



AUGSBURG LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Congregational Council	Page 2
Standing Committees	Page 3
Pastor's Report	Page 4
Congregational President	Page 5-7
Altar Guild	Page 8
Cemetery Committee	Page 9
Memorial Committee	Page 10
Parish Life	Page 11
Parish Statistics	Page 12
Preschool Report	Page 13
Property Committee	Page 14
Social Ministry	Page 15
Evangelism Committee	Page 16-17
Stewardship and Finance	Page 18
Worship and Music	Page 19
Christian Education	Page 20
Operating Fund	Page 21

Augsburg Lutheran Church

ELCA

100 N. Mineral Springs Road

Porter, Indiana 46304

(219) 926-1658

Congregational Council

Officers:

		<u>Phone No.</u>
Pastor	Rev. Erik Bernth	926-1658
President	Mary Klein	921-0561
Vice President	Caroline Ward	926-8612
Secretary	Karen Riefe	241-6142
Treasurer	Robert Ton	926-5660

Members and Committee Assignments:

Christian Education	Kaitlin Ferguson	771-7923
Evangelism	Don Freese	926-6262
Pre-K Liaison	Jennifer Demitroff	508-6037
Parish Life	Stephanie Crook	299-9443
Property	Dennis Brubaker Brian Gustafson	508-4910 929-5891
Social Ministry	Jim Fant Jim Babcock	926-3517 926-3100
Stewardship & Finance	Caroline Ward	926-8612
Worship and Music	Jennifer Demitroff	508-6037

Appointed Member Positions:

Archivist/Historian	Jean Buckley	926-4095
Financial Secretary	Brian Ton	395-1734

Church Staff:

Pastor	Rev. Erik Bernth
Church Secretary	Tara Hodgson
Organist / Vocal Choir	Jane DeVries
Bells / Choirs	Ann Ballinger
Youth Group Director	Ann Ballinger
Pre-K Director	Lorene Schaudt
Custodian	Tara Hodgson

Revised 10/28/21



AUGSBURG LUTHERAN CHURCH

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT for 2022 FOR CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND POSITIONS NOVEMBER CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL: - 3-year term, max 2 consecutive terms

Term Ends	Until Dec. 2022	Until Dec. 2023	Until Dec. 2024
Travis Dunlap	Caroline Ward	Dennis Brubaker	Stephanie Crook
Jim Babcock	Karen Riefe	Kaitlin Ferguson	Jim Babcock
Jim Fant	Jennifer Dimitroff	Mary Klein	Jim Fant
Brian Gustafson	Don Freese	Lyle Munn	Brian Gustafson

AUDIT COMMITTEE: - 3-year term

Term Ends	Until Dec. 2022	Until Dec. 2023	Until Dec. 2024
Shirley Freese	Debra Gruzosky	Jim Fant	Shirley Freese

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE: - 2-year term, max 3 consecutive terms

Term Ends	Until Dec. 2022	Until Dec. 2023	Until Dec. 2024
Mara Becking	Lorene Schaudt	Matt Wesley	Mara Becking
Heidi Babcock	Jim Fant	Brian Gustafson	Heidi Babcock

CEMETERY COMMITTEE: - 2-year term, max 3 consecutive terms

Term Ends	Until Dec. 2022	Until Dec. 2023	Until Dec. 2024
Mel Bigger	Jim Babcock	Keith Gesse	Mel Bigger

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: - 2-year term, 1 outgoing CC member

Term Ends	Until Dec. 2022	Until Dec. 2023
Bob Bergren		Travis Dunlap
Don Freese	Don Freese	

CONFERENCE/SYNOD DELEGATES: - 2022 (Indianapolis, IN)

Female Rep. _____ Male Rep _____

REPORT OF THE PASTOR

Friends in Christ:

