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OUR FATHER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA
Sunday, January 27, 2019

- ◆ Devotion & Opening Prayer
- ◆ Call to Order
- ◆ President's Remarks
- ◆ 2018 Highlights & Ministry Reports
- ◆ Approve 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes
- ◆ Nomination Slate
- ◆ 2019 Budget
- ◆ Blessed to be a Blessing in 2019
- ◆ Sending Prayer
- ◆ Adjourn

2018 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

2018 Our Father's Lutheran Church Congregational Annual Meeting Minutes

Sunday, January 9, 2018

Fellowship Hall – 10:15am

Welcome and Opening Prayer: Led by Pastor Jon Rhodes.

Call to order: 10:20am by Council President, Anthony Wold, declaring a quorum was present.

Remarks of the President: Anthony Wold

- Thank you
- Prayers for a heart of and spirit of forgiveness and commitment to reconciliation which will keep us together in unity.
 - Sharing our gifts that have been given in grace by the spirit to each of us.
- Renewal of purpose and optimism, moving into 2018 with unifying love, purpose, and divine action.
- *“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”*
- *Isaiah 43:19*

2017 Highlights & Ministry Reports:

Complete ministry reports included in annual report. Highlights for visioning areas provided by:

- WORSHIP: Cathy Jones sharing the hope of a new tool, Facebook Live, to bring Worship to others.
- LEARN: Lucas Botten and Joey Seymour sharing their experience at the ELCA National Youth Gathering in Houston with a group of youth from Our Father's.
- DISCIPLE: Kurt Pennuto sharing the STRIVE program's work in our schools, and how Our Father's members are engaging to support it.
- SERVE: Shirley Enger sharing the evangelism work Our Father's Members participate in with Meals on Wheels, the Riverworks Food Shelf, and Thrift Store.

Approval of 2016 Congregational Annual Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made by Norie Siers and seconded by Amber Stefan to Approve the 2016 Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes. Meeting minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

Nomination Slate: Anthony Wold announced the uncontested slate of candidates.

- Council Members at Large (3): *Erik Dahl, Larry Lommen, and Julie Vergin*
- Council President: *Anthony Wold*
- Council Treasurer: *Sarah Jones*
- Council Secretary: *Rachel Baccam*

Nominations from the floor include additional Members at Large (2): Rick Fuglie and Paul Bolstad. A motion was made by Norie Siers and seconded by Shirley Bolstad to accept by acclamation the slate of candidates nominated; approved unanimously by voice vote.

2017 Financial Review: Anthony Wold, prepared by Glenda Banken, OFLC Church Administrator

- The General Operating fund concluded 2017 with an overall surplus of \$20,189
- The Mortgage fund concluded 2017 with a reserve of \$16,681, representing six months of mortgage payments.

- The total of all donations to the Operating Fund, Mortgage Fund and Dedicated Accounts was \$326,959.
- As of 12/31/2017, OFLC had a total cash balance of \$85,294 which consisted of the General Operating Fund (\$20,189), Mortgage reserves (\$16,681), and Dedicated Funds (\$49,054).

2018 Proposed Budget:

- Anthony Wold brought members through the 2018 Operating and Mortgage proposed budget recommended by Council. After explanations and answering questions President Wold called for a motion. A motion was made by Amber Stefan and seconded by Denise Wold to accept the 2018 Operating and Mortgage Proposed Budget as presented; approved unanimously by voice vote.

Call to Action:

- Anthony Wold challenged the congregation to participate in covenanting for 2018, prayerfully considering what gifts they each have to share with the community.
- Rachel Baccam shared with the congregation the request that was brought to Council in January of 2018 by Cathy Jones: would our congregation consider calling her to a Pastoral position? Rachel Baccam called for an exploratory call committee to be formed on behalf of the congregation to understand the commitment that God is calling the congregation and Cathy Jones into.

Norie Siers motioned to adjourn the annual congregational meeting, seconded by Kathy Lunderby; unanimously approved by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm; Pastor Jon Rhodes closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Jones, 2017 Council Secretary

MINNEAPOLIS AREA SYNOD ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Your congregation matters! It matters because the *gospel* matters. The Good News of Jesus Christ proclaims that, in God's eyes, you are enough. The world is great at telling us we're not enough. "Do more. Be better." But God's *grace in Jesus Christ* says something else. Not only are you enough, you *belong*; you are welcome into beloved community. In that community, God provides food for the journey, friends in faith, and power to live out the presence of Christ in our daily lives.

The church matters because of the *gospel*, because of the community it forms, and also because the *world* needs the church's *voice*. Our communities need us to speak of God's love for all people, no exception; to advocate for the care of creation; and to build cities and neighborhoods where justice is the standard for all our work.

The church matters. *Everything we do in the synod office is poured into this conviction.*

Because the church matters, **congregations** matter:

In 2018, the synod walked with 58 congregations in call processes and assisted 52 congregations in work such as stewardship growth, conflict resolution, vision discernment, and anniversaries. Through the new Resurrection Fund Imagination Grants, we made legacy awards totaling \$270,230 to 40 congregations and ministries to further the mission of the gospel. And, in addition to our 145 congregations, the synod has five new mission starts: Tapestry, Intertwine, Tree of Life, Amazing Grace, Southwest Latino Ministry.

