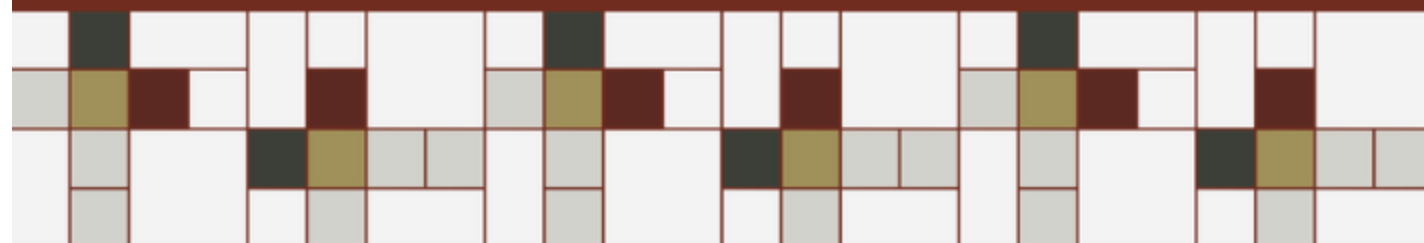


Luther Memorial Church

2018 Annual Report



From Pastor Lindsay

Dear LMC -

As I remember 2018, I am deeply grateful for the faithfulness, generosity, and commitment of Luther Memorial. Through your service and witness, our ministry is strengthened and God is moving in this congregation.

My first full year as pastor of Luther Memorial has been one of joy, grace and learning. As I continue to deepen relationships with people, I give thanks for a community that supports leadership staff and is open to discerning God's will.

During the summer we restructured our music staff and hired Liza Micelli as the Contemporary Worship Director and Leo Meere as the Organist and Accompanist. We have spent much of the fall learning the musical ropes of our two services. We continue to explore the identity of our two Sunday services and our seasonal vespers services: How are the worship services different? And yet, how are our worship services

collectively an expression of who we are as a congregation?

Energy and enthusiasm around the ministry at LMC began to grow during last summer starting with our staff/church council retreat. As we discussed where we had been and how we were trending as a congregation, we began to talk about where the Holy Spirit was calling us. The feeling of positivity stayed and after several tight financial years, the congregation rallied with unprecedented support and helped to significantly close our deficit at the end of 2018.

What is in store for 2019?

+ In the summer of 2018, the church council set a goal of strengthening relationships between people at LMC. The goal was to get to know one another better through avenues like supper clubs, small groups, and social events. As God strengthens the core of who we are we will be better equipped to serve those around the congregation and welcome folks into our midst.

+ The council also prioritized

What's Inside?

Updates from LMC Ministry Teams including:

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developing a more thoughtful, biblically based stewardship strategy over the course of the next year.

+ The launch of a Building Use Committee tasked with looking at how we can better use our building to serve the community and our mission.

It is a gift to be able to serve as Pastor of Luther Memorial. Each Sunday, I give thanks for the worship and sense of community that we share. In addition, many thanks for our talented and creative staff: Deaconess Claire Schoepp, Don Erickson, Heather Vanderberg, Eron Dupree, Liza Micelli, Leo Meere, Amy Karp, and Kevin Dill. I continue to give thanks for them, for you, and to serve in such an open and vibrant community of faith.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Lindsay Mack

All Are Welcome: Hospitality at LMC

Each week, Pastor Lindsay reminds us that no matter who we are or what our story, we are welcome at God's table.

We strive throughout our ministries at LMC to extend that sense of welcome to everyone who walks through the LMC doors. Our Hospitality Team is integral to that effort – from nametags to help us put a name to

faces both familiar and new, to providing a welcoming space for conversation at coffee hour with delicious treats and a friendly smile, to creating events that allow us to connect with one another, to opening the doors to our community as a polling place.

During this year's Rally Day in September, our Hospitality Team organized a Volunteer Ministry Fair that highlighted the many exciting things that happen here at LMC and provided members, friends, and neighbors with ways to connect to those ministries. It was exciting to see our lawn alive with connection.

