with the gospel. I am very gracious to Shawn and Sara Juers for writing a Thrivent Action Grant to get this program up and running. We received a \$250 grant; this money went toward buying all of the supplies that went inside the Kids Worship Bags. It was great to continue to be able to engage children throughout worship. When we begin worship again in person, the Kids Worship Bags will be available for all kids.

**FLBC:** I had the opportunity to attend camp with the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> graders during July! We had such a great time full of fellowship and fun. I was repeatedly impressed by the respect and maturity of all the youth who attended. All kids participated regularly and gave great insight and introspection during Bible Study and discussion times. I hope that I will have the opportunity to participate in camp again as a chaperone – it was such a powerful experience for me as a Christian.

**Virtual Sunday School and KidzEd:** Just like all things this year, we had to adjust how we provided Sunday School and KidzEd to the PK - 5<sup>th</sup> grade youth at Our Redeemer's. In the spring, I recorded lesson videos and had Zoom meetings to stay in touch with all kids. With social distancing and safety protocols in place, we could reconvene both ministries in person in the early fall. We had 20 families who signed up to participate! Families could either participate online or in person, but I did not get any interest in this virtual option. In October, when the church decided to discontinue in-person worship, Sunday School and KidzEd also transferred online to ensure all involved health and safety. I am currently providing live Sunday School and KidzEd classes through Zoom for all children interested in participating!

**Sunday School:** We have been blessed with a group of kids who are always anxious to learn more about Christ. Children age 3 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade participate in a *Workshop Rotation Model*. Lessons are presented in 4-week units focusing on a key Bible story. Sunday school starts with an opening prayer and a Bible verse. Children participate in a different workshop each week in art, games, movies, and cooking & science. I am so grateful to those who helped with Sunday school this year! Sara Juers, Jessica Salo, Chris Boe, and Kathy Olson have volunteered to help this year. It wouldn't be possible without them.

**KidzEd:** We have a great group of children who join us on Wednesday evenings for KidzEd. Children age 3 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade get the opportunity to learn more about Sunday gospel sermons. The lessons at *KidzEd* explore the subject of the sermon on an age-appropriate level. Thank you to Mackenzie Grimmis, who volunteered to teach the PreK - 1<sup>st</sup> grade group until she left for college this fall. I took over the entire PK - 5<sup>th</sup> grade due to a lower number of attendees. Jessica Salo and Kim Lawton volunteered their time this fall to assist and lead while I was on maternity leave; I certainly couldn't have done it without them!

**KidTime:** Like Sunday School and KidzEd, there have been many adjustments to KidTime this year. In the spring and summer, I prerecorded the KidTime lesson each week and posted it online. It was also posted on the ORLC live page, along with the worship video. I sent out KidTime worksheets and stickers so that families were able to participate from home fully. Those who didn't receive a worksheet/stickers in the mail could download the KidTime worksheet below the video lesson. In the beginning, the

KidTime lesson videos were very popular, with an average of 15 views each week. It was great to be able to reach out to these families. In the early fall, we noticed that families were not choosing to access the KidTime videos as frequently. We decided to discontinue KidTime until we can hold it in person again. I made this decision because I did not have any families register to participate in this online ministry this year. It is very understandable because I know that families are overwhelmed with online requirements this school year. Once things with the pandemic have subsided and we can be together again (in person) for KidTime, we will continue offering it! Children age 3 through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade are provided with about 20 minutes of children's activities, called KidTime. The curriculum is a lectionary curriculum that follows the lessons used during the church service. Thank you to Mary Robertson, Cheyenne Damron, and Jackie Bartz for volunteering to lead these lessons a couple of times a month this year!

**Blessing of the Backpacks:** In August, we had our annual Blessing of the Backpack Milestone. As a sending into the new school year, all students from preschool through college were welcomed to come forward, have their backpacks blessed, and receive a small gift to remind them of God's ever-present love. We were excited that almost 20 students showed up and came forward to receive a backpack tag! It was great to see so many youth during this service.

**Walk through the Bible:** Bibles were given to four 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students during a special service at the beginning of our Walk Through the Bible class in November. Pastor Kendra and I taught the course helping participating children and families learn about the Bible and how to use it. We also gave the attending children a Daily Devotional. WELCA (Women of the ELCA) purchase these Bibles for our children. Thank you to WELCA for donating these beautiful Bibles and helping ORLC make new disciples!

**Faith Chests Milestone Ministry:** Faith Chests were given to newly baptized children in 2020. Each chest includes an age-appropriate book. These chests are bought rough and need sanding, some rebuilding, and staining. The Men's group have taken on this task and have been finishing the chests since the Faith Chest Ministry's beginning.

**Advent in a Box:** During the Advent season, to reach out to families while we aren't together in person, Jackie Bartz and I collaborated to create the Advent in a Box kit! Advent in a Box was provided as a tool for families to use as they journey through the Advent season. Each box contained simple activities and was intended for use at home. We had phenomenal interest in these kits and created and distributed over 30 of them. We hoped that each family could experience Advent and Christmas together in a meaningful way at home!

Christ's Peace,

Liz Swenson,  
Director of Children's Ministries

# Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives

## Report of the Director of Youth and Family Ministries Jackie Bartz

*When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." ~John 8:12*

Twenty-twenty started with all the excitement and enthusiasm of a new year and quickly became full of many changes and challenges we did not expect! Many traditions and events had to be canceled, postponed, or re-invented in new and creative ways. We reminded each other that although separate, we remain connected and supported as members of God's beautiful and loving family. With Christ at the center, it has been amazing to witness His light shine uniquely through each of us in both big and small ways, always encouraging one another along the way!

Here are some highlights of this roller coaster year:

**WOW on Ice** - Pr. Kendra, Liz, and I collaborated to have a night of fun and fellowship on the ice by renting Memorial Park warming house and ice rink on January 22nd.

