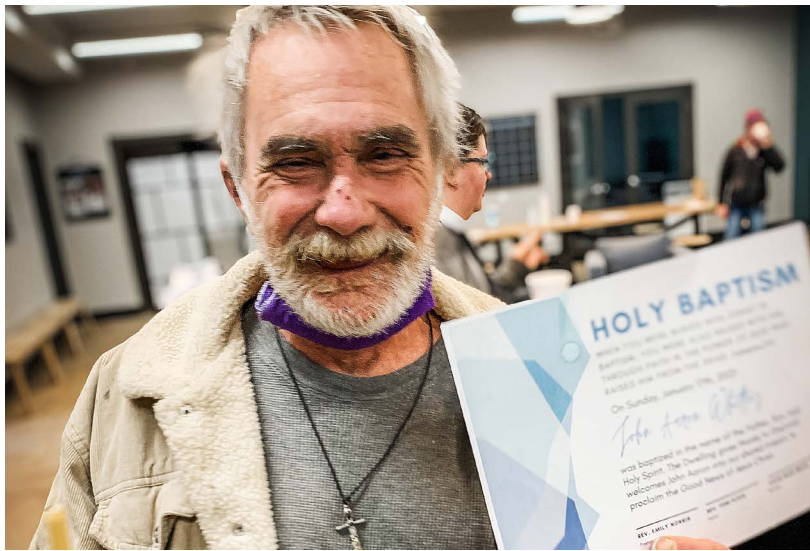


ANNUAL REPORT

2021



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



A MESSAGE FROM ELCA PRESIDING BISHOP

*Elizabeth
Eaton*

Dear friends in Christ,

The last year has been one of adapting and learning. In many places we have seen vibrant and vital ministry spring forth from changes made due to the pandemic. Digital worship opportunities have introduced to our congregations people who may never have walked into one of our buildings. Many congregations have found new ways to invite people to share their generosity through online giving. And many ministries have found just how vital they are as they continue to serve alongside people in their communities.

The first chapter of James, verse 17, reminds us that “Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” Yes, this has been a season of change, but Scripture also reminds us that we serve a generous, steadfast God.

While we stay rooted in God’s enduring, unchanging promise, God also gives us the gifts of creativity and learning. Across all three expressions of the church we have used those gifts to serve God, love our neighbor and share the good news of Jesus Christ. In this time of change, we have opened our arms wider to meet people where they are, living into the reality that we are not defined or confined by the four walls of our buildings.

Through all this, I am so grateful for your generous sharing of creativity, time, talents and resources. All good gifts do come from God, and we are called to share and use those gifts. We have and will continue to answer that call. There is still much change and learning to come, but God’s steadfast love energizes us for the work God is still doing in the world through this church.

Elizabeth A. Eaton

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

“Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

Thoughts From Guest Pastor Vera Guebert-Steward For Your Annual Meeting

A while ago I received a book as a gift from a friend. The book entitled "The Choice: Embrace the Possible" is an amazing story of survival. "The Choice" is about a woman, who at the age of sixteen was sent to Auschwitz. Hours after her parents were killed, Nazi officer Dr. Josef Mengele forced Edie to dance for his amusement and her survival. Her time at Auschwitz and her imprisonment were excruciating. But she survived. Edie was pulled from a pile of corpses when the American troops liberated the camp in 1945. Edie spent decades struggling with flashbacks and survivor's guilt, determined to stay silent and hide the past. Thirty-five years after the war ended, she returned to Auschwitz and was finally able to fully heal and forgive the one person she had been unable to forgive – herself. The book is about her journey from the darkness of Auschwitz, the imprisonment of her soul by memories she held on to for much of her life and how she finally found freedom from the past which thrust her into a powerful and positive future. Her attitudes and resolve propelled her beyond feeling imprisoned and helpless to feeling as though her life, given to her by a loving and gracious God, was hers to live and make positive choices about.

Victor Frankl, in his book, "Man's Search for Meaning" writes: *Everything can be taken from a man except one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.*"

I'm sure that some days during this time of transition at Saint Peter, it feels like you have no power over your lives and the direction your congregation is moving. Many of you still feel uncomfortable with Pastor Dave's departure. Questions about his leaving stir you. You may also feel some anger and certainly plenty of grief. You may be struggling to contend with your feelings about his leaving.

Even in the course of these challenges, we still have power over many things especially our attitudes about how we will survive this seemingly long, but in reality, very short time in our lives. We can choose to live well, to love each other, and to dedicate our time and energy to the transition this church is journeying through. Or we can sing a continual lament about what we've lost. Granted, losing Pastor Dave after 23 years of ministry hurts. But a new day will come and will bless you and the future of this special church is powerful and bright, not bleak.

In chapter thirty of the book of Deuteronomy we read: ¹⁵ *Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster.* ¹⁶ *For I command you this day to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, decrees, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy. Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!"*

We still have lots of choices we can make each day. But the one choice that matters, really matters, is how you will live your faith in this blessed life that God has given you. I invite you each morning to choose life and to cultivate an attitude of positivity. The choices we make each day drive our attitudes about so many things. I invite you to live well and positively. Anne Lamott suggests that there are really only two prayers we MUST pray each day. When you rise from your night's sleep pray: "Help Me." And when you lay your head to rest at the end of a good, good day simply pray: "Thank you." Choose well my new friends. Choose life in Jesus. Amen.

**Annual Report of the Congregation
for the Year 2021**

**Submitted at the Annual Congregation Meeting
February 27, 2022**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AGENDA	7
MISSION AND VISION AT SAINT PETER	8
DISCIPLESHIP AT SAINT PETER	10
2021 PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS.....	11
PASTOR DAVE’S FINAL SERMON AT STPLC ON DEC 26, 2021	12
MINISTRY REPORTS	14
Ministry Reports: Prayer & Study.....	15
Ministry Reports: Worship.....	16
Ministry Reports: Generosity	18
Ministry Reports: Community Service.....	19
Ministry Reports: Small Groups	20
Ministry Reports: Administrative	22
Ministry Reports: Partners	24
CONGREGATIONAL OFFICER REPORTS.....	28
STAFF REPORTS	36
ROSTER	43

AGENDA

Opening Devotions	Pastor Vera Guebert-Steward
Call to Order	Bruce Stokes
Establishment of Quorum	Steve Haigh
Overview of Ministry Team Reports	Allison Summerton
Congregational Officer Reports	
Secretary	Steve Haigh
President	Bruce Stokes
Treasurer	Shawn O'Keefe
Staff Reports	
Pastor	David Risendal
Administrator.....	Lynn Sherpe
Family Ministries	Mary Pratt
Congregation Communications	Sara Lancaster
Nominations for Congregational Council	Allison Summerton
Presentation of 2021 Financials	Shawn O'Keefe
Presentation of 2022 Church Budget	Bruce Stokes
Presentation of Budget	
Discussion	
Congregational Vote	
Closing Prayer	Pastor Vera Guebert-Steward
Adjournment	Bruce Stokes

MISSION AND VISION AT SAINT PETER

Our Mission: Welcomed and Sent

The People of Saint Peter Lutheran Church

Welcomed... into God's Love
just as we are

Sent... into God's World
to be a reflection of Christ

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...God proves love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

(Romans 5:1, 8)

We Are Welcomed...

- just as we are – with no need to prove ourselves or earn God's love (and with no fear of being judged by others)
- into an experience of God's life-changing love
- into a living and growing relationship with Jesus Christ
- into a world-wide community of brothers and sisters in faith
- into an understanding of ourselves as both sinners and saints
- into the journey of discovering God, and discerning God's call
- into the peace that comes from knowing God in Christ
- into this particular family of faith we call "Saint Peter Lutheran Church"

Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

(Saint Matthew 28:19-20)

We Are Sent...

- to be a reflection of the love we have first received from God
- to live as Christ has shown us how to live (the "cross-shaped" life)
- to offer ourselves in service to those who are in need
- to reach out with compassion to those who are in pain
- to live generously, with what God has entrusted to us
- to invite others to join us in lives of discipleship

Our Vision

We Are an Inviting People...

Inviting all people to share our faith

We Are a Growing People...

Growing in faith and understanding

We Are a Serving People...

Serving with Christ-like love and compassion

Our Values

We are Biblically Grounded.

- Saint Peter understands itself as the body of Christ, continuing our Lord's mission and presence in this community (1st Corinthians 12:4 - 13:13).
- Saint Peter reaches out to the world, seeking to share with others the faith that has touched our hearts and shaped our lives (Saint Matthew 28:16-20).
- Saint Peter takes its theological heritage seriously, and seeks both to understand it, and apply it to daily living (Saint Matthew 13:44-52).
- Saint Peter is committed to touching the hurts and the needs of the world, both within and outside of our community of faith (Saint Matthew 25:31-46).

We Are Mission Driven.

- Saint Peter is clear about its vision for ministry and focused on the mission it believes God has entrusted to it. Clarity of vision and mission enables congregational leaders to spend more time and energy on pursuing that mission, and less on peripheral matters.

We Are Prayer Centered.

- Saint Peter believes in the power of prayer and understands how important it is to surround any significant venture with prayer, entrusting the outcome to God.

We Are Gifts Based.

- Saint Peter's ministry is shaped by the gifts that God has given to its participants. People are not recruited to "fill empty positions" in the church's structure. They are encouraged to know their gifts and passions and find ways to serve that make use of them.

We Nurture a Permission Giving Environment.

- Every participant at Saint Peter is responsible to study and understand the congregation's mission. Based on that understanding, and working from their individual gifts and passions, they have permission to initiate and participate in ministries that promote Saint Peter's mission. Congregational leaders help individuals shape their ministries to best fit the congregation's mission, provide the training and support necessary to ensure their success, and find resources to allow their ministries to thrive.

