

# *Annual Report 2021*

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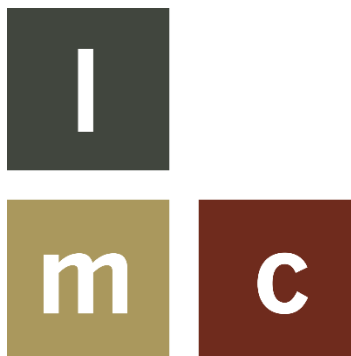
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# *From Pastor Lindsay*

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Dear LMC,

I have a preferred route that I walk with my dog most days. It has to do with the trees on particular streets. There are the pear trees and the magnolias which are favorites for climbing if my kids are along. There are the tall elms. There's the redbud with the branch that stretches across the sidewalk. Oaks are my favorites. I find it has done my soul well to walk near these great, old, gentle beings over the last year because this has been a year of both ups and downs, of both joys and challenges.

We did great things as a church this last year: We've loved God, loved each other, and loved our neighbor. We did book studies, Bible studies, choral anthems, and vespers. We confirmed youth, baptized babies, remembered those who had died, and supported people in need. We said goodbye to people and welcomed new members. While we did great things as a church, 2021 was also a year of change and unpredictability in our world and we felt that in church life.

**Like the trees that bend in the wind, we are a church that is flexible.** This last year, we continued to do church out of our comfort zone, sometimes on screens, sometimes with combined music styles. Through all of it, you showed up. When we were short staffed and needed support, you helped. When we asked you to wear a mask in the world's hottest sanctuary over the summer, you did. When we served you individually packaged communion snackables, which were terribly difficult to open, you somehow figured out how to open them. When half your Sunday School class couldn't make it, you taught the gospel with love to the two little ones that were there. When people were sick, you filled in. We rolled with the punches this last year. We're a church that is flexible and we're stronger for it.

**Like old trees that adapt to the circumstances around them, we are a church that tries new things and learns.** For the most part we did the familiar things last year: We worshiped together, our kids met for Sunday School and youth group, we deepened our faith, and we served people. But we changed some things up and learned: Virtual chair yoga during Lent? Sunday School in the forest? Day of the Dead *ofrenda* for All Saints Sunday? Food truck for Rally Day? Interactive prayer wall outside our building? Halloween block party? Sure, you said, we'll try it! We tried and we learned and we're stronger for it.

**Like trees that provide rest for all creatures, we are a church where people find rest.** Our roots are deep and tapped into the One who calls us beloved. When the



world has been uncertain over the last year, LMC has been steady. You've been a bastion to each other. We've found rest in being together in God's good presence, and, by the grace of God, we're stronger for it.

I'm ever grateful to our faithful and talented staff and contractors for their dedication, creativity, and flexibility, particularly Jared Beverly (Director of Administration and Communication), Christopher Drummond (organist), Melissa Ferguson (bookkeeper) Bernadette Haugen (Nursery Attendant), Nichole Martinez (Interim Director of Child and Family Ministries), Sandra Sanchez (janitor), Deaconess Claire Schoepp (Director of Child and Family Ministries through September), Sarah Swagler (Director of Youth Ministries), Heather Vanderburg (Director of Administration and Communication through April).



We look forward to 2022 with peace. I know we will continue to deepen our connections to God and each another. In this journey of faith, we are called to stay on the ride, to trust the trajectory, to know it's moving and deepening into something better. God is alive in our midst, comforting us and leading us forward in radical service to God and to one another.

