

The Messenger



COVID 19 AND THE CHURCH: ONE YEAR LATER

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH

In June 2020, in an effort to find out how the Synod's churches were faring under the pandemic, LCMS Research Services distributed a survey to the 4,787 LCMS congregations for which they had a valid email address. As the pandemic dragged on, a second survey, this time of over 4,800 congregations, was distributed in early 2021. The response rate for both surveys was approximately 22% and, combined, represents more than 1,600 of the Synod's congregations.

The surveys indicated, in part, that:

- Around 90% of LCMS congregations stopped meeting in person for some period of time during the pandemic.
- 92% of congregations provided worship content online during the pandemic.
- 90% of congregations modified their logistics for observing communion when gathered together.
- Most closures lasted for 7–14 weeks during April through June 2020. By March 2021, 95% of congregations had resumed in-person worship.
- 60% of congregations that instituted some form of online worship during the pandemic plan to maintain it.

Additionally, the surveys revealed that, as the Synod's churches begin trying to return to "normal," the primary concern is getting people back to in-person worship. Another concern is the potential for congregational tension due to differing opinions on issues such as restrictions and vaccines. The June survey found that finances were not a major problem for many congregations, and the 2021 survey found the situation has improved somewhat since then. However, there still remain a significant number of congregations, particularly small ones, that are in a much worse financial situation than prior to the pandemic.

Congregations reported that what they need most from the Synod right now is help with resources for returning to "normal," along with encouragement and prayer.

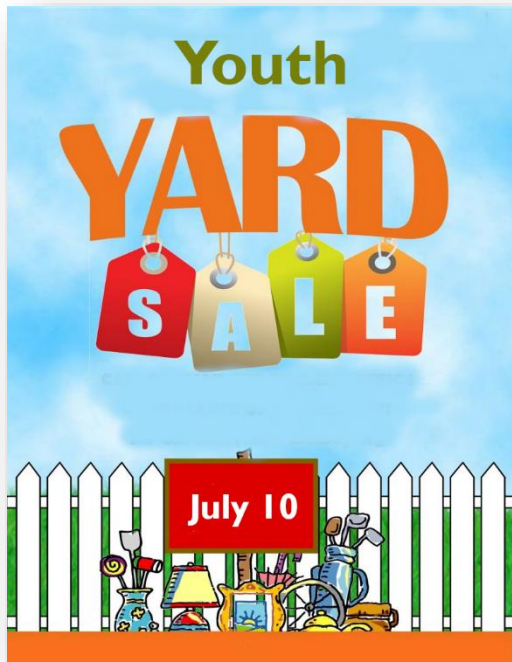
By all measures, it has been an extremely challenging year for the congregations, workers and laity of the LCMS. More than 85% of congregations in the 2021 survey reported that at least one of their members had contracted COVID-19, and in a third of congregations, at least one person had died. Around 40% of congregations experienced a period of time when their pastor had to quarantine due to either catching or being exposed to COVID-19.

Rev. Edward Killian, pastor of The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Inglewood, Calif. noted that as both the world and the church continue moving forward from the pandemic, "There's not exactly a playbook. Yet there's no greater time than now to proclaim the certainty of Christ in the midst of a world that is uncertain. As a pastor, I try to be faithful to my call in the ministry and also to my call as a citizen — to do what God would have me do in both kingdoms."

Killian also sees unexpected blessings in the last year.

"I think we all now appreciate even more what Divine Service means to us, and what it's like to not have it — what it's like to not be able to gather and to not receive the Sacrament regularly. We appreciate how easy it is to lose those things, how imperative they are to our lives and how different our lives were without them. God was always still with us, but we weren't always with each other. We've come to prize our life together as a sweeter thing than we did before."

Excerpt from LCMS Reporter – Cheryl Magness, May 23, 2021



It's time to 'BRING IN YOUR STUFF'. The Youth are planning a yard July 10. It's time to bring in those things you just don't need anymore. Please put them in the Fellowship Hall in the area along the driveway. Thanks so much for your support.

THANK YOU, ST. PAUL, for providing ninety baby boys clothes that were delivered to First Choice Montgomery. Director Bethany was thrilled to receive the clothes for mothers and babies.



SEWING FOR CHRIST

Ladies, *Sewing for Christ* will meet on Wednesday, June 23 at home of Mary Cronian at 10:00 a.m. Before Covid, this group made warm hats for veterans. Now we'll sew baby boy burp clothes for First Choice Montgomery!

Bring a sack lunch if you would like. Fabric and sewing machines provided. LWML bought the boy fabric and now we need your help!

