



BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2021 Annual Report



WORSHIP



GROW



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CARE



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MINUTES FROM 2020 ANNUAL MEETING

Liana Thibault, Council Secretary

Minutes submitted by Lisa Meetze (secretary at the time of the meeting)

BLC Annual Congregational Meeting – 10.25.2020

BLC held its first “Virtual” annual meeting on Sunday, October 25th. While the majority of the participants joined via Zoom, nine members participated in person in the BLC social hall. This approach allowed members without access to Zoom to fully participate in our annual meeting. 96 voting members of BLC were able to participate. This represents a significant increase in participation when compared to the last several years.

After opening with prayer, Pastor Amy gave a brief pastoral update.

The next agenda items included election of council candidates and BLC members to serve as voting members for the next synod assembly.

Mike Higgins and Andy Gates were elected to their second terms on council. Glenda Lockard and Liana Thibault were elected to first terms.

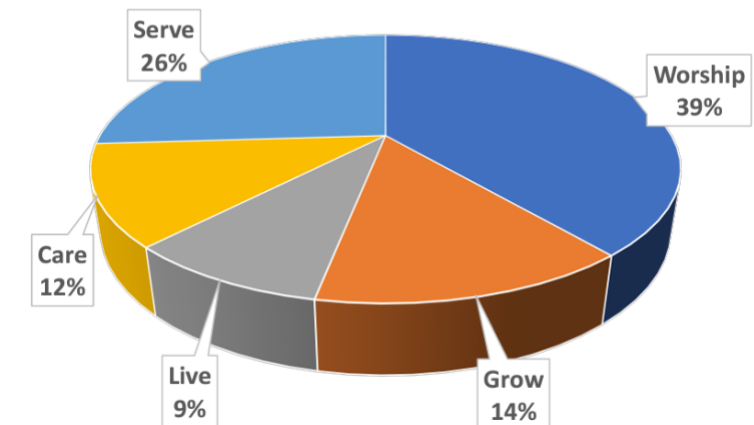
Marcy Adams, Marsha Gerhardt, and Lisa Rosenbauer were elected to be voting members at synod assembly. Sherry Cook was elected as an alternate.

BLC treasurer, Alan Sleeman presented an overview of the church’s finances. BLC ended fiscal year 2020 with a deficit of \$2540 with total expenses for the year at \$436,797. This solid financial position in spite of the impact of the pandemic and \$10,671 of unplanned expenses due to Covid-19 is only possible because of the continued stewardship of the members of BLC.

The proposed spending plan authorizes BLC to spend up to \$429,514 for fiscal year 2021.

This year’s annual meeting included a narrative overview of the proposed spending plan. Spending was broken down by the five core ministry areas as follows:

BLC 2021 Spending Plan



Highlights from 2020 for each core ministry were presented along with four short videos from BLC members.

Following the narrative budget presentation, the spending plan was approved by a vote of 91 for and 3 against.

A planned vote on updates to the BLC constitution was tabled. We learned very recently that one of the changes requires two votes by the congregation for ratification. The second vote must take place at an annual meeting. We will use one of the 2021 forums to conduct the first vote on these changes and vote on final ratification at next year's annual meeting. This delay will have no impact on the business of the church.

Bob Stock presented an update on the planning for BLC's 100th anniversary. The start date remains fluid, but we do have Sunday, August 8th reserved to formally celebrate our 100th anniversary at the outdoor pavilion located at BLC Plank Road, our "Parent" church.

Pastor Amy closed the meeting with prayer.

Feedback on the this first virtual annual meeting has been positive. Council will review the process and look for ways to make our next virtual meeting even better.

Slides from the annual meeting can be viewed by following the link provided in email ahead of the meeting. If you desire a hard copy of the slides or the church's annual report, please contact the church office.

COUNCIL NOMINEES FOR 2022

Lisa Rosenbauer

Lisa Rosenbauer has been a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church for many years. This will be her second term on Church Council, should she be elected. She has served BLC in many ways in the past; as Usher Team Captain, Assisting Minister, and church choir member, and is currently in the Dulcimer Group and Chancel Bells. Lisa looks at the future of BLC and sees challenges and blessings. She hopes to serve on Church Council to meet all of these head on! Lisa is newly retired and trusts this will give her the time and opportunity to serve in other capacities as well.



Antionette "Toni" Thompson

Toni grew up in Wayland and moved to Rochester when she graduated from SUNY Buffalo. Her working career was in the insurance industry. Toni has been a member of BLC since 2016.

Prior to joining BLC, Toni and her husband, Jerry, attended First Congregational United Church of Christ for 30 years, where they were active participants. Toni served on the Missions Committee, the Worship Committee and was a member of Council. She also managed the annual antique show twice and the annual rummage sale five times.

Since joining BLC, Toni has been an active member. She participates by washing communion glasses, providing bread for Communion, and serving coffee hour. She has been on the Missions and Social Concerns Committee, the Worship Committee and is the Core Ministry Team Leader.

Aderyn Gantner

Aderyn Gantner is in 9th grade at Minerva Deland School in Fairport. She has been attending BLC her whole life. Aderyn enjoys reading and hanging out with friends.



CO-PASTORS' REPORT

Pastor Abigail Zang Hoffman & Pastor Amy Walter-Peterson

Over the last two years, we reflected on ministry in the context of a time of “dramatic and unprecedented change in the Christian church in North America.” In writing this year’s report, it’s apparent that at some point what we thought of as a **season** that would eventually return to **normal**, became a new reality that marks a shift in how we do ministry now.

In living through this shift, the Bethlehem community is in tune with other churches, as well as individuals, organizations, and businesses, which have been changed by what we have lived through and experienced over the last two years. Like all of those around us who recognize this change, we are “*holding up pieces of our lives, and asking what parts we want to keep and what parts we can let go of. We are asking questions about what really matters*” (Rev. Natalia Terfa). As the people of God at Bethlehem who are guided by a particular vision of ministry, the question we are asking is: ***given who and where we are today, what does it look like to live our vision to equip all children of God to follow Jesus?***

Over the last year, we’ve carried out this vision in a shifting landscape, trying to discern new ways to equip households to live out their faith in their homes, while also providing ongoing Sunday worship leadership that connects us to our daily lives and experiences, as well as each other. This work is always grounded in our worship life and is often explored through our seasonal themes.

