



Our Father's Lutheran Church Gather & Serve Newsletter

November 2022

How rich are you?

By Aaron Fuller

The other day, I came across a website that people can see how rich they are compared to the rest of the world. You enter your after-tax income, the number of people in your family (adults and kids) and hit 'calculate.' Out of curiosity, I pulled out my 2021 tax return, entered in Kelly and my after tax income, and hit 'calculate.' The results were interesting: We're in the top 1% the world's population in terms of wealth, 26.5 time greater than the world's median income. The website also calculates where one's standing would change if they gave 10% of their after-tax income to charities. If Kelly and I gave 10%, then we'd still be in the top 1%, and the money we had left over would be 23.8 times greater than the world's median income.

That got me thinking: I looked at what Kelly and I gave to charities last year, and did a little math. We gave about 4.7% to charities in the past year. Of that, I was giving about 2.9% of my after-tax income to my church, OFLC! It's a big reason why I increased my giving this year, and I'm closer to 5% now. (Kelly did something similar contributions to her congregation)

I'm sharing this with you because one, I thought it was fun little exercise. As we continue to do more as a community of faith post-pandemic and look to even more in 2023, the fact is our budget is going to grow in order to retain our excellent non-pastoral staff and create opportunities to gather and share Christ's love with our growing Rockford-Greenfield community. Like everyone else, rising inflation has impacted my life as well. Yet, the calculator showed me, perhaps not to the extreme I thought it was.

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If you're interested in doing something similar, shoot me an email or text for the website link, or google "giving what we can how rich am I" and click on the "How Rich Am I?" link. And as always, thank you for your current generosity to OFLC!

Peace,

Pastor Aaron

President's Update

Greetings OFLC Family!

Just a few quick updates I'd like to share:

We received the round of feedback from the synod on our updated constitution. We are still working toward the goal of having this as an item on our annual meeting agenda in January.

Give to the Max Day is planned for Thursday 11/17/22022. More to come on how you can help!

Planning for Crow River Christmas is underway. Our next planning meeting is Tuesday 11/15/22 at 7pm if you'd like to attend. We also have sign-up sheets available at the church and in the Friday Faith feed if you're interested.

Peace,

Pam Hoekstra

Are you a Thrivent Member? We'd like to know!

Many of us are members of Thrivent Financial, or use their services. Did you know that Thrivent members can request \$250 grants twice a year to contribute to a charity or event of their choosing?

In the past, OFLC members who are also members of Thrivent have chosen to request their grants to help fund community outreach events such as the Fall Festival, Crow River Christmas, and the Rockford Expo. These grants have helped OFLC tremendously as an additional source of resources to carry out God's ministry and be present in the community.

We are asking, if you are a member of Thrivent, to contact Melissa in the office so she can update the church's database to reflect that. Going forward, it allows us to reach out to you about potential opportunities for you to utilize your Thrivent member grants in support of OFLC. Please feel free to call the church office or email Melissa at office@ourfatherschurch.org. Thanks!

Upcoming Worship – Thanksgiving Eve and Advent

It's close to that time of year! This year, OFLC will be doing joint worship with United Presbyterian Church (6301 Maple St, Rockford, MN 55373). In the spirit of sharing, worship has been scheduled for the following dates and times:

Thanksgiving Eve Service @ United Presbyterian, November 23rd, 7pm.

Wednesday Advent Service @ United Presbyterian, November 30th, 7pm.

Wednesday Advent Service @ OFLC, December 7th, 7pm.

Wednesday Advent Service @ United Presbyterian, December 14th, 7pm.

Wednesday Advent/Longest Night Service @ OFLC, December 21st, 5pm.

We look forward to worshipping together and with our friends at United Presbyterian! Also, keep an eye out for our upcoming Christmas Worship schedule as well. Thanks!

Save the date!
Our annual Christmas Cantata will be
December 11 @ 7 pm.

Music Ministry

We are still looking for people to join our choir and bell choir. No prior experience necessary! Bell Choir meets Wednesdays from 5:30 – 6:30. Choir meets Wednesdays from 6:30 – 7:30. We do not meet on the first Wednesday of each month.