One year later and unfortunately we are still having our lives impacted by Covid 19. Rather than focus on what we are still unable to do, I think it's helpful to focus on what we have been able to do, especially compared with last year. For starters, we transitioned from monthly distributions of Holy Communion in the parking lot, to outdoor worship in person in the early summer. Later in the summer, we resumed worship indoors, essentially doing what we did pre-pandemic without only a few alterations. Later in the fall, we added back our Wednesday morning liturgy. While we are not back to where we were in 2019, we have made significant strides relative to where things were prior to the pandemic. I know many people are understandably uncomfortable gathering in person, especially when we see case numbers spike with increased transmission, yet we are committed to maintaining in-person worship barring some unexpected change either to the virus or to the effectiveness of the available vaccines. We intend to offer worship via our YouTube channel for the foreseeable future as it's a good way to connect with others who can't be present in church.

I want to especially highlight the fact that as long as mask wearing is deemed necessary in large gatherings we will keep our practice in place. Since returning indoors we have maintained 100% mask wearing compliance which is greatly appreciated. I know I would prefer not to mask personally, but we are here to make our space as safe as possible for all people. Hard as it may be to believe, there will be a time when we won't need masks or to worry so much about distancing; this pandemic will end and the disease will settle into a more predicable pattern that won't necessitate the measures currently necessary. Unfortunately, I don't have a crystal ball to predict that time, but it will happen!

Throughout this time, we have been able to maintain our support of local assistance organizations such as First Contact and the Westchester Township Food Pantry; we have also continued our support of the larger church through benevolent contributions to the Indiana/Kentucky Synod of the ELCA. Another area we have continued to provide ministry is to Lutheran World Relief which has seen no decrease in our support at all. Finally, we have been able to restart our Pre-K ministry this past year, and enrollment for the coming fall looks to be very encouraging already.

The take away message is clear: despite having to deal with the worst international health emergency in at least a generation, Augsburg Church has remained resilient, and has been able to offer its core ministries during this time. I want to thank all of you for your support, both financially and in the other various ways you have stepped up. It's worth repeating that without all you have done and continue to do, we wouldn't be in the position we are today.

Finally, I want to thank the outgoing Church Council for their steadfast support and guidance this past year. Particularly, a "shout-out" to the Council officers, who remained in their respective positions an extra year to get us back to some sense of normal operations. May God continue to bless this community of faith as in the past, and may the year 2022 bring us greater blessings and more opportunities to serve others in the name of Jesus The Lord.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor Bernth

Augsburg Annual Report 2021 Congregational Council President

Augsburg wishes to extend a thank you to the 2021 Congregational Council for their leadership and service during the past year. The focus this year started notably different than it had in recent years with the goal to simply return to worship in lieu of the COVID-19 pandemic impact lingering from 2020, with persistent intent to make progressive and incremental changes towards normalcy as we know it not only as a congregation but also community.

The 2021 Congregational Council members included:

	Travis Dunlap	President	
	Mary Klein	Vice-president	
	Jim Burge	Secretary	
	Bob Ton	Treasurer	
Brian Gustafson	Dennis Brubaker	Kaitlin Ferguson	Jim Fant
Caroline Ward	Lyle Munn	Jennifer Dimitroff	Jim Babcock

2021 highlights include:

1. Our vision is to increase involvement, communication and growth within our Church in making it a vibrant place for all who join us. We strive to do this through various standing committee activities. The standing committees need your help to “run” the Church. For each committee to be effective they need to establish a team of individuals who are willing to work together in service. Stewardship for example, besides providing the financial support for the Church, also includes providing time and talent to serve God. Evangelism and Social Ministry for example, focus on supporting some of the externalities beyond the physical walls of the church building or our congregation. These activities will be highlighted throughout this report.
2. Council extends a thank you for everyone's patience, commitment and generosity in such challenging circumstances! We've taken a rather cautious or conservative approach in keeping health and safety of the entire congregation in mind throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It was with heavy hearts we had made the decision to enter what ended up being over a year moratorium, as we optimistically waited to recognize when the right time to resume in person worship would come - Memorial Day 2021 was that time. While we started outdoors and migrated back into the sanctuary, our goal was to be able to get the entire congregation, plus visitors, back to and remain in worship while navigating a fluid situation. The abundant input with the unity of our congregation in mind made possible resuming vast majority of what we're accustomed to relative to worship as a whole and nurturing our faith this year.