DISCIPLESHIP AT SAINT PETER

We have chosen to focus on Five Habits of Discipleship in our efforts to be faithful to God's claim on our lives. What follows is a description of these habits. Our hope is that these descriptions might provide a better understanding of what it is we are trying to accomplish, and a picture of how it might look in the lives of those who practice these habits.

Daily Prayer and Bible Study

A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who has a daily discipline of studying God's Word, and spending time with God in prayer. Studying the Bible can be a transforming experience, as we come to know God's word and God's will; likewise, with the discipline of prayer. As we spend intentional time each day in prayer, lifting up our fears and joys, our triumphs and defeats, we find that our spirit is strengthened and our relationship with God is deepened. We become more able to hear the still small voice of God that speaks to us.

Weekly Worship

A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who makes regular worship with God's people a central component in the rhythm of life. In worship we hear the words of absolution as if coming from God's own voice, Christ meets us in word and meal, the promises of our baptism are reaffirmed, and we join together with our brothers and sisters in faith and offer ourselves to God – that we might become instruments of love and grace and renewal for others. Worship is the lifeblood of a Christian, and so we commit ourselves to worshipping every week, and to preparing ourselves ahead of time.

Generous Financial Support of Ministry

A disciple of Jesus Christ makes use of wealth to accomplish great things for the sake of the Gospel. The call to generosity, ultimately, is a call to obey the first commandment. We are to fear, love, and trust in God above all things (according to Martin Luther's Small Catechism). And so, disciples of Jesus develop habits of generosity to guard against the possibility of trusting too much in our wealth. Generosity is not a burden that is imposed upon the Christian. It is the opportunity to say "thank you" to God, who has already provided so much, in that there is great joy, and a deep sense of meaning.

Community Service

A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who understands that servanthood is a central component of the faithful life. One cannot be a disciple of Jesus without seeking to love and serve others as he did. At Saint Peter, we promote a minimum goal of one act of community service each month. Our lives become more Christ-like as we discover a purpose outside of ourselves.

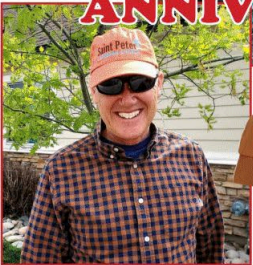
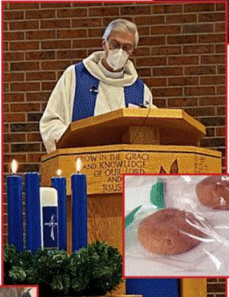
Faith Nurture in a Small Group or Faith Partnership

A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who gathers with others to support and strengthen another for faithfulness. Making the commitment to grow with others often provides the discipline that we need to grow ourselves. At Saint Peter, active members belong to a small group or a ministry team, teach a Sunday school class, or meet with a faith partner for support and encouragement.

We have many ministry teams at Saint Peter. Some of them fit within one of the five habits, and others of them cross over to address numerous habits. In the following section, these Ministry Teams are listed in order of the Discipleship Habit to which they most closely relate.

†

2021 PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



PASTOR DAVE'S FINAL SERMON AT STPLC ON DEC 26, 2021

At the end of 2021, Pastor David Risendal ended his 23-year tenure at Saint Peter Lutheran Church. He is both celebrated and dearly missed. We will fondly remember him and the final sermon he shared with us.

There was a time when the call process for a new pastor usually included a trial sermon that the candidate would deliver for the congregation before a vote took place on whether or not to issue a call. An old piece of preacher's wisdom that went along with this practice was that the two most dangerous sermons you'll ever preach in a congregation are your first one and your last one. The first, because you'll be tempted to put on a real show, and wow them into voting for you. The last, because you'll be tempted to try and finish all the business you had hoped to complete before leaving but hadn't yet.

The best advice I ever received on how to handle these two tricky sermons was short and sweet: "Just preach the text!" So let me follow that advice today and say just a word about this morning's Gospel lesson.

"Just a word." Isn't that an interesting phrase? It implies that words really aren't all that important. Words are... just words. And from one perspective this is what we believe, isn't it? You've heard the expressions:

- Don't just talk the talk; walk the walk.
- That dog: he's all bark and no bite.
- He talks a good game, but we'll see if he ducks when we're under fire.

This sentiment is even found in the Bible. In the first chapter of James we read, "Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers." ¹

We're well aware of the notion that it is one thing to say what we believe and an entirely different thing to act on it. And it's true: for our words to have authority, they need to be backed up by our actions.

Despite that, there is power in the spoken word. Think of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who in his first inaugural address declared, "let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself..." Or Winston Churchill, who thanked the Royal Air Force by saying, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." Or John Fitzgerald Kennedy, "Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country." There is a power in words, and these strong leaders made a difference by using the power of speech to rally support for the cause.

Think also how we have experienced the power of the word in our own lives. Recall the first time someone spoke the words, "I love you." Remember the day you promised to each other, "I take you to be mine." It is a powerful thing to hear the doctor say, "It isn't cancer," or to hear someone you love say, "I forgive you." There is power in the spoken word.

Martin Luther knew this. At the heart of his ministry, helped a bit by a certain machine the Gutenbergs invented, was his desire to get Bibles into the hands of everyday Christians. He believed in the power of the word. He knew that if people had direct access to God's word, it could change their lives. And he believed that the church was being transformed in his time not because of his own hard work and faithful leadership; not because of the talented colleagues he

had during the Reformation; but because the people of his day were reading and hearing and reflecting on God's word, and it was drawing them back into the heart of God.

Luther knew the power of God's word, and so did St. John the Evangelist. John begins his account of Jesus' life with a soaring poetic tribute to the power of the Word of God, which was present at creation. As I'm sure you know, in Genesis God literally speaks creation into being. Each day follows the same litany: God speaks something into being, it comes to be, and there is evening and there is morning, the first — the second — the third... day. All that is, spoken into being by God's word: darkness and light; earth and sky; land and sea; plants and trees; women and men. All of this, spoken into existence by a God whose very word has the ability to make it become.

John the Evangelist is obviously inspired by these opening words to Genesis. This is not, for John, the description of a past event. He recognizes this as a present reality when he continues, "... the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." For John, Jesus is nothing less than God's creative word in human form. The same word which spoke creation into being is now born among us. The word which continues to reveal God's heart to us and set God's call before us.

I am so grateful to have had the chance to study this word with you over these past 23 years. I'm grateful for the times when this word has offered us a familiar comfort and hope. I'm grateful, as well, for the times when this word has sent us off in new and unexpected directions. And I'm grateful for those of you who will, I know, continue to open your hearts to this word, and allow it to guide you into your most vital, most faithful future. When we do this the same Christ who was born in Bethlehem is born into our lives and becomes present to others through our words and deeds.

Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig was a Lutheran educator in the 19th Century. In 1817, while living in mainland Denmark, he composed the hymn "God's Word is Our Great Heritage." With a nod to Martin Luther, he set it to the tune of "A Mighty Fortress." Let's end this morning's message with Grundtvig's words. He wrote: God's Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever; To spread its light from age to age shall be our chief endeavor. Through life it guides our way, in death it is our stay. Lord, grant, while worlds endure, we keep its teachings pure Throughout all generations.²

May the word of God, born among us in Christ Jesus, dwelling with us still today, always call you forward as a faithful people; ever welcoming you into God's love, just as you are; ever sending you into God's world, as a reflection of Christ. Amen.

David J. Risendal, Pastor

1 James 1:22, Romans 8:38–39, New Revised Standard Version Bible, op. cit.

2 "God's Word Is Our Great Heritage." Composed by N.F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872). Translated by O. G. Belsheim (1861-1925). Originally the final verse of a longer hymn beginning "Guds Kirke er vor Klippe-Borg." In the Public Domain.

MINISTRY REPORTS

Ministry Reports: Prayer & Study

Contemplative Ministries

Leaders: Bethany Laurie and Jeanne Maloney

Contemplative Ministries (CM) at Saint Peter continued to expand opportunities for meditation and contemplative prayer to members in 2021. Taking advantage of the Tech Team's expertise developed in 2020, Contemplative Ministries served members, near and far, through Zoom.

In January, CM offered a six-week Meditation 101 Workshop that introduced participants to meditation and contemplative prayer practices. For Lent 2021, CM created an original contemplative series focused on the Prayer of St. Francis. Handcrafted prayer journals were delivered to participants to accompany a six-week study and meditation in preparation for the Easter celebration.

In 2021 Contemplative Ministries also collaborated with other groups at Saint Peter. Notably, CM partnered with the Saint Peter Faith In Action Team and prepared a Meditative Prayer Service on Racial Healing in June, as well as prayers and meditations for studies on the documentaries and discussions for "Emanuel 9" and "Before the Flood." For Advent 2021, CM offered a series of meditations and opportunities for contemplation in preparation for the Christmas celebration.