Because the church matters, **leaders** matter:

With nearly 700 rostered leaders, our synod has 313 in active calls, 31 on leave, and 347 retired. We work hard so the church receives the mature, faithful and theologically well-formed ministers it needs. In the years ahead, we will focus even more on raising the next generation of gifted and diverse leaders who will carry a message of God's love to a multiracial world.

Our Tool Kit gathering is a favorite for elected congregational leaders, and we invite you to consider bringing your church council to the 2019 Tool Kit at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Bloomington, on Saturday, February 23, 2019.

In 2018, we supported 69 persons in the candidacy process as they prepare to become deacons or pastors. We ordained 11 pastors and installed 25; we had a combined attendance of 463 pastors and deacons at our Ministeriums, Bishop's Theological Conference, and the Lunch and Learn gatherings; and we have 250 leaders meeting in peer groups. We also gave scholarships to 38 pastors to attend a conference on supervision and building healthy teams.

Because God's **world** matters, the **church's voice** matters.

Together, the congregations of the synod are working to foster racial, environmental, and economic justice. With grants from InFaith Community Foundation, the Bush Foundation, area Watershed Districts, and local congregations, we have called three synod staff members to lead congregations in this work. We also trained 65 leaders in faith-based community organizing.

It is the generosity of congregations like yours that make the synod's work possible. Thank you! We seek to be careful stewards of every gift. For the fifth straight year, we've been given a clean audit. For our fiscal

stewardship as well as for the synod's excellent governance, I give thanks to our synod council and to Vice President Felicia Boone. Our synod is also blessed with an extraordinary staff who work with humility, tenacious commitment, wisdom, creativity, and hope. We also rejoice in the two full-time Lutheran Volunteer Corps Members on our staff and the age and ethnic diversity our growing staff brings.

I conclude this annual report with a word of deep gratitude for the privilege of serving as your bishop. Especially, I thank you for calling me to serve a second six-year term. I praise God for our shared mission and our vital partnership. Please let us know how we can serve one another better—working together so all ***experience gracious invitation*** into ***life-giving Christian community*** and live in ***just and healthy neighborhoods***.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "An Joernangsen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the main body of text.

PASTORS' REPORTS

FAREWELL LETTER FROM PASTOR JON RHODES

12 July 2018

The words from Ecclesiastes chapter 3 have always given me great comfort. Entitled, *Everything Has Its Time*, the writer suggests a certain known seasonality to life, a right time for everything.

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

These words seem sensible and truthful; it is my Christian faith that makes them hopeful. In honoring God's will and call, I trust that no matter what our God walks alongside us.

There is also a time for the end of a pastor's call and a faith community's transition to a new pastor.

My friends, we are indeed in a new season: the end of one call and the beginning of another.

As I said, I find these words comforting. They are also difficult, challenging, and disruptive.

Today I am thankful to have been called (twice), loved, supported, challenged and equipped by God and the people of Our Father's Lutheran Church. In my estimation, our next and final season together is to rejoice and celebrate what God has been doing among us for eleven and a half years, to reconcile ourselves to one another (especially for where I/we fell short), and to send each other on to our next calls.

Please pray for Missy, Sam, Pete and me as often as you can in the coming days and weeks. And know how much we love you and will miss you.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jon

REPORT FROM PASTOR CATHY

Music Days

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth. Psalm 100:1

This was our theme verse for the first Music Days at Our Father's. Instead of traditional Vacation Bible School, a group of creative and musical folks gathered and invited children to join in. Two days were spent learning songs, making music, playing instruments and much more. Thanks to all who lead and participated!

House of Grace at Grace Place in Montrose

Partnerships grew this past year as Our Fathers teamed up with House of Grace in several ways. First, our youth were invited to Camp2B to help lead students in a week of day camp! We also had a few campers from Rockford who joined the fun of learning about being a disciple of Jesus! Second, House of Grace, Rockford United Presbyterian and Our Father's teamed up to try a year of Taize Worship. We rotated from church to church and shared leadership. It was a great introduction to Taize for those who participated. God's Work Our Hands joined forces with OFLC and HOG to serve our neighborhoods! Garden clean ups and helping neighbors with a roofing project cleanup are some of the service work we shared as partners in ministry. Lastly our food drop programs have been able to share food and help each other imagine what this part of the county might look like if more people have access to better food while cultivating deeper relationships.

Graduation, Call, Farewells, Ordination, Installation and Recognition

Our Father's knows how to put on a party and we had lots to celebrate this year! June brought my graduation from seminary. What a blessing to have all of you praying for me, walking alongside of me with encouragement and challenges to help grow me into a pastor! The call process was a journey of itself with many ups and downs and yet God provided a place for me to serve right here where I had first heard my call and felt the deep connection to this community! July found us celebrating eleven years of ministry for Pastor Jon as we bid him, Missy, Sam and Pete Godspeed as they were called to Lakeville, MN to serve at Christiana Lutheran. November brought an ordination, the third in OFLC history, I am proud to follow Kimberly Buffie and Jon Rhodes as one ordained by Our Father's Lutheran Church! December brought installation of not one but two pastors as OFLC started a new chapter using the co-pastor model! What a blessing to serve alongside Pastor Melanie Lichtenberg as our interim co-pastor helping lead us to the new ways we are being called and activated! Lastly, our own Kevin Reed completed his chaplaincy! We recognized Kevin for this accomplishment and prayed for him as he begins service in a very intentional way as a chaplain!