Watch for the Light: Advent 2020 – Nine months into the pandemic and facing a long winter with little opportunity for connection, we focused on light for our Advent and Christmas season. As a community of faith, we marked the season of Advent – a time when we focus on waiting and watching in the life of the church – by listening to God’s Word, inviting each other to share stories and testifying to the Light we saw around us, and bringing the Light of Christ into our homes by offering Advent activity bags and Advent logs to households. Each Sunday in worship, we watched as one household in our community shared as their family lit the Advent log in their home reminding us that we were connected through our shared experience during this time.

(Virtual) Lessons and Carols for Christmas Eve – Even as we grieved the loss of not being able to gather to hear the story of Jesus’ birth and sing the carols that we know so well, members of the BLC community came together virtually on Christmas Eve. People of all ages recorded videos of themselves sharing music of the season or recording the Christmas story. Even Santa joined us by Zoom! In our homes with the people we could safely gather with, we lit our candles, turned out the lights, and sang *Silent Night*, remembering again the lonely, isolated place that Jesus first appeared.

We Wish to See Jesus – A year into this pandemic marked a sad anniversary for many of us. Like ancient visitors to Jerusalem, we, too, wished to see Jesus. We longed to see him in our sacred spaces and shared sacraments, but by the season of Lent, many of us had been separated for nearly a year. During Lent, we examined the places where Jesus appeared in Scripture and asked where those places might be in our world today.

Created for Community - During Lent we also partnered with ELCA congregations in the Genesee Finger Lakes Conference for midweek Lenten worship. Five congregations, including Bethlehem, recorded Holden Evening Prayer to share across the conference. In addition, each week pastors provided worship leadership and an opportunity to go deeper as we reflected on the various ways we are called to be community: with creation, with the saints, with our neighbor, with those on the margins, and with Christ. Our shared midweek worship continued on Good Friday when we “walked” the stations of the cross. Congregations across the conference brought the cross of Jesus to places around our communities. In these places, we listened to the story of Christ’s Passion, we prayed, and we remembered. Worshiping with other congregations during this season reminded us that we were not alone in our separation from community.

Summer marked not a seasonal theme but a return to in-person worship beginning on May 9 and learning how to be physically present in worship and adapting to the needs dictated by the pandemic (reduced contact, wearing masks, etc.).

I’ve been meaning to ask . . . This fall as we’ve intentionally worked to launch our Sunday morning schedule and sought ways to incorporate intergenerational faith formation into our shared life, we’ve grounded our worship and learning around this preaching series, which has invited us to re-build and re-connect as a community by asking intentional questions: Where are you from? Where does it hurt? What do you need? and Where do we go from here? In worship, and in both intergenerational and age-specific small groups, we’ve invited deeper conversation and connection.

After being deprived of the Sacrament for the early months of the pandemic, sharing communion became an important focus in our worship life. We found a way to offer communion monthly during the program year starting on All Saints Sunday, November 1, 2020, by inviting people to come to church after livestream worship to receive the elements. This sustained us until we were once again able to offer the Sacrament in the context of in-person worship during the summer of 2021.

As our worship life has grounded us as a community, we also continued pursuing Crucial Conversations discussing how our Lutheran theological tradition addresses topics, issues, and events taking place in the world around us. Over four sessions in January we studied the ELCA Social Statement ***Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*** adopted in 1993.

Through the winter and spring months, our Council and Core Ministry Team met in retreat together to discern and identify two congregational goals that will guide our congregational ministry in the coming years. These goals take into account the scattered nature of our community life that has emerged throughout the pandemic and continue to affirm the intergenerational character of congregational life that we are working to foster and strengthen. These goals will continue to guide our ministry priorities in the year(s) ahead:

Goal 1: The BLC community is engaged in the ministry of the congregation. We want to consistently increase active participation in worship, service, faith formation – in every aspect of BLC’s ministry.

One way we have begun living into this goal is through inviting the gathered community to step into worship leadership roles on Sunday mornings. This creates space for anyone who comes on Sunday morning to have an active (rather than passive) role in worship, rather than limiting worship leadership only to those who are scheduled in advance.

Goal 2: The BLC community builds intergenerational relationships and connection.

Our fall worship series and Faith Formation for All conversations have been developed specifically with this goal in mind.

All of this ministry is done in partnership with the people of God at Bethlehem, as well as with our gifted staff. We marked the end of ministry this year for both Annette Finkbeiner (May) and Susie DePasquale (August). Susie’s retirement marks the end of over 30 years of musical leadership of the Bethlehem community. Their contributions to our ministry, along with Jim Jefferis, have been instrumental to enhancing our worship life and supporting community connections, even through a pandemic. We are excited for Raelynn Clare’s arrival as our Director of Music and Organist in September 2021, and we look forward to the ways that she will continue to build on our music ministry and collaborate with our staff team. In addition, Beth Schoenfeld’s contributions to supporting ministry (especially with increasing our digital/electronic means of communicating and coordinating ministry) and equipping volunteers as we’ve begun to re-engage in-person worship and gatherings over the last five months have been essential to our ministry.

It is no exaggeration to say that this has been a most challenging year and context in which to serve as pastor. We remain committed to our shared ministry as co-pastors, which we resumed in July 2021, allowing us a vehicle for us to adapt to ever-changing circumstances. We are both deeply grateful for the partnership we share with each other, with staff, and with the people of God at Bethlehem. Working together with the leaders of Bethlehem, we will continue to find ways to share ministry together that serves the needs of this community in the year ahead. We give thanks for the body of Christ that is present here in Bethlehem and made visible in each and every one of you. We are grateful always for the privilege of serving among you and for being partners with you in living out the mission that God has given to us.

In Christ -

Pr. Abigail Zang Hoffman

Pr. Amy Walter-Peterson


BLC VISION, MISSION AND COMMITMENT

VISION: *Where we are headed*


BLC exists to equip every child of God to follow Jesus.

MISSION: *What we do*

Following Jesus means we:

 **WORSHIP the Living God: *Worship glorifies God and gathers us together where we are transformed by word as well as baptism and communion and prepared to serve.***


Worship is the heart of our congregational life from which everything flows. Worship provides an experience of the living God that deepens our faith and calls us to action in daily life. Worship shapes us with beautiful music, well-prepared leadership and thoughtful preaching. Worship stretches us to experience the living God in new ways but is always grounded in forming community and witnessing to an authentic Lutheran understanding of faith in Jesus Christ. Worship is energetic, thoughtful, intentional, and full of joyful noise.