As we enter 2022, CM is already offering twice-weekly meditations via Zoom, reaching on average 20+ participants each week. This will soon expand via the Saint Peter website where recorded meditations and contemplative resources will be posted for all to access. CM is currently planning a Lenten meditation series, contemplative retreats, and ongoing opportunities for members to connect to Saint Peter through CM as well as collaboration with other Saint Peter ministries in 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
Bethany Laurie and Jeanne Maloney †

Catechism

Leaders: Pastor Dave and Nate Gerhart

After taking a year off due to the pandemic, Catechism resumed in September for the 2021/2022 year. Catechism has been utilizing the new Meeting Owl to connect our group for hybrid lessons, enabling families to participate in person or from home, whichever is most appropriate for them. Having the option to do Catechism remotely has helped us see more consistent attendance, as families are able to join us, even when their Sundays end up being extra busy. We have been discussing Lutheran Life and Luther's Catechism this year. We have three sixth-graders, two seventh-graders, two eighth-graders and four ninth-graders participating. Additionally, we were finally able to celebrate the Affirmation of Baptism with one of our tenth-graders who missed out in May of 2020. Congratulations to Gavin Waggoner on his Affirmation of Baptism on October 31, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Nate Gerhart, for the Catechism Team †

Prayer Team

Leader: Karen Clair

Prior to COVID-19, I began rallying many of you to write notes to folks on the prayer list. Remember me in the Narthex on the high-top tables with pen in hand? Then, thanks to COVID-19, the Saint Peter prayer list saw a lot of activity, not to mention some of us found ourselves with lots of time on our hands. Given that combination, the Saint Peter Prayer Team organically formed and has sent 850 notes (to date) to Saint Peter members and friends who needed extra prayers.

If you'd like to contribute, reach out! We are on track to reach our goal of 1,000 prayer notes by March 2022. Who knows how many more we could send with your help!

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Clair †

Sunday School

Leader: David Strezo

Earlier on during the pandemic, the Strezo family produced a number of videos just for the Sunday School kids at Saint Peter. Those videos can still be found on the Saint Peter website and will remain for all who want to access them. †

Ministry Reports: Worship

Altar Guild

Leader: Jan McGaw

Participants: Susan Greene, Pam Haigh, Shelly Hunter, Deb Paul, Pam Prichard, Gerry Rasel, Brooke Tieperman, Valerie Watkins

Altar Guild Purpose Statement: We will maintain the Altar for all worship services.

Summary of Ministry & Special Events in 2021: As of November, Altar Guild is up and running again. We are thrilled to add Susan Green, Deb Paul, and Pam Prichard to our team. Our responsibilities include taking care of baptisms, candles, flowers, and paraments.

Vision and Objectives for 2022: We continue to work with the D. E. S. I. G. N. team to enhance our liturgical seasons. We welcome anyone who would like to join our great team.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet McGaw †

D.E.S.I.G.N. Team (Decorate Everything Simply in God's Name)

Leader: Valerie Watkins

Participants: Verna Leighton, Pat Johnson, Jan McGaw, Karen Clair, Pam Pritchard, Linda O'Bryan, Deb Paul, Brooke Tieperman, Lynn Sherpe, Dolly Bunke, Valerie Watkins

Our team, with assistance of members of the congregation, decorated and "de"decorated for Advent and Christmas season and we continued to provide appropriate liturgical colors for the year.

We did update the lighting on our outdoor wreath and increased lighting outside, specifically in the Labyrinth area. Thank you to the property committee for their help.

Our hope for 2022 will be to continue use of visual imagery to reflect the seasons of worship in the church's liturgical calendar with the primary focus on the Worship Center.

Vision and Objections for 2022: A long-standing goal is a large reversal white banner that could be used on different "white" Sundays such as Holy Trinity and The Transfiguration of our Lord.

Short term goal is to evaluate how to be inclusive to others, including youth. Special recognition to Verna Leighton for her long-time service to the DESIGN team!!

Respectfully submitted,
Valerie Watkins †

Music Ministry

Despite challenges relating to COVID, Steve Howie continued to make Saint Peter's Music Ministry a bright spot of worship in 2021. With pre-recorded music and a capable Tech Team, we were able to enjoy music both during all-Zoom worship services and hybrid worship services, even after Steve Howie's last day on August 15, 2021. Steve's 21 years at Saint Peter and the library of recorded music he left behind are both true gifts. †

Technology Team

Members: Annie Heath, Chuck Baker, Jed Summerton, Rick Brydum, Will Beals

When things are going well, the StPLC Tech Team are the invisible folk working behind the scenes to make sure the audio/visual elements of our worship services are in proper working order, so you only notice the service. COVID complicated that a bit by making technology much more visible, but we still strive to be as invisible as possible. Last year provided plenty of new settings as we migrated from 100% online to separate online/parking lot services to separate online + labyrinth services, to separate online + sanctuary services before finally reaching the end goal of an integrated online plus in-person hybrid service. For each change we brought new technologies and equipment to support that service, sometimes minor, sometimes significant.

Each new setting brought challenges that have resulted in us being not-so-invisible. These have been temporary as we quickly learned the difference between theory and practice. Offering a hybrid service is by far our biggest challenge, requiring a lot of new technology. We are

learning quickly as we are writing this report. With any luck we should be mostly invisible again by the time you read this report.

We would particularly like to thank two departing individuals from the Tech Team during 2021 who were both drivers of the vision. Steve Howie kept us mostly organized not just with tech, but also with all the music as well. We'd also like to acknowledge Pastor Dave as an honorary member of the team. We quickly learned how central he was to the tech side whenever he wasn't leading a service!

We would also very much like to thank the worship leaders and indeed the congregation for gracefully accommodating all the new tech. It's never perfect, but we are quite unique in having maintained a live Sunday service throughout the pandemic and now hosting a hybrid service. That takes an entire congregation to learn new technologies, not just a tech team. It also takes financial support, and we very much appreciate that support as well.

For 2022, our goal is to continue fine tuning the hybrid service and further enhance the ability to interact between the in-person and online participants. While COVID may have been the catalyst, a hybrid service that includes participants that for any kind of health or travel reason are unable to attend in person is welcoming. Don't forget to stop by the station in the Narthex on the way in and out of service to say "hi" to the online folk!

Respectfully submitted,
Annie, Chuck, Jed, Rick and Will †

Ministry Reports: Generosity

Ron Leighton Scholarship Memorial Committee Report

Leaders: Ken Gerhart, Lori Williams and Pastor David Risendal

The Saint Peter Scholarship Committee invited applications for scholarship in the Spring of 2021. Submitted applications were reviewed and following the Committee's process which includes an application and essay review, candidate interview and reference check, we were thrilled to award two \$500 scholarships in 2021 to very qualified and deserving candidates. Both Julian Buerk and Payton Waggoner impressed the committee with their personal faith story, outstanding integrity, leadership and self-confidence. Each of these young men is a wonderful role model for their peers, and each is aware of and takes seriously the responsibility that comes with being a role model to one's peers. Payton and Julian have both touched the hearts of their friends and families. Julian is attending Colorado State University-Pueblo in Pueblo, CO; Payton is attending Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. We wish them the very best!

We are looking forward to the 2022 scholarship year.

Respectfully submitted,
Ken Gerhart and Lori Williams †

Stephen Ministries

Leaders: Sharon Stokes, Bruce Stokes and Lynn Sherpe

Active Ministers: Carol Mayor, Janet McGaw, Valerie Watkins, Dick Watkins, Jim Bunke, Mary Pratt

Stephen Ministers are lay congregation members trained to provide one-on-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, and/or stress associated with living through a global pandemic. In 2021, each member committed to making Care Calls. Many of us also wrote notes to and called those on the Prayer List as well as distributed 78 Journeying Through Grief books and 28 prayer shawls to those who are struggling. The team also was active in making hospital and hospice visits.

In 2022, we will continue our work as lay ministers. We hope to offer trainings and skill-based classes to those interested in Stephen Ministry work themselves. We are looking to coordinate with the FIA team to provide a prayer opportunity for those dealing with grief and loss.

Respectfully submitted,
Bruce Stokes, Sharon Stokes and Lynn Sherpe †

Saint Peter Stitchers

Leader: Susan Greene

Participants: Darlene Beals, Jane Dumler, Carmen Faaiu, Stephanie Guthals, Jenny Kramer, Beth Pasterkamp, Janet Pasterkamp, Kristen Raleigh, Vicky Simpson, Christina Von Stroh and Patrice Von Stroh

The Saint Peter Stitchers met monthly in 2021 via Zoom. The Stitchers ministry provides prayer shawls and blankets to celebrate baptisms and to those grieving or experiencing illness or other life struggles. Each prayer shawl and blanket provides warmth and comfort and is accompanied by a special prayer offering support. Twenty-eight prayer shawls and blankets were distributed by the church office to Saint Peter members, their families, and friends.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Greene †

Ministry Reports: Community Service

Faith in Action

Leadership members: Brittany Hass, Shelly Hunter, Sara Lancaster, Bethany Laurie, Jeanne Maloney, Mary Pratt, Lynn Sherpe, Sharon Stokes, Allison Summerton and Janet Weinz

The Faith in Action team had a strong presence in 2021 despite the pandemic. The team shifted quickly to an online platform and continued to raise awareness around many social issues through Faith Forums, documentary viewings, book discussions, newsletter articles, worship and special prayer services.

The issues covered during the year included: Poverty, Ethnicity Awareness, Sexuality, Women, Environment, and Gun Violence. The team also led an effort to sponsor two families from Afghanistan through Lutheran Family Services resettlement program. The congregation generously donated over \$16,000 and a team of seven Saint Peter members have an on-going mentorship with the families.

The Faith In Action team's vision statement is:

- Sparking Conversation with all
- Fostering Curiosity among all
- Embodying God's Love for all

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Maloney †

God's work. Our hands.

Leaders: Open †

Ministry Reports: Small Groups

Chick Lit

Leaders: Lori Williams and Heather Dahms

Despite on-going concern surrounding COVID-19, this resilient group of ladies continued to gather, via Zoom, on the third Thursday of each month to share thoughts, insight, feelings and most often laughter while discussing the Chick Lit book of the month. This vital ministry is enjoyed by several enthusiastic readers whose love for literature spans generations and genres.

Each year Chick Lit reads 11 thoughtfully suggested and voted-for books, both fiction and non-fiction. We gather monthly to discuss that month's book. It is heart-warming to share thoughts and personal experiences inspired by literature. As has become tradition, an additional meeting was held in December to select 2022's book list, all from a list of suggested titles compiled from member suggestions. We continue to support and encourage one another through life's adventures, joys and sorrows, while friendships rooted in words blossom and thrive.

