

# 2009 ANNUAL REPORT



## FAMILY OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Rev. Lon Larson

## Annual Report 2009

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**Family of Christ Lutheran Church**  
**Annual Congregational Meeting**  
**January 31, 2010 — 9:40 am**

**AGENDA**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Call to Order                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Doug Windhorn                                                                                                               |
| 2. Opening Devotions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Pastor Lon Larson                                                                                                           |
| 3. Minutes of 2008 Annual Meeting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Rebecca Donner                                                                                                              |
| 4. Council Reports:<br>President's Report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Doug Windhorn                                                                                                               |
| 5. Staff Report<br>Pastor's Report<br>Membership Statistics<br>Congregational Life<br>Music Report<br>Youth Director's Report                                                                                                                                                    | Lon Larson<br>Lon Larson<br>Laura Heyne<br>Beth Mangold<br>Sherry Goodman                                                   |
| 6. Elections:<br>Nominating Committee Report / Distribution of Ballots                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                             |
| 7. Recognition of Outgoing Council Members                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Doug Windhorn                                                                                                               |
| 8. Council & Ministry Team Reports<br>Community Relations Report<br>Outreach<br>Parish Fellowship<br>Social Concerns<br>Education Committee Reports<br>Property/Operations Committee Report<br>Landscape/Flower Report<br>Youth Ministry Team Report<br>Tanzania Ministry Report | Barb Nylund<br>Glenda Lind<br>Sandy Soukup<br>Amanda Boe<br>Dan Benson<br>Kitty Soderberg<br>Lisa Cecchini<br>Vickie Heggen |
| 9. Other Business                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                             |
| 9. Adjournment—Lord's Prayer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                             |

**Family of Christ Lutheran Church**  
**Minutes of Annual Congregational Meeting**

**January 25, 2009**

- Vice President Deb Cathcart called the meeting to order at 9:49 a.m.
- Pastor Lon Larson opened with devotions.
- Copies of the 2008 Annual Report were handed out to members of the congregation.
- The congregation reviewed the 2008 minutes, a motion to accept them was made by M.J. Benson, seconded by Janet Delperdang. The motion carried
- Staff Reports:
  - o Pastor's report by Pastor Lon, Congregational Life report by Laura Heyne, Music Ministries report by Andrea Olson, Youth report by Sherry Goodman.
- Council Reports:
  - o President's report was summarized by Deb Cathcart, Finance/Stewardship report was summarized by Mark Olsen. The 2009 budget was summarized by Deb Cathcart and Mark Olsen. A motion to adopt the budget was made by Doris Peterson, seconded by Ed Hellier. The motion carried.
- The 2009 Ballot for Church Council members and Church Committee members was announced. Janet Delperdang made a motion to accept the ballot, Gerry Wills seconded. The motion carried. Results: President: Doug Windhorn, Treasurer: Angie Korsa, Financial Secretary: Steve Huseby, Operations: Dan Benson, Stewardship: Julie Davidson and Ed Hellier, Outreach: Barb Nylund, Social Concerns: Sandy Soukup, Fellowship: Glenda Lind, Synod Assembly: Doug and Kitty Soderberg, Nominating Committee: Sheila Ehrich, Jeanie Bergquist, Wendi Anderson.
- Deb Cathcart recognized the outgoing council members, Mark Olsen and Sheila Ehrich.
- A motion was made by Linda Bartz and seconded by Barb Martin to adjourn. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. after praying the Lord's Prayer.

## Pastor's Report

*"I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given to you in Christ Jesus, or in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift..." (1 Corinthians 4-7a)*

Family of Christ Lutheran Church is now approaching its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The great hope and excitement that gave birth to this congregation, the expectations of the ELCA and of those founding charter members—the heartfelt call to worship God and service neighbors—all these initial expectations and dreams remain the foundation upon which we build. Family of Christ Lutheran Church has been through substantial change. But the love of God has not changed. Nor has our respect for God's Word. Nor is our need to offer Our Lord praise and thanks any lessened. And our concern for others in need remains central to all we do. So let us be mindful and thankful for those who, from the beginning, set forward a worthy example of what it means to be the Body of Christ, and who by hard work and perseverance and faithfulness, have made it possible for all of us at Family of Christ to find a spiritual home and a worthy ministry.

We are saved by God's grace through faith. We are saved by God, simply because God loves us. We receive the gift of salvation through the simple act of trusting it to be true. God has given the gift. Faith is what unwraps the gift and makes it our own. Our job is not to save people—God does that! Rather, our job is to introduce people to God's promise, to tell the story of Jesus, to encourage one another to open our heart to His promise. This is a lofty endeavor. It is the kernel, the core... or as the bible tells it, 'the pearl of great price.' For this, we give up everything else. To know Jesus and believe in God is the essence of life.