Ukulele Group is meeting the first Wednesday of each month from 5:30 – 6:00 pm. No prior experience necessary. It is a lot of fun!

Contact Tammy Jarvi if you have any questions or interest in joining in any of our music ministry groups. 763-732-8920. Thank you!

Did You Know.....

.....that Pastor Aaron periodically writes for “Living Lutheran,” the ELCA’s magazine? This month, we share his article that will be published in November’s issue. If you’d like to receive Living Lutheran Magazine, let Pastor Aaron or Melissa know for more details!

“People are more important than things,” – Lectionary Reflection

Growing up on our family dairy farm, one of the things I struggled with was my dad’s penchant to be lenient on those who fell short of his own high standards for moral character. Whether it was an incompetent hired hand or someone who wronged him or a neighbor, my dad would treat them the same as those who were well respected in our rural community. Looking back, I realize why my dad did so. Life in our small farming community was often unpredictable, and folks were often one accident, one poor season of weather, or one bad market from hardship and potentially losing their farm. When equipment and buildings were burned to the ground, cattle were lost to disease, or crops lost to drought, certain things didn’t matter. You came to the aid of those in need, and you trusted they would do the same. How you treated people mattered.

In the military’s Special Operations Forces, they have “5 truths” they live by. The first truth is “People are more important than things.” What this truth recognizes is that life in special operations often places individuals in adverse conditions where not even the best technology and equipment will enable them to succeed. Rather, it is the small team of people around that is their greatest advantage. Therefore, the Special Operations community places a high premium on valuing and investing in people over any one “thing.”

When I read the gospel texts for this month, this preference for people over things is apparent. Whether calling the marginalized blessed, enduring chaotic events, or keeping ready, the texts call us to draw near to each other, just as Jesus draws near to all humanity through his death, on behalf of the “God of the living.” (Luke 20:38) We’re called to draw our attention away from things, whether physical (Luke 21:5-6) or events (Luke 21:10-11). Yet, there is also a wrinkle: we’re called to expand our preference of people to include our enemies (Luke 6:27-29), just as Jesus expanded his to the criminals he was crucified with, and to the crowds that called for his gruesome death.

In our collective witness to the world to pursue justice, mercy, and love, I sense that often value things over people. We prefer certain institutions, leaders, written social statements, and spoken commentaries which usually do nothing but affirm our biases and give us a false sense of validation. Yet, my experience has shown me valuing things alienates those with opposing views we are trying to reach with our testimony, and marginalizes those we are attempting to advocate for. When we value things over people, it not only gets frustrating for everyone, it gets really hard for anyone to see Jesus.

We can only see Jesus if we value people over things, even the seemingly worst of people. That sentiment may be worthy of our reflection as we end this liturgical year and enter into the season of Advent.

Rev. Aaron Fuller is a bi-vocational pastor serving Our Father’s Lutheran, Rockford, MN and as a chaplain in the Navy Reserve.

Fall Fest at OFLC

What a blessed day we had celebrating fall with all our friends, family, and neighbors. There was a little bit of something for everyone. This year, 21 decorated trunks joined us for kids to trick or treat. The guests then voted for their favorite trunk. Amy and Matt Field took home the first prize and Erin and Jesse Smith took home second. There was also a corn pit and hay maze for the kids and kids at heart to enjoy. Thank you to Jim Strehlow for donating the many haybales it took to make it possible and Katrina's Gardens for donating the corn.

We used this opportunity to spotlight local nonprofits and the amazing work they are doing in our community. This year Andrew's Splash Pad, Mom's Club, WCCA Headstart, Lions Club, Rockford Area Schools Early Childhood Family Education, Love INC, and NourishingHOPE joined us. Cub Scouts and Girls Troop shared information about their organizations and the exciting opportunities they offer to our local youth. OFLC internal ministries pitched in as well, OFLC Foundation was on sight to make popcorn. The Sewing Ministry created spooky ghost crafts with the kids. Sunday School made pinecone bird feeders. Diane Dorrel greeted guests at the Our Father's Lutheran Church booth. As a long-standing member, she was able to answer any questions they may have about what OFLC is up to and the opportunities we have to offer. Confirmation students and their families provided many hands to help set up and organize, they also served food the day of the event. The Men's Group hosted a decorated trunk for trick or treaters.