It is never too late to join! Members and friends of Saint Peter Lutheran Church are invited to participate in Chick Lit gatherings, held on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Please contact Lori or Heather for specific information regarding meeting logistics in 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Williams and Heather Dahms †

Church Chicks

Leaders: Annie Heath and Jo Kurowski

Participants: Ladies of Saint Peter Lutheran Church

Purpose Statement: To love and honor God and each other through fellowship, fervent and daily prayer, and as stewards and caregivers to each other and our world. Church Chicks ministry is for all women at Saint Peter Lutheran Church; women are not only invited but encouraged to join this thriving and growing ministry, to take on a leadership role and to be connected to God and to each other!

Church Chicks just completed its eleventh year of ministry. The group was formed in response to the interest of the women at Saint Peter to enjoy times of fellowship with other sisters in Christ and to share our love of God in service and prayer.

Summary of Ministries and Actions 2021:

- We continued Church Chicks' virtual coffee hour for the first several months of 2021, meeting twice a month via Zoom. We began meeting in person at Panera in the summer when it was nice enough to eat outside. This was an opportunity for our ladies to get together socially and share our stories and pray together.
- Gently used women's professional clothes were delivered monthly to Dress for Success clothing drives in January, February, April, September, and October in 2021.
- In 2021, we provided monthly meals for lunch on the third Saturday for The Delores Project. We instituted a line-item fund for people to direct donations to make it easier for us to track our budget and at times provided reimbursement for Annie and Jo when meals were purchased. These meals provided for at least 50 shelter guests and staff and were always received with much appreciation and gratitude.

May God continue to bless the women of Saint Peter Lutheran Church as the Church Chicks transition to being called "All Daughters" in 2022. Leadership of the group will be provided by Karen Clair and Dori Babcock.

Respectfully submitted,
Annie Heath and Jo Kurowski †

Men's Group

Leader: Steve Haigh

The Men's Group meets on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at a nearby tavern or on a member's patio. Ninety-minute gatherings usually start at 5:30 p.m. and are dedicated to fellowship. After skipping our annual All Daughters Mother's Day event in 2020 and 2021, we're looking forward to resuming the event in May 2022 at the church. All are welcome.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Haigh †

Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS)

Leaders: Lindsay Crosby, Brittany Hass, Sara Lancaster, Sara Orlino, Mary Shull and Stephanie Swift

In 2013, Saint Peter began a Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) ministry for church members and friends who were moms with children six-years-old and under. MOPS International is a large organization, and there are groups in churches all over the world, but the Saint Peter MOPS group started off different than the other groups and stayed that way—meeting on Saturday mornings (most groups meet during the week) and small (some MOPS groups have dozens of members, but StPLC's group had an average attendance of 10 attendees each session).

Due to COVID and all the challenges that have come along with it—e.g., inability to meet in-person and provide childcare, decreased attendance, open leadership positions, etc.—the group has decided to officially step back from a MOPS International affiliation and instead focus on simply being a community of Saint Peter moms. We request that whatever remaining funds are in the MOPS designated fund at Saint Peter be donated to the Covenant Cupboard Toy Drive, a program the MOPS group has been connected to from the start. Every Christmas the group stuffed stockings for the event.

Thank you to the Saint Peter Congregation for supporting the small but scrappy StPLC MOPS group for nine years. Please know that many friendships were formed in our church building, and much was learned from the guest speakers and activities. And thank you to all the moms who attended our meetings and to those who served in leadership roles over the years.

All members of the leadership team hope that another generation of moms will pick up the MOPS ministry at Saint Peter in the future. But in the meantime, all moms with young children are invited to join the NEW informal social group. If you'd like to participate, send a note to mops@stplc.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsay Crosby, Brittany Hass, Sara Lancaster, Sara Orlino, Mary Shull and Stephanie Swift †

Ministry Reports: Administrative

Evangelism Team

Leader: Open †

Nominating Committee Report

Jim Bunke, Shawn O'Keefe and Allison Summerton will be nominated to serve their second terms through February 2024. Bruce Stokes' term ends in February 2022 and is not eligible to be re-elected. Bruce is willing to extend his term as president to provide consistent leadership through the transition phase. Council is supportive of Bruce continuing to serve as Congregational President through the transition phase; stepping down as soon as the Call

Committee is formed. Per our constitution, officers shall serve their two-year term or until their successor is found.

Respectfully submitted,
StPLC Congregational Council †

Property Team

Leadership members: Dave Prichard, Steve Haigh, Jerry Paul

The Property Team is excited about the projects it has planned for this year. There will be several general clean up days this spring as we hope to make the property more inviting and welcoming.

We will continue to maintain the sprinkler system, clean the flower beds, plant flowers and shrubs, and keep the lawn maintained. We appreciated all the members who helped spread mulch, plant shrubs and flowers and trim the many bushes on the property. A special thanks to Jerry and Deb Paul for their continued work on trimming the shrubs and junipers and spreading mulch around the parking lot.

We would like to thank everyone at Saint Peter for their help and support.

If you have not seen the kitchen remodeling, we would invite everyone to check it out. A special thanks to Lynn Sherpe and Valerie Watkins for all their help on this project.

Respectfully,
Dave, Steve, Jerry †

Stewardship Team

Participants: Darlene Beals, Jim Bunke, Shawn O'Keefe, Pastor Dave Risendal and Bruce Stokes

Saint Peter Lutheran Church, like our society, has had to adapt to challenges brought on by the pandemic over the past 23 months. The church leadership, staff and the congregation has done their best to adapt to these challenges. During 2020 and 2021, our financial position remained relatively solid thanks to the generosity of the congregation, significant special gifts and two PPP loans from the federal government (both of these PPP loans have been forgiven).

This fall's stewardship campaign was themed *Look what we've done; Imagine what we'll do!* The campaign culminated in commitment Sunday on November 14, 2021. We are grateful for the 70 households that made financial commitments in support of our 2022 ministry in the amount of \$422,754.

Look at What We've Done, Imagine What We'll Do!

Final Report (February 8, 2022)

70 Statements of Intent (62 Adult, 6 New Pledges, 2 Visitors) totaling \$422,754

- Contributing households that completed a Statement of Intent both in 2021 and 2022:
 - 27 raised their intentions for 2022 by a total of \$44,690

- 22 intend to contribute the same in 2022 as they did in 2021
- 15 lowered their intentions for 2022 by a total of \$18,200

Stewardship Reports Comparison for Last Four Years

Report #	2018 for 2019		2019 for 2020		2020 for 2021		2021 for 2022	
	Pledges	Amount	Pledges	Amount	Pledges	Amount	Pledges	Amount
1st Report	56	337,088	61	379,160	57	374,944	27	175,734
2nd Report	65	379,388	74	447,200	71	410,444	39	269,194
3rd Report	77	416,568	81	474,590	79	451,264	42	277,074
4th Report	80	428,528	87	503,386	86	490,864	47	317,874
5th Report	89	458,948	96	527,056	--	--	56	351,334
Final Report	98	499,699	99	551,056	89	504,344	70	422,754

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Sherpe †

Ministry Reports: Partners

Christ In The City

Saint Peter contact: Mary Pratt
<https://christinthecity.org/>

Aims to know, serve and love the poor with a vision to create a culture of encounter. Saint Peter members are invited to donate items to our unhoused friends in Denver. Regular community meals are served when possible, and volunteers are welcome. †

Covenant Cupboard Food Pantry

Saint Peter contact: Laura Guthals
<http://covcupboard.org/>

Hosted by Presbyterian Church of the Covenant and supported also by Good Shepherd Episcopal Church and Saint Peter Lutheran Church. †

Covenant Cupboard Toy Drive

Saint Peter contact: Shelly Hunter and Vicky Simpson

The 2021 Toy Drive reverted this year to the Christmas Toy Store for clients of Covenant Cupboard, allowing them to shop for their children under age 13. Saint Peter Lutheran Church organizes and hosts this event annually, with the help from partner churches and civic organizations. Each child received a gift, Christmas stocking, and a book, plus a blanket was provided by Arapahoe County Alternative Services for each family. Sign up to receive additional books from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, sponsored by Centennial Rotary, was available to children under age 5. Many thanks to Linda O' Bryan, Shelly Hunter, the StPLC MOPS members and the many volunteers and shoppers that provided the gifts, stockings, and man hours for this special project. In total, over 90 families with 317 children were served! So many toys were provided, Covenant Cupboard held another toy store at their location on the third Friday in December, rather than store the excess for next year. The families were so happy and thankful for everyone's effort to make their children happy this Christmas!