INTERIM PASTOR REPORT

Our Father's Lutheran Church
2018 Annual Report

Dear Faithful Disciples of Our Father's,

I greet you with God's Spirit of Peace. I am honored to be your Interim Co-Pastor, to walk with you during changes of staff as well as journey with you on the path of God's Hope into the future.

2018 was a year filled with many changes. You not only shared goodbyes but also honored and celebrated the ministries of Pastor Jon, Missy, Pete and Sam since 2007. With each story and every shared-memory, you gave witness to God's faithfulness through times of mountaintop-joy experiences as well as travelling through the dark valleys of discernment. Always and forever, God is with us!

I am grateful to God, to Co-Pastor Cathy, and to the members of Our Father's! In these first months of my call, I've needed your help and you have enthusiastically responded! Thanks be to God! Whether it was help with cleaning the church or answering questions about the church building or administrative details, you put your faith into action and helped generously. I feel blessed to experience here the "great cloud of witnesses" of Hebrews 12:1-2,

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely.
Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,
looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

With our eyes on Jesus, we will walk and work together in this upcoming season to prepare our hearts and this house of God for the next called permanent pastor here at Our Father's. I pray the Holy Spirit's wisdom, creativity, and compassion continue to inspire and lead us!

With God's Spirit of Hope,

Melanie Lichtenberg
Interim Co-Pastor

OUR FATHER'S MINISTRIES

FAITH STORY OF TAMMY JARVI

"A VERY PRESENT GOD"

Those were the words I wrote in my brand new, leather bound, journal given to me in the Christmas of 2015. I have always felt God's presence in my life and these words seemed so fitting to the new desire I had to journal the ways in which God was working in my life and the lives of others. Though my intentions of journaling daily soon turned to the reality of sparsity, the amazing truth of A VERY PRESENT GOD was all the more amplified – LO I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS - even in your failures; even in your brokenness!

Brokenness...it had been a topic of much discussion at OFLC over the course of several months following...broken relationships, broken community, broken spirits, broken homes, broken lives, broken dreams. In all of the conversations, God did an amazing thing! He began to show me that despite the fact that we all strive for perfection and hate to think of ourselves and our lives as broken, it was the one thing we have in common and God actually uses it to draw us all together and become the beautiful Body of Christ!

I was witness of this particularly in September of 2017 when I was broken with cancer. It is a strange thing to "hear" you are "sick" but don't actually feel like it. Yet, there I was on a journey of surgery, chemo, and radiation. I saw the Body of Christ supporting me in playing for services, directing the bell choir, attending my medical appointments and driving me to my treatments, doing my work and preparing meals with me and for me. I received visits and phone calls and gifts and cards of love, encouragement and inspiration. I felt the prayers of many turning brokenness into wholeness and weakness into strength and I received a special "dream" from God reminding me of the need to trust in Him for the outcome.

Victory Tour! Upon completion of my treatments, I was blessed to go on a real life Planes, Trains and Automobiles trip from Seattle to LA with some very dear friends. Pastor Cathy came up with the name of Victory Tour and it couldn't have been more perfect! It was a wonderful celebration of life, creation, friendship, restored health and God's goodness, grace, mercy and love! Through the gift of modern technology, it allowed us to feel as though many of you were with us too! Amazing! Although we saw lots of beautiful places, what stands out most of all to me about the trip is the ways in which my friends took their faith on the road and kept reaching out in love – praying for and assisting a "new" waitress on one of her first days on the job as it was discovered that the soup was cold because of a crockpot that hadn't been plugged in, listening and sharing with a grieving friend to let her know she wasn't alone in her sorrow, assisting an elderly woman with some food, washing the tar off of my feet after a walk on the beach, and much, much more! As we sat together in the airport sharing a final "meal" together before boarding our plane home, we went around the table and each shared our highlight of the trip. You know that God has indeed been very present and at work when you hear one of your friends say her highlight was, "Pastor Cathy's prayer for the waitress."

The journey of change...I remember thinking before my cancer surgery "I will never be the same." Truth is, that is what life is - constant change. We have all experienced change...in ourselves, in our family, in our friends, in our work, in our schools, in our churches, in our homes, in our health, in our plans and in our dreams. Each step of change is built on the previous step of the past and we continue forward in discovering that change is necessary because it brings about growth in ourselves and our faith. Change is also what makes God unique – He NEVER changes! He is our "Constant". He is ALWAYS with us! That's why we need

Him so desperately! We need that anchoring in our lives because without it, we would never survive. As His children, we have the wonderful gift of being able to celebrate victory while experiencing the storms in our lives and growing in them. Remember His words...suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us." With God, we ALWAYS have victory and hope!

As I reflect back on this incredible journey of change at Our Father's, I see growth and I see God! I have witnessed the Body of Christ loving God and serving Him, and loving others and serving them too through worship, fellowship, Sunday School, Confirmation, bible studies, ministry groups, church leadership and council, food drops, shared meals together, music ministries, MOPS, community work days, highway clean ups, the "Harvester" project, church cleaning and repair, lawn mowing, Vacation Bible School, Music Camp, Labyrinth walks, Fall Harvest Festivals, Thanksgiving community meals, Men's group; people praying together; Women's and Men's retreats; meal trains; ride shares, Meals on Wheels, helping at the RiverWorks Thrift Store, hospital and home visits and communion, community worship events, talents and gifts shared, youth gatherings, making quilts and prayer shawls and prayer crosses, walking alongside people not only during their celebrations but also during some of the darkest and most painful times of their lives, blessing and praying for Pastors and staff and their families as they say goodbye, people putting in extra countless hours to keep things running smoothly in these absences, and supporting and welcoming interns and new Pastors as they lead us and teach us and support us in life and faith, just to name a few! I am confident that along with all of this growth in our faith community at OFLC, we have each personally grown too.