Other events spearheaded by our Hospitality Team included Bonfire of the Lutherans, a social gathering with campfire favorites on our front lawn and "Not Political, But . . .," a workshop on a Christ-led response to today's political environment.

Moving into 2019, the team encourages everyone to continue wearing your nametags, introducing yourselves to newcomers, and reaching out to your fellow members as you would your family.

Singing (and Ringing) a Joyful Song

"The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through music." – Martin Luther



2018 was a year of transition for LMC Music Ministries. We said goodbye to Lead Musician Sarah Kovach and welcomed Organist Leo Meere and Director of Contemporary Worship Liza Micelli. Throughout this period of transition, we have continued the commitment that quality music is a vital role in all of our church services, including Festival Sunday, Advent and Lenten Services, and Holy Week as well as participation with the Sunday School in the annual Christmas Program under the tireless leadership of Director of Music Eron Dupree.

In addition to our four musical ensembles that regularly participate in worship (Praise Band, Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir, and Children's Choir), we introduced "Come As You Are" Ensembles with the Sunday Morning Singers and Sunday Morning Ringers. These are low-commitment groups that rehearse and participate in worship on the same day. It's a great way to "try out" singing or ringing in worship.

We also welcomed the participation of additional musicians including, but certainly not limited to, handbell ensembles, men's quartets, guitarists, flautists, trumpeters, violinists, pianists, and guest vocalists. Please reach out to us if you have a musical talent that you would like to share in worship.

Looking forward to 2019, the third Sunday in May will be a Music Festival Service as all of our ensembles come together to proclaim the word of God through music. We hope to see you there!

Worship Team: Keeping an Eye on the Details

The Worship Team, initially formed to assist with worship planning during a period of transition, is evolving as a team focused on the details that go into a smooth worship service. The team meets quarterly and is currently focusing its efforts primarily on two areas: decoration of the Sanctuary for Sundays and holidays and clarifying the various ways individuals serve in worship. The Worship Team hopes to develop a process to assign a volunteer coordinator for various worship server roles as they continue and develop updated training resources for those who serve in worship.

Faith Formation with the Child, Youth & Family Team

LMC's Child, Youth and Family team has lots to celebrate this year.

Amongst the ministries to our smallest members, we welcomed five new members to the body of Christ through baptism, we gifted bibles to six children preparing to enter our Sunday School Pre-K threes, and we continue to celebrate the successful Frolic program that provides an e-newsletter with faith formation ideas, occasional faith classes, and social gathering for children under three and their parents.

Our Sunday School welcomed, on average,



37 kids per week. We added five new adult volunteers and welcomed three youth helpers: two high-schoolers who are co-teaching our third grade class and a seventh grader who serves as a greeter for the PreK three year olds.

On Wednesday evenings, LMC tweens and teens meet for on-going faith formation. Each of these groups continue to enjoy growth in participation year-to-year.

Club 56, our fifth and sixth grade youth group, continues to grow in their relationship with God and one another with the help of Deaconess Claire through activities – some quiet and some loud – up on the third floor. This year’s highlights include praying in color (quiet), lots of crazy games (loud), and planning and leading worship for Ash Wednesday (both).

2018 saw the confirmation of seven eighth graders on Pentecost Sunday. This year’s Confirmation Class has eleven participants, four of whom will be confirmed later this year. Over the summer, six kids went to Confirmation Camp at Lutherdale Ministries, a new venue for us, and a great time was had by all.

Our High School Youth Group numbers 10 active youth. We spent 2018 focusing on Christ’s hospitality, advocacy, listening, and hope as we prepared to attend the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas. To raise funds for this trip, we held several events including a pancake breakfast, spaghetti din-

ner, and sponsorship dinner. Your generosity covered not only the cost of our own youth, but also allowed us to sponsor two youth from First Lutheran Church of the Trinity in Bridgeport who otherwise would have been unable to attend the event.