**Extravaganza** - In January, I was so grateful for the support of ORLC as I traveled to participate in the Extravaganza conference for youth ministry directors. This year's theme was "Practice Not Perfect." *Who would have thought that this conference would set the tone for this whole year?!* This conference centered on how we hold ourselves and the ministry we lead to a perfection standard, but we forget that ministry is a practice. Jesus never calls us to be perfect but instead reminds us that there is grace to cover our failures when we boldly try something new and then ask us to continue trying- to practice service, love, care, and better align ourselves with God's mission in this world. I genuinely believe that this was God's loving nudge to fill me with ideas and connect me with folks from around the country to collaborate with throughout the year, seeking and trying new ways to continue to serve, love, care, and minister to one another through this pandemic.

**WOW Retreat** - I had the privilege of working with Lynnette Avery, Rebekah Thomas, Liz Swenson, and Pr. Kendra, Kristen Young, and the FLBC Staff to engage our middle school youth in a faith enriching, energetic and fun weekend at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp "*Walk on Water*" WOW Retreat. This theme contemplated Peter's struggle in getting out of the boat and how that relates to our lives. Twenty-five middle school and high school students participated in this amazing retreat in February, helping our youth grow closer to God and one another. To keep costs affordable, we partnered with St. Paul's in Missoula again this year. On the trip home, I asked the high school youth to share one reflection from the weekend. One youth simply said with a full heart, "*This is why I am a part of this community!*"

**Ecumenical Youth Group Exchange** – Last spring, we endeavored to make greater connections with our ecumenical partners, beginning with Our Lady of the Valley. This exchange was cut short due to the pandemic.

**Passion Mime** – Our high school students and congregation as a whole greatly look forward to performances of the Passion Mime each year, sharing the story of Jesus' ministry, His death, and resurrection through mime. We made it through our first practice just before the onset of the Covid pandemic. Holding onto the hope that it was a temporary delay, it was eventually decided, with a heavy heart, that for the safety of all, the Passion Mime would be canceled for 2020.

**Spring Wednesday Evening Small Groups**– With the pandemic's onset, all in-person groups were moved online. Pr. Kendra, Liz, and I collaborated to provide a KidzEd and Confirmation hybrid zoom meeting for 1 hour each week. This included a check-in, an ice-breaker game, a brief lesson, and an interactive prayer. Safehouse

was also moved online, and gatherings were held via zoom. This became a time where our high school youth could gather in a community of peers to share their struggles and triumphs and encourage one another. As the spring went on, while we continued to hold both zoom gatherings, attendance decreased as youth and families became more overwhelmed with online school requirements.

**Holy Week @ Home** – We were on stay-at-home orders this spring as we approached Holy Week. During this week, we celebrate the heart of what we believe; however, we were not able to gather as a church community in one place this year during this time. Liz and I partnered with Becky Cole, a Children's Ministry Director in Kirkland, WA, to create an online resource for families to learn, worship, and celebrate together. We included scripture, activities, and prayers for each milestone during Holy Week.

**Marvel Movie Mondays and Wednesday Matinees** – Another way we connected through the Spring and gave youth and families a break was checking in and watching movies digitally together each week. It was fun to see smiling faces check-in.

### **Youth Lead Special Service Projects**

- **Helena Food Share Kid Pack Builds:** Our youth partnered with Helena Food Share and the Salvation Army to assist with two Kid Pack Builds in a safe, socially distant space.
- **Planting Helena Food Share Plot in the Community Garden:** A few of our high school youth and I spent a few hours in the garden planting a large portion of the Helena Food Share plot this spring.
- **Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits:** Kalley May launched the collection and assembly of Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief in March. With her perseverance, enthusiasm, and creativity, she assembled 210 kits with help from Lori Bigwood-Pecarina and a Thrivent Action Team Grant, the Safehouse crew, and generous donations from our congregation and community in July. This project is a step toward her Girl Scout Gold Award.
- **Refreshing a Family Room at God's Love:** The youth leadership team brainstormed a community service project for the Safehouse youth. Ella Krumm wrote and was awarded a grant from The William and Blanche Hetzel Foundation to refresh a family housing room at God's Love. This project has been put on hold until the Spring of 2021 when a space is unoccupied and proper safety precautions can be determined.
- **New Raised Beds in the Community Garden:** Morgan May and her Girl Scout Troop built three new large, raised beds in the garden this August. They filled them with fresh compost and topsoil as well as planted fresh herbs for all to enjoy!
- **New Picnic Tables by the Community Garden:** This summer, the Boy Scout Troop that meets at our church built and stained two new picnic tables for the community garden.
- **Basketball Hoops for Special Olympics** – Although unable to execute a prom for people with disabilities this year, Dylan Maharg still wanted to make a difference in their lives. He gathered three donated portable basketball hoops for two different Special Olympics teams, a youth, and an adult, to practice in the back parking lot this fall safely.
- **Adopt A Cottage** – Our youth leadership team decided to spearhead an Adopt A Cottage by providing gifts for a cottage of seven youth at the Intermountain Children's Residential. They creatively made a video announcement asking for the congregation's assistance. Ella Krumm even applied for a



## **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

Thrivent Action Team grant to assist with the funds donated by youth, family, and friends to cover any additional gifts needed.

**Graduation Banquet & Blessing** - Due to the pandemic, we came up with some alternative ways to celebrate our seven high school graduates. We honored our graduates during our online worship for May 17<sup>th</sup> - inviting the graduates and their immediate family members to the Courtyard at Our Redeemer's for a blessing, a gift from the congregation, and a blanket ceremony to be recorded at a safe social distance. A video of all of our graduates was shared with the help of Jacob Pecarina. Our congregation showered our graduates with cards sent directly to their homes. Finally, we hosted a "Reverse Graduation Parade" in which graduates wore their cap and gowns, spaced themselves out in the church parking lot, and watched as people drove through honking horns and sharing their good wishes to the graduates.

**2020 Costa Rica Servant Trip** - With the pandemic's onset, stay at home orders, and international borders closed, the servant team had a difficult decision to make. The team took the discussion to heart, understood the great importance of continuing the connection between the community and the church, and was led to sponsor a small team of four to continue the ministry and serve local needs amid this pandemic. As Costa Rica began to reopen mid-summer, Fiorella, our local coordinator with Praying Pelican Missions, worked with the small local team and local pastors to minister in our place! The focus of this team is to partner with Pastors and provide food distribution in local communities. They can reach out, deliver food, pray, and bless over 100 people.