 **GROW in Faith and Discipleship: *We cultivate multiple ways to learn about and deepen faith for people of all ages and life stages, as well as those with varied faith experiences.***


We provide opportunities for people to grow, learn, be challenged by and be invigorated in their faith in Jesus Christ and God's free gift of grace made known in him. We reach out to people who are new to or curious about Lutheran Christianity and welcome and integrate them into congregational life. At the same time, we seek for all members to continually develop in their journey with Christ. Age-appropriate and intergenerational learning experiences are provided throughout the week and encouraged for all according to their interest. Parents understand that they serve as role models and primary teachers for their children about the faith. They are encouraged and supported in this vocation by being actively engaged in their own faith development. The foundation for faith development is Biblical and consistent with Lutheran Confessions.

 **LIVE Our Faith in Daily Life: *We develop multiple points of connection between faith and daily life that extends beyond worship.***

God sends us into the world and equips us for action – in our community, in our schools, at our work, in our homes and everywhere we live. Serving, learning, sharing, growing and inviting others to join with us in all we do is vital to who we are as Christians. We witness to our faith through our words and actions and encourage members to humbly minister in their daily lives in ways that serve real and known needs. In all our life, we seek to steward God's abundance.

 **CARE for One Another: *We build and foster intergenerational relationships within the BLC family to cultivate a faith community in which each person is valued as a fellow child of God.***

Relationships matter for us. We know and love one another. We value one another even when we don't agree. We share our joys and concerns. We pray for one another. We encourage each other to share our gifts with the church and community. Building relationships, growing new friendships and expressing care and support for one another are the work of the entire congregation.

 **SERVE Our Neighbor: *We reach out to the world for the purpose of serving our neighbors near and far, especially those who are marginalized and easily forgotten.***

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to be the hands and feet of Christ in our world today. We do this as part of a wider church as well as through our own congregationally based ministries. We give permission to members to start ministries consistent with the teachings and traditions of our faith. We listen for the Spirit's guidance, the congregation's discernment and our neighbor's needs to identify the life cycle of each ministry. In doing this we are attentive to the gifts and passions of congregational members and allow ministries to grow, adapt or end. We seek partnerships with others for the purpose of service. In all our ministry, we seek to manifest the gifts of the Spirit for the sake of our neighbors.

COMMITMENT: *How we do the work*

Called by the Holy Spirit, trusting in the grace and love of God, each of us will:

Cultivate a safe environment that enables us to take risks and step outside our comfort zone.

We know that we have been given the gifts of God's forgiveness and grace and are called to share them with others. We understand that people often react or don't act at all because of fear. We want to create a church that believes a glorious failure is better than a mild success. We accept the changes that come as we find new ways to show and share God's love in this time and place. We extend grace to all and believe that we are all trying our best.

Meet people where they are at all ages and stages of life.

We believe that BLC should reflect the gifts, experiences, faith stories and cultures of diverse ages and multiple generations. We desire to create an environment that encourages us to intentionally work, play, and worship alongside one another. We need to be aware of who's missing and intentionally create spaces where we can learn from each other and share life together.

Recognize our God-given talents and put them to work in the world.

We believe that we all have gifts to share. We strive to use those gifts in the ministry of BLC and throughout God's Kingdom. We value everyone's contribution and understand that there are many different ways for us to respond to God's gracious love, including through our daily actions as parents, family members, friends and employees; our commitments as citizens and community members; our efforts in social service and volunteerism; our voices offered in public witness for justice; and more.

Teach, encourage and learn from one another.

We take joy and comfort in the Word of the Lord. We know that a deep understanding of God's Word prepares us to be witnesses in speech and in action of God's rich mercy in Jesus Christ. We are curious about the perspectives of others and seek to find new voices to expand our understanding. We learn through many different means, such as Sunday School and Adult Education programs, book studies and discussion groups, personal daily devotionals, and conversation with family or friends.

Understand that we are in a relationship with the wider church.

We know that we cannot be church alone and we support the ELCA vision of fostering unity among the children of God for the sake of the world. We desire to develop our relationship with the Upstate Synod, the church-wide organization, and global partners. We understand that each congregation has a variety of gifts and we seek to use BLC's unique gifts in cooperation and support of the wider church. This means facilitating the ecumenical and interreligious work of congregations, synods and church-wide ministries, supporting the reception of our full communion agreements, and accompanying others, including our interreligious partners.

Provide and allocate resources to fulfill our vision and mission.

We recognize that we are called to be faithful stewards of the tangible gifts God has so abundantly given to us, including financial resources. We strive to practice generosity in our daily life and in the life of the congregation. We understand that we should use all that God has entrusted to our care - our time, our talents and our treasures - to love God and our neighbors.

The Vision and Commitment statements were developed through the conversations held at the Council and Core Ministry Team Retreat held in November 2015, congregational potluck dinners in January and April 2016 and Cottage Meetings in January/February 2016. The Mission reflects the Purpose statements that were adopted in 2013. Collectively, the Vision, Mission and Commitments below give us clear direction about where we are going, what we are doing and how we will carry out ministry together.

Compiled: September 2017

PARISH REGISTER 2021

		Baptized	Confirmed
	<i>TOTAL Membership as of September 30, 2020</i>	579	562
Members Received			
	Baptism	3	0
	Cooper Miller (5/9/21)	1	
	Samuel Joseph Kruse (7/18/21)	1	
	Logan Brooks Morrissette (9/5/21)	1	
	Affirmation of Faith/Transfer In	0	
	Affirmation of Faith/Confirmation (Confirmed 5/23/21)	1	9
	Michael Chaffee		1
	Allison Furst		1
	Aderyn Gantner		1
	Rachel Meetze		1
	Jonathan Palermo (from 'non-member' to confirmed in system so add baptism too)	1	1
	Lauren Salvador		1
	Evan Sousa		1
	Olivia Strasser		1
	Elizabeth Wholley		1
Members Removed			
	Deaths	8	8
	Paula Hitchings (10/13/20)	1	1
	Merlin Scharfe (10/20/20)	1	1
	Anna Steuerwald (10/17/20)	1	1
	Marjorie Miller (12/20/20)	1	1
	Nancy Bornemann (1/23/21)	1	1
	Steven Donner (4/12/21)	1	1
	Darrell C. Kilburn (7/26/21)	1	1
	Carolyn Olsen (9/2/21)	1	1
	Transfer Out	7	7
	Wayne Shipman (2020)	1	1
	Doug & Debra Sharp (2020)	2	2
	Deb & Tom Young (2020)	2	2
	Melissa Kelbe (3/10/21)	1	1
	Grace Isaacson (9/29/21)	1	1
		Total Baptized	Total Baptized & Confirmed
	Total Members Added	4	9
	Total Members Removed	15	15
	TOTAL Membership as of September 30, 2021	568	556