This is an exciting time! A time when we reflect back on our growth but look to the future and anticipate with great hope the wonderful things that God is yet calling us into and the things He will be accomplishing in and through us, His people. "I am making all things new," He says. And He will! ☺

We have already taken the first step of the "new" as we welcomed Pastor Cathy and Pastor Melanie into a co-pastorship. We look to God for the next steps that follow.

During the time of Pastor Cathy's ordination, God gave me a song to sing at her ordination service. As I began to sing it over and over in preparation of playing it for the service, I began to see that it not only spoke of Cathy's journey of faith, but my journey and our journey together too! It speaks of all of the things I have shared with you in this writing. It is a good reminder from God that He is always with us, He loves us and He has a great plan for us – if we will just trust Him and follow His leading. I can't think of a better way to end than to share the words of this song with you...

RIGHT HERE

Long ago you planted a tiny seed in this heart of mine
and I know it's grown taller and stronger through the passage of time.

The winds of change have been blowin' sometimes so hard and long.
Yet in the midst of the hurricane, I have found the peace of God.

Lord, help me to follow.
Lord, help me to see
no matter where You're leading,
You are right here with me.

Lord, as I answer this call of yours to serve and to love,

help me every day to show You are the way to joy, peace and great love.

Lord, help me to follow.
Lord, help me to see
no matter where You're leading,
You are right here with me.

So I will not doubt and I will not fear.
I will trust and believe Your word is true
and everything that You do says that you love me.
You say that you love me!

Oh, Lord, help me to follow.
Lord, help me to see
no matter where You're leading,
You are right here with me.

You are right here with me!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, God loves you and so do I!

In His love and peace,

Tammy Jarvi

OFLC FOUNDATION REPORT

OFLC Foundation 2018

The Foundation is alive and well. The Foundation was started about 18 years ago. It's an account of money set up to help make a rainy day brighter within the church. The Board of Directors running the Foundation have worked wisely, growing the Foundation about \$3,500.00 a year through membership, donations, fundraisers, and investing the funds safely.

The "alive and well" is only partially true. All Board Members have exceeded their term limits and the church Leadership would like the Foundation to have a jump-start by setting up a new Board of Directors. It's an easy but rewarding type of committee. Please talk to Pastor Melanie or Pastor Cathy if interested in becoming a Board Member and get the Foundation working again to help support Our Father's Lutheran Church and our community interests.

Submitted by Tom and Jan Lemmage

REPORT FROM NORIE CHANDLER-SIERS

Beloved let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
1 John 4:7

It has been an honor to share God's love in our community over the past year. I have continued to assist the pastors in doing home visits to the shut-ins in our church family. We usually have around a dozen or more folks who are in need of the tender compassion of our God.

I enjoy being with our young folks on Wednesday nights. It is always a challenge and a rewarding experience to be with them. I am impressed with not only their endless energy but their knowledge of the Bible. Amy Krcil and I work together in assisting them to be open and learn more of God's love and plans for their lives.

Our Widow/Widowers Group continues to meet for lunch once a month, usually at one of our local eateries. Although our numbers have dropped because people have moved or gone to be with the Lord, we would love to have more folks.

Our Ministry of Hospitality continues through the generosity of Don Solorz, who creates our palm crosses and Jim Strehlow who stamps them with our signature scripture verse. Don has probably made 200-300 them over the years that we have spread God's love by praying over them and sharing them with friends and family who have special need of the reassurance of God's love.

This reassurance of God's love also continues through the ministry of our prayer shawls. We have several ladies who prayerfully create these warm comforting shawls, Karen Sangren and Diane Dorrel are the two I am most aware of. Karen and I also do the Birthday Card Ministry. We have recently started a miniature prayer shawl ministry. It is a pocket-sized square that can be carried or put in a back pack as a reminder of God's constant care. We have a nice supply of them and if you know someone who could use a touch of God's love, just ask for one.

Diane and I are the greeters for the Nourishing Hope Food Drop participants, making them welcome and telling them about our wonderful, delicious community meal the next day prepared by Jose and Kristy Flores, Julie Vergin and Pastor Cathy. We have many OFLC members and community members that also help with the setup and distribution of the food. Some of the regular helpers are Julie Vergin, Pastor Cathy, Jim Lupino, Gail and Dave Swanson, John and Korki Blodgett, Mark Nelson, Sandy Schultz, Dick and Joyce Storck, Mike and Pam Dickman, Randy Eberling, Harold and Lynn Greseth, many helping from the Boy and Girl Scouts.

God's love shows up every Friday night in our prayer room meditation group for about an hour. We have a small group of 5 or 6 and would love to have more. We do the Twin Hearts meditation which is a guided meditation which aims at achieving illumination and reducing stress. We begin with some simple exercises to open the energy centers. Then we listen to the guided meditation and close with another set of simple exercises. The evenings are both energizing and relaxing. Come join us!