Blessed be the journey,  
Pastor Lindsay Mack

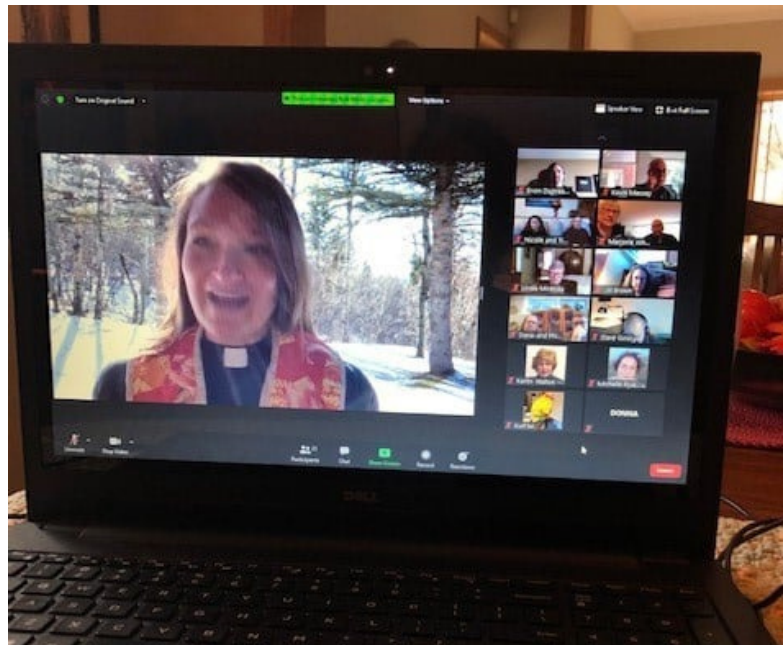


# Worship

## Virtual Worship

As 2021 began, worship remained a central aspect of who we are at LMC. Because of the ongoing pandemic, we continued to gather virtually, whether together on Zoom or via streaming on Facebook or YouTube.

We celebrated the Epiphany online. We shared “ashes to go” on Ash Wednesday and journeyed through our Lenten series “Again & Again” online. And we made our way into Easter online.



## In-Person Services Return

As COVID numbers decreased, we were able to return to in-person worship starting on Pentecost!

We gathered together with proper safety precautions, including limited attendance, social distancing, masks, hand sanitizer, and individually packaged communion elements.

Throughout the summer, we worshipped at a single Sunday service that combined both traditional and contemporary music.

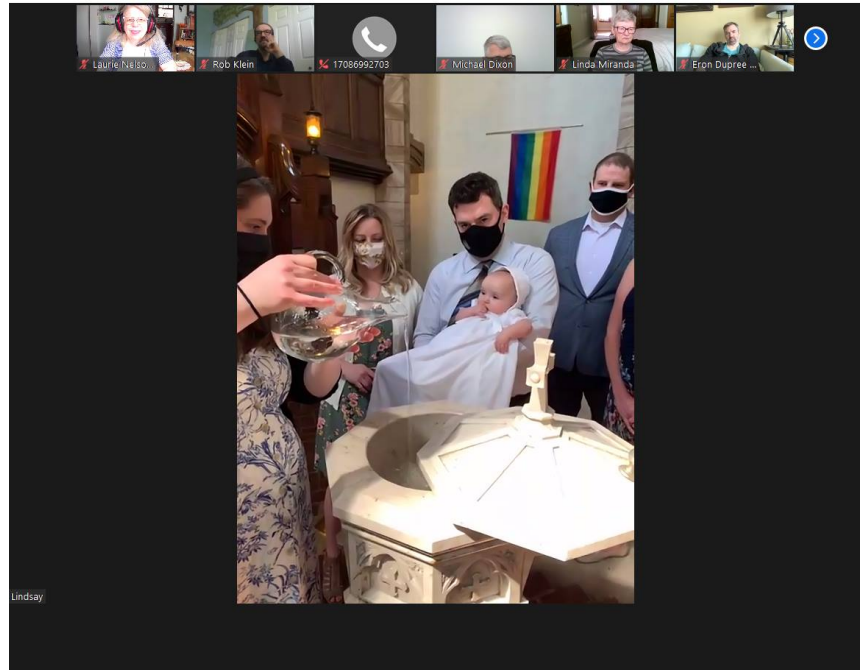
As the fall began, we reverted to a more familiar worship schedule, with a 9am traditional service and an 11am contemporary service. Beginning with Rally Day, we rejoiced in our ability to meet again through our series “Together for Joy.”

We slowly began to integrate our children back into our worship services with our time of Word and Wonder and in service as acolytes and crucifers.

In October, we were delighted to hold a Confirmation service for our confirmands in person (right), and our Wednesday night Advent Vespers also made a return in December. We explored our longing for community and belonging in our Advent series “Close to Home.”

Through it all, both virtually and in person, we reminded ourselves that a big part of what it means to be Christian community is to draw together with love of God and our neighbor for joy.

Worship is a place where we practice how to live in our everyday lives. We eat at the table with folks of differing opinions, we offer the peace to all the people around us, we strive to grow and learn together. After a year where a lot of folks felt isolated, it was good to be together.





## Rainbow Pet Blessing

In honor of the feast of St. Francis, and in celebration of Chicago's rescheduled Pride, LMC held a rainbow pet blessing for all of God's creatures outside.