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

Rick Walker, Council President

This past year has been one of transitions. I feel that it is fair to say that most of us expected to be farther along in our recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic than we are currently experiencing. The impact to our congregation by this continued pandemic is as varied as our individual circumstances. Many of us, myself included, are retired. We have had no disruption to our employment or income. The impact to us has been in loss of freedom to engage with family and friends and to do some of the things that add variety and joy to our lives. Things like dining out, movies, live entertainment, and festivals. For the larger number of people who are still employed, many of you have been able to work remotely, allowing you the ability to maintain your employment while protecting yourself and your family from exposure to the virus. But this too comes at a cost. Work can become a 24/7 presence and juggling the demands of children who were attending school virtually while working remotely has added much stress to many households. We also have members who work in jobs that never stopped being in person. People in health care, law enforcement and service positions have faced enormous challenges this past year. In many cases the choices they have had to make were stark. Accept the risk of continued exposure to Covid-19 or lose their source of income. The work done by these folks has allowed all of us to maintain our lives through this period. This has also been a period of financial insecurity for many people. Members of our congregation have lost jobs or faced reduced hours and income. The impacts of this type of disruption in income to families are ones that may take years for those affected to recover from.

BLC has weathered this period better than many congregations. We have leveraged technology to remain connected and our members have continued to financially support our mission. Our level of income is reduced from prior years due to a decrease in contributions and a loss of income from our rental property. One of our tenants has been financially impacted by the pandemic and has struggled to support her family and pay her rent. We are fortunate that our expenses have also been reduced during this period sufficiently to offset these reductions in income. BLC remains financially sound with sufficient reserves to address any challenges we may face. This year we will once again end the fiscal year in a stronger position than we had anticipated at the beginning of the year. To be able to make that statement two years in a row during a global pandemic is truly evidence of the vitality and strength of this congregation.

We are now at the point where restrictions have eased, and life is starting to feel a bit more normal. But infection rates are increasing again with the advent of the Delta variant and while we are not required to mask in public spaces, it is highly recommended. This is troubling as we move into flu season and colder weather that will drive all of us indoors.

Last year we all learned about what it meant to experience things “virtually” that we were used to experiencing in person. We have now transitioned from “virtual” to “hybrid”. The ability to meet in person and virtually at the same time has allowed us to address the concerns of those who are ready to gather in person as well as those who are still not ready to take that step. Our first big experiment with a hybrid gathering was

last year's annual congregational meeting. A small group met in person in our social hall, while the majority attended virtually. Participation in our annual meeting in 2020 set a record for attendance! We will be using this same model for this year's annual meeting and anticipate that more people will attend in person than last year. Hybrid gatherings using Zoom will continue for the foreseeable future to ensure that all who wish to participate can do so in a manner that meets their needs. Our livestream also continues. Many thanks to the small group of volunteers that make this possible on Sunday morning.

As we move through the coming year, it is our hope that the pandemic will finally be brought under control. Until this occurs it is hard to imagine putting masks and social distancing behind us. BLC leadership will continue to follow state and federal guidance as we look for ways to safely become more fully engaged with each other. We will continue to keep the health and safety of the most vulnerable in our congregation in mind as we strive to provide multiple paths for worship and faith formation. Our re-entry team continues to meet to examine how and where we gather.

During this past year, the work of the church council has continued. Some of the things that have been completed this year include:

- Development of two long term goals for BLC focused on increasing engagement and fostering intergenerational relationships within BLC.
- Exploration of how best to utilize technology to augment and enhance our worship experience. This is a work in progress and will require some give and take to determine the right blend of tradition and innovation for BLC.
- First approval of proposed changes to our constitution. A vote to ratify these changes will be part of this year's annual meeting.
- Replacement of the church's card key access system and addition of access via Perrin Street.
- Completion of financial audit for 2020 with no negative findings.

This has been another incredible year! As we moved through 2021 and we all realized that the pandemic was not going away as rapidly as all had hoped for, it would have been easy to become weary and lose our direction. But with the help of God and a supportive congregation, we have had an amazing year! We still have more work to do before we are through the pandemic and have figured out what our new normal looks like. I am confident that we will continue to work together to keep our congregation healthy and connected.

On a personal note, I want to thank everyone who has shared their thoughts with me on how BLC should address the various challenges brought on by the pandemic. This my fourth and last year as Council President. The input that I have received from the members of BLC during those four years has been invaluable! While there have certainly been some challenges, I have never regretted my decision to accept this role. It has been an honor to serve the people of BLC.

Covid-19 Pandemic Impact on the Congregation of Bethlehem Lutheran Church Provided to the Perinton Historical Society

Bethlehem Lutheran's response to the Covid-19 pandemic is best described as a journey. In March of 2020, BLC made the decision to cease in person activities on a Thursday evening. At that point we had no virtual presence and were not using any level of video conferencing. By the following Sunday we were live streaming our worship service using an iPhone and Facebook live. We were fortunate to have a member of our music staff who was able to facilitate this transition. Our congregation's response to live streaming of worship was positive and our attendance numbers were close to our normal attendance for our 8:30 service. We record the service and make it available for viewing for those who are unable to join us live. We have experienced a new definition of what our congregation is. We routinely have people joining us from out of state and from other countries.

We moved very quickly to set up Zoom our platform for small group meetings. We used the licensed version of Zoom to eliminate the time limit of the free version. As our congregation became comfortable with Zoom, the number of groups that met virtually grew rapidly. Some of the groups that have used Zoom include:

- Church Council
- Church leadership team
- Various church committees
- Women's groups
- Men's groups
- Lutheran Youth Organization (Junior and senior high school)
- Confirmation Class
- Sunday school
- Adult education
- Book studies
- Youth choirs
- Adult choir

We created a re-opening team to begin the work of determining when it would be safe to begin in person activities and what would be required to make this happen. This group developed a document that allowed for small groups to meet and provided guidance for how meeting could be held safely.

As our experience with live streaming grew, so did our expertise. We invested in dedicated equipment to support the livestream and identified volunteers to manage this equipment. We now broadcast our live stream on Facebook, YouTube, and our website.

One of the first uses we identified for live streaming, beyond Sunday worship, was a funeral. Due to Covid-19 restrictions there was a limited ability for in person attendance. By live streaming the funeral service, many more people were able to participate in the service or view a recording of the service later.