Thank you to all that helped with some of the creative and alternative accommodations this past year, including:

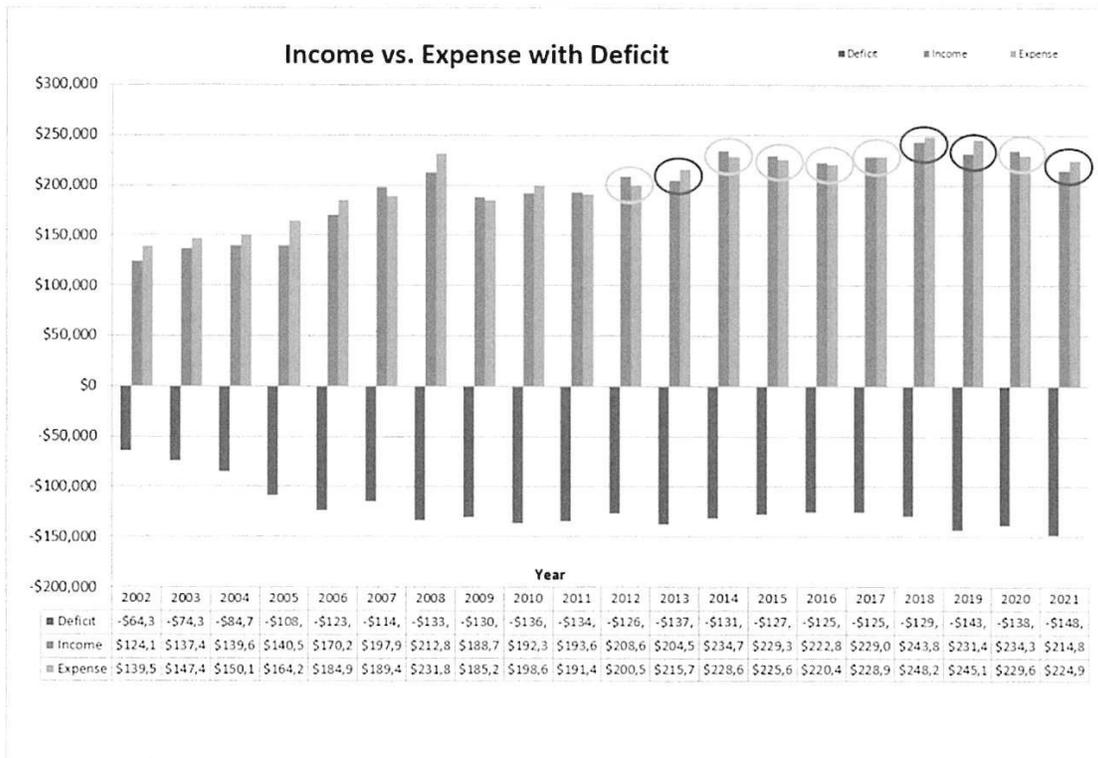
- Memorial Day @ Burstrom
- Outdoor worship in the grove & cont'd virtual service via *YouTube*
- Christmas program
- First Contact
- Westchester Food Pantry
- Lutheran World Relief

3. Financially, we finished 2021 with income short of expenses by \$10,175.

Actual Income	\$214,812.24
Actual Expenses	<u>\$224,986.83</u>
Difference	-\$10,174.59

The following graph illustrates the past twenty years' income, expenses and net deficit. The income has now exceeded expenses nine (9) of those twenty (20) years, which allows us to operate in the *black*. Unfortunately, 2021 expenses exceeded income by \$10,175, despite expenses being well under budget and reduced from prior years. It's worth noting, that we were actually financially in the *black* until month of Oct2021. This is a slide back from 2020 in which income exceeded expenses \$4,746. We have been able to stay financially solvent through the hard years by dipping into our own funds, or what is now a net deficit of \$148,639, which has been relatively stable for the past ten (10) years or better while also being cognizant of expenses where appropriate.