We continue to do our bi-monthly healing services which consists of music, scripture readings and holy conversation that adds to the prayerfulness, the Holy Meal and an opportunity to experience the laying on of hands. Since a major portion of the New Testament is about Jesus' healing, it seems like we need to be His hands in carrying out a healing ministry. It is interesting how the structure of the evening stays the same but, depending on the congregation, the focus may change. The December service was focused on the healing of

grief and we call it, "Blue Christmas." Our hope is that it will bring comfort for those who are missing loved ones on the holidays.

The Centering Prayer group continues to be mostly a Biblical quorum (2 or 3). However, God always is there with us.

A wise person once said that the only thing permanent in life is change. We have certainly experienced a lot of change in 2018, and it seems to me that change is God's invitation for us to grow in Trust – Trusting that you know God loves you and so do I.

Norie

PRAYER CHAIN MINISTRY

Prayer – what a comforting, powerful word. The Apostle Paul says in Phil 4:6-7, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Our Fathers has a “behind the scenes” living ministry that presents our requests to God. We have 66 members of our prayer chain ministry--prayer warriors--who lift up prayer requests for comfort, hope, healing, thanksgiving or whatever is needed, whenever it is needed. In 2018 our prayer chain received close to 150 prayer requests. Prayer requests are confidential and are e-mailed or phoned to Shirley Bolstad, our prayer chain lead, who either e-mails that request to 59 prayer warriors who prefer receiving requests by e-mail or telephones the prayer to the other warriors who prefer receiving the requests by telephone.

What a powerful ministry and how comforting to know that, if you or someone you love, are going through a health emergency, a death in the family, a long-term illness, a crisis of any sort, that others are praying for you and that situation. You are not alone in prayer!

If you have a prayer request, or if you would like to join our prayer chain ministry, please contact Pastor Cathy, Pastor Melanie or Shirley Bolstad. Shirley’s contact information: pbolstad@aol.com or Tel: 763-478-9480.

Have a Blessed and Meaningful New Year!

Submitted by Shirley Bolstad

WOMEN'S MINISTRY BY KERRI HOLM-EBERLING

Lent Supper "Potluck"

This was our third year providing the sign-up sheets to sponsor a Lent Supper Potluck. Once again, this was successful as the different committees and groups worked together to provide a variety of wonderful meals for five Lenten Wednesdays in February-March.

Women's Retreat

The retreat was at Camp Koronis on March 9-11. This year, we extended our retreat until Sunday which enhanced our experience. Our Co-Facilitators were Cathy Jones and Amy Field. With 22 attendees, we had a great time studying and learning together. Our program was based on the book, "What Happens When Women Say Yes to God (Author: Lysa Terkeurst)." It's so spiritual to receive communion together at the retreat. The event requires a number of other support roles and we always have plenty of disciples to assist. In addition to the camp rental, part of the attendees' fees and supplies are paid for by Women's Ministry.

Rally (Round Up) Sunday

In September, we had a table at Roundup Sunday to share information on our ministry.

Women of the ELCA Fall Gathering

The annual gathering takes place in October. In 2018, we had no attendees from OFLC. Previous gathering presentations led to donations from Women's Ministry for women in need (i.e. WELCA Triennial and Sex Trafficking victim support). Part of the attendees' fees are paid by Women's Ministry.

Women of the ELCA Thank-offering Sunday

This is an annual global event. The Women of OFLC led both services on Sunday, November 18. We collected donations totaling \$332.05 which were then donated to Women of the ELCA.

Lefse Making

With the hard work of fewer, but dedicated, hands this year, the Lefse dough was prepared, with 75 pounds of potatoes, on November 16. On November 18 and 19, the nine volunteers made 400 pieces of Lefse to sell at our annual cookie walk. The best part of this event is the fellowship and sharing of family history and tradition.

Cookie Walk & Silent Auction

On December 1, we held our 30th annual Cookie Walk/Silent Auction/Craft Sale. This event is part of the day long "Crow River Christmas" community celebration. We had another successful event with people lining up an hour before the sale began. This was due to good advertising and the reputation this event has built over the years because of the many church and community members who donate baked cookies, silent auction items and time. A beautiful quilt, made and donated by Gail Swanson, was raffled off. We sold 100 packages of Lefse, 109 sloppy joe lunches and many pounds of delicious treats. Despite the fact that compared to last year, we had fewer baked items donated, vendor count was down, and we received less silent auction items donated, we still did very well and raised \$3,600 (less expenses). Proceeds from this event have supported OFLC ministries and the surrounding community. (i.e. Mothers of Preschool Students (MOPS), National Youth Gathering (NYG), drinking fountain, coffee machine, Women's bible study Gather magazine, Women's Retreat, WELCA and its events, The Nest (single mothers) and the Crow River Christmas community event.) (Note: Jim and Barb Strehlow received a "Thrivent Action Team Grant" of \$250 to support this project.)

BUILDING & GROUNDS REPORT

We have been blessed with many volunteers and generous hearts that have contributed to helping maintain, clean, and enhance the property in a variety of ways.

Listed below are a few of the wins we have had this year:

- HVAC zone control valve replacement
- Water heater replacement
- Water softener replacement
- Vertical Money Management Safe Installation for safer operation than previous floor safe
- Fellowship hall roof repair
- Lighting improvements in the kitchen, entryway, and outside the fellowship hall
- Garbage disposal replacement
- Major cleaning/sorting/organization of several areas in the building so we can be better stewards and more hospitable towards our guests and ministries

The church rekey was not able to be done in 2018 due to part availability and scheduling with the holidays, but it will be completed in early 2019, so stay tuned!