Our very own Taryn Smith, spent countless hours, hand painting noodles for an adorable noodle necklace craft. Guests were able to take a leisurely stroll through the neighborhood to take in the fall colors, thanks to Closer to Home Construction, who generously donated horse drawn hayrides. A Wright County Sheriff visited with the kids and allowed them to take a tour of his car. We even had a surprise guest, Rockee the Rockford Rocket stopped by to say, "Go Rockets" and snap a few photos, thank you to Jodi Bryant for coordinating.

Worship music filled the crisp air from the talented Riverwood Worship Team. We are so thankful they joined us to spread God's love on this glorious day. Thank you to Shannon Sand and Aaron Hunter for providing our band with heaters to keep them cozy while we enjoyed their talents.

We prayed many prayers for the weather to cooperate and we ended up with a beautiful day. We are extremely thankful for all the donations and all the volunteers that made this event a huge success, without all your selfless contributions, none of this would have been possible. We can't wait to do it again next year.

*If I forgot to mention anyone, please forgive me!



Quilting/Sewing Ministry

Our quilting/sewing group continues to meet on the third Monday and Wednesday mornings of each month. We are working on simple quilts for clients of Vinland National Treatment Center. If you'd like to join us, we'll be happy to get you started. No sewing skills are necessary.

You are also welcome to bring your own sewing/knitting project along just for some dedicated work time. We'd love to have to join us for the conversation. Have something you need to finish before the holidays? This is a great way to set some time aside to get it done.

November dates are Monday and Wednesday, November 21 and 23, 9 AM.

It would be great to see some new faces. For more information, contact Gail Swanson, 763.242.0351.

Love INC Heartland Bedding and Linens

Our Love INC Bedding Ministry is getting about one request each month. We are able to visit with our neighbors and help them with needed bedding and linens. Thank you for your donated items! We also pick up donated items from Love INC in Delano.

Our current urgent needs:

Queen comforters/quilts

Queen sheet sets

Queen blankets

(Gently used and washed)

Lynne Greseth and Brittini have also been organizing and serving meals for Fresh Start class members in Delano on selected Monday nights. Watch for more of those opportunities in Gather and Serve or Friday Faith Feed.

Thank you for your blessings to Love INC. Please pray for our neighbors and for the Ministry!

Also check out the Love INC store in Howard Lake for furniture and other treasures (see LI website for hours).

Christmas Service Project



Greetings OFLC Families!

On Sunday, November 13th, our students will spend our Sunday School time packing boxes for the Riverworks Food Shelf as our Winter Service Project. These boxes will be handed out to children of families visiting the food shelf over the upcoming holiday season. Once again, we are asking our church family for donations to include in these boxes. Suggestions include:

Kid Friendly Snacks:

- Individual Fruit Cups
- Applesauce cups or pouches
- Fruit Snacks
- Goldfish Crackers

Toiletries:

- Individually wrapped Chapstick or Lip Balm
- Travel-size packets of Kleenex
- Toothpaste/Toothbrush

Art Supplies:

- Small coloring books
- Small packages of crayons or colored pencils
- Pencils/Pens

Keep in mind that the above ideas are simply suggestions! Because these boxes will remain local, we have a lot more freedom in what we choose to include.

As a church family, we understand that the holiday season can be both emotionally and financially difficult for some, especially in the economic times we are in now! We only ask you to contribute if you are willing and able to do so. Donation boxes will be placed by both the North and South ends of the building for you to drop off at your convenience.

Thank you and we wish you all a very Happy upcoming Holiday Season!

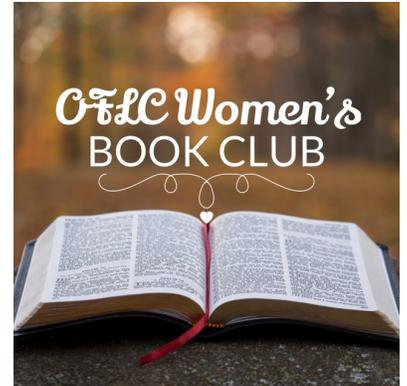
Sincerely,
Lindsey Bervig and the OFLC Sunday School Team

OFLC Women's Book Club

Calling all ladies!