Our thankful commitments in faith have allowed us as a congregation to have made impactful progress despite financial headwinds and the pandemic, while continuing wonderful ministries efforts. The congregations continued financial contributions despite the economic uncertainty has been a tremendous impact in 2021 while maintaining operations and ministries in stride!



4. The *Walking in the Light* Capital Campaign is still active in the 5th year of five (5) years planned, granted we'll likely be near seven (7) years with respect to schedule shift required beyond our control. We have completed nearly all of the Phase 1 & 2 ("A & B" priority) planned improvements totaling approximately \$44,400 including the Sanctuary, Narthex, Chapel, restrooms, lower level education wing (Pre-K) and lighting in the fellowship hall. Due to the generous giving we have been able to proceed without securing a loan to date as planned, hence saving money approved. Additionally, we have been able to complete progress under budgeted estimates by approximately \$1,000. Pledges and contributions are approximately 80-85% of required (cumulative) to support finishing projects. We will resume improvements in 2022 as possible that were put on hold in 2020-2021, as we have estimated \$30,000 of the project to complete including lighting in the upper level education wing, parsonage and additional at Burstrom.

Thank you to the Council and Congregation who supported with exemplary sense of compassion and resilience in 2021!

Sincerely in Christ,

M. Travis Dunlap

ALTAR GUILD

The members of the Altar Guild prepare the altar and worship area for worship and occasional services. We care for the articles that are used in the worship services such as: changing paraments and vestments, preparing for communion and baptisms, replacing candles, dusting, and checking that the pews are clean and in order. We help the Cross-bearers prepare for their duties prior to the services. Following services, we clean the communion materials and return them to their storage places. We also take care of the altar flowers for the families who may have sick or shut-in members.

Most of the preparations for worship are done on Fridays or Saturdays.

The Altar Guild dedicates its efforts and ministry to the Glory of God.

We invite all members of the congregation to join us in this very purposeful part of worship in our church. Ask any Altar Guild member about joining us!

This past year we continued to change paraments when necessary in preparation for the services.

The Altar Guild would like to extend a special thank you to Don and Shirley Freese, Travis Dunlap, and Kaitlin Ferguson for all their help in preparing the church for Advent and Christmas.

The following are current member of the Altar Guild:

Karen Adcock

Heidi Babcock

Kaitlin Ferguson

Debra Gruzosky

Heather Harwood

Sarah Olson

Sharon Robey

Pam Stawitcke

Caroline Ward

Helen Ward

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Augsburg –

There was one burial and one cremation this year.

No cemetery lots were sold this year.

All the flags and artificial flowers were removed in the fall. The torn and faded flags were taken to the VFW to be disposed of in an honorable way.

The new grave was covered with top soil, raked, and seeded in the spring.

Small sticks and limbs were picked up.

In the late fall, graves with artificial flowers and dead ones were removed for winter.

Burstrom –

No burials or cremations this year.

In late fall, graves with dead and artificial flowers were removed for the winter.

All the flags were removed (torn and faded) for the winter and taken to the VFW to be disposed of in an honorable way.

A large tree up on the hill came down, was cut up and hauled away. A big thanks to those church members who worked hard on this project.

Another big thank you to the church members that worked on the chapel roof repairing the hole, just before winter set in.

This Report submitted by Committee Members:

Mel Bigger

Keith Gesse

Jim Babcock

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

The mission of the Memorial Committee is to carefully and prayerfully consider the purposes for which the memorial donations will be used by the congregation. The intentions of the donors of the memorials are important factors in making decisions, as are the appropriate uses of the gifts. The honor paid in memory of a departed loved one is a precious thing for those making the donation, and this makes any decisions very important and are not taken lightly.