There are a plethora of unmentioned items that have given life and support to our church and ministries in 2018 and we are eternally grateful.

Blessings!

Anthony Wold

EDUCATION REPORT

Sunday School 2018.

Sunday School this year starts after Worship service at 10:15am and goes until 11:00am.

Below are some stats from our program.

- 20 students registered this year in grades PreK through 4th
- 3 classrooms of students: PreK & K, 1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th
- Spark curriculum is used to share Bible stories with students to help them learn about Jesus and build their relationship with him.

We have a great group of teachers and helpers for our program including: Lynn Greseth, Gale Swanson, Kristin Doboszinski and Dan Reed. We also have a number of substitute and teacher helpers including: Brenda Fortin, Lindsey Bervig, Kathy Lunderby, Claylan Mounthachek, Katie Baccam and Kelly Kinnan. This year we also have Tammy Jarvi sharing music with the students and we are hoping to sing for the congregation later this school year.

Students shared the Christmas story with our congregation on December 16th during the worship service by presenting a program called "Christmas Presence – Bring your gifts to him.". The program used the Christmas story to discuss God's gifts to us in the true meaning of Christmas. Hot chocolate and cookies were served after the program.

The Sunday School is very grateful for all the students and their parents and the chance to share God's word.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Mutterer

Confirmation 2018

Engage and Confirm 2018-2019 is every Wednesday evening. The schedule starts at 6:00pm with a shared meal and fellowship, large group at 6:30pm to present the lesson for the evening followed by small group for more in-depth discussion. Wednesday evenings are wrapped up with worship at 7:30pm. The students are active participants in the worship service doing the readings and helping to serve communion. Everyone is invited to share worship with the students.

We have 69 registered students this year. These students have a wonderful set of adults supporting their faith journey through confirmation years. The mentors are Jim Lupino, Amy Krcil, Diane Mutterer, Pam Hoekstra, Michelle Andrew, Sharon Thomas and David Kosfeld. We also have Norie Siers, Michael Thomas and Ken Davis as a support/substitute team as well as our Pastors Cathy and Melanie.

Twelve students participated in their Affirmation of Baptism in October of 2018. The confirmands are Katie Baccam, Rayna Bowen, Ryan Boysen, Sara Byers, Kacy Connelly, Kaylin Gruber, Jayden Lark, Claylan Mounthachak, Steven Mutterer, Sam Rhodes, Lauren Ruth and Grace Zimmerman. Each confirmand presented their statement of faith earlier in the month. Many different types of presentations were used including pictures, anagrams, and PowerPoints. The students did a great job of presenting their faith journeys for the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Mutterer

OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

MOPETS

Why I am a MOPets helper. Several years ago, about the time I was a part of the effort to restore the children's playground, I felt a need to help support young families. Now as a part of Mothers of Preschoolers I am blessed to help the preschool children as a Moppets helper. Seeing young children learning Bible stories, making crafts related to the stories and even sometimes using that playground, has been such a blessing to me. Along with the other MOPets helpers it is an inspiring group. Great to be a friend to these fine children.

Known as {Church grandpa} Jim Strehlow

MOPS (Mothers Of Preschoolers) and MOMSNext (Mothers of school age children)

Our MOPS ministry is thriving at OFLC. This past year has been a year of growth and great connection within our group. We have had a record number of 13 new moms join us in the last year which now brings our registered women up to 48! Our group continues to dive deep into Jesus' love for us and our families. Our group sent 8 moms to Lexington, KY for the MOPS international convention this past year, and we already have a dozen Moms committed to attending the convention in 2019!

We bring our imperfect selves and find a community of Moms who walk with us through all the ups and downs of life. One of our new Mom's shared this comment after our annual progressive dinner, "(I am) so very thankful for this wonderful community of women. I've prayed many years for you... thanks for being so inviting and open. Love you guys♥."

Personally, our family was so very blessed by our MOPS group during a very trying time this spring. While my husband was hospitalized our MOPS group showed up and absolutely exemplified "being the hands and feet of Jesus." We were moving during his hospitalization, and these ladies juggled children while painting, packing, prepping meals, cleaning, doing yard work... they thought of it all. From moments big and small, we thank God through it all!

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Gustafson

REPORT FROM BOY SCOUTS

Our Father's Lutheran Church is the chartering organization for three scouting branches of the Boy Scouts of America: Rockford Pack 490; Rockford Troop 490; and Rockford Crew 490. Being a chartering organization is the first critical step to support scouting as packs, troops, and crews can't exist without one. We all would like to thank OFLC for the additional support the congregation provides by giving us meeting space, a place to park our trailers, and opportunities to earn service hours by allow us to assist with the Food Drop.

Highlights from troop 490 in 2018 included: assisting with service on Scout Sunday last February, participating in the Rockford/Greenfield Expo, attending a district camporee, participating in Crow River Serve Day, partnering with the cub scouts for two camping weekends, attending Many Point Scout Camp, running the corn booth at Rockford River Days, and decorating Riverside Park for Crow River Christmas.