We have used Zoom for quarterly congregational meeting and for our annual meeting. By using Zoom's breakout room feature, we have been able to have rich, small group discussions. Our attendance for these meetings is higher than has been typical for in person meetings. Attendance for our annual meeting set a record. During our first virtual congregational meeting, the congregation affirmed their support for live streaming of our worship service and requested that we continue it when we resumed in person worship.

Our youth and adult choirs resumed practices virtually. Our choir directors have learned out to take multiple recording of choir members and merge them together to present them as a virtual choir with all the members displayed on the screen.

Our Sunday morning service regularly includes components that are prerecorded. Much of this content does not originate from our church building.

We held a series of in person prayer services in the fall and have resumed communion monthly.

Your letter posed some specific questions that are addressed below.

The concert that you mention in your letter was what we call our "Music Sunday" where most of the service is presented through music from choirs and individuals. Our music staff took individual recording of the music and merged these into virtual choirs for the service. The various recording with merged with the other elements of the service and broadcast at the time of our morning service.

Our confirmation classes are held virtually but have expanded to include other Lutheran churches in our area.

Weddings, funerals, and baptisms continue, although attendance is limited to 15 or less by our current guidance. As described above, we have used live stream to allow for a larger participation in a funeral.

Participation in our remote services is hard to pin down. We typically have over 50 families on Facebook live. We do not have an easy way to determine how many families participate in worship via YouTube or our website. It is also difficult to determine how many people view a recording of the service. Our sense is that we are reaching an audience that is roughly equivalent or slightly larger than our normal attendance at our 8:30 service.

Our congregation has indicated broad support for continuing our live stream for the foreseeable future. Our largest challenge in this area is how to ensure that members worshipping in person and members worshipping virtually have the same experience. Our desire is to continue to integrate remote and recorded content into our service. Ensuring that both groups can see this content will require some additional technology. The financial impact of Covid-19 to BLC has been minimal. BLC members continue to provide strong support during a period that are expenses are reduced. We have encounter unplanned costs as we added hand washing and sanitizing stations and

touch free towel dispensers. We have purchased equipment to support high quality live streaming capability and have upgraded our church website. To date we have spent approximately \$10,000 and anticipate another \$5000 to \$6000 in expenses. The net of all of this is that we remain in a solid financial position and have not eliminated or reduced any ministries.

The overall impact of Covid-19 to Bethlehem Lutheran Church is a mix of challenges, new opportunities, redefinition, and growth. We are still determining what our new normal will look like, but we are confident that we will emerge from this pandemic as a vibrant church community.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Beth Schoenfeld Coordinator of Communications

The mission of the Communications Committee at Bethlehem Lutheran Church was to inspire, inform, and invite participation in the life and ministry of the church. This had been done through multiple areas of media, including print (printed Star, weekly worship bulletin, kiosks, bulletin boards), social networking (Facebook), electronic (website, monitors) and other special displays as needed.

The church office continues to work with the Pastors, Council, and the Core Ministry Team Members to coordinate projects or publicity campaigns to ensure information is effectively communicated to those both within and beyond our walls.

While we no longer have a designated committee, Beth Schoenfeld has led many efforts and supported volunteers as we strive to continuously improve our communication across various platforms:

- Andy Gates has faithfully created and led the Livestream Team efforts learn and implement new technologies to broaden our offerings to provide remote worship to viewers near and far.
- Beth Schoenfeld has continued working with Capra since the redesign of the Website in August of 2020 to make ongoing improvements to the site, and creatively meet the needs of groups and volunteers to share targeted communications, create both short- and long-term web presence when needed, generate customized forms for collecting inputs and registrations, and more! The internal and external users are very happy with the BLC Calendar of Events and its functionality allowing for easy log-ins to remote meetings. The landing page and menus have also been routinely edited to help promote groups, events, and activities. An electronic pew card is available for people to submit prayer requests or other content that they would normally be able to do when sitting in church. We have also expanded our weekly email functionality to have simple one-click links to important information and adding more images to the emails we send out.
- Our pastors have paid close attention to the feedback about the sanctuary monitors, continually trying to use them to expand on the worship offerings and not provide a distraction to those in the sanctuary. Sarah Morrissette continues to be a strong support in managing much of our Facebook group content and posts for recurring events, sermon series items, 100th anniversary information and more.

CARE OF PROPERTY REPORT

Bob Stolze, Chair

Property Committee and Landscaping Team, October 2021

Bob Stolze, Property Committee Chairman, 585-857-6350

Kathy Forney, Landscaping Coordinator, 585-455-0229

Members: Brian Edwards, David Chaffee, John Salvador, Matt Beutel, Rolf Maxa, John Schmeelk, plus numerous landscape and gardening volunteers

Property Committee highlights:

- This past year has been mainly reactive. We're in the re-opening group and have been supporting their decisions to making our church as safe as can be given our uncertain environment.
- We're supporting our 100th anniversary celebrations as needed, including hanging the banner on the Church Street side of the building.
- We replaced our door keycard system with a newer and better system. Call the church office if you'd like a new entry card.
- Continued to improve our streaming abilities to make them permanent. We installed two video screens on the walls on either side of the altar. Also added a second camera to improve the coverage.
- We had the wall behind the altar painted, converted sanctuary hanging lights to LED bulbs, and kept up with various repairs.
- Our church building is being maintained in good condition and things are working properly.

Plans for the coming year

- We are making improvements in our ventilation to make our gatherings safer. The initial focus is on the sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall, and other spaces are being evaluated as well. It will include a combination of fans and air purifiers.
- Possible replacement of the carpeting in the sanctuary and narthex. They're 20 years old and the glue has been failing for some time, causing bubbles to appear in the summer and gaps to appear in the winter.
- Also investigating installing a hood over the stove in the kitchen. Possible re-sealing of the parking lot in the spring.

Note to everybody:

We're looking for people who can manage our online streaming during services. It uses a software tool that manages the cameras and extra content. If you feel a little Hollywood in your veins, give the church office a call. It's a fun and interesting job!

If you enjoy getting your hands dirty once in a while, the property committee or landscape team is just the thing for you! Property meets one Saturday a month, and occasionally at other times as needed. The Landscape Team meets several times for larger tasks like spring cleaning, and members come when appropriate to keep up with the regular watering and maintenance. Contact Bob or Kathy or talk to any member of the teams to find out how you can play a part! No special skills are necessary, just a love for our church and a desire to have fun while learning new things!