During the calendar year 2021, there have not been major disbursements for the purchase of memorial items from monies that are currently in the Memorial Fund. As needs arise for important worship purposes, some non-designated money has been used in the past, after reasonable discussion has taken place.

At the time when a memorial gift is to be considered, there are opportunities to discuss that with Pastor or a member of the Committee, whose members' names are available in the church office.

Respectfully submitted by the Memorial Committee

PARISH LIFE

The Parish Life Committee encourages and promotes fellowship and interaction among all Congregation members and guests. We implement dinners, seasonal and special events, picnics, coffee hours, among other activities. As in years past, we support a number of activities including the hanging and removing of the greens, the corn roast annual church picnic in August, Halloween party, VBS support, and Connections, a frequent fellowship hour between services. Some past events include spring and fall church clean up, brunch for first confirmands, Wednesday Lenten potluck dinners before midweek evening service during Lent, cookie sales, fried chicken sales, trips to local baseball games, and game night for families. Funeral luncheons, organized by Marianne Ahrendt and Lorene Schaudt have provided generous and comforting meals after funeral services. During the time of the Pandemic, the Parish Life Committee has participated with Council Members to help develop and maintain policy for safety in our Congregational Life.

Yours in Christ,
Mary Klein, Chairman

PARISH STATISTICS

Baptisms –1

Renee Jo Ramoska

12/5/2021

Confirmed – 6

Emma Adcock

Gage Adcock

Elsa Leady

Sophie Leady

Katie Rehtorik

Max Shield

Sophie Ton

First Communion – 0

Marriages—0

Deaths –2

Doris Swanson 1/25/2021

Katrina (Katy) Hoagland Cutlip 1/7/2021

PRESCHOOL REPORT

Pre-K classes resumed in the fall of 2021 after being shut down for the entire 2020-2021 school year.

Enrollment for 2021-2022 was down from pre-pandemic levels, however, enrollment for 2022-23 is already encouraging. There were no staff resignations. Tuition increases of \$20/two-day class and \$25/three-day class and three-day extended class was approved by the church council for next year.

Enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year is as follows:

2 Day Class - 11

3 Day and 3 Day Extended - 16

The 3 Day Classes were combined this year with Mrs. Budzius and Mrs Mussatto co-teaching.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The Property Committee continues to support the mission & vision of Augsburg through the day-to-day up-keep of the church's assets. In addition, the committee continues implementing the items of the "Walking in the Light" Capital Campaign.

The "Walking in the Light" Capital Campaign LED light fixtures for the second-floor education wing, Luther Lounge, Sunday school and choir room have been ordered. They will be installed this spring.

The H&A systems for the sanctuary required the installation of one new circulation pump and remote thermostat including reprogramming of the system thermostats. One of the units has an intermittent fault. This condition continues to be monitored and will require a service call soon.

The pre-k "blue room" and hallway have been repainted. This included modification of the heating and air pipe chase. The closet area was modified into a reading area nook. Many of the floor tiles needed to be reglued due to water damage caused from a damaged downspout last year.

A section of the Parsonage gutter and fascia required replacement due to ice damage last winter.

The Parsonage garage fascia and gable ends were replaced with aluminum and steel material. The squirrels had again damaged the fascia and were getting into the garage.

A section of the kitchen roof/fascia was repaired due to wind damage.

Burstrom Chapel required a temporary roof repair prior to winter. Next year the cedar shingle roof will need to be replaced and repairs need to be done to the exterior of the tower. A detailed list of critical repairs is being developed for fund raising efforts.

Thanks to the many volunteers that have helped during the completion of the above projects. Special thanks to Rob Ahrendt and Jack Anderson for their continued attention to maintenance at Burstrom Chapel.

The committee will continue with the implementation of the Walking in the Light projects and the Burstrom Chapel repairs as funding becomes available.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Gesse

Brian Gustafson

Dennis Brubaker

Travis Dunlap

Tara Hodgson

Don Freese

SOCIAL MINISTRY

The Social Ministry Committee seeks to share our blessings with those who are in need. Those needs are met in the form of items that represent answers to prayers for necessities and for life-changing opportunities.