That said, how are we doing with this most important ministry? Good! Here's how we know - you continue to invite your friends and neighbors and family... all the people who you care about the most... you continue to invite these most special people to Family of Christ, to be companions with you in this ministry. This is the most we can ask of one another, and also the least we can do in order to be the Body of Christ. We are growing in the numbers of people who count themselves as partners in this mission. More importantly, we are growing in our depth of faith, in our trust of God, and in our commitment to those in need, be they within this congregation, in this community or in some distant land. Let us continue to invite others to embrace, and to be embraced, by the Spirit of a living and loving God so very active in this place.

Ministry has challenges. The Christian church has given rise to voices that are, at times, strident and just downright bitter. The harshness of the rhetoric has not been lost, especially to our children, most notably the ever-increasing numbers of young adults who simply want nothing to do with the church. Please receive my heartfelt thanks for being a voice of compassion and love, for offering words of mercy and acceptance to those on the periphery, for making space in your hearts, even when doubt and confusion are part of your own journey. You have maintained your commitment to conscience. More remarkably, you have allowed others to do the same. This is a great gift to the Church universal, as well as a great gift to the people of this community and congregation.

This has been a difficult year because of the economic recession. Without the kind of work that offers a liveable wage, life is hard. Many prayers have been offered at Family of Christ for an end to these hardships. Those prayers will continue. In addition, prayers will continue for the support of Family of Christ, for there to be clarity and transparency regarding the financial needs of the church, for there to be an unshakable focus on sound theology and right thinking when it comes to the issue of stewardship. Rest assured that our ministry together has never been, nor will it ever be defined by the budget. Money does not get to be the loudest voice in the chorus of needs. On the other hand, we dare not neglect our commitment to pay the bills; nor do we want to underestimate the powerful good that God can do with our resource gifts, our money.

I am deeply thankful for the leadership that was offered by Kris Smith and Brian Knapp, as co-chairs of our latest capital appeal, Growing in Faith. I am thankful for the ongoing hard work of Steve Huseby, our Financial Secretary; Angie Korsa, our Congregational Treasurer; and Doris Petersen, our Contributions Coordinator. Doug Windhorn, our council President, did yeoman-level work for the Fall Stewardship Pledge Appeal, in formulating the proposed budget for 2010. As always, a most sincere thanks goes to you people, who in spite of very difficult realities, shared your time, talent and resources for the good of others, and for the good of Family of Christ Lutheran Church. For all your giving, I am deeply grateful.

The work of the church moves forward on the shoulders and in the hearts of ordinary people. Much of the planning for our ministry starts with the staff, with Karen Brettingen working with volunteers; with Sherry Goodman and Jesi Pettit working with the youth; with Amanda Boe working with education; with Laura Heyne working with issues of congregational life; and with Beth Mangold and Stephanie Devine working with music and worship. We are so fortunate! We are so blessed by these people! They are faithful and talented and committed and loving and fun. They are wonderful leaders of the Church because they are faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Not last and not least, we continue to be blessed by the good work of our janitors, Dan Benson and Quentin Pratt. We have a lovely and very functional church facility. I am very thankful to Dan and Quentin for the extraordinary work they do in maintaining our church building. Mary Jeanne Benson, the last on our list to thank, is master of 10,000 details, and some days, more. Mary Jeanne is often the first to greet those new to the church, the first to help those who need a hand, the first to direct those who are lost, the first to console those who are in pain. It's a big job, and Mary Jeanne does it so well. Really well.

As a congregation, we are not old, but we are no longer young. We have seemingly glided to easy and comfortable places. And we have had to work hard to get beyond some very uncomfortable places. We are in the midst of ministry that is challenging and also unbelievably rewarding. We have successfully expanded our facility, and still have a sanctuary yet to build some time in the future. We stumble from time to time. I stumble from time to time. Yet there are lives being saved, marriages being saved, homes being saved, strangers and guests being saved, people on the other side of the world being saved... because you keep showing up and asking God "What next?" The challenges are real and many, but by God's grace and mercy, Family of Christ Lutheran Church... that would be all of us together... this church continues to give birth to miracles. Most of them are quiet, not flashy. But let there be no mistake, God is in this place and among you people, and good things are happening, praise be to God.

In His Service,  
Lon Larson, Pastor

## Family of Christ Lutheran Church

### Membership Statistics

2009

Total Members (Baptized)	569
Confirmed Members	409
Total Member Households	167
Active Non-Members	14
New Members	31
Number of New Member Households:	14
Members Reinstated	4
Members Deceased in 2008:	1
Members Transferred Out:	7
Removed to Membership Archive:	34
Worship Services:	99
Average Weekly Worship Attendance:	214
Baptisms:	12
Weddings:	1
Funerals:	1
Confirmation:	16
First Communion:	14
Presentation of Bibles (3rd Graders):	13
Sunday School Enrollment:	80
Youth Program (6th-12th):	106

## Congregational Life

As I start my second year working at FOC, I'm still focused on the questions I began asking when I took this position. Questions like... How can we grow together? How can we better serve each other and our community? How can we grow in our relationships to God?