**Summer Fun Events** - As we entered phase two of the pandemic and were able to gather in small groups again with safety precautions, it was clear that our youth needed in-person interaction. Each week throughout the summer, we were able to gather for socially distant activities.

**Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp** - FLBC decided they could not hold camp, as usual, this past summer but opened it to families and groups to participate in a retreat-style format instead. While there, a camp staff member guided us through the various activities that camp offers, and groups remained distanced to the best of their ability, as recommended by the CDC and Flathead County Health Department. I was able to plan two separate youth trips based on the feedback from a parental survey. The first one was July 12<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> with nine youth 8<sup>th</sup>+ grade, and the second was July 19<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> with 12 youth 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Blessing of the Backpacks** - Liz and I led the church family as we celebrated this milestone by presenting youth with backpack tags, blessing and praying over them as well as reminding them that God is always with them.

**Spark Worship** - Over the summer, Pr. Kendra led staff in reimagining and rebranding Wednesday evening worship for the fall. This was in response to lower attendance in the past year, the restructuring of confirmation, and making Wednesday worship more in sync with Sunday worship.

**Fall Safehouse** - We have a fantastic group of youth leaders this year that are putting in so much extra time and effort to plan, study the word, brainstorm, and try new ideas. It is evident, our youth's greatest need is to have in-person interactions, even if that means being masked, maintaining social distancing, and frequent hand washing or hand sanitizing. Safehouse met outside into the fall and then moved into the Great Room to have more space. We continue to explore what makes a welcoming community of faith; the significance behind traditions; growing in their faith by asking tough questions; and most importantly, learning to articulate their own beliefs and share the hope and unconditional love that comes from having a relationship with Jesus.

**Nursery** - Unfortunately, with the pandemic and keeping the safety of children and nursery attendants at the forefront, the nursery has been closed most of the year. In the meantime, Liz and I worked on alternative resources for young families, including children's worship bags and revamping the Pray Ground toys so that they could be sanitized after each use.

**Love and Serve Your Neighbor** this fall was an intergeneration day event as all ages came together (masked and socially distant) to assist with much-needed service projects on our campus. We had 34+ people spaced out to re-stain the picnic tables, weed and add new wood chips to the boulevard, spread compost, put up a new fence around the community garden, pick up garbage, package candy for Spooky Spaces, and plant trees!

**Youth Workers Retreat at FLBC** - This fall, I participated in a unique continuing education opportunity at FLBC at the Youth Workers retreat. Thirteen youth leaders from the Northwest gathered using social distancing to learn from our guest presenter Mark Jackson. It was great to collaborate with others discussing context, spiritual practices, strategic plans, learning new games, and sharing their ministry ideas.

**Spooky Spaces** - As with so many other events, Trunk or Treat had to be re-invented to ensure our community's safety. It was renamed Spooky Spaces to reflect the changes. I worked closely with the L&CC Health Department, including submitting the 10-page event planning form. It was approved to hold a socially distant trunk or treat with a scavenger hunt and photo opportunities with many safety precautions in place. Even with the approval, as Covid numbers began to rise, the L&CC Health Department reduced event numbers to only 50 the Friday before our event, and the snow decided to come in full force! However, Pr. Kendra and I decided we had a safe plan in place and continued with the event. We had just the right amount of help and participants to make it a great day in the sunshine without having to turn anyone away. This would not have been possible without the help of our high school youth, Sarah Juers, and everyone else who decorated cars and donated candy!

**Advent In A Box** - Liz and I collaborated with Becky Cole to create *Advent in a Box*. This box is geared toward families, although any age could take one, as a way for them to celebrate the season together in their home. Each box included a Christmas story, devotion, discussion questions, song, activity, and prayer for each week of Advent. Ryan Magee and Joel Anderson, high school students, assisted with assembly.

**Christmas Outdoor Display** - Christmas Eve services cannot happen as they have in the past, but we wanted to share all of Christ's light and peace that we experience during these special worship services. With much brainstorming and assistance from others, an outdoor display was created to bring the peace and calm of the season with a luminary path, nativity, and lighted trees. Thanks to all who helped bring light to this special time of year!

Some of my goals for the coming year are to:

- \* Continue to inspire, encourage, and guide our youth as they lead service opportunities and become more involved in leadership roles in our congregation and community.
- \* Participate in the Extravaganza Youth Director's Conference virtually this year.
- \* Re-invent our WOW retreat into a more family orientated retreat at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp.
- \* Lead groups of youth to spend a week at camp this coming summer, similar to last summer and instead of a servant trip.

In Christ's Service,

Jackie Bartz

Director of Youth and Family Ministries

# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

---

## **Report of the Director of Worship & Arts Jason Callon**

To state it positively, this year has been unique. I am so thankful for the support and grace everyone in the church has shown during this time. Worship has felt different and, at times, uncomfortable or unfamiliar. Let us all hold onto hope that one day, sooner than later, we will be able to return to normal and worship in-person.

### **People and Groups**

- Linda Keim continues as our organist.
- Our musical ensembles are mostly on hiatus; I am inviting musicians of our church to participate in musical offerings as they are able.
- We welcomed three members as new LPA's (Lay Pastoral Associate) to our church: Lori Bigwood-Pecarina, Kevin Mathews, and Lisa Williams-Mathews.
- We now have four Assisting Ministers (that lead the creed, prayers, and other parts of worship): the three new LPA's and Jan Martin.
- Our 30+ Worship Assistants, led by Kristi Antosh, are taking a well-deserved rest from their duties while we are online-only.

We are encouraging church members to participate in worship in a variety of ways. If you feel you can contribute to worship, please reach out to me. We love seeing the faces of a variety of congregation members in worship! Lutheran worship is a group effort by design, and we love having others share the load.

### **A Look Back at This Year**

- 2020 started strong with in-person worship but was soon halted due to Covid.
- We received grants to purchase audio and video equipment necessary to produce high-quality worship videos and live streams.
- As Director of Worship, one of my primary duties is to facilitate and direct worship. With this online-only model, this has meant planning, filming, editing, and distributing

worship videos. Thankfully I have a background in these areas that has enabled me to do this without hiring outside help.