Augsburg supports persons in our local area through financial donations to First Contact, and through gifts of nourishment to the Westchester Food Pantry.

We support people who live far from us by contributing to Lutheran World Relief.

During the season of Lent, we continue to collect combs, toothbrushes, bars of soap, and nail clippers to be wrapped in towels to create Personal Care Kits for the victims of poverty, mistreatment, and war.

Throughout the year, Augsburg's people donate school supplies that include rulers, pencils, pens, scissors, crayons, pencil sharpeners, and erasers. These School Kits are sent to international destinations by Lutheran World Relief, where they are given to girls and boys who are enabled to attend schools and be educated,

God constantly blesses us, and our mission is to thank God by passing on some of those blessings to our needy brothers and sisters in Christ.

God has blessed Augsburg by giving our congregation a great many generous persons who donate not only the material items, but also their giving of time and effort with loving spirits, to make this mission possible.

Submitted in grateful appreciation by the Social Ministry Committee

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

Duneland Church Outreach Project

The purpose of this project was two-fold. Firstly, I wanted to identify how other churches, and denominations, were handling the COVID pandemic and subsequent attempts to return to normal life. Secondly, to survey those same congregations to see what, if any, outstanding needs may exist in the Duneland community whereby two, or more, congregations working together might better address compared to each church unilaterally working with limited results.

Churches contacted: I contacted primarily mainstream denominations of similar size to Augsburg:

Porter United Methodist, Chesterton United Methodist, St Johns United Church,
Bethlehem Lutheran ELCA, St Paul's Lutheran Missouri Synod, St Francis Episcopal

Overall, the results were mixed. All that received my call were very willing to share their experiences with COVID and share their current situation. Much of that was obtained from the front office staff. As to the Pastors responding to a discussion about the secondary objective to discuss the needs of the community – the results were mixed. Some pastors were very enthusiastic and engaging, (Pastor Heather -Chesterton United Methodist, and Pastor Arron at St Johns) and others have not return calls after repeated attempts. The COVID summary is below. As to opening a dialogue about the needs of the Duneland community, there is a desire on the part of Pastors Heather and Arron to meet in a round table discussion in the coming weeks to explore three objectives:

After discussions can we find a consensus of the communities most pressing need(s)?

Can we agree on a pragmatic solution(s) that are conducive for multiple congregations to work effectively on jointly?

If yes to the first two, then set a date to return together to address how to accomplish such goals, gain input from each participating council and develop a road map.

One topic that surfaced was hunger in Duneland. Pastor Heather indicated that the NWI Food Bank Coalition has recently elevated Chesterton/Duneland to an “extreme” hunger need category. Duneland had never been in that category before.

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

COVID:

Summary... all congregations contacted are back to in person services. Several started back at, or before, Easter 2021. One, United Methodist Chesterton, have been back since summer of 2020. United Methodist in Chesterton offers two services. All others currently have a single service which use to be two services before COVID. All congregations contacted indicated attendance numbers are down across the board. I did not get into financial standings. This is a different outcome compared to the 1918 pandemic which saw a strong increase post pandemic.

Masks... range from mandated (United Methodist Porter) to optional at most other churches.

Action Items:

I indicated I would report my findings to the Augsburg Council. I also indicated that if the Augsburg Council wished to move forward with an initial round table discussion that I would notify the other churches accordingly. I would suggest that if we do, that we host the first meeting to at least see if there is anything we may wish to pursue.

Jim Burge

Evangelism Committee- Chair

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

Last year was AGAIN a year like no other we have seen in our lifetime. We started outdoor services and were finally able to bring our worship inside. I was not sure how our finances were going to be met AGAIN but this congregation stepped up AGAIN. You continued the pledge you made in 2019 for 2020 and into 2021.

The most important part for us is the consistent cash flow to the church. Did you know that you can contribute electronically? There is a link on our website to get you there:

<https://www.augsburglutheran.org/> Many banks offer electronic contributions as well. You can, also, mail in your contribution.