CMT CONVENER REPORT

Beth Schoenfeld, CMT Convener

Core Ministry Team (CMT) Mission: *We work in tandem with Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council to realize the Congregation's vision statement. We engage in purposeful communication, coordination of the church calendar and activities, and consider what we are being called to do within and outside our walls in order to foster synergy and interconnectivity between Core Ministry areas: Worship, Grow, Live, Care, Serve.*

CMT works diligently throughout the year to offer multiple ways to fulfill the mission of this community of faith – to equip every child of God to follow Jesus – through planning for worship, Christian education, spiritual growth, community outreach, fellowship, youth programs, and much more. CMT has been the backbone of all the programs and activities at BLC. Your CMT leaders have worked hard to adapt and to continue to provide unique opportunities for engagement even in the midst of the pandemic. Some of the things the team has made happen are:

- Supported those groups who wanted to continue to meet virtually by training their leaders and promoting their Zoom meetings
- Held virtual story hours for children
- Participated in confirmation program virtually, conference wide
- Adapted Thinks-giving and Angel Tree to happen in safe, effective ways in 2020
- Continued producing and sending the Quarterly Mailer
- Strengthened web presence, digital sign ups and email communications
- Helped support a drive through Advent Bag pick-up, tree lighting shared outdoors and via FB live, and virtual Christmas Eve Worship
- Held outdoor youth programming such as hiking and courtyard gatherings
- Increased the pool of recipients for Valentines
- World Hunger Awareness and Appeal around Easter time
- Participated in Values Discussions and Goal setting with council
- Outdoor gatherings and listening sessions held in person in April & May

Each quarter, CMT works with the church office to compile a mailer that includes details on upcoming events and happenings at BLC. The Quarterly Mailer is mailed to each household. As we work on the November mailer, we will continue conversations of how CMT can best serve the congregation this program year, and what the frequency and goals of CMT meetings will be.

The website (launched in August of 2020) and calendar of events have been invaluable for effective communication this past year! The new Calendar of Events on our website allows for current listing of the upcoming events, RSVP through the site, and seamless participation in virtual events. Easy access is provided for connecting to worship through social media platforms. Emails are being created with one-click access in mind and reflect more visual components and less text.

Beth Schoenfeld has continued to serve as convener. CMT has provided a monthly report to Council, to strengthen the collaboration between the leadership groups. Pastoral presence at the meetings remains essential. 2020 presented challenges to what has become the core functionality of the CMT Group (looking out ahead and planning for events and activities in the various ministry areas). While we met virtually throughout 2021, it became increasingly clear that the advanced and bigger picture planning the group had grown accustomed to was simply not possible in the same ways. The planning has become more just-in-time with changing COVID protocols. Smaller, more task-specific groups were formed to keep things moving forward, and the CMT group meetings were becoming less efficient for a time. We decided to take a break in July and have recently been asked to consider reconvening.

If you are interested in exploring a new-to-you group and participating in the life of the congregation in a different way, we welcome your involvement. You DO NOT have to be on the committee to help initiate events and activities that support the ministry focus of BLC. You can find out more about each CMT area, Worship, Grow, Live, Care, and Serve, by visiting <https://blcfairport.org/about/>, reading the STAR and Quarterly Mailer, or contacting one of the leaders, pastors, or the church office.

WORSHIP THE LIVING GOD

Toni Thompson, Core Ministry Leader

Worship glorifies God and gathers us together where we are transformed by words, baptism, and communion; and prepared to serve.

As our church year began in September of 2020, we were still in a lock-down mode, live-streaming a worship service at 8:30 AM. It was unclear at that time how much longer we would have to go on with this format.

All Saints Sunday was celebrated on November 1, 2020. As the names were read and a bell was rung, the camera for the service was focused on the font and the Paschal candle. Families were encouraged to light a candle in their own homes as they watched the live-stream service. Communion was offered in the sanctuary immediately following service from 9:30 to 11:00. All precautions were taken, as communicants picked up their own cups, and the pastor served cubes of bread with tongs. Many people were moved emotionally to be able to participate in the Eucharist once more. This year, just as in 2020, there was no service offered on Thanksgiving Eve.

Advent began on November 29, 2020, and the theme was “Watch for the Light” Instead of one large tree decorated with the customary Chrismons, there were three small trees covered in white lights and small mirrors to reflect the light. There was one small Advent wreath on the altar which was lit by the pastor in the virtual services, and families were encouraged to simultaneously light an Advent wreath in their own home. The church provided Advent logs and shiny blue ribbons to families who wanted them. There was no customary Music Sunday, but each service throughout the service there were two offerings of special music.

On Christmas Eve, people were invited to come and sit in the sanctuary from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. The lights were dimmed, and there was soft music playing in the background. It was a very peaceful time to sit and meditate. In the evening there was a live-streamed service with a great deal of music.

Communion continued to be offered on the first Sunday of each month.

Lent began with Ash Wednesday on February 17, 2021. On Wednesday evenings during the season, there were virtual services in conjunction with other churches in the Conference, and the Holden Evening Prayer – a great favorite – was sung. The theme was “We Want to See Jesus” and was centered around the imagery of a wilderness. Church members were encouraged to write a person meditation on the theme, and they were compiled into a devotional booklet which was distributed in the Quarterly Mailer. Easter Sunday, virtually of course, culminated the season.

On May 9, 2021, the church re-opened to in-person service as well as live-streamed. The virtual service began at the usual time of 8:30, and the in-person service occurred at 10:00. Reservations were required for the in-person service, and all the usual precautions of masks and social distancing were in place.

No singing was permitted, and there was minimized touching of shared items such as hymnals. Nonetheless, thirty-nine people were thrilled to be worshipping in the sanctuary that morning.

Pentecost and Confirmation were observed on May 23, 2021, bringing the church year into ordinary time. On June 20, 2021, nine seniors were recognized in a lovely virtual presentation.

On August 8, 2021, there was a joint worship with the parent church, Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Penfield as a launch to the year-long celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Fairport church. The celebration took place in the outdoor pavilion of the Plank Road Penfield church and was very well attended by both congregations. It was a very happy and joyous occasion, enjoyed by all.

On September 12, 2021, we launched a new church year with only one service – both live-streamed and in-person – conducted at 8:55 am. Reservations were no longer required, and Communion began to be served every Sunday from then on. A brief fellowship time followed the service and then there was a time for Faith Formation for All – a hybrid of Sunday School, LYO, Confirmation and adult education offered for everyone and based on the scripture of the morning and a time for discussion of “Where Are You From?” – an opportunity to know each other a little better. People have been so hungry to be together, that these new opportunities have been very well attended.