- Over the summer, we were able to meet in-person for worship, which mostly happened outdoors. I am so thankful for the beautiful weather we enjoyed that made this possible.
- This fall, we initiated Spark Worship, a new worship opportunity on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm, which took the place of WOW. This new worship included traditional Lutheran worship with a vibrant and contemporary backdrop of visuals, music, and liturgy. I am looking forward to resuming Spark Worship when possible.

With the continued rise in Covid cases, we are back to online-only for worship, and that will continue for the foreseeable future. I am working to elevate the worship videos for the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

### **Back to Normal**

- Tuning in to worship on a screen in one's living room is far from ideal. However, it has also given us opportunities to explore new technologies, forced us to rethink what it means to worship and be a church, and made us recall what is important and what has value in our world. One day Covid will be a vague memory, and I am so thankful to the entire church for the support and grace we give as a gift to each other. Grace is our best response, and it is how we are called to serve others as Christians.
- When we return to in-person worship, we will likely continue social distancing and mask-wearing. When herd immunity is reached through vaccination or other means, we will take off the masks and hug and sing and worship together.

Yours in the service of Christ,  
Jason M. Callon  
Director of Worship & Arts

# Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives

## Report of the Director of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Preschool Trudy Burke

What a roller coaster the year 2020 has been, making it hard to believe what we experienced over the past 12 months. Through it all, the love of God has been shown to preschool students through the dedication of staff and their innovative ideas of how to continue the classroom experience, even when we can't be together.

### **A look back at 2020:**

**January** - The year's start found us with seven classes of 3, 4, and 5-year-olds. Each class participated in an "enrichment" class with a guest teacher during the cold months - Spanish for our PreK classes, Science for our Four-Year-Olds, and Music/Movement for our Three-Year-Olds.

January was also the midpoint of our school year, and we held Parent-Teacher conferences. We had 100% of our families participate in short meetings with teachers.

**February** - We opened registration for the 2020-2021 school year and quickly realized we would need to add a third Three-Year-Old class. Our other classes also filled quickly, and by the end of the month, we were nearly at capacity.

**March** - Our Preschool board put together the Annual Basket Fundraiser in early March, not knowing we would have to suspend it after only a week (we were able to wrap it up later.)

On March 13, we decided to close the Preschool. Our staff quickly shifted to online mode, offering daily and weekly activities and Zoom class meetings for our students.

**April** - The teachers knocked themselves out, coming up with ways for children to stay connected and learning. We decided not to charge tuition during these months of online classes; however, with donations from families and PPP monies, we were able to honor staff contracts and pay teachers throughout the school year.

**May** - We were able to celebrate the end of the unusual school year with a special event. The Preschool Board organized a dinner for teachers, followed by a Drive-By parade of Preschool families through the church parking lot. Students were so excited to see their teacher, and staff wrote "love notes" on car windows for their students. It will be a special memory for us all.

**June and July** - We said goodbye to Starsha Frederickson, who had taught our Three-Year-Old classes, and Susan Bergland, who taught PreK. We also welcomed Jan Kiley and Emily Haerter to take on the challenges of the Three-Year-Olds for the upcoming year.

During the summer months, much time was spent figuring out how we could safely return to school in the fall. Covid policies and practices were planned, and we updated our cleaning processes. We also came up with ways to keep each class in its own "pod" to reduce contact.

The summer was also a time for parents to debate the choices they were making for their children. Many new inquiries and registrations came in, and we also lost many enrolled students who decided to stay home this year.

The Preschool hosted several round-table meetings over the summer for staff from other preschools around Helena. These events allowed teachers to share ideas and best practices and was an excellent way to connect with the other programs in town.

**August** - In mid-August, teachers returned to work, and classroom preparations began. At the end of the month, students and parents started to visit for orientation sessions. We were thrilled that 66 families had decided to enroll their students for this new year.

**September** - Classes started, and it felt great to have children in the building again. Many new procedures, such as temperature checks and playground drop-off and pick-up, were put in place. We welcomed Taylor Jenks to our staff as an assistant to help with all these tasks; she has proven to be a favorite with the kids and a great help to teachers.

We also received a \$10,000 DHS grant to help with extra expenses and salaries.

**October** - We found ways to use other parts of the building and grounds to give children new experiences while keeping classes from running into one another. We held our annual Halloween Parade outside, and the afternoon classes walked to the Renaissance Senior Center to wave at residents through the windows.

**November** - We had our first class shut down due to a presumed positive Covid case in a student. That class went online while the rest of our classes met in person. Preparations we had put in place served us well, and parents seemed pleased with our response.

**December** - We will be observing the birth of Baby Jesus in different ways this year. Our usual programs will look different, and we will not be able to invite everyone to see us perform. Still, we know that the story of our Savior will find a special place in all our hearts this year, as it does each year.

In Christ's Service,  
Trudy Burke  
Preschool Director

# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

## **2020 Annual Report of the Women of the ELCA**

WELCA is a community of women who meet together for fellowship, growth, and service. 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, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, society, and the world. **All women who are members of Our Redeemer's are also members of WELCA.** All women are invited to attend WELCA functions and Bible study.

Bible study is one of our core activities, and our two Bible study groups met the first three months of the year. Studies were suspended until September, when the two groups joined together for three monthly sessions.

Despite the many challenges this year presented, our quilting group continued their work, and in July, we sent 190 quilts to Lutheran World Relief. The Sew in Love service group was also able to continue making items for the women and children at the Friendship Center.

We continued to collect items for Lutheran World Relief Kits during the year, and in July, we sent out 101 Baby Care Kits and 110 School Kits.

We were not able to have our annual fall fundraising bazaar, but with funds remaining from last year's event, we were able to provide scholarships for students attending Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp.

The WELCA Board oversees all aspects of the WELCA program and plans the events for the coming year. This year, serving on the board were: President, **Pat Lumma**; Vice President and Secretary, **Charlene Mayala**; Treasurer, **Kim Randall**; and Bible Study Chairs, **Hildegard Krumm and Kay Patterson**. The WELCA Board hopes to get back to meeting the second Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am in AD-1, and we invite all interested women to attend any of our meetings.