The next meeting of our book study on "The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry" will be Friday November 11th at 7pm at Wendy Gustafson's home. No worries if you haven't attended the first session or truthfully even if you haven't read the book. Just join us!

Text Wendy for the address 612-812-7376.



Rockford OFLC Women's Group

The women of OFLC have formed a Facebook group to keep in touch. Are you on Facebook, but haven't found us yet? You can find the group under "Rockford OFLC Women's Group" or message Shannon Sand or Wendy Gustafson for an invite to this private group. Feel free to post God sightings, event ideas, or inspirational posts that brighten your day.



**Remember to turn
your clocks back,
November 6th!**

Financial Report

By Amy Krcil



The general fund decreased this month by \$4,063 mostly because of expenses exceeding contributions. Please note that the general fund includes \$21,080 received due to the Employer Retention Credit—which will be used toward an endowment fund.

Because of the reduction of the general fund, this changes the average contribution per family needed to maintain our general fund at \$18,000 and meet expenses. That amount is now \$234 (for about 95 total families in our congregation. Last month it was at \$218.

The September results are \$5,786 of contributions over expenses. This includes a one-time contribution to Nourishing Hope of \$7,741. Contributions and expenses approximate last year if you ignore the large one-time contribution in Nourishing Hope.

	<u>December</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>Inc/(Dec)</u>
Total General Fund Cash Balance	\$ 17,911	\$ 32,167	\$ 14,255
<u>Total Restricted (Designated) Cash</u>			
Nourishing Hope	21,647	45,837	24,190
Building Improvements	20,733	8,912	(11,820)
Mortgage Reserve	7,126	4,883	(2,242)
Ministry	17,859	15,998	(1,861)
Technology	9,606	9,606	-
Other	14,189	14,209	20
Total Designated Cash	\$ 91,159	\$ 99,446	\$ 8,287

<u>Proposed Endowment Fund</u>	<u>September Reported Balance</u>	<u>To Endowment Fund</u>	<u>Revised Fund Balance</u>
Funds from General Fund	\$ 32,167	\$ 21,080	\$ 11,087
Funds from Ministry	15,998	10,000	5,998
Funds from Technology	9,606	5,000	4,606
Funds from Nourishing Hope?	45,837	10,000	35,837
Total Transfer to Endowment		\$ 46,080	

September Results

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Nourishing Hope</u>	<u>Other Designated Funds</u>
Contributions	\$ 12,947	\$ 7,741	\$ 2,763
Expenses	15,180	12	2,474
Net Result	\$ (2,233)	\$ 7,730	\$ 289

Any questions can be directed to accounting@ourfatherschurch.org. You may also call or text me at 612.202.0160.

Council Minutes

By Chandler Drummond

Our Father's Lutheran Church
 Agenda for Leadership Team Meeting
 October 4, 2022

Pam, Amy K, Dan, Shannon, Amy J, Brian, Wendy, Aaron, Tiffany, Chandler

Devotion & Prayer – Pam

Internal Ministries:

Council leadership transition plan

Decisions from existing council members eligible for another term

Chandler – Secretary second term

Amy K – Step back

Amy J - TBD

Tiffany – Step back

Brian – Step back

Shannon - TBD

Dan – Commit to a year

Update on scheduling a meeting with NourishingHOPE

Pam working with Mike Dickman to schedule

Meeting purpose to discuss meet the NH team – introductions and align on overall combined long term visions – working to deepen the relationships

Tuesday Oct 25 @ 7:00 proposed

Space Requests

How should staff handle questions about space availability and cost to rent?