Submitted by Pamela Hoekstra

BNI

The BNI (Business Network International) group would like to express gratitude for the wonderful partnership that we have had with Our Father's Lutheran Church over the years. The space is conducive to our meetings and we've been able to not only help local businesses connect and thrive, but we've done special projects to benefit the community, such as the Toys for Tots drive in December, where all members brought donations for the organization. We look forward to many more years of learning and growing at Our Father's Lutheran Church! If you would like to visit our meeting to see what it is we do, you are more than welcome to join us! We meet every Tuesday morning from 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. Just let someone from our leadership team know and we will be ready to greet you!

Our Mission

Our mission is to help members increase their business through a structured, positive, and professional referral marketing program that enables them to develop long-term, meaningful relationships with quality business professionals.

Submitted by Peggy Bobick

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

GLOBAL MISSION OUTREACH

Whatever happened to “the combine”...

That is the question that I have been getting many times from interested members of our congregation who participated in some way in this rather successful fundraising, purchase and modification, and then shipping of the combine to Iringa, Tanzania in 2014/2015.

Long story, longer...

Let's start with the technical consultation trip that Brian Walton, Steve and Sherri Strehlow and I took to Iringa in October/November 2015:

There had been some sort of technical problem with the fuel system as described to us by Cheetah personnel on the ground there; the engine started and ran but then shut down as it failed to get fuel adequately so as to develop the needed power to move the machine down the road at a decent speed...and, of course, to function as a sheller.

Steve found the problem and devised a temporary fix and we were able to drive it under full power up to the Cheetah offices and do some testing of the machine, and make the correct settings and also training of the guys who were to operate and maintain the machine (we have pictures and video of all this!)... Steve and Sheri left with instructions as to how to correct the problem. Unfortunately, that involved an expenditure of \$500 to \$800 to get a rebuilt diesel injection pump and have it installed properly. Cheetah Development didn't have the money to do this at that time...and so things sat as they were.

At the same time that we were in Iringa, there was a presidential election...and there were some significant changes in government as a result. Also, just after we left, there were some personnel difficulties that affected the whole operation of the maize(corn) harvesting and marketing system that Cheetah was establishing. The personnel conflict resulted in the local government ordering the Cheetah operation temporarily shut down pending an investigation by other government officials from the capitol city, Dar es Salaam.

These investigations cleared Cheetah of all accusations...but the new government apparently adopted a policy of squeezing organizations such as Cheetah for revenue and accused Cheetah of not paying the proper fees for visas for their employees going back to the start of Cheetah in 2010. The Cheetah people showed that they had paid the amount they were told to pay, but the new government refused to recognize this claim.

According to Ray(founder of Cheetah Development), the government then seized their bank operating account without notice or due process and took in excess of \$100,000 without recourse. This was money that was for salaries but more importantly for buying the crop from their farmers.

With this... the maize buying and marketing operation became impossible and our combine, a rather small but important part of the maize buying process, was not able to be used in the way envisioned by Ray and Cheetah. Subsequent to this, I have corresponded with and met with Ray about devising a new way to utilize the combine/sheller. Until recently nothing happened...

This last summer I had a chance to meet with a Tanzanian pastor who was the head of the program for micro-credit and maize marketing for Iringa Hope, the part of the Bega Kwa Bega partnership between the Iringa Diocese and the St. Paul Synod of the ELCA.

I suggested that he could find a use for the combine in their ongoing and long-term efforts to help farmers in much the same way that Ray and Cheetah had envisioned. He promised to look into it and today I received a response from him in which the newly elected bishop of the diocese suggested that the combine/sheller be based at one of their long-established secondary schools where they have a very large maize farm and could use the combine/sheller in that way.

Ray has written an email to his remaining two employees in Iringa authorizing them to make the necessary arrangements for this to happen. As I write this, I will be continuing to work on this new arrangement and plan to talk to this pastor in late January when I will be in Tanzania with Shirley and a group of 12 friends and family...

Two steps forward, one big step backwards...so it seems.

I hope to be able to report a whole new way in which our combine can be used to the benefit of the people in Iringa. I do like the idea of our combine becoming part of a well-established secondary school... **with** the blessing of the bishop of the Iringa Diocese.

I can envision a number of ways that this can work to the benefit of students and the farmers of the immediate area as customers of a small business consisting of a moveable sheller operated by students and/or teachers as a practical learning project.

Stay tuned...

Written by Paul Bolstad

VETERAN'S MINISTRY

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13

Thanks be to God as we at OFLC continue to support our veterans. The Community Resource Referral Center (CRRC) in downtown Minneapolis is one of 17 nationally, aimed at ending homelessness among Veterans. Your backpack and clothing donations are appreciated. OFLC Members delivered God's love and a homemade chili to the CRRC. All was well received and much gratitude was expressed by the Veterans and Staff.

In May, a Patriotic Program was given for the Girl Scouts that meet at the church. It included providing hand held flags, Pledge of Allegiance, National Anthem and Flag Folding Ceremony (meaning of the folds of the American Flag). As a thank you to the Eberling's for leading the program, the Girl Scouts donated back packs to the CRRC.

In honor of Memorial Day, Randy Eberling presented three OFLC members with WWII caps in gratitude for their service. OFLC member and Veteran, Jim Lupino, donated two diamond willow guidon staffs to two Minnesota chapters of the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Assoc. in honor of their service.