## Rally Day

To kick off the fall 2021 program year, we gathered for Rally Day worship outside and enjoyed a meal from a food truck.

## Prayer Wall

The Prayer Wall outside allowed LMC members and our neighbors to share our prayers as well as to count down the days of Advent.







## Adult Ministry

Throughout the year, women continued to gather together to support one another and grow in their faith. At the beginning of the year, we met in virtual events where we shared the joys and challenges of pandemic life. We were blessed with the gift of friendship through it all.

In addition, various other groups met periodically, such as Wired Word, the Defiant Women of the Bible study, Lunch with Luther, and others.





# *Children and Family*

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As winter continued in 2021, we connected with occasional parents' groups and through our online Sunday school videos. A huge thank you to all the creative and patient Sunday School teachers who lovingly made videos for our children in the first half of the year.

Creativity permeated the children's ministry, and as we came back together for in-person ministry at the beginning of the summer, many of our families got involved in the community through outdoor events. We held monthly outdoor forest Sunday and inter-generational monthly kickball games at Well's park.



In September, we welcomed back all LMC children for in-person Sunday school. In the photo to the left, our 3rd-through 6th-graders are meeting outside for Sunday School led by our teachers.



## Worship

Our children served in worship as acolytes, lectors, banner bearers, and crucifers.





## Club 56

Club 56's Wednesday night activities also resumed outside in October. During this first month, Club 56 held a canned food drive and donated a total of 63 cans to the Friendship Center!



An *ofrenda* (altar) was created by Club 56 to honor past activists, family members, and pets.





In November, Club 56 created 48 transgender pride flags that represented the 48 transgender people who had been killed in 2021 in honor of Transgender Day of Remembrance. In the first picture, Club 56 kids are pictured creating transgender flags. To the left, the transgender pride flags are displayed in the Sanctuary on November 21, 2021.

We delighted in our 5th- and 6th-graders who helped plan and lead meaningful moments in worship on All Saints' Sunday and Transgender Day of Remembrance.





## Lessons on Palestine

During Advent, Club 56 gathered and learned about Palestine and the Holy Land. Dieter Schulte and Elizabeth Meadows volunteered and helped lead these sessions. Pictured here are both volunteers and Club 56 youth watching a video on the cave in which Jesus was traditionally said to have been born.



# Youth Ministries

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## Meeting Outside

Because of the ongoing pandemic, for safety reasons, the youth met outside for a lot of 2021. For instance, they hiked in Irene Woods in January.



The youth and confirmands also held a nighttime prayer walk.

## Wednesday Nights

Each Wednesday, we average approximately 8-12 high school students at our meetings. Our time together has included arts and crafts such as painting and just enjoying time together.

## Thanks to Our Volunteers!

A massive thank you goes out to the volunteers that helped run confirmation and youth group last yet.





## Thanksgiving Pies

The youth came together to prepare Thanksgiving pies for the Friendship Center.





## Night Ministry

The youth focused on service by making sandwiches for the Night Ministry in October 2021, and Gingerbread Cookies for the Night Ministry in December 2021.



## Youth in Prayer

Youth group focused on prayer throughout the second-half of the year. We held a back-to-school prayer service in August and a Longest Night Liturgy just before Christmas. In addition, we added the practice of meditation at the end of our meetings to focus on the end of the week.





A large background image of a young child dressed as Captain America. The child is wearing a blue suit with a white star on the chest, a blue helmet with white wings, and a maroon face mask. They are holding a large, red, white, and blue Captain America shield. An adult's hand is visible, holding the child's hand.

## Trunk or Treat

LMC hosted our inaugural Trunk or Treat event on Saturday, October 30, 2021. The Walkers performed while over 20 cars/stations handed out candy. This community event saw over 100 participants come through—mainly all from the neighborhood.





# *Music Ministries*

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## **Praise Band**

Going into our second year of pandemic, we were grateful to all the volunteers, from our Praise Band members to our youth and their parents who participated in creating our Virtual Sunday Worships! One of our youth, Claire Shank, shared in a recent interview, "Virtual worship was the only consistent thing our family had to look forward to every week during the pandemic." Others felt, through our live Zoom watch parties and Zoom get-togethers, that it was a fulfilling and unique experience to connect and foster more intimate relationships between each other.