Other youth events included the Metro-Chicago Synod Ultimate Lock-in, a Synod Bowling Night, more.

Programs for families were a hit this year as well and focused on activities enjoyed by all ages and all family forms. 2018 saw a shift from traditional vacation bible school during the day to Faith and Family Week, a week of intergenerational programs in the evenings. We celebrated God’s creation through water stories with art, kickball, skits, and worship with Global Music. We also enjoyed an intergenerational event at Christmas as people of all ages spent an afternoon caroling at St. Pauls House. Other events included our annual Eggstravaganza Easter party in the spring and a return to the Reforween, our Reformation/Halloween mash-up, in the fall.

It was a packed house at Christmas for our annual Christmas program where our Sunday School, with substantial help from our Music Ministries, told the Christmas story with the help of the Christmas Hymn “Hark the Herald Angels Sing.”

We look forward to a great 2019 with the children, youth and families of LMC!



Stewarding Our Gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure

The LMC Stewardship Team works tirelessly to encourage us to give freely and meaningfully of our time, talent and treasure.

The Stewardship Team started 2018 with some fun as they created the NCAA Bracket Challenge for Charity in conjunction with March Madness. Forty-one members and friends created brackets raising a total of \$950. Our first and second place bracket winners designated The Friendship Center and ELCA World Hunger as the charities to receive the bracket funds.

The Team remained busy in the spring and summer as they led the effort to thank our many volunteers and our Sunday School teachers as well as moderate a Community Conversation to present the results of the asset mapping and community engagement surveys undertaken in 2017.

This year's annual pledge campaign centered on the theme "Bring Hope to Life" and spanned several weeks kicking off in October and culminating on November 11. During this time, households were asked to consider some combination of: increasing their 2019 pledge by 10% over their 2018 pledge; formalizing a pledge if they gave in 2018 but didn't pledge; and shifting some or all of a previous capital campaign pledge into their 2019 pledge. As of January 9, 2019, \$234,862 has been pledged from 54

households, with 27 households increasing by 10% or more.

Shortly on the heels of the pledge campaign, the Stewardship Team implemented a Close-the-Gap strategy to address a projected budget short-fall. Six LMC households pledged \$20,000 to match dollar-for-dollar all gifts given over and above regular, pledged offering. By the end of the strategy, an estimated \$50,000 was given through this initiative, a tremendous outpouring of faith and generosity.

Ongoing Stewardship initiatives include the development of new electronic giving tools including a mobile giving app, Text-to-Give and new credit card readers for use with tablets and smartphones. Direction on how to use some of these tools can be found on the new pew cards created under Stewardship's direction that allow members who give electronically to place a tangible representation of their giving into the offering plate on Sundays.

In 2019, the Stewardship Team will transition as several members move on to other projects and we welcome new members to the team. We will continue to look for ways to make our weekly offering more intentional and to foster a spirit of giving here at LMC.



God's House, Our Hands

The LMC Property Team has shepherded an amazing transformation of our space in the past three years from the kick-off of the Grace Overflowing Capital Campaign through the kitchen and capital builds, until today, all while continuing to address the on-going maintenance needs of a grand, old building.

One of the “feature” projects this year is the on-going restoration of the backyard now that major construction is complete. To date, the backyard is prepped for landscaping and has a new fence installed. We were also pleased to offer customizable pavers to honor or remember friends and family for future installation in the backyard and were thrilled with the response. These pavers will be installed with the return of warm weather in the spring.

Our other “feature” project is the remodel of the chapel including new chairs, carpeting, painting and cleaning of the stained glass windows. We also located and restored old stained glass windows for display. We are excited to bless this new space between services on February 3, 2019. Thanks to the dedication of the Schulte family in seeing this project through.