As a commitment to you, I have kept you informed monthly of our financial status. Some months were better than other months. For obvious reasons, our expenses were still lower than budgeted. I am beyond grateful that this congregation has been sending in your donations continually. Due to this support, we have been able to continue our ministries to First Contact (also known as Noisy Offering) and the Westchester Food Pantry. These organizations need our support to help those within our communities.

Thank you to all for your contributions. God Bless!

Sincerely in Christ,

Caroline Ward

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Hymn selections made for services during meetings held throughout the year. Meetings attended by Pastor Bernth and Jane DeVries.

Some musical selections played by bell choir were selected as favorites of choir members. Additional favorite hymn recommendations welcome from other members of the congregation.

Bell choir is always welcoming new members! We welcome all ages and ability levels. Training offered as requested.

New assisting ministers, lectors, and bell choir members participated in services.

Additional new lectors, assisting ministers, greeters and ushers, and communion assistants are needed. Training can be provided.

Respectfully submitted,

Worship and Music Committee

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION REPORT

Sunday School attendance for pre-kindergarten through 5th grade ranged from 5-13 kids. We are using Children's Worship Bulletins (www.childrensbulletins.com) as the main curriculum, plus various free online resources for crafts and game ideas.

Virtual Sunday School occurred on Sunday mornings at 9:30 via Zoom. Sunday School materials were passed out at Communion once a month, along with using online resources in the Zoom meetings. The videos, activities, and crafts were also available on the Augsburg Sunday School webpage. There were about 9-13 participants each week. Pastor joined in occasionally to answer questions that the kids have and to deliver a children's lesson. Sunday School resumed in-person learning on Sunday, September 12, and we are continuing to meet each Sunday at 9:00am during the Eucharist.

The Confirmation class had also adapted to a virtual setting, also using Zoom, on Wednesday evenings. The confirmation class resumed in-person learning in the fall. On October 31st, the following people were Confirmed:

Gage Adcock
Emma Adcock
Rebecca Adcock
Max Shield
Elsa Leady
Sophie Leady
Katie Rehtorik

The new Confirmation class has resumed using the Zoom platform for instruction on Wednesday evenings.

Vacation Bible School was held in person during the week of July 19th. We had an "Olympic" theme. VBS was held entirely outdoors, with 7 participants. The Kona Ice truck came and cooled off the children on the last day of VBS (in lieu of a program and pizza party).

The Christmas Pageant was also held in person this year on December 19th. Nine Sunday School students participated.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaitlin Ferguson

OPERATING SUMMARY

1/30/2022

Operating Summary Report - 2021
1/1/2021 through 12/31/2021 Using Operating Budget 2021

Page 1

Category	1/1/2021 Actual	- Budget	12/31/2021 Difference
INCOME	214,812.24	273,073.04	-58,260.80
Contributions	206,333.52	261,727.00	-55,393.48
Miscellaneous Income	8,478.72	11,346.04	-2,867.32
EXPENSES	224,986.83	273,072.92	48,086.09
Administration	11,346.64	12,862.00	1,515.36
Benevolence	19,175.65	26,172.00	6,996.35
Building	25,457.43	38,999.92	13,542.49
Education	52.50	2,200.00	2,147.50
Evangelism	0.00	800.00	800.00
Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	500.00	500.00
Parish Life	147.65	500.00	352.35
Pastor Benefits	44,609.98	47,089.00	2,479.02
Payroll Expenses	109,051.28	119,900.00	10,848.72
Stewardship	819.13	2,499.96	1,680.83
Utilities	11,467.30	13,500.00	2,032.70
Vacation Supply	0.00	2,700.00	2,700.00
Worship-Music	2,859.27	5,350.04	2,490.77
Net Difference:	-10,174.59	0.12	-10,174.71

Dura Brusosky 2-6-2022
Shirley Fuese 2/6/22
Johns + Jan 2/6/22