Submitted by Kerri Holm-Eberling

REPORT FROM JULIE VERGIN

2018 has seen the Holy Spirit actively working among us at Our Father's. In January we began a series of gatherings we called Connect and Activate. We hoped to discern, through prayer and discussion together, how our family could become more engaged in our community and how we might better become the body of Christ in serving our neighbor. Out of these gatherings was borne NourishingHOPE and the NourishingHOPE community meal.

In spite of some hurdles early on, God led us to the path we were meant to follow. NourishingHOPE launched in July with the first food drop and community meal and we have not looked back. To date, in six months, God has blessed us with the opportunity to have distributed free food, predominantly fresh produce, to over 350 families (over 1000 individuals). In addition, NourishingHOPE has sponsored mentorship from Second Harvest Heartland to assist folks with obtaining food assistance and hosted a warm clothes give away in November as part of the food drop.

As NourishingHOPE has evolved, so, too, has our partnership in the community. We have developed a beautiful working relationship with Riverworks Food Shelf, Second Harvest Heartland, the Wright County Community Action service and a food ministry, Forgotten Harvest. We have a committed group of volunteers, from within OFLC and the community, who give of their time and energy to serve in this ministry. We have received funding from community partners Bankwest, Rockford and Loretto Lions. The program is safely funded through 2019.

The NourishingHOPE community meal became a natural outgrowth of the food drop, using items from the drop to create a meal open to anyone and everyone. With Jose Flores of Forgotten Harvest as chef we have served over 300 meals in our first six months and created a gathering place for fellowship as well. We are truly blessed to be a blessing.

Both Rockford Riverdays and the OFLC Second Annual Harvest Festival brought us into the community and the community to us. Both of these events were successful in raising funds for our ministries and we look to 2019 with energy to continue these events and we hope to gather new voices into the fray to help with planning and administration.

We have seen our Worship practices evolve at OFLC this past year as well. In May we added a monthly Taize prayer service that draws together our faith partners. The service, each third Thursday, is titled Sabbath Taize and is a quiet service of song and prayer lasting about 40 minutes. It is intended to be a time of rest and replenishment and has offered a beautiful presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. Pastor Rick from UPC has served as our music leader for this service drawing us together in worship and song. The service rotates among OFLC, House of Grace in Montrose and United Presbyterian Church in Rockford.

REPORT FROM GAIL SWANSON

Quilting/Sewing Ministry

The Quilting/Sewing group has had a busy year. Despite meeting only 9 months of the year, we've completed 5 or 6 quilts for Vinland Treatment Center, a hand-quilted table runner for the Harvest Festival, a hand-quilted holiday throw for the silent auction in December, a number of Baptismal napkins, and a number of prayer pillows to be distributed to our youngest worshipers. All that, and it never feels like work! As with the church as a whole, we each bring our gifts to the table. Some enjoy planning and cutting; others do machine stitching. Some get the quilts sandwiched and tied, and others do the binding. The results are beautiful and useful expressions of warmth and caring. Come if you have an interest in learning or sharing your sewing gifts. All skill levels are welcome. We are also accepting cotton fabric you may have lying around. Most of our quilts are made entirely of donated fabrics.

Riverworks Thrift Store Volunteers

There's a great opportunity for local volunteer work right in our community. The Riverworks Thrift Store receives mounds of good, usable items. Proceeds from the resale of these items goes to support the Riverworks Food Shelf and other Riverworks programming to strengthen our community. However, it takes lots of hands to sort, tag and hang, or display all of these donated items. And that's where we come in. The first and third Thursdays of each month we have a number of volunteers who meet at the store and assist with whatever is needed at the moment. We work under the direction of in-the-know staff, so it's easy to feel useful almost immediately. Join us for some active conversation and a chance to see how our donated items are used to benefit local and not-so-local (think Haiti) individuals.

Riverworks Food Shelf

OFLC has committed to staffing the Riverworks Food Shelf on the 5th Monday of the month. While this does not occur regularly, it does happen several times per year. With just a little training it's easy to assist shoppers as they navigate aisles and choose from the canned goods, fresh produce, baked goods, and dairy cases. If you have a few hours on an occasional Monday evening it's a great way to become involved in the community.

BEDDING MINISTRY

Our Father's continues to receive requests for our Bedding Ministry through Love In the Name of Christ Heartland. We had 29 requests for bedding and linens this past year. Our busiest months were September to December. We are privileged to meet these neighbors and also make sure they have what they need to stay warm at night. Many of the neighbors we serve are also involved in "a hand up" through classes such as life skills, stress, budgeting and dreams and affirming your potential. We serve our neighbors in many different situations such as unexpected disabilities, grief issues, families helping extended family members, a parent trying to stay at home with his or her kids.

Please continue to pray for our neighbors and that our bedding ministry can be the hands and feet of Christ.

We are thankful for many blessings this year:

For all of the generous donations you gave during the year

For the OFLC sewing ministry for curtain alterations done for a neighbor

For the 20 pillows donated by My Pillow

For a Watertown neighbor who lovingly made 8 beautiful blankets and delivered them to us in December

Our three regular volunteers would welcome a few more people who could help out, occasionally or regularly, with neighbor visits, sorting, trips to Delano Love INC, or phone calls. Please contact Laurie Hanson or Pastor Melanie if you want to find out more. There are many opportunities to get involved at Love INC. Check it out!

John 15:12. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Submitted by Laurie Hanson