Respectfully submitted,
Vicky Simpson and Shelly Hunter †

The Delores Project

Saint Peter contact: Annie Heath and Jo Kurowski
<https://www.thedeloresproject.org/>

A Denver facility that provides safe, reliable shelter and housing for women. Saint Peter's own Church Chicks regularly provided meals in 2021. †

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Saint Peter contact: Open
<https://elca.org/> †

Joshua Station

Saint Peter contact: Jeanne Maloney
<https://mile-high-ministries.networkforgood.com/projects/17062-give-to-mile-high-ministries2>

A faith-based community helping families make the transition from homelessness to a healthy, stable living environment. Monthly community meals are served when possible. †

Holy Hammers/Habitat for Humanity

Saint Peter contact: Adam and Brittany Hass
<https://www.habitatmetrodenver.org/our-supporters/faith-sponsors/holy-hammers/>

Holy Hammers is a faith coalition comprising 10 Lutheran churches in the Denver metro area that has worked alongside Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver since 1996 to build homes,

raise funds, and create awareness about the need for safe, decent, affordable housing in our community. †

Lutheran Family Services

Saint Peter contact: Open
<https://www.lfsrm.org/>

Inspired by the compassionate love of Christ, Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains walks with the vulnerable, through services that heal, strengthen and provide hope. †

Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA

Saint Peter contact: Open
<https://www.rmseca.org/>

Find the 2021 RMS Annual Report here:

https://rmseca.org/sites/rmseca.org/files/media/rms.2021.annual.report_1.pdf †

Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp

Saint Peter contact: Eric and Kate Waggoner
<http://www.rainbowtrail.org/>

Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp, just outside of Hillsdale, Colorado, is an outreach ministry of the Rocky Mountain Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is a year-round ministry that offers an extensive summer camping program that includes on-site programs for all ages as well as Compass Points outdoor adventure program for Junior High and Senior High youth, and Bridging Borders mission trips designed for Senior High youth. In addition, Rainbow Trail offers retreating opportunities for the other nine months of the year including sponsored confirmation retreats, men's Fly-Fishing retreats, church worker training events, and family weekends amongst other retreat opportunities. †

Selian Ministries

Saint Peter contact: Terri Mohrhaus
<http://almec.or.tz> and <http://selian5k.stplc.org/about-selian/>

We had another successful year of fundraising for medical missions in Tanzania despite the pandemic. Dozens of participants and volunteers gathered at Saint Peter on Saturday, September 11, for our 13th annual 5K walk/run with kids' activities and food in the labyrinth. The weather was great, and fun was had by all. As a result of this event and other donations throughout 2021, we had \$17,701.42 to disburse. After consultation with Mark and Linda Jacobson, the following donations were made:

- \$10,000 to Cancer Care Center at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC) - Brain Cancer Initiative
- \$6,921.42 to Cancer Care Center at KCMC - General Fund

- \$500 to Global Health Ministries as our commitment to be a Selian (Hospice) Sustaining Sponsor
- \$280 to Holy Hammers to support Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver (\$5 from each 5K registration due to our scheduling conflict with their walk/run on the same day)

In addition to this money, we created what we hope will become a recurring scholarship for a nursing student at Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre school of nursing. This year's \$1000 scholarship came from a fund established several years ago by a small number of Saint Peter members. It was donated through Operation Bootstrap Africa, which provides scholarships to nursing students, among their other ministries.

Our hope is to hold our next 5K Run/Walk around the end of August 2022, and we are considering various ways to attract larger numbers of participants. If you have a special place in your heart for these incredible ministries, please consider joining us as we refine these plans.

Thank you for your support over the past 13 years!

Respectfully submitted,
Terri Mohrhaus †

Village Resource Center

Saint Peter contact: Sharon Stokes (VRC Treasurer)
<https://www.hopechangeslives.org/partners/village-resource-center/>

This Greenwood Village area church partnership continued its mission to keep families in their homes in 2021! In all, there are six churches in the partnership. Continuing to innovate, the VRC is now able to deliver applications online as needed. In 2021, VRC hired a new case manager, Abby Yaris. With her efforts, VRC aided 59 families with direct financial assistance; total rent/mortgage aid amounted to almost \$24,000! Countless others were referred to other community partners when needed. With continued financial support in 2022, VRC will continue to aid families and serve the community to the best of its ability.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Stokes †

Vitalant

Saint Peter contact: Gayle Romceovich and Karen Clair
<https://www.vitalant.org/>

Saint Peter partners with multiple other area churches to put on regular community blood drives. However, this year those were put on hold due to COVID-19. Vitalant is still hosting blood drives. Donors are also tested for COVID-19 antibodies. †

CONGREGATIONAL OFFICER REPORTS

Report From the Secretary of the Congregation

Minutes of Saint Peter Lutheran Church's Annual Congregation Meeting, February 14, 2021, via Zoom

President Bruce Stokes called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

It was explained that our meeting this morning will differ in content from our typical annual meeting:

- Main purpose is to adopt our budget for 2021.
- We are deferring election of new council members until such time as we will be gathering in person.
- We will not be receiving reports from the various ministries and committees. I would direct you to the annual report on our website for summaries of those ministries.

Brooke Tieperman reported that we had more than enough in attendance to meet our quorum of 45 voting members with 83 members present.

2020 was certainly a year unlike any other, but one thing that did not change in 2020 was the generous financial support that we received

Bruce walked through the balance sheet as of 12/31/20, our revenue and expenses for 2020 and our proposed budget for 2021.

On page 30 of the annual report is our balance sheet as of December 31, 2020:

The first 5 lines of the assets are our liquid assets consisting of checking, savings and investment accounts: they total \$196,890.

- On the liabilities & fund balances side we have \$190,617 in designated funds as of 12/31/20. These are funds that have been received for a specific purpose and are outside of our general operating funds; there are 24 such purposes listed.
- At the top of the liabilities, you see accounts payable of \$6,273. These are bills that we owe as of the end of the year.
- If we add the balance of the designated funds and the accounts payable it equals our liquid assets of \$196,890...this is not an accident.
- At year end we used \$6,673 in PPP funds to eliminate a deficit in our operating cash.

They were directed to go to page to page 35 which is the Financial Secretaries report.

This is a summary of all the financial giving that StPLC received in 2020:

- Pledged giving \$514,061, pre-paid pledges \$17,100 & 2020 Mission support (unpledged giving) \$65,108. These make up our pledged and unpledged giving of \$596,269.
- The column on the right side is giving to designated funds of \$31,572 for the year.

Page 31 contains actual revenue and expenses for 2020, the budget for 2020 and the proposed budget for 2021.

- The left column is actual for 2020. Revenue was \$610,442 against a budget of \$663,420.
- Pledged and unpledged giving was 93% of budget.
- With no in-person Easter or Christmas services our season/holiday receipts were down by \$7,500.

- Our expenses for 2020 were \$614,934 against a budget of \$663,420.
- Many expense categories were down as a function of the building being closed and worship being conducted online.
- No salary adjustments were made.

Bruce Stokes then discussed the proposed 2021 budget:

- Our pledges this past fall for 2021 fell short of our goal. We received \$491,000 in pledges which was \$60,000K below our pledges for 2020.
- Taking our \$491,000 in pledges plus unpledged giving (based on current giving patterns) we arrive at projected pledged and unpledged giving of \$580,000 for 2021.
- This is \$61,000 less than our 2020 budget and \$16,000 less than our actual receipts for 2020.
- This resulted in a need to reduce some expenses for 2021:
 - Cut Rocky Mountain Synod support from 11% of giving to 10%.
 - Reduced budgets for several ministry areas.
 - Eliminated the position of Volunteer Ministries Coordinator.
 - Reduced salaries of some part-time staff based on change in workload and hours during pandemic.
 - No salary increases for any staff members.

Our proposed spending budget for 2021 is \$60,000, which is \$11,000 less than our actual expenditures for 2020.

We are presenting a balanced budget that is achieved by utilizing \$17,800 in PPP funds.

There was a motion by Bruce Stokes and a second by Jim Bunke to accept the 2021 budget as presented. A vote was taken via the Zoom chat function and all votes were to approve.

Pastor Dave presented his "State of the Congregation" address. He reviewed the challenges Saint Peter met in 2020, especially those related to the pandemic. He referred to the many ways Saint Peter has persevered, including online worship, service to community, faith formation, and workdays on the Saint Peter property. He thanked Saint Peter's leaders and invited others to join them in moving us towards a strong future together.

Bruce closed by

- Thanking all for attending
- Thanking everyone for your faithful support of our ministry
- Thanking the wonderful tech team and musicians
- Thanking the church council for their time and leadership
- Thanking the staff for their service and adaptability

Pastor Dave closed us in prayer

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m. †

Minutes of Saint Peter Lutheran Church's Special Congregation Meeting, May 23, 2021, VIA Zoom

President Bruce Stokes called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

He explained the purpose of the meeting:

- Seek authorization of entering into a contract with Tolin Mechanical for upgrades to the church's HVAC system.
- Our constitution requires congregational approval for any expenditure in excess of 2% of our approved operating budget.
- If you have questions during the presentation, please enter them into the chat
- We will also vote using the chat feature.

Quorum

- Brooke Tieperman and Annie Heath reported that we have a quorum with over the necessary 45 voting members being present (64 were present).

The need to replace the units was explained:

- The church building has 7 HVAC units that are old, inefficient and have become costly to maintain (2 in sanctuary and narthex and 5 between the hallway, offices, kitchen and fellowship area).

Bruce Stokes went through the process that has been followed to evaluate proposals and bids:

- Early in the year we hired a mechanical engineer ST&B to evaluate our systems and make recommendations.
- Based on those recommendations in early April we prepared an RFP that was sent out to 3 HVAC contractors.
- We received back two bids for replacement of all the systems in the building; Roeman Home Design, Inc. at \$164,000 and Tolin Mechanical at \$156,000.
- We met with each of the two contractors. Based on thoroughness of proposal, cost and understanding of the situation the group all agreed that Tolin Mechanical was the choice
- Given the cost we discussed phasing the project in two to three phases.
- We asked Tolin to give us a price for replacing the HVAC units in the Worship Center, provide bipolar ionization units for all the HVAC units and to add vents and return air to the cry room.
- They provided a bid of \$62,800 for this work (Given the current environment they can only hold this price through the end of May).

The potential benefits were discussed

- We will be going from 80% efficient systems to 95% efficient equipment. It is expected that the units will pay for themselves in energy savings over the projected useful life of 15 years.
- Reduce the need for costly repairs to units that often no longer have available parts.
- The bipolar ionization system is for improved air quality, including assistance with removal of airborne aerosols. While this is not a prerequisite to re-opening the building, it will expedite the process and should provide a safer indoor environment.