In Christ's service,

Pat Lumma, WELCA President



# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

## **2020 Annual WELCA Treasurer's Report**

Beginning Balance: 13,628.09

### **Income 2020**

Fall Festival 2020 (net) *	-
Fall Festival After Sales 2019	58.00
Circle Offerings	139.50
Pool of Living Water	4.40
Thank Offering	-
Gifts received	-
Bank Interest	2.12
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>204.02</b>

### **Disbursements 2020**

Synodical Payments:	
Convention	-
Circle Offering	41.50
Pool of Living Water	-
Thank Offering	-
Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church:	
Bibles for Third Grade	-
Emergency Assistance	520.00
Family Promise Fund	450.00
Home Nursery Fund	230.00
Join the Journey	600.00
Middle School Retreat Fund	-
Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp	400.00
Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp - washer	500.00
Friendship Center	450.00
God's Love	700.00
Lutheran World Relief	500.00
LWR kits and delivery expenses	279.00
LWR Quilting Supplies	975.99
St. John's Foundation	500.00
Scholarships: Youth Global Missions	-
Scholarships: Bible Camp	840.00
Scholarships: Lutheran College	-
Miscellaneous **	249.63
<b>Total Disbursements:</b>	<b>7,236.12</b>

**Bank Balance 12/31/20 6,595.99**

12/5/20 kwr

\*No Fall Festival due to Covid-19

# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

## **2020 Personnel Committee Report**

The Personnel Committee of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church has met regularly throughout the past year. We are fortunate to have two long-standing members, Ingrid Childress and Jan Martin, who bring a rich history of the committee as well as insights into past and current policy practices. Additionally, as newer members, Bob Oldenburg and Lynda Hanson bring thoughtful input and expertise into this committee. Completing the committee is Pastor Arne, who has timely and essential information. These dedicated committee members have allowed us to make a good deal of progress.

ORLC should have a job description for each staff member as a matter of record. Unfortunately, not all positions have a written record; therefore, the committee has taken on this task. We have completed the Director of Youth and Family Services job description, which was approved by the Council in July. We have currently developed a draft for the Administrative Assistant and are moving forward towards a final document.

Since May, our committee has been focused on policy regarding leave for staff as this was an immediate need due to maternity leave request. We have reviewed policies from several Montana churches similar in size to ORLC, reviewed our current personnel policy, and have made recommendations for policy changes. The existing policy is being updated to reflect various types of leave better and differentiate between leave and benefits.

Attention has been given to a review of the ORLC Personnel Policy manual, including policies specific to the Preschool. It may be necessary for the Council to clarify the Preschool's relationship to ORLC. In past years, the Personnel Committee has made recommendations for staff salary increases, but this was not done in 2020.

We plan to continue our work in the next year.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Redfern

ORLC Personnel Committee Chair

\*\*\*\*\*

## **2020 Perpetual and Seminary Scholarship Fund Awards**

Committee Members: Lori Bigwood-Pecarina, Glenn Erickson, Jim Penner

All Perpetual Fund committee action was conducted via email due to the Pandemic.

The committee announced the availability of grants in the church bulletin and Voice during April. Two grant applications were received, reviewed, and unanimously approved for funding.

### **PERPETUAL FUND: SEMINARY SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

The committee awarded \$1,000 to Baird Linke for course materials. Baird is enrolled at Wartburg Theological Seminary to earn an MDiv degree

### **PERPETUAL FUND GENERAL FUND**

The committee awarded \$644 to Pastor Kendra for leader materials and five scholarships for Financial Peace University Classes to be taught by Marie Rauch. ORLC members will be given priority to the scholarships. Participants who receive scholarships are required to contribute \$20 of the \$ 129-course fee and pledge to attend classes. The class ultimately was postponed due to Covid-19 and will be rescheduled as conditions allow.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Bigwood-Pecarina, Glenn Erickson, Jim Penner

Perpetual Fund Trustees

**Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

**Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church  
2020 Gifts and Memorials Committee Report**

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Gifts and Memorial Committee (GMC) at Our Redeemers Lutheran Church (ORLC) only met on an ad hoc basis through email correspondence this past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The GMC received and reviewed monthly financial reports to ensure that all gifts/memorials were properly directed to fund(s) specified by the donor(s).

In early September, the GMC was approached by Pastor Bergland with a request to use some dedicated Larry Rosin memorial funds to purchase a conifer tree in his memory. In addition to four other trees purchased by Jeanne McCoskery in honor of her daughter Nancy, these trees created a new memorial "forest" along the Benton Avenue entrance to the church. The purchase was approved for \$434.83, and the tree was installed in mid-September. A pathway and some benches are envisioned as additions in the future.

**Additional requests/projects:** The purchase of new paraments (altar cloths) for use in the sanctuary using the remainder of Larry Rosin's dedicated memorial funds has been approved (unknown when the purchase will occur). Another proposed project under development is the addition of a street or yard light at the Benton Avenue entrance (projected cost is about \$1,300).

The GMC general fund balance was \$5,271.97 on January 1, 2020, and \$ 6,787.14 on December 10, 2020. Total expenditures for the year equaled \$434.83 and gift/memorial deposits for the year to the fund totaled \$1,954.00.

Prayerfully submitted by,

ORLC Gifts and Memorial Committee  
Norm Midtlyng, Chair  
Ingrid Childress  
Autumn Keller

\*\*\*\*\*

**Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church  
2020 Financial Review Committee Report**

The Financial Review Committee is annually re-established by the Council President. The members are charged with regular review of the financial status of the church, advising the Council with respect to budget issues, responding to the Audit Committee's annual review and advising the Council Treasurer. The committee has met periodically this past year, and reported recommendations to the Church Council. The Committee members in 2020 were Clint Ohman, Craig Erickson, Jan Martin, Beth Johnson and Sarah Magee as a non-voting member.

# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

## **2020 Advocate for Justice and Peace**

### **Hunger Team**

Our partnership with Helena Food Share is a remarkable blessing for all. The Hunger Team's milk appeal, when matched dollar-for-dollar by a local foundation, totaled \$12,800. Thanks to the efforts of many, we donated more than 50 pounds of fresh produce to Helena Food Share this season (despite lots of grasshoppers).