We need volunteers to make baby boy burp clothes. This is all First Choice Montgomery has left to offer to moms and dads. Parents earn "mommy bucks" and "daddy dollars" by attending classes.



Mite Offerings Received

Amounts as of March 31, 2021

Mission Goal for 2019–2021 Biennium: \$2,100,000.00

Amount Received: \$ 2,204,724.55



CHRIST FOR YOU, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE - **KFUO RADIO** (on the air and internet)

2019-2021 LWML Mission Grant 17 \$60,000

Since 1924, KFUO has been reaching people far and wide with the message of Jesus Christ by using the latest technology. In the last century, technology has advanced at an unprecedented rate and continues to develop with each new year. Incorporating the newest forms of communication methods into KFUO's ministry, they can more effectively reach the younger generation and the generations to come with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Even our Nation's military can listen wherever they are stationed. Aging family and friends who are confined to their homes can still be gathered to the Word through an iPad or similar device. Prison Ministry also utilizes KFUO as an effective way of sharing the Gospel. This grant will assist the station in sharing the gospel and staying current in the digital age.

VOTER'S MEETING, JUNE 13, 2021 - HIGHLIGHTS

- A review of the budget was presented by Janet Rosin. Currently, the Church is blessed with a surplus of funds and a plan will be presented at the Fall Voters meeting.
- Motion approved to accept the property plan that identifies various infrastructure repairs/improvements needed and a timeline for completion over a five-year period. The understanding is that this is a living document and will be modified as required.
- Motion approved to make the June Voters Meeting the time to review the property plan.
- Motion approved to hire an administrative assistant at \$12/hr for 20 hours weekly.
- Kyle Arnold and Mark Wootan are leaving the Board, with Steve Dradzynski, Jay Sloop, and Dee Wilson remaining. Pastor recommended Eric Burley for Board membership.
- Motion approved to accept Eric to the Board.
- Safety for the new playground was discussed. A sun shade will be installed. To prevent vehicles from entering and deter children from leaving the playground, installation of bollards was proposed.
- Motion approved to install three bollards for this purpose.



MEXICAN TRAIN DOMINOES

Come play Mexican Train Dominoes on Saturday, June 12 at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. (Resuming on the second Saturday of each month.)

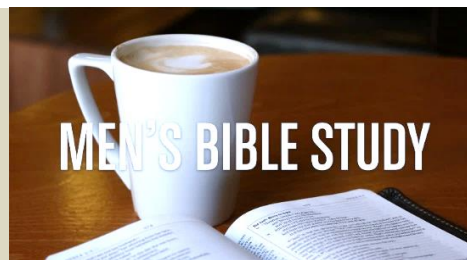
Bring a snack to share. It's an easy and FUN game to learn.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, June 23 at *United Lutheran Church*
& Wednesday, July 28 at *St. Paul Lutheran*

For more information contact Pastor Elam.



ST. PAUL APRIL 2021 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Contributions \$21,938.25 (\$1395.08 under Budget for the month)
Monthly Budget\$23,333.33

Quarterly - January through March

Contributions\$67,517.42
Quarterly budget\$70,000.03 (\$2,482.61 under Budget for the quarter)



June Joan Nightengale
July Terry Elam
August ... Sandy & Jerry Huffstickler

Julia Bennett	06/17	Jack Dradzynski	07/02	Nick Thomas	07/09
Steve Dradzynski	06/17	Kajuana Hill	07/04	Katie Floyd	07/11
Paula Mitchell	06/18	Audrey Cordes	07/05	Jonah Lueck	07/12
Crowell Lisenby	06/25	Jay Sloop	07/05		
Aidan Smith	06/25	Matthew Boarts	07/06		
Dave Anderson	07/01	Jackie Marquis	07/07		



<i>Jerry & Sandy Huffstickler</i>	<i>06/20</i>	<i>Bob & Audrey Cordes</i>	<i>06/29</i>
<i>Ed & Leslie Maher</i>	<i>06/21</i>	<i>John & Debbie Mikulka</i>	<i>07/01</i>
<i>Chris & Jennifer Marquis</i>	<i>06/23</i>	<i>Bunnie & Nancy Dunn</i>	<i>07/06</i>
<i>John & Cynthia Weimer</i>	<i>06/23</i>	<i>Jon & Elizabeth Oswald</i>	<i>07/12</i>
<i>Steve & Ginger Richardson</i>	<i>06/28</i>		



Please submit pictures/information for the newsletter by the 12th of each month to dhoward@knology.net.

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER

To activate the prayer chain, contact the church office at 272-6214.