The congregation was asked to vote on the following:

- Approval to enter into a contract with Tolin Mechanical for \$62,800 for replacement of the Worship Center and Narthex HVAC units, add bipolar ionization units to all 7 HVAC units and provide ductwork, vents and return air to the cry room.
- Approval of the Church Council for an additional \$37,200 to explore phase 2 for replacement of some of the remaining HVAC units.

We have sufficient funds on hand to fund these two items and still have reserves to handle other long term deferred maintenance such as the parking lot repair/replacement.

Allison Summerton made a motion that we allocate \$100,000 for phase 1 of the HVAC replacement; Cathy Dundon seconded the motion.

The vote of people via the chat function was a unanimous “yes vote” to move forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m. †

Minutes of Saint Peter Lutheran Church’s Special Congregation Meeting, September 26, 2021, via Zoom

Congregation President Bruce Stokes called the meeting to order at 10:45 am.

The needed quorum of 43 voting members was established as 56 computers were logged in with many of those have multiple participants.

The purpose of the meeting is to elect 4 members to the church council. Their terms will run from today until February 2023.

The nominating committee is advancing 4 candidates;

- Cathy Bunch, re-elected for 2nd term
- Robyn Glaser
- Steve Haigh
- Gerry Rasel

The candidates each made brief statements.

There was a vote of raised hands and it appeared that the vote was unanimous for the four candidates.

President Stokes mentioned that there will be a retreat of the new council next Saturday October 2nd. He thanked DJ Bruen, Gerry Mueller and Brooke Tieperman for their years of service on the council.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Saint Peter Council Secretary †

Report from the President of the Congregation

Saint Peter congregants, friends, council members and staff:

2021 brought continued uncertainty to our world, country, state and to the community of Saint Peter Lutheran Church. This uncertainty presented challenges to the council, staff, pastor and the congregation. COVID has required us to adapt on how we worship and gather, which continues in 2022.

From March 2020 the Church Council has sought input from CDPHE, the Rocky Mountain Synod of the ELCA and medical experts in making decisions regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the ministry of StPLC. In May we surveyed the congregation on several topics. Two things were very clear from the survey; 1) we were a highly vaccinated congregation, and; 2) That a significant majority of the respondents wanted to move towards gathering in person for worship.

In June we resumed gathering in person with parking lot services on Saturday evenings. In July we moved the services to the labyrinth. In August services were moved to Sunday mornings. In mid-October we held worship for the first time in the sanctuary. There was much discussion and debate at each step in the process. I can assure you that we have not taken this responsibility lightly. We are aware that the progression moved too slowly for some, with others believing that our pace was too rapid.

We are grateful for the continued financial generosity of the congregation during this challenging year. Pledged and unpledged giving in 2021 was down \$43,000 (8%) from what was received the prior year. We ended the year with sufficient revenues to cover all our expenses. Projected giving for 2022 is off by 6% versus the actual 2021 giving. However, with a strong cash position due to designated funds and lower projected expenses in 2022, we should be in good financial shape. Total giving, which includes giving to designated and pass thru funds such as the Ron Leighton Memorial Scholarship fund, Afghan refugee fund, Selian Hospital, and ELCA World Hunger, was \$733,000 for the year!

The departures of two key members of our staff, Minister of Music Steve Howie, who left in August, and Pastor Dave Risendal, who left at the end of the year, present us with challenges and opportunities in the year ahead. Both played a critical role in the life of Saint Peter during their many years of ministry. We are thankful for their dedicated service and wish God's rich blessings upon them.

We are blessed with a faithful and dedicated staff at Saint Peter. During the past year they have had to adapt how and where they work. They have done this in a seamless way while being flexible in doing so. This has allowed Saint Peter to continue worship, provide opportunities to strengthen our faith, handle the necessary administrative duties, continue to support outside organizations, communicate with our members and guests and provide service to the community. Thank you, Lynn, Sara, Barb, Mary, and Arielle! We are excited to welcome Beryl to the staff and look forward to her contributions in 2022. Since March 2020, our outstanding and dedicated tech team has adapted to changing worship protocols. During 2021 that meant adding a significant technology to the sanctuary that allows us to engage in hybrid worship services. We are so thankful for your significant efforts and commitment. Thanks to Will Beals, Rick Brydum, Chuck Baker, Annie Heath and new to the team Jed Summerton.

2021 was a challenging year to serve as elected church leadership and I am proud to serve with a dedicated group of women and men who have faithfully served this past year. There have been more meetings than usual and tough issues to deal with. Thank you to Allison, Shawn, Steve, Cathy, Jim, Gerry and Robyn for your commitment and continued willingness to serve. The year ahead will be one of change for Saint Peter as we embark on the process of transition, identifying who we are as a congregation and what God has in store for our future. This will require work, reflection and patience as we work with the Synod moving towards the call process. I am optimistic and believe that God has a good plan for Saint Peter. Please know that it is my privilege to serve as your Council President, one that I do not take lightly. God's richest blessings to all of you.

Respectfully submitted,
Bruce Stokes, Council President †

Report from the Treasurer of the Congregation

Balance Sheet	12/31/2021	12/31/2020
ASSETS		
1st National Bank-Checking	64,440	35,189
1st Natl Special Business MM	188,444	131,151
Mission Plus Investment	6,245	6,211
U.S. Bank	329	329
Mint Financial Strategies	26,140	24,009
Building & Related Costs	1,143,341	1,143,341
Land	98,750	98,750
Office Equipment	12,530	12,530
Furniture/Equip/Furnishings	306,021	306,021
Playground	16,087	16,087
Vehicles	22,648	22,648
TOTAL ASSETS	1,884,975	1,796,266
Liabilities and Fund Balances		
Accounts Payable	59,784	6,243
Thrivent Mortgage	492,329	518,399
Continuing Education	7,189	6,662
Total Long-Term Liabilities	499,519	525,062
Total Liabilities	559,303	531,304
General Fund	1,102,546	1,074,345
Administrative Discretionary Fund	100,163	52,074
AV - Sound System Fund	2,015	2,608
Building Maintenance Fund	48,113	29,832
Catechism Fund	389	389
Delores Project Fund	719	-
DESIGN Fund	-	18
Facility Use Fund	930	930
Habitat for Humanity	15,979	15,463
Interior Refresh Campaign Fund	-	364
LFS Afghan Refugee Fund	5,345	-
Memorial Funds	4,166	3,401
MOPS Fund	1,599	1,549
Music/Choir Fund	801	801
Operation Bootstrap Africa	385	1,385
Pastor Discretionary Fund	-	1,656
Rainbow Trail Fund	818	318
Sabbatical Fund	-	6,190
Saint Peter Stitchers Fund	815	815
SBA PPP Loan	-	64,229
Ron Leighton Memorial Scholarship Fund	36,432	3,895
Seminary Scholarship Fund	1,669	1,669
Stephen Ministry Fund	1,590	1,657
Youth Fund	-	179
Youth Mission Fund	1,198	1,198
Designated Funds	223,125	190,617
TOTAL FUNDS	1,325,672	1,264,962
TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUNDS	1,884,974	1,796,266

Treasurer's Report 2021 and Proposed Budget 2022

	2021 Actual	2021 Budget	2022 Proposed Budget
Pledged/Non-Pledged Giving	552,687	580,000	520,000
SBA PPP	17,800	17,800	-
(1)Miscellaneous	396	2,500	1,000
Seasonal/Holiday	3,195	3,000	5,000
Facility Use	300	500	500
Interest Income	227	200	200
Total Receipts	574,606	604,000	526,700
Altar Guild	1,082	1,500	1,500
(2)Benevolence	60,267	63,000	57,000
DESIGN	30	540	540
Evangelism	236	3,000	4,000
Faith Formation	295	2,500	2,500
Family Ministries	4,388	5,000	5,000
Group Ministries	-	200	200
(3)Member Services	16,208	20,887	21,450
MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)	199	800	-
Music	5,060	6,900	9,500
(4)Property	109,180	114,535	130,623
Stephen Ministry	570	1,000	1,000
Stewardship	381	650	650
Youth and Family	1,900	2,000	3,500
Worship	4,767	5,100	6,100
Salaries - Pastor/Office Staff	252,548	263,553	255,985
Benefits - Pastor/Office Staff	97,766	109,835	27,152
CE - Pastor/Office Staff	3,000	3,000	-
(5)EOY Adjustment	16,729	-	-
Total Disbursements	574,606	604,000	526,700

(1) 2021 Miscellaneous includes donations for loose currency, donations for Easter Lilies & Poinsettias, Day Camp Registration, Thrivent Choice, and AmazonSmiles.

(2) 2021 Benevolence includes \$55,267 to RMS and \$5,000 to Village Resource Center.

(3) 2021 Member Services expenses include general office supplies, office computer replacement, 40th StPLC celebration, postage, devotionals, Living Lutheran subscription for members, conferences/conventions, office software/hardware, service charges for online donation accounts.

(4) 2021 Property expenses include \$46,932 for total mortgage payment; and \$62,248 for property maintenance, landscaping, supplies, insurance, fire/security, utilities.

(5) 2021 EOY Adjustment: move surplus to Building Maintenance Fund

Respectfully Submitted,
Shawn O'Keefe, Treasurer †

STAFF REPORTS

Report from the Pastor

Dear Friends at Saint Peter,

Grace to you and peace, from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I have had many conversations with family members, friends, and colleagues about my tenure at Saint Peter during the month since I last was with you. Time and time again I have heard others say, “Twenty-three years is a long time.” It is true: twenty-three years is indeed a long time. Thinking back over the years we spent together, I am deeply grateful for the love and support I have received from so many of you, the opportunities I have had to walk alongside you in good times and bad, the love we have shared with hurting neighbors near and far, the advances we have made in so many ministry areas, and perhaps most importantly: the experiences we have had of God moving among us to strengthen spirits, heal hearts, deepen relationships, and inspire love.