Agree the form is a good topic for the Oct 18th workshop – deeper discussion needed

Intent is for Melissa to be a part of the meeting

Youth and Family Safety/Background Checks – Policy Updates

Separate meeting and review to be scheduled – trying to align on a template

Administrative/Personnel:

Pastoral update

See attached

Items for council consideration

Melissa – accepted a long term substitute position (Mid Oct – Late Jan)

Recommendation is to retain employment – understanding her time here will be shuffled a little

Council Minutes continued

Five Council members who are willing to contact the proposed confirmands

Gwen Distad - Chandler

Evelyn Engebretson - Wendy

Robbie Begin - Dan

Max Edwards - Brian

Peyton Doboszanski - Pam

Finance:

Treasurer update

Bank Documents to be signed by Wendy/Chandler/Pam

Pam is looking into options for a possible future endowment fund

Possibility for a need for another "Give to the Max" day

Need to find new ways to have the giving conversation with our congregation – history shows if we stay this course, we will continue to be right on the budget line with very little growth

Other:

Updates on upcoming events

October 15th - Fall Festival/Trunk or Treat

Short on volunteers for games – please contact Brittini if you are willing to help

Could use more "trunks" – never too many – all are welcome

December 3rd - Crow River Christmas

Amy to sign up for a tree

Reaching out to the fire department for the supplies – estimating 300 people

Constitution Update (attached)

Submitted to Synod – 2022 version was to be used – Updates made and resubmitted

Building lights

John reached out to discuss lighting – timers have been set and proper switches have been identified

Parking Lot

Chandler and Brian to look at options – Checking school board minutes and John to see

Devotion Schedule:

November – Erin

December – Aaron

January –

Upcoming working session meeting schedule:

Nov 15, 2022 07:00 PM – Topic: Crow River Christmas

Dec 20, 2022 07:00 PM – Topic: 2023 Budget and Annual Meeting Prep

Jan 17, 2023 07:00 PM – Topic: Finalizing 2023 Budget and Annual Meeting Prep

Council meeting schedule:

Nov 1, 2022 07:00 PM

Dec 6, 2022 07:00 PM

Jan 3, 2023 07:00 PM

Engage & Confirm

Engage & Confirm has begun! Kick off night was 9/28.

We enjoyed cupcakes & ice cream and talked about summer and what our evenings together would look like. We had our 1st service project in Oct. The kids of E&C helped set up for our community event, Trunk Fest! We unloaded hay bales, made s'more kits, blew up balloons, set up table and chairs, organized decorations and a few other things. Brittni Bronczyk was impressed with the pace at which these young people could complete projects!! We also helped to serve food at Trunk Fest. Thank you to Jody Bryant & Kathy Lunderby for helping to set up and serve with the kids and their families. We will finish off Oct. with pizza and game night.

We can't wait to share with the OFLC congregation all the fun planned for November!

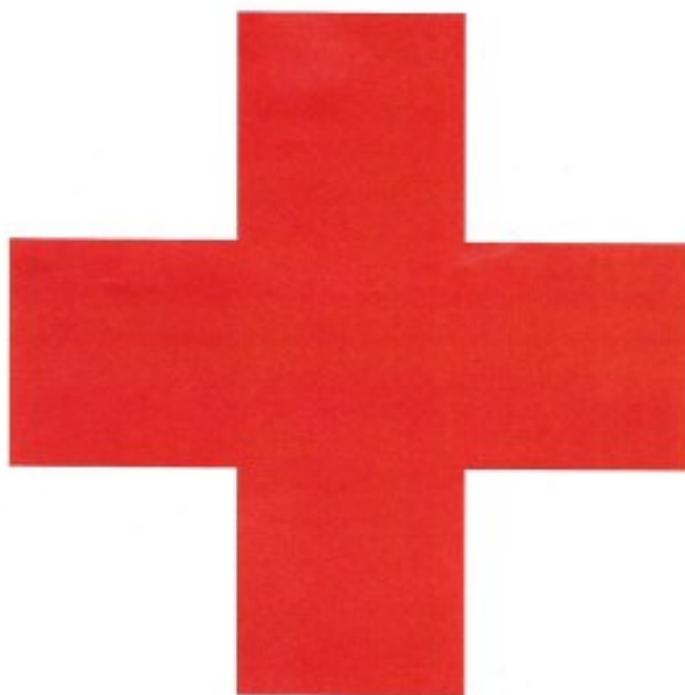
Here are a few pictures taken in October of the group.



Give blood.

Every 2 seconds someone
in the U.S. needs blood.

American Red Cross



Blood Drive
Rockford Community

Our Father's Lutheran Church

3903 Gilbert Ave SE - Rockford

Tuesday, November 15, 2022
12:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org
enter Sponsor Code: Rockford MN



Scan to be directed to
RapidRelease



**Download the Blood Donor App today. Get your digital
donor card, schedule your next appointment, track your
lifetime donations, view your blood pressure, and follow
your donation on its way to a hospital.**



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an appointment.