Once being blessed with the opportunity to worship back in person, we have invested our time and budget to continue providing live-streamed services to at-home viewers. Our challenge has been to match the same intimate and technological quality that our pre-recorded services have provided as they are two different animals with different variables, but we are proud of the improvements and learning curves that we've made throughout the transition. We are so grateful for the three youth we have recently hired to continue on the growth of this project with staff mentorship. We look forward to work with our youth Worship Technology and Streaming Assistants to find new creative ways to make in person virtual service more engaging and appealing.





## Youth Band

The youth band plays a song during the Confirmation service.





The Praise Band has also invested their time to work with the youth band fostering leadership, musicianship and rehearsal etiquette. Our youth members each have had a chance to serve with the Praise Band gaining experience in worship leading skills.

With the addition of our in-person worship and the investment in all of the appropriate technology, we have used designated funds to provide better storage for keeping our expensive equipment safely maintained and properly organized for years to come.

## **Cantors and the Schola**

A tip of the hat in gratitude to our team of dedicated, resilient cantors, who offered their ministry of music to lead congregational song in online, hybrid, and in-person worship during a year of pandemic. Toward the end of 2021, a Schola was formed from within the cantors. During Advent and Christmastide, they led congregational song and offered up choral arrangements of the psalms, soaring hymn descants, and motets that enhanced the worship experience for so many.





## Combined Services

For the return to in-person/hybrid worship in the summer months, Rally Day, as well as other feasts of the church year: musicians of the traditional and Praise Band worship teams came together for blended, combined services. Sharing our gifts with one another and the congregation was a life-giving experience.

## Congregational Music for the 9am Service

For 2021, worship incorporated a more expansive array of musical resources that represented a generous swath of human experience in relationship with creation, embraced by the One whose love endures forever. So, in addition to the red hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, we sang new texts from the ELCA hymnal *All Creation Sings*, spirituals and gospel music from the ELCA African-American hymnal *This Far by Faith*, chants from the communities of Taizé and Iona, as well as psalmody and hymnody from our ecumenical partners.





# *Our Church Home*

## **Building Improvements**

Our property team oversaw a number of work projects for the building in 2021.

To name just a few, the water heater was replaced, the wifi was upgraded through the building in particular to help with streaming and, and the front doors of the sanctuary were painted and stained.







## Balcony Repairs

Plaster repairs, painting, and caulking around the stained glass windows in the balcony were all undertaken.





## Masonry Work

In 2021, we also did some masonry work on the exterior of our building.



## Building Use

Events started to pick up again after 2020's pandemic slowdown, so a number of outside groups used our space. AA and Al-Anon have continued to meet here. Lincoln Park Fencing, Music Together, and SoleStance also met at LMC for lessons. Our sanctuary was an occasional space for weddings and concerts. On December 10, a local group called Family Focus held a vaccination clinic in our Fellowship Hall, where 90 people were vaccinated!

## Clean-up Day

In April, the property team held a clean-up day to organize our storage.







## **Volunteers**

Thanks to all our volunteers for the many ways you helped out around the building.



# *Administrative Updates*

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## **Moving to Church Center**

Last year we made an important step in streamlining church operations by adopting Church Center as our community portal. Through <https://lmcchicago.churchcenter.com>, LMC members can manage their giving, view the church directory, and see upcoming events on the calendar.



The administrative side of Church Center, called Planning Center, allows staff and volunteers to track attendance and manage pledges, and it offers powerful tools for planning worship services.

## **Staff Transitions**

2021 was a big year for transitions in LMC's staff. In June, **Christopher Drummond** officially became our organist.

In July, **Sarah Swagler** came aboard as our Director of Youth Ministries.

In April, Director of Administration and Communication **Heather Vanderberg** departed. Her duties were managed over the summer by **Michelle Pyskaty**, an intern from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. In August, **Jared Beverly** was brought on as the new Director of Administration and Communication.

Finally, in September, our long-time Director of Child and Family Ministries Deaconess Claire Schoepp left for a position at another church, and Nichole Martinez stepped in as the Interim Director.



# Outreach

Reaching out and serving our local community is a part of who we are and everything we do at LMC, so much of this work appears throughout the foregoing report, from the youth serving with Night Ministry to our 5th- and 6th-graders collecting canned food.

A few other ministries stand out. The women's ministry sold fair trade coffee. We collected gift cards for Concordia House. We collected Blessing Bags for the Center on Halsted. We donated to the Friendship Center and to Apna Ghar, a domestic violence shelter. We supported the Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches and the Afghan Relief Fund. We also collected money in our annual appeal for Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Cicero.

And our Free Little Pantry continued to provide food to our neighbors in need throughout 2021.