A long time ago — twenty-three years ago, to be precise — I submitted to you an Annual Report (even though I had only been with you for four months...) that included, in part, these words: *As I have spent time visiting with you and listening to you during these first few months, I have been touched by the strength of your faith, the depth of your theological understanding, and the character of your convictions. The Call Committee portrayed this congregation as one that included many mature Christians who take their faith seriously, and I have found that to be the case. I pray that my ministry among you will encourage that strength, and that you and I will have many years of growing in faith together.*

These words still ring true for me about the people of Saint Peter some twenty-three years later. I consider myself fortunate to have witnessed, time and time again, the strength of your faith. It has made itself known as you have met challenges, wrestled with losses, envisioned the future, mentored younger members of the community, and cared for those in need. In those moments, Saint Peter has truly been a “faith community” — one that has often inspired me. It has been a privilege for me to teach and lead among people who hold a deep understanding of what it means to be a Christian; of what it means to be a Lutheran. Our tradition is, in the best sense, a theological tradition: one that finds meaning in asking hard questions and seeking the will of God in all matters. I’ll always have strong Saint Peter memories of late-night Council deliberations, enthusiastic participation in Faith Forum sessions, young members of our community eager to learn and grow, countless one-on-one conversations about how faith becomes real in life and, of course, that extraordinary group of theologians who met with me every Wednesday at lunchtime, and who deepened my efforts to prepare a message for Sunday’s worship services.

As I think about the coming years at Saint Peter, I am especially grateful for the many of you whose commitment to Christ goes far beyond a set of beliefs and is expressed by the way you live into your faith. Jesus calls us to a life that is shaped by love: love of God and love of neighbor. Your ability to follow this calling, practiced and strengthened over the years, will continue to provide a strong and reliable foundation for your life together, and your witness to the world.

It has been a privilege and an honor to serve as your Pastor. Know that I miss you and think of you every day. I continue in my prayers for you, that God will lead you and strengthen you, and move through you to share faith and love with the world. We have had, as that young pastor wrote twenty-three years ago, “many years of growing in faith together.” I am forever grateful and wish you the very best in years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

David J. Risendal, your pastor and friend †

Report from the Administrator

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." [John 20:26-29]

This has been my favorite bible passage for many years! As I wrestled with my faith at a young age, I was constantly looking for concrete signs that God existed. Thankfully, over time, my vision, faith, and resilience for change has improved greatly! I am reminded daily that the presence of God is in everything we touch, in everything we see and is a part of everything we do. Through the grace of God, we are equipped to embrace challenges and changes. What an incredible gift this is to all of us as we head into a new chapter of ministry in 2022.

It has been an unprecedented two years for our congregation (and the world!) as we have navigated our way through a pandemic. We have seen extraordinary growth in our worship life, in our ministries with young people and their families and in preparing our facilities for what comes next. I am extremely grateful for our wonderful staff and the Congregational Council for their leadership and commitment to the ministries we serve. Our incredible Tech Team has worked tirelessly to keep us connected to each other through technology; what a blessing they are to our Saint Peter family. It was a privilege to serve every day with Pastor Dave and Steve Howie for nearly 19 years! May God bless their new beginnings!

2021 Accomplishments

Pastor Dave, Steve Howie, Jeanne Maloney, Sara Lancaster, Bruce Stokes, Brooke Tieperman, Karne Beighle, Annie Heath, Allison Summerton and I graduated from Excellence in Leadership on May 15, 2021. This 2-year program is designed to form courageous, resilient, and faithful leaders who are better equipped to follow the path of transformation and build courageous, resilient, and faithful communities. This training will be so valuable as we enter our Pastoral Transition beginning January 1, 2022.

I am so fortunate to work alongside staff and membership who possess different talents, gifts and personalities. Together we can do many things! Looking back at 2021, here are some general administrative duties performed:

- Assist in special projects for all ministry teams.
- Assist Sara Lancaster in some of the congregational publications: This includes annual congregational reports, stewardship materials, promotional materials and church directories.
- Congregational fiduciary/government reporting responsibilities: This includes coordinating invoices for payment, handling all payroll functions, state and federal reporting and ensuring that all written policies and procedures are followed.
- Maintenance of congregational records: All member and visitor records in the church's database are maintained; this includes home addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, worship attendance, donation records, and membership changes.
- Maintenance and scheduling of congregation's physical facilities: This includes maintaining the church calendar, review/negotiate contracts as needed, insurance review, fire and security system monitoring review, supervising the contract cleaning service and working with outside vendors.
 - The kitchen remodel project was completed first quarter 2021.
 - Painted Sacristy and refinished cabinets and countertops in the first quarter 2021.
 - We completed the first phase of the HVAC equipment replacement. This phase included replacement of the Worship Center air-handling system, the Narthex unit, and the

Covenant Hall unit. Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization (NPBI) air purification units were installed on all HVAC equipment (new and old equipment).

- We upgraded our internet service to facilitate our needs and resources for enhanced hybrid worship.
- Updated the look of the Narthex by removing the old built-in and tack walls. Amazing what a coat of paint will do!
- Data Maintenance and Membership Statistics: The following chart illustrates the membership status that we are reporting to the ELCA as of December 31, 2021. These numbers are based on the total number of confirmed and baptized active members at Saint Peter Lutheran Church.

	Baptized (total membership)		Confirmed (eighth grade and older)	
Active Membership, 12/31/2020		354		302
Members received by Baptism	6		0	
Members received by Affirmation of Faith	0		0	
Baptized youth, who were confirmed			1	
Total members received	6		1	
Sub-total		360		303
Members transferred to other congregations	0		0	
Members who died	3		3	
Members released from membership	1		1	
Members placed on inactive roster	33		31	
Total members removed	37		35	
Statistical Adjustment	0		0	
Active Membership, 12/31/2021		323		268

Summary of membership removals:

- Saint Peter now has 138 active member families.
- 9 family units have been moved to our inactive roster due to non-participation (they did not commune or contribute during the calendar year – our constitutional definition of an inactive member). Although their membership status has changed, we still have a pastoral responsibility to them. If any members of Saint Peter are interested in reaching out to them, please contact me and you will be invited to contact one or two of them.
- No family unit has transferred their membership to another congregation.
- No family units have moved out of town and have not transferred their membership.
- 3 members have been removed due to death (1 family unit removed from membership).
- 1 family unit has requested to be released from membership.
- No family units that were previously placed on the inactive list have transferred their membership to other congregations.

Report from the Financial Secretary

I also served as Financial Secretary in 2021. The following table summarizes the gross receipts that were received this year:

General Funds Receipts in 2021		Designated Giving in 2021	
2021 Pledged Mission Support	485,348.09	Administrative Discretionary Fund	40,000
Non-pledged Mission Support	67,339.20	Building Maintenance Fund	1,331
2022 Prepaid Pledges	51,050.00	Covenant Cupboard Fund	1,451
Advent/Christmas	2,625.00	Delores Project Fund	1,035
Facility Use Revenue	300.00	ELCA World Hunger Fund	5,371
Interest Income	224.71	Habitat for Humanity	516
Lent/Easter	570.00	LFS - Afghan Refugee Fund	16,121
¹ Miscellaneous: AmazonSmiles	178.14	³ Memorial Fund	765
Miscellaneous: Initial Offering	25.00	Ministry Support	435
² Miscellaneous: Thrivent Choice	193.00	MOPS Fund	50
		Pastor Discretionary Fund	500
		Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp Fund	1,500
		Ron Leighton Memorial Scholarship	33,537
		SBA PPP Loan	77,100
		Selian Hospital Fund	19,700
		Sound System/Hybrid Worship	500
		Stephen Ministry Tech Fund	247
		Village Resource Center	2,162
Total General Fund	\$607,853.14	Total Designated Fund	\$202,320.87

¹Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to StPLC.
²Thrivent Financial for Lutherans provided more than \$100 million to help congregations, communities and individuals in need. The Thrivent Choice® program offers two ways members can recommend where Thrivent Financial distributes some of its charitable outreach funds. Eligible members are designated Choice Dollars, based on insurance premiums, contract values and Thrivent Financial volunteer leadership
³Memorials received in loving memory of Liz Rusk, Jim Hallstrom and Gary Miller.

I am excited to dream and envision what is in store for us in 2022! May God guide and empower us to work together to strengthen our ministries and be a witness to the world around us.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Sherpe †

Report from Congregation Communications

In September 2018 I joined Saint Peter as a part-time staff member in the role of Congregation Communications. My primary duties include co-producing the weekly newsletter, *Our Life Together*, with Barb Hinchey, publishing the bi-weekly "What's Happening" blog post/email as well as managing other communication tools like the StPLC website, worship reminders emailed on Saturdays and the Facebook page among other things.

Summary of 2021 Activities

- Weekly newsletter production.
- Worked with Lynn Sherpe to produce the 2020 annual report.
- Completed the Rocky Mountain Synod's two-year Excellence in Leadership Program along with other StPLC leadership. Our Saint Peter group worked together to make Saint Peter's 40th Anniversary celebration a success.
- Updated the website and other materials for special events like the Selian 5K, Family Ministries' activities, COVID information and more. This includes the recently revised home page, which now includes rotating announcements.
- Began the creation of the "Connection Center" in the Narthex, which involved refinishing walls (removing the wooden built-in and tack boards) and installing slat wall displays. Now we can conveniently display posters and brochures for all to see. Thank you to **Lynn Sherpe, Jed Summerton** and **Valerie Watkins** for helping with the project.
- As part of the Connection Center, Saint Peter invested in a new name tag printer. All members have a new magnetic name tag and there are blank name tags in the Connection Center for guests also.