We still face a great deal that is unknown for our worship life. How will we celebrate All Saints Sunday? What will we do for Advent? What will Christmas be like? We have come far since the separated and isolated days from last September, and we will forge ahead with confidence as we face the future. We are a resilient people who have demonstrated our capacity to deal with changes, and we can be confident that all will be well.

GROW IN FAITH AND DISCIPLESHIP

Marcy Adams, Core Ministry Leader

We cultivate multiple ways to learn about and deepen our faith for people of all ages and life stages, as well as those with varied faith experiences.

Our emphasis for the 2019 -2020 GROW ministry continued with the theme of equipping every child of God to follow Jesus. We also continued to encourage intergenerational connections as much as possible.

Similar to other programs this year, the GROW committee had to adopt new protocols due to the restrictions of Covid 19 from the CDC. Several different options were offered to keep in touch with students of all ages, but we found it difficult to maintain consistency due to the increased demands on our families. We basically just wanted to provide connections to this community of Faith. At different times of the school year, Sunday School teachers and members of GROW contacted their students via Zoom, phone calls, recorded story times, Recorded Faith 5 and recorded Children's Messages. Confirmation classes continued virtually with other Confirmation classes throughout the Synod. Pastor Amy provided support and coordination. On Sunday, May 23, an Affirmation of Baptism celebration was held for Confirmands and their families only during the 8:30 service taping. We had 9 children being confirmed this year.

LYO continued under the leadership of Bethany Trippi, Jim Berner, John Schmeelk and Justin Eardley. A number of virtual meeting times were tried in an effort to include as many teens as possible. As the weather became warmer there were some outdoor meetings in the courtyard. John Schmeelk, Jim Berner and Marcy Adams interviewed two Scholarship candidates over Zoom. It was decided, after the interviews to award scholarships to both young ladies, Paige Harman and Preston Fuerbacher. A daily devotional by Bob Goff, "Live in Grace, Walk in Love" was given to all eight of our graduating seniors.

This past summer, Pastor Amy and Pastor Hoffman collaborated with adults and interested parties of all ages to examine what Sunday might look like in the fall. A core committee continued to meet to plan the activities for Fall 2021. It was decided that a Faith Formation class for all would be held in the Fellowship Hall following 8:55 service. Confirmation class and LYO would continue to meet with their peers and leaders in their Sunday School rooms. Other children and adults would gather in the Fellowship Hall for a Faith 5 session of sharing highs and lows with the preschool – 5th graders breaking off for activities with a team of teachers and adults working with the Pastors. This format is planned for an eight-week session, to be evaluated at the conclusion.

We are a work in progress trying to adapt to our changing world and expectations. We hope to continue to be flexible to whatever comes our way. Many, many thanks to the many volunteers who are helping with all aspects of this ministry. We welcome your input and suggestions.

LIVE OUR FAITH IN DAILY LIFE

Cathy Gottermeier, Core Ministry Leader

We develop multiple points of connection between faith and daily life that extends beyond worship.

LYFE stands for Lutheran Youth and Family Engagement. This committee focuses on faith formation in the younger stages of life and developing intergenerational relationships. They plan programs and activities for ages birth through high school and beyond. Prior events have included corn mazes, themed fundraisers, 30 Hour Famine, overnight lock-ins, and service activities. Bethany Trippi continues to help support appropriate activities for the LYO and confirmation kids.

Women's Ministries

LYLAS (Love You Like A Sister) pairs women of BLC in order to anonymously provide encouragement and support to each other through the year. Participants are asked to regularly include her LYLAS partner and her family in prayer. Inexpensive cards and notes, as well as small gifts, can be used to maintain contact and remind her that you are thinking of her. The tricky part is doing this without disclosing your identity! The LYLAS partners for the year are revealed at Ladies Night Out in the fall.

LYLAS is currently active with a small group of participants this year. They will be ending this "season" in October. There is a basket for physical gifts in the Narthex, however most of the women this past year were mailing notes to their LYLAS through USPS and the feedback was that it was very uplifting to receive and know someone was thinking of you. This program appears to work well with social distancing.

Ruth Circle and Women's Fellowship provide the opportunity for women of BLC to gather monthly to learn and grow in their relationship with God and with one another. The groups meet September through May at Church.

Ruth Circle has just resumed meeting this September on the second Monday at 1 pm in person in the Fellowship Hall at Church.

Women's Fellowship continued to meet via Zoom until Spring of 2021. We will resume this group when someone is found to lead the group.

Ladies' Night Out is held in the fall in Fellowship Hall. This annual event is an evening of fun, fellowship, and light refreshments, combined with an activity or entertainment. This is a wonderful opportunity to share a casual evening with your BLC sisters and get to know them a little better! Our gathering this year was on October 12.

Advent by Candlelight is held in mid-December. It is an opportunity to gather women together around the Word of God in a quiet setting to focus on the meaning of Christmas and to prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus. This group meets one

evening during Advent to share fellowship, prayer and dessert. This event did not take place December of 2020. Tentative plans for 2021 are being discussed.

Men's Ministries

The Men of Bethlehem (MOB) meet on an "as needed" basis to provide service work to a number of the ministries that BLC supports financially, along with many of our members as they need assistance around their homes. Examples include painting and repair work at Grace House, kitchen remodeling and construction/installment of free library for South Wedge Mission, and drywall repair/painting for our members. In addition, the MOB holds periodic social events, including our March Madness poker/college basketball night at one of our member's houses. Additional Service and Social event ideas are always welcome! Events will be posted in the STAR. This group is not active at this time and will be revisited when the time is right.

Gather with the men of BLC at the Landmark restaurant in Fairport at 8 am on the first Wednesday of each month and at the Penfield Wegmans upstairs at 1 pm on the third Wednesday each month. We share good food and informal Christian fellowship with no planned agenda. This is a great opportunity to get to know your BLC brothers a little better.

CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER

GerryAnn Westcott, Core Ministry Leader

We build and foster intergenerational relationships within the BLC family to cultivate a faith community in which each person is valued as a fellow child of God.

CARE Ministry at Bethlehem includes several separate programs: Barnabas Ministry, Fellowship Committee, Greeters & Welcomers, Prayer List & Eucharistic Ministers.

Barnabas Ministry: During the past year, the Barnabas side of CARE has remained committed to their mission. The sending of greeting cards, visiting the home bound, and caring for those who live alone continued. Prayer Squares were sent to many as a reminder of BLC's concern for them. A new group was established to give encouragement to those caring for others. All in all, it was a good year.