Because of Covid-19 restrictions, Helena Food Share could not accept most food donations or volunteer assistance from the community, so we could only participate in Kid Packs assembly from January to March. Also, as we were unable to sponsor our usual holiday food gathering this year, the Hunger Team challenged the congregation in December to raise enough funds for Helena Food Share to buy a ton of food.

ORLC received a grant from Lutheran Disaster Response Covid-19 Relief for \$1,500 in June. The money is designated for our milk drive for Kid's Packs and fence replacement and soil amendments for our community garden.

### **Family Promise of Greater Helena**

Family Promise continued to serve homeless families' needs in our community in 2020 when the need was more significant than ever. Due to the pandemic, some significant changes happened in the program. All families are now housed at First Christian Church. Other churches—including Our Redeemer's—still serve as meal, evening, and overnight hosts on a rotating basis. Our Redeemer's hosted in February, September, and November.

There is a great ministry opportunity to serve as overnight hosts—please contact the overnight host coordinator, Linda Coty, if you would like to serve. In February, the Our Redeemer's team also participated in Family Promise's annual fundraiser, the Comfort Food Challenge. Kathy Olson and Janet Whitmoyer serve as our overall coordinators for the program.

### **God's Love**

The economic impact of the pandemic has deeply affected those with low to no income in our community. We gathered hats, gloves, socks, clothes, toiletries, shoes, and hand care items to deliver to God's Love Shelter throughout the year. Thank you for your mercy and generosity to those who are most vulnerable in our community.

**Report of Deacon  
Carol Will**

**REFLECTIONS**

*Just as water reflects the face,  
so one human heart reflects another.  
Proverbs 27:19*



A new ministry called **Reflections** began in September 2020, hosted by Carol Will.

Each session is held in a Google Meet every two weeks on Tuesday.

**The Sources and Structure:**

- Opening prayer
- Reading of (short) Sacred Scripture, poetry, passages from other spiritual texts, prayers, etc... - shared on the screen for all to see as it is read out loud
- Reflections by the presenter
- Re-reading of the same text
- Brief litany of petitions
- Opportunity at the end of the session to have an open dialogue

There is no sign-up, no commitment, just an offering for anyone to check-in for this time of prayer and reflection. It is a spiritual practice that brings some peace, inspiration, or solace to our community. The average attendance has been between 4-6 participants.

# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

## **2020 Community Development Team**

In keeping with the congregation's approval of 2020 ministry initiatives, the Community Development Team continues to progress on behalf of ORLC. The Team's third quarter report highlighted our progress with the good news on two issues. First, the City of Helena informed us that our street maintenance fees would be reduced which created an annual savings of over \$40,000. Second, the development of a consortium consisting of four non-profits and the City of Helena, and the submission of an application for Community Development Block Grant-CDBG funds for the purpose of identifying and validating Helena residential housing needs and creating a design on our 12-acre campus to meet them.

This quarterly report is highlighted by an announcement from the Governor's office on December 21, 2020 that the CDBG application has been approved. The City is the official recipient of the grant and will lead the project implementation activities. We expect to obtain consultants within the first quarter of 2021, followed by the needs analysis and community outreach activities with all of our partners (Helena Habitat for Humanity, Rocky Mountain Development Center, YWCA, Trust Montana and the City of Helena).

Based on these activities and research, priority housing needs will be identified and each partner will determine what segment they can support. Concurrently, work will begin to assess legal and site-specific development needs, as well as capital funding mechanisms to help inform parcel allocation for each entity and relatedly, each entity's prospective building envelope within the campus.

As these activities take place in the second and third quarters of 2021, ORLC will be preparing its buy/sell agreements, building covenants, and related documents to accomplish the sale of the property. The development plan will be completed by the fourth quarter of 2021 or the first quarter of 2022.

For the Community Development Team,  
Jerry Hoover

# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

## **Biographies of Council Members & Nominees**

### **Craig Erickson**

I was born to Richard and Carol Erickson in Moorhead, Minnesota, on January 27, 1962. I was baptized at Hegland Lutheran Church near Hawley, Minnesota, on March 11, 1962. Thanks to my mother, I still have a bulletin for the worship service. The name of Pastor Underbakke's sermon was "The Tempter is Here." I wonder if he was trying to be funny?

In 1986, I left Minnesota and moved to Havre, Montana, to work at KOJM/KPQX radio. I left radio in 1998 to work as a planner & grant writer for Bear Paw Development. In 2009, I left Havre to work for Great West Engineering here in Helena, and I soon became a member of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church. I love the Lutheran faith and our belief that God's grace saves us. It is also a blessing to serve the Church as a member of the Church Council. Thank you for your support, and have a blessed New Year.

### **Ryan Holm**

Ryan Holm was born and raised in Helena. He was baptized into Our Redeemer's when he was an infant and attended ORLC throughout his youth and into adulthood. He was active in Safe House and played drums when ORLC first started the contemporary service. He graduated from HHS in 1998 and attended Montana State University for two years. He gained civil engineering experience working four summers for Damschen & Associates during high school & college. He used this experience to work as a project engineer for DJ&A, PC of Missoula, and then CrossRoad Engineers of Beech Grove, Indiana. In 2005, Ryan returned to Helena and resumed working for Damschen & Associates which had changed its name to Great West Engineering. While working full-time, he completed the last two years of his Civil Engineering degree at Carroll College part-time, finally graduating with honors in 2010. Ryan has been employed by Great West Engineering since 2005 and is currently a project manager and lead road designer for highway projects.

Ryan has two sons, Sawyer (12) & Trevor (10), who are the light of his life. They were baptized at ORLC and now reside in Utah during the school year and in Helena during the summer. Despite the distance, Ryan spends at least a week per month with his boys when they are in Utah. JoAnne is Ryan's girlfriend of 4 years, and she has a daughter, Hannah (13). Ryan enjoys waterskiing, downhill skiing, hunting, backpacking, and other outdoor sports with his family. He can often be found vacationing at Flathead Lake or boating at the lakes around Helena.

Ryan has enjoyed the challenges of serving on the Church Council in his first year. In addition to getting up to speed on the function and role of the Council, the extraordinary challenges that Covid has caused Our Redeemer's have been trying. However, the way the executive committee and Council have come together to respond to the challenges has been rewarding.