2022 Goals

I will continue to explore ways to improve Congregation Communications and to support to Saint Peter's ministry activities. Some of those plans include:

- Continue to improve the Connection Center in the Narthex with updated information and possibly more technology, art and storage.
- Continue to enhance the website, which includes videos and articles for the blog (this will help others find us through Google searches).
- Help ministry leaders get the word out about their ministry activities.
- Clean out and organize the bookshelves in the Fellowship Hall to create a worthwhile library resource for all church members.
- Develop a "thank you" memory book for Pastor Dave in cooperation with Barb Hinchey.
- Collect, organize and properly display historical documents and materials for our church. Much was uncovered in prep for the 40th Anniversary, Pastor Dave's memory book and in organizing the library. This is a great time to take stock of what we have and ensure the Saint Peter story will live on.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Lancaster †

Report from the Family Ministries Leader

Family Ministries at Saint Peter Lutheran Church aims to build relationships with families, focusing on our households with children infant through elementary age but embracing families of all sizes and ages. It's our goal to support faith building, community-building across generations and empower others to employ what we learn "at church" in the home and in the outside community.

Highlights of Ministries and Actions 2021

- Epiphany Kits for at home use and accompanying Children's Message
- Object lessons for Children's Messages Lent through Pentecost
- Created Kits for at-home worship during Lent and Easter
- Wrote 5 scripts for Women of the Bible, performed by StPLC adults and youth, with talk-back responses for Children's Messages after Pentecost
- Celebration of HS Graduates with worship recognition and fleece blankets
- Organized an in-person Celebration of the Strezos and a kick-off for summer faith fun
- Selian 5K activities organized for young children while families ran the 5K
- Blessing of the Backpacks
- Continued to update my Picture Book list for households
- Launched Intergenerational Faith Formation LIFT with 60 participants in Fall; Re-designed LIFT for February-May 2022
- AdventFest November 27 with over 50 onsite participants
- Christmas Eve Journey to Bethlehem written by me for 3 p.m. Worship
- Established mentoring opportunity for 3 of our HS graduates during their 1st year of college.
- Attended online Intergenerate Conference, attended every session
- Collaborated with Alex Sergio of Covenant Church with youth
- Made/distrib. Scripture Survival Kits for StPLC members, w/ Sharon Stokes and Carolyn Brink
- Created more videos of me reading picture books posted on FM website
- Monthly webinar Study Group with Milestones Ministry
- Zoom professional development with Linda Staats, Homegrown Faith

2022 Goals

- Continued collaboration with Faith in Action and StPLC Staff
- Continued participation on webinars and working with mentors
- Continuing collaboration with Covenant Church and St. Gabriel for youth activities
- Creating Worship Bags for children that mimic the parts of worship so all are engaged
- Create opportunities for faith building through intergenerational and age-based opportunities
- Re-design of LIFT continually to meet the needs of StPLC

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Pratt a/k/a Miss Mary †

2021 ROSTER

STAFF

- **Dave Risendal, Pastor;** Last day of service at StPLC 12/31/2021
- **Barb Hinchey,** Weekly Editor
- **Steve Howie,** Minister of Music; last day of service at StPLC 8/15/2021
- **Sara Lancaster,** Congregation Communications
- **Mary Pratt,** Family Ministries
- **Lynn Sherpe,** Administrator
- **Tabitha Strezo,** Nursery Coordinator
- **Arielle Wilson,** Accompanist

EXECUTIVE TEAM / CONGREGATION OFFICERS

- **Bruce Stokes,** President; Term expires January 2022; ineligible to be re-elected; first elected in 2018; currently serving second term with focus on Administration, Finance and Stewardship.
- **Allison Summerton,** Vice-President; Term expires January 2022; eligible to be re-elected; first elected in 2020; currently serving first term with focus on Faith in Action and Worship.
- **Shawn O'Keefe,** Treasurer; term expires January 2022; eligible to be re-elected; first elected in 2020; currently serving first term with a focus on Stewardship.
- **Steve Haigh,** Secretary; term expires January 2023; eligible to be re-elected; first elected in 2021; currently serving first term with focus on Property.
- **Dave Risendal,** Pastor; term: ex-officio; voice and vote
- **Lynn Sherpe,** Financial Secretary (not an officer of the corporation); serving "until her successor is elected" (constitutional language); first elected in 2011

COUNCIL MEMBERS AT-LARGE

- **Cathy Bunch,** At-Large; term expires January 2023; ineligible to be re-elected; first appointed in 2017 (partial term); currently serving second term with focus on Service.
- **Jim Bunke,** At-Large; term expires January 2022; eligible to be re-elected; first elected in 2020; currently serving first term with focus on Stewardship and Communications.
- **Robyn Glaser,** At-Large; term expires January 2023; eligible to be re-elected; first elected in 2021; currently serving first term with focus on Youth and Family.
- **Gerry Rasel,** At-Large; term expires January 2023; eligible to be re-elected; first elected in 2021; currently serving first term with focus on Hospitality.
- **Steve Howie,** Minister of Music; ex-officio; voice / no vote

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OPENING LITURGY

Litany

Today our congregation gathers in prayer and hope to begin another year of ministry. We bring with us the memory of a year like no other, even as we move into a future that we cannot yet imagine. Yet even now, as in every age, God is our refuge and strength. In times of plenty and want, in times of conflict and peace, in times of growing and pruning, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

We remember the past year with lament and gratitude. We have lost so much, and so much still feels uncertain. We have also witnessed God's hand at work in new and unexpected ways. We delight at hidden seeds bearing surprising and wonderful fruit. When our own resources fail, when we cannot predict the future, when we must rely on God alone, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

We celebrate this moment and the many ways God has held us together as a community. We give thanks for the gift of our church building and the welcome it provides, even as we bless God for the marvel of technology and the new bonds of connection it makes possible. When our bodies need sanctuary, when our minds need expanding, when your grace must transcend our limitations, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

We look ahead to the road we will travel together this year. We anticipate and receive with joy the new gifts God's love has planned. We pray for the grace to let go of what has served its holy purpose. When we are trailblazers or followers, when we are seekers or visionaries, when we must walk by faith and not by sight, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

And so we pray: Grace our meeting, O God, with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the Spirit who has guided the church from the beginning, the Spirit of our risen Lord Jesus, the Spirit who sends us as healers and restorers of your beloved world. You are the source of our life together. You are the rock and cornerstone.

You have called us for such a time as this.

God of the Fertile Fields

1 God of the fer - tile fields, sha - per of
2 We would be stew - ards true, hold - ing in
3 As grows the hid - den seed to fruit that
4 God of the coun - try - side, dear to the

earth that yields our dai - ly bread: forth from your
trust from you all that you give; help us in
serves our need, so your reign grows. Let all our
Christ who died to make us one: we pledge our

boun - teous hand come gifts your love has planned,
love to share, teach us like you to care
toil be used, no gift of yours a - bused,
lives a - new in faith - ful love to you.

that all in ev - 'ry land be clothed and fed.
for peo - ple ev - 'ry - where, that all may live.
no hum - ble task re - fused your love be - stows.
Guide all we say and do. Your will be done.

All Creation Sings #1063

Text: Georgia Harkness, alt.; © 1955, ren. 1983 The Hymn Society, admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used with permission. Reprinted under license #RP090721-1.

Music: ITALIAN HYMN, Felice de Giardini, in the public domain.

For further use of this hymn, including podcasting/streaming, please request permission from the copyright holder or report usage under a valid license.

**O God,
you have called your servants
to ventures of which we cannot see the ending,
by paths as yet untrodden,
through perils unknown.
Give us faith to go out with good courage,
not knowing where we go,
but only that your hand is leading us
and your love supporting us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen. (ELW, p. 317)**

Change and the need for creativity have become constants over the last year and a half in many aspects of life, including the church. This was the case for **Living Christ Lutheran Church** in Flagstaff, Ariz., even before a global pandemic caused many of us to rethink what it means to be church. Generosity from all three expressions of the ELCA (the churchwide organization, the Grand Canyon Synod and members of Living Christ) helped turn a congregation “on the road out of town, near the mall” into an online presence reaching over 500 people a week from Phoenix to the Philippines. (Read more about Living Christ in the current issue of “**Stories of Faith in Action**” at [ELCA.org/SOFIA](https://www.elca.org/SOFIA).)

Many other congregations have found new ways to connect both when in-person worship was impossible and when congregations began to return to their sanctuaries. Generosity, especially through Mission Support, helped us find and support these new ways of being connected. Early in the pandemic, ELCA Worship launched the “Worship in the Home” webpage, with Scripture, hymn links, prayers and reflections for each

Sunday. These resources were and continue to be used in congregations across the ELCA—even at **Sitka Lutheran Church** in Alaska, whose members printed and hand-delivered “Worship in the Home” resources to fellow members without internet access.

Change and creativity have taught us many things. As Pastor Sandra Rudd of Sitka Lutheran Church noted, “The pandemic was a stark illustration of the fact that the church is not a building. A lot of people say that, but we didn’t fully know it until we didn’t have a building to use. We learned that there are many ways to be connected as the church.” Throughout the pandemic, the ELCA has changed and adapted, doing ministry in new and creative ways, because of the generosity of its members. Even now, you may be gathering in a new way for your annual meeting, to discern how you will steward the gifts shared generously with your congregation to do ministry in your community and beyond. As you have these important conversations, remember that your gifts of time, talent and resources have helped create new spaces beyond our walls and buildings where we continue to worship, serve and love God and each other.

ANNUAL REPORT

2021