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | redcrossblood.org | Download the Blood Donor App

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11/15/22 10:00 AM - 11/15/22 6:30 PM - 3903 GILBERT AVE SE - ROCKFORD, MN 56108 - 1-800-733-2767



With each passing month, our blessings are multiplied. This community we are in, continuously shows up in miraculous ways. Mom's Club served at this month's packing, they came with their smiles and their babies! It filled the air with joy and love. In October, with the help of our volunteers, we packed nearly 20,000 pounds of food into 560 boxes. These boxes were handed out in five different locations, serving people from 72 different zip codes. The boxes will feed more than 1,500 people. Please join us for our November distribution.

Send an email to Brittni to find a way to contribute your unique talents.

brittni@ourfatherschurch.org.

To sign up for November's distribution:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040b4eaca928abf49-november>

Donations can be made at OFLC or Paypal:

https://paypal.me/NourishingHope?country.x=US&locale.x=en_US

www.ourfatherschurch.org/nourishing-hope.html

Nourishing Hope Pictures





NourishingHOPE

Free Fresh Produce and Dairy

Monday, November 14th
4:00pm – 5:00pm

Boxes of fresh produce and dairy products will be available for drive through pickup on a first come, first serve basis at the following locations:

Corcoran

St. Thomas Catholic Church
20000 County Road 10
Corcoran, MN 55340

Delano

Light of Christ Lutheran Church
3976 County Line Road SE
Delano, MN 55328

Rockford

Our Father's Lutheran
3903 Gilbert Ave SE
Rockford, MN 55373

Buffalo

Buffalo Covenant Church
1601 Highway 25 North
Buffalo, MN 55313

Hanover

Influence Church @ City Hall
11250 5th Street NE
Hanover, MN 55341

For assistance locating a specific site or for questions, please contact us at nourishinghope.oflc@gmail.com or Facebook Messenger.

NourishingHOPE is a ministry of Our Father's Lutheran Church, in cooperation with four area churches. Our vision is to relieve area food insecurity and promote wellness in mind, body, and spirit for people East-Central Wright County. For information on you or your organization partnering with NourishingHOPE, please visit our website at www.ourfatherschurch.org/nourishing-hope.html

Are you able to volunteer to unpack produce, pack boxes or distribute food out? There are many shifts to choose from!!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040b4eaca928abf49-november>



Prayer Requests:

Do you have a prayer concern? **Contact:** Shirley Bolstad, pbolstad@aol.com

Would a palm cross or prayer shawl comfort you or a family member?

Contact: melissa@Ourfatherschurch.org

Newsletter Deadline:

Deadline for articles, photos or announcements is the 15th of each month.

Send to:

Melissa@ourfatherschurch.org

Office Hours:

Brittni & Melissa: by appointment

Pastor Aaron: Tues & Wed.

Please call:

Phone: 763-477-6300

Website: www.ourfatherschurch.org

Staff Contacts:

Pastor Aaron Fuller: pastoraaron@ourfatherschurch.org

Office Admin: Melissa Ungaro melissa@ourfatherschurch.org

Community Outreach: Brittni Bronczyk brittni@ourfatherschurch.org

Music/Bell Choir Director: Tammy Jarvi tjarvi@charter.net

Council Members:

Tiffany Distad, Chandler Drummond, Pam Hoekstra, Amy Jacobson, Amy Krcil, Shannon Hunter, Dan Schiller, Brian Walton, Erin Smith, Jody Bryant, & Wendy Gustafson

Executive Team Members:

Chandler Drummond, Aaron Fuller, Pam Hoekstra, Amy Krcil

WORSHIP
Sunday's 9:00am

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

[https://
www.ourfatherschurch.org/](https://www.ourfatherschurch.org/)

We're on YouTube!

Watch from the comfort of home. Visit us at:

[https://www.youtube.com/
channel/
UCePt4KWmjvq1M7vPbl-
jUfeA?view_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCePt4KWmjvq1M7vPbl-jUfeA?view_as=subscriber)