### **Beth Johnson**

I was baptized as an infant at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Two Harbors, Minnesota. I was confirmed in the same church and sang in the choir in high school. My husband Fred Goughnour, and our children attended St. John's Lutheran Church while we lived in Mound, Minnesota. I was a Sunday school teacher for a couple of years at St. John's, specializing in 2nd grade. My children, Erik, Guy, and Julia, were baptized in that church. My family and I moved to Helena in 2010 and became Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church members shortly thereafter. I have been a WOW guide and served as a member-at-large on the ORLC Congregational Council for a couple of years. I am honored to have served as Council Treasurer this past year..

### **Tom Johnson**

Tom is retired from the Fort Harrison Fire Department with 34 years' service and from the Montana Army National Guard with a total 41 years, 7 months combined active and reserve time. He also worked part time as an EMT-I for Eagle Ambulance for about 18 years. Currently, Tom owns a small farm/livestock money losing operation for the last 35 plus years.

Tom is currently Commander and very active with the VFW Post 10010 out of East Helena and current Chaplain for the District 4, Montana VFW along with holding a board position with VFW Cooties, Pup tent 10. He is also active with the Sons of Norway and holds a board position as Public Affairs.

Tom was confirmed at Our Redeemer's on Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>, 1971. He has two wonderful sons and two wonderful daughters, along with being additionally blessed with many grandchildren. Hobbies include hunting, fishing, shooting, horses, rock hounding and mentoring anyone.

### **Janice Kirkpatrick**

Janice and her husband Stewart have been members of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church since 1996, although they had been members 5 years earlier before a move to Butte. In total they have been a part of this congregation for about 28 years. Janice and Stewart have two daughters, Kathryn and Siobhan. Kathryn has two children, Rodney, a freshman at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado and Aila, a junior in high school. Siobhan is married to Tyler Strom, a Lutheran Pastor in Rogers, Minnesota. They have three children, Isla - 4 years old, Aiden - 2 years old, and Ava - 3 months old. It's been a blessing to watch these grandchildren progress through life and grow into the wonderful people they are today, even little 3 month old Ava! Janice graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in Elementary Education and retired from the State of Montana in 2014. Even though she never taught in the public school system, her degree did come in handy when she worked for the Montana University System as Scholarship Coordinator.

Janice enjoys reading, walking/hiking, spending time with family and friends, a good Netflix series and due to COVID has taken up cross word puzzles and embroidery.

Over the years Janice has served as a Sunday school teacher, WOW guide, Worship Assistant Captain, money counter, on the Call Committee for Pastor Arne, and is currently the church council secretary. She is very grateful for Pastor Arne, Pastor Kendra and the wonderful staff at Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church. It truly is a blessing to be a part of this wonderful congregation.

## **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

---

### **Jan Martin**

Jan and Jeff Martin joined Our Redeemers Lutheran Church in 2002, before that time they had not been members of a church. Jan is a Lay Pastoral Associate and on occasion helps with worship on Sundays. She is a member of WELCA, and serves on the Financial Review Committee, the Generosity Committee and the Personnel Committee.

Jan and her husband Jeff have lived in Helena since 1981 and they have 2 sons, and 4 grandchildren. Jan worked for Valley Bank of Helena and is now retired. She is a member of Soroptimist International of Helena and has served on the Board of Directors for Family Promise and YWCA of Helena.

### **Clint Mingay**

My name is Clint Mingay. I am a Townsend native and work for the Veterans Benefits Administration as a Veterans Service Representative. My wife, Amy and I have two children, Brinley and Sawyer. Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church has been our church home for more than 10 years. I am interested in joining the ORLC council to become more involved in our church and community. I would be honored to serve as a member of the church council, and would be grateful for the opportunity.

### **Cody Salo**

My name is Cody Salo and I have been a member of Our Redeemer's since 2011. I have two children, Kacey and Kendall, and my wife is Jessica Salo. I grew up in Helena and was raised Presbyterian, but I have really enjoyed my church family at Our Redeemer's and all of the great ministries and support it provides our congregation and community. We are so blessed to be involved at Our Redeemer's and I look forward to seeing it continue to thrive.

I am a civil engineer and work for DOWL, a regional engineering firm that focuses on municipal and transportation projects. Currently, I am the Helena branch office manager and oversee 15 people locally and another 15 people in the region. This experience lends itself well to our upcoming property transitions and guiding of decisions in the church. I believe that I could provide real value to the council and I want to help our congregation through serving on the council. My personality is balanced and I value hearing all perspectives before making important decisions.

### **Drew Sielbach**

Drew has lived in Helena for just over five years. He is married to Susan Sielbach and they have three grown children. Prior to becoming members of Our Redeemer's in spring 2016 they were members of Shepherd of the Valley (SOV) in Juneau, Alaska where Drew served on council, was active working with the youth and served on the call committee for SOV's current pastor.

Drew is a Civil Engineer and enjoys travel, hiking, boating, canoeing and fishing.

### **Lynn Voss**

Lynn moved to Helena in 1997; met Shannon during her Senior year at Carroll; and joined ORLC in quick succession. Lynn and Shannon were married in Helena with Pastor Doug Peterson officiating and celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this past April.

Lynn has taught Sunday School and Confirmation classes with Shannon and over the intervening years has been involved on the Stewardship, Call, and Mutual Ministry Committees. Lynn and Shannon have two boys: Eli, a junior at Capital High, and Bridger, an eighth grader at CR Anderson. Shannon is a Human Resources Professional with the State of Montana. Lynn is a Financial Advisor at Thrivent Financial.



# **Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives**

## **2020 Congregational President's Report Craig Erickson**

Dear Family in Christ,

2020 has been a year of challenges for all of us. None of us has escaped the impact of COVID-19. Isolation, illness, shuttered businesses, lost jobs, and adapting to new and sometimes frustrating ways to communicate, work, and worship. If you are like me, you may, at times, have felt frightened, frustrated, angry, and disconnected. However, as challenging as this year has been, there is much for which I am very grateful. For example, we learned how to worship God in new and creative ways. We have found ways to cut our costs, and God blessed us with financial gifts that have enabled us to adapt to the challenges of serving His people during a pandemic. Personally, the greatest blessing has been to understand how important we are to one another. A Church is people. It is Christ's people worshipping, working, and serving together. Zoom has been a blessing, but it will never replace the wonderful gift of going to Church. I confess I used to take for granted the ability to go to Church. I do not anymore.