In addition to these projects, updates continued on the lower level with a complete remodeling of the men's restroom, textured painting in the basement hallways, relocation of the coat racks, improvements to the new flooring by facilitating repairs to various

installation faults, replacement of interior doors in the nursery and MultiPurpose Room, installation of a new water fountain, updates to the basement sound system, and improvements to the Wilson red door foyer including upgraded lighting and switches and new water absorbant mats.

There were also improvements to the Sanctuary as we replaced and updated all lighting with LEDs ensuring fewer burnt-out bulbs and lots of energy savings. Other Sanctuary improvements include painted hallways, repairs to the west balcony stairs, installation of dimmer switches for some lighting, and creation of secure storage for communion wine in the sacristy.

Finally we reconfigured space in several areas including creation of a new storage room and a new Sexton's office, reorganized the storage room off of the kitchen, installed windows in the doors to the Pastor's office and lounge, painted second floor hallway and hallway doors, installed magnetic door holds and pendant lights in the kitchen, repaired the rear door on Campbell Avenue, and replaced the boiler condensate pipes and pump.

It is pretty amazing to look back on everything accomplished over the past year (and beyond). Thank you to everyone for their gifts of money and time for the improvement and maintenance of God's house.



Faith and Justice in Our Community and Beyond

2018 saw the “reformation” or rebirth of the Faith and Justice Team with an initial meeting in November. Several topics will form the focus of this team as it moves forward and defines its projects including: the environment, racism, hunger/food access, gun violence, LGBTQ issues, and immigration and refugees.

Three initial projects include homeless outreach via resource contact cards, support for transgender people in our community, and obtaining enough blue recycle bins to populate each actively used room in the church building.

The team is still working to identify key leadership and welcomes new members at any time.

Women’s Ministries

We are grateful at LMC to have an active and engaged Women’s Ministries as one of over 7,000 groups that form the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

This past year, LMC’s women’s ministries got things off to a “bold” start with their annual Chili Cook-Off and Bold Women’s Sunday. The Cook-Off was once again dominated by Ron Meadows who walked away with the top prize. Bold Women’s Sunday celebrated all of the bold women in our lives - whether we

live out our bold story of faith in the workplace, family home, or community, our faith compels us to make a difference in the lives of others.

March brought us the 10th Annual Women’s Spiritual Retreat at Techny Towers in Northbrook. The 2018 theme was “Radical Hospitality” and the keynote speaker was Pastor Lindsay. Pastor Tom Terrell of Christ Luther Church led the second worship service. March also saw our participation in the Lutheran-Catholic Annual Women’s Day of Dialogue and Prayer at Edison Park Lutheran Church in Chicago.

LMC’s Women’s Ministries continue to offer a variety of small groups on Monday evenings: Bible Study, Spirituality Group, Knit Night, and the Book Club while the Service Group continues to meet on occasional Sundays to assist in large-scale events including the PreThanksgiving Dinner as well as planning and hosting the Chili Cook-Off.

Other regular projects include the Bake Sale and GRO Plant Sale, support for LSSI, the annual Women’s Ministries picnic in June, Rally Day, the Synodical Women’s Organization Convention, the Advent Fair Trade and Bake Sale, the Concordia Place Wishing Star Project, and the annual Women’s Ministries Christmas Party. There really are ways for all women at LMC to connect with one another through worship, service, and social events with LMC Women’s Ministries.



LMC 2018 Council

Jay Kapp, President
Angie Cooper, Vice President
Toietta Dixon, Secretary
Ben Dieterich, Treasurer
Jeff Conway
Audrey Downes
Larry Gehrke
Maggie Haite, Youth Delegate
Emily Moen
Nicole VanderDoes

LMC Staff

Pastor Lindsay Mack
Kevin Dill, Sexton
Eron Dupree, Director of Music
Donald Erickson, Director of Youth Ministries
Amy Karp, Financial Administrator
Leo Meere, Organist
Liza Micelli, Director of Contemporary Worship
Dcs. Claire Schoepp, Director of Child and Family Ministries
Heather Vanderberg, Director of Communication and Administration