Fellowship Committee: The other side of CARE is Fellowship. The restrictions because of the pandemic made it nearly impossible to plan anything. When we opened again, the Fellowship Hall was still decorated for the Mardi Gras Coffee Hour that we had enjoyed a year and a half before.

Lemonade Time (a summer version of Fellowship Coffee) began in June and still continues now including coffee, tea and cocoa. Please join us in the Courtyard as long as the weather permits.

The only social event planned was/is the BLC Amazing Race. It was first planned for October 2020 but postponed due to lack of people willing to chance becoming infected. It is now scheduled for October 16, 2021, with a minimal number of participants. It promises to be a fun day for those participating.

SERVE OUR NEIGHBOR

Julie Owen, Missions & Social Concerns Committee Chair

We reach out to the world for the purpose of serving our neighbors near and far, especially those who are marginalized and easily forgotten.

“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” Galatians 5:13-14

Mission and service are transformational. We go into the world with an open heart and often encounter Christ in those we encounter.

The SERVE Core Ministries include 2nd Sunday Dinner Ministry, the Angel Tree, community mission partners, Quilting Group, South Wedge Mission, Thinks-giving, connections with our international "twinned" congregation in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe, God's Work Our Hands, and Upstate NY Synod Mission Support. The Mission and Social Concerns Committee (M&SC) oversees much of this engagement.

In the first quarter of 2021, Beth Walker transitioned out of her leadership role on the Missions and Social Concerns committee. She remains actively engaged and continues to play a crucial role in supporting Julie Owen as the current committee chair. The Mission and Social Concerns Committee facilitates mission engagement, mission education, seasonal ministries, and the Mission and Social Concerns spending plan.

Our 2021 spending plan reflects support of agencies and services where BLC members have direct and consistent involvement. Additionally, the committee strives to equally address these three areas of focus:

1. Crisis Aid (efforts which address immediate and sometimes life-sustaining needs)
2. Sustainability Aid (efforts which provide training or systemic change)
3. Accompaniment (opportunities and resources for BLC members to engage with others in service)

Our spending plan in 2021 included support for these BLC mission partners:

- Willow (formerly RESOLVE of Greater Rochester)
- Grace House
- Coldwater House (A women and children's shelter under the umbrella of Open Door Mission)
- Fairport Good Neighbor Fund
- Lutheran Campus Ministry
- Senior Options for Independence (SOFI)
- Perinton Churches Housing, Inc.
- ELCA Genesee/Finger Lakes Conference
- Shurugwi Parish, Zimbabwe (BLC's twinned congregation)
- Advent House
- Ecumenical Ministries of Perinton

In addition, the M&SC committee utilized discretionary monies to build on the growing relationship with our friends and neighbors at the Pines of Perinton. For our Spring appeal, the M&SC committee addressed food insecurity. A calendar of events was created encouraging people to become “hunger activists”. Daily opportunities to reflect and act on food insecurity were offered including filling the mini food cupboard at the Pines of Perinton with assorted items. There was significant energy and engagement from the congregation. Due the generosity of BLC members, we surpassed our goal for contributions toward ELCA world hunger relief at the Synod assembly. We continued to build our relationship by collecting school supplies for Learning Links, a tutoring program offered at Pines of Perinton. And we offered another opportunity against hunger by partnering with Moll Farms in Williamson to provide fresh fruit and vegetables weekly to those in need.

God’s Work Our Hands - As in 2020 and in keeping with the congregation’s priority on safety amidst the COVID 19 pandemic, God’s Work Our Hands looked a little different. Congregational members were encouraged to identify and share their unique projects. Small group projects at Pines of Perinton, Habitat for Humanity and Open Door Mission were shared through “BLC on the GO” as opportunities for engagement as well. We cared for one another by sending care packages to BLC college students and did yardwork for our friends who needed an extra helping hand. We celebrated our collective community impact through social media, photos and in Worship.

International communication with our companion synod of Zimbabwe continued at both the country and individual parish level. BLC and the Shurugwi Parish send regular messages to each other, share greetings on Companion Synod Sunday, and pray for each other weekly and on All Saints Sunday. Amidst the COVID 19 pandemic, there were opportunities for our twinned parish to share in virtual worship experiences with members of BLC.

The Angel Tree Project was able to support five local families in 2020 along with gift cards for Grace House. We distributed Angel tags and collected gifts with safety and social distancing. Thanks to everyone who provided gifts to share with others in our community.

BLC Quilters have remained active this year. Another 40 quilts were delivered to Linus Blankets in May. Ladies met Thursdays this summer and during GODS WORK OUR HANDS WEEK and tied 10 quilts for Lutheran World Relief. More help is always welcome.

Second Sunday Dinner Ministry is back in business after a 16 month delay due to the pandemic. We have discontinued serving meals in the Fellowship Hall and have transitioned to a delivery-only service. We provide a hot meal to shut-ins in the Fairport/Perinton community on the second Sunday each month. Our dedicated staff of volunteers shops, prepared, serves and delivers meals, and does dishes each month. Our meals include hot dogs and coleslaw in the summer, turkey and all the fixings around Thanksgiving, pulled pork in the fall, and a number of Chef Alan's (aka Mark Fink) favorite recipes.

We are currently in need of at least two more delivery teams. If you can help out on an ongoing basis or would be willing to fill in occasionally, please contact Toni Thompson at 223-2666. Your participation would be greatly appreciated. Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers who help make this ministry possible.

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. ~Matthew 5:16

As we enter the 21-22 church year, we do so having weathered a year+ of a pandemic, listened and learned about race and privilege through book studies and from our own city of Rochester thrust in the national spotlight because of Daniel Prude and a young girl who was pepper sprayed. Our country, though divided in political beliefs, elected a new President and we are in the midst of understanding how to support those who are fleeing from war torn countries seeking asylum and a safe place to land. As my predecessor so eloquently wrote last year - ***mission needs are still abundant, but it has become clear that how our neighbors and society are perceived directly affects who has opportunities to thrive and who does not.***

The M&SC Committee will continue to explore social and justice issues and have conversations within the committee to understand our individual and world view. Our collective goal is a congregation actively engaged in our local and world communities by being Allies, Advocates and Activists (AAA) with our mission partners.

New members or visitors to the M&SC committee, ideas about new ministries, and different views and paradigms for engaging in mission are welcome and encouraged.