A vaccine is on the way, and with it, I pray, will come the ability to gather safely together again in God's house. I do not know when that day will come, but it will, and it will be a fabulous day. Until then, let us continue to come together and worship on-line. Let us pray, serve, and give thanks to God and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the many blessings we are given each day.

Peace.

Craig Erickson

# Embraced by God's Love We Reach Out to Serve Because Our Redeemer Lives

---



**Montana Synod**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

“...the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the...shadow of death, light has dawned.” Matthew 4:16

Dear Siblings in Christ,

The season of Epiphany – the revelation of God’s light into the world – has come. And with it also come annual meetings for you in your congregations.

It’s been a wild and crazy year, hasn’t it? Last year at this time, we were meeting in person, preparing budgets, voting for new council members and getting ready for the new year; yet we were still in the dark about what was heading our way. Now a year later, Covid-19 hasn’t disappeared as we wished; things haven’t gone back to normal. Instead, hundreds of thousands have died, we’re exhausted, and we’re still disagreeing about masks.

But there is also a light dawning on the horizon. Vaccines have been developed through the God-given talents of doctors and scientists and, if all goes well, we will be able to gather again for worship, faith formation, fellowship and service sometime this summer if not sooner.

Over the past year, we as your synod staff have been honored to travel with you and your congregation on this difficult journey. While we weren’t able to “fix” things or make it all go away, we hope that the guidance, support, resources, encouragement, and love helped you to do the work of the gospel in the dark days as well as the bright ones. We too have been exhausted by the realities we as a church were facing, but it was and continues to be a joy to equip you in the ministry Christ has called you to in your community.

“Synod” means “walking together on the way.” And in spite of everything that has happened, all of us – whether congregations or ministries, synod staff or synod council, WELCA or ecumenical friends, members or affiliates – we in the Montana Synod have walked on the Way of Jesus Christ together this past year, equipping one another to do things we hadn’t thought possible before the pandemic. Even though it was hard to see sometimes, the light of Christ was there calling us forward into the ministry of the gospel and we followed it in beautiful ways. Thank you for all you have been doing to share God’s love during these difficult days!

But we’re not to the end of the tunnel yet. We may be able to see the light, but we still have some distance to go. Events and activities will continue to be affected over the next months by our need to love and protect one another from the virus. This includes the Synod Assembly, which for the first time ever will go virtual. Though it will still be held during the first weekend in June, it will look and feel much different than past years. Thankfully, we will not be the first to conduct our assembly digitally. This past fall, several synods held their assemblies online, including having bishops’ elections. If they can do it, so can we!

More detailed information about the 2021 MT Synod Assembly will be coming in January about what your delegates will need to do to prepare. But one thing you can do at your annual meeting is to find and elect delegates who have some comfortability with the technology of computers or people who are willing to learn. While this may seem rather daunting right now (I know I’m feeling the pressure of leading my very first assembly online), by June we’ll be as ready as we can be to let the Spirit guide us into the new possibilities this digital assembly will open for us now and into the future.

No, we’re not where we want to be yet. But that’s okay. We can make it. In the Spirit’s power, we will come out on the other side more resilient and equipped as followers of Christ because now we know how important the church that equips us to grow in faith, love and hope is and we are being called to find new and more effective ways of being church together.

As you make your plans for the year 2021, please do your best to keep the Epiphany light of Christ in your sights rather than getting stuck in the gloom of the past year. Remember what Jesus says to us in Matthew 28: “I am with you always until the end of the age!” Christ is with us and, when we follow his light, amazing opportunities will open as God does new things in our ministry.

May the light of Christ bless you and your congregation in the year 2021!

In Christ’s Love,

Rev. Laurie Jungling  
Bishop, Montana Synod, ELCA



## *Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp*

Annual Report 2020

*"Wow! Thanks so much for all your work in making camp happen this year... It was awesome to have this time in all this craziness! We felt safe and so enjoyed the week." 2020 Family Camper*

### 2020 by the numbers:

- 2020 Summer Campers: 722; Fall/Winter/Spring Campers: 774 (in 2019, FLBC served 4,057 campers in the Summer, and 3,615 in the Fall/Winter/Spring)
- 19 incredible summer staff joined our 11 year-round staff to make 1 awesome ministry team
- Projected Annual Budget Shortfall: \$200,000

### 2020 at a glance:

- January & February
  - Awesome retreats & events; Spiritual growth, faith, and fun
- March 12- June 12
  - Camp closes due to COVID-19
  - Plenty of time for projects (for example, new grass in front of the camp office & Cockrell Center!)
- May 26<sup>th</sup>: FLBC Board makes decision to cancel summer youth camp, and instead offer family and small group retreats
- June
  - Year Round staff call 500 registered youth campers to share the decision of no "traditional" youth camp
  - In registration deposits and payments, approximately \$40,000 was rolled over to 2021, \$30,000 was refunded, and \$7,000 donated
  - Staff prepare for new style of programming, writing and re-writing Standard Operating Procedures
- June 28<sup>th</sup>: 19 Summer Staff arrive for a Christ filled family retreat style summer
- July 5th - August 15th
  - Summer campers learn about our summer theme, "LOVE ENDURES" - Psalm 100:5 through music, worship, Bible Study, and fun with structured COVID-19 protocol in place
- August 15th - December 31st
  - FLBC continues to offer year-round programmed retreats sponsored by camp, and host retreats brought in by groups with strict COVID-19 procedures
- October 2020: FLBC learned of a first right of refusal on a neighboring property on Hughes Bay! In God's timing, the FLBC Association voted unanimously at the October 10<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting to purchase the land for \$289,173 - generous gifts were received and \$125,000 was borrowed. On October 31, the land was officially a part of camp! Thanks be to God!



~ Stay tuned for what 2021 will hold! ~

*Thank you for your generosity and care for camp!*

**Notes**