Last winter, I began Family Business. This is the online newsletter sent out about every other week that provides information to the congregation about events and activities and schedules for things happening over the next several weeks. It has also been used to inform the congregation of cancellations of activities due to weather and to invite the congregation to events such as Pastor Lon's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. It's become another useful tool to help get information out to our members.

We continue to welcome new members into the congregation. Over the past year, 14 families joined and we held multiple new member orientations. Beginning last June, we changed the orientations from Sunday evenings to a brunch following second service worship. This has been a positive change in that it's a very warm and informal way to welcome people into our congregation and it's nice for families to not make another trip. We will continue to find ways to improve this area of ministry. During the orientations, we try to focus on getting to know the new members better and introducing them to some of our many areas of ministry. We also really enjoyed having a receiving line for our new members at the end of several services, but suspended it due to the flu season this winter.

I have attended workshops this year for the Book of Faith initiative through the ELCA and have committed to making Family of Christ a Book of Faith church. This means providing multiple opportunities for Bible study. Please see the Education report for a full listing of the opportunities I have developed this year. I hope to expand these opportunities into 2010 and beyond.

Connections Sunday was September 20<sup>th</sup> this year. I would like to push that back into October next year. We did not have the turnout that I know we can get. We can really get people excited about our wonderful ministries here and next year I will use what I've learned the last two years to make it more fun and better attended than ever. Our leaders did a great job this year of providing give-away items and fun table displays, etc. The standout booths were: Operations, Yoga, Children's Ed., Spiritual Spa, Music and Bloodmobile, but many other tables had great visuals and information as well.

Weekly yoga classes are a growing ministry that took root over the last year. Our own Margaret Paradise teaches on Saturday mornings at 7 a.m. and Sunday evenings at 6:30 p.m. We are so blessed to have her providing this wonderful gift of better health for free to members!

Last February we held a Women's Prayer Breakfast and had the ministry group *Espresso Yourself* speak about where God is leading us. They entertained and enlightened us with fun skits and singing, as well. We prayed, listened, ate, sang and laughed with about 30 women. This February we will be expanding into a Women's Ministry Spiritual Spa day. We hope to serve at least 40 women at this event. We will grow deep roots of faith by exploring various ways we can tend to our faith lives with the theme of *Love Grows a Garden*. I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to our great team of Mary Sadek, Becky Nystuen, Lyndy Werdin, Kaelene Klemick-Hutchinson and Pat Petrich for all their dedication to providing faith enriching opportunities for the women of FOC.

Last spring, Andrea Olson and I organized our first annual Gifts of the Spirit Talent Show on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. There were thirteen acts and a great deal of fun was had by all. After the show we had an ice cream social and had great attendance for both. The date has been set for this year's show so plan now which of God's gifts you will share with the congregation. This year's show will be Sunday, April 11, at noon. Mark your calendars and start planning your act!

This year's summer picnic felt like a fall picnic! Despite the strong winds and cold temperatures, everyone had a good time. Lots of people braved the elements to share a meal and there was a fun softball game that lasted until almost dark! Also, during the summer we participated in the Lutheran Night at the Twins Game in August. We rode the light rail to the Metrodome and had a great time. Next year we'll go again and watch them play at the new Target Field! Lutheran night is a great fellowship event that is fun for the whole family. Join us next summer!

We've expanded the ACTS groups that began last year. ACTS stands for Adult Christians Together Socially. We're organizing groups twice per year now. They are groups that meet several times for fellowship and fun and then they are done. Look for groups forming each fall and spring. We also try to include new members in each group that gets formed. It's a great way to get to know other members on an informal basis and have fun.

Although we didn't officially become a Stephen Ministry congregation this year, Janet Delperdang and I have worked hard to lay the foundations for bringing this ministry to FOC in the next year or two. There are so many situations where a Stephen's lay minister could be of immeasurable use and comfort to members of our faith community that we are committed to the work of raising funds to train leaders and bring this great ministry to our congregation.

I really have been blessed to be a part of this wonderful congregation and this great staff for over a year now. I appreciate all the wonderful ideas for ministry that many of you have brought to me and encourage you to please continue to suggest new ministries and be a part of events and programs as we move into the future together, growing in our relationships to each other and to God.

Blessings,  
Laura Heyne, Congregational Life

## Music Ministries

This annual report comes at a unique time of transition in the music ministry of Family of Christ. Andrea Olson finished her ministry here in June, concluding three years of growth and deepening of the worship experience within this congregation under her leadership as Music Director. Her diligent work and deep faith left a legacy of members involved in the music ministry of this church, committed to continued growth in rich worshipping experiences for this congregation. I am blessed to have been called to share in this ministry, following her vibrant music leadership! The posting on Luther Seminary's website listed the position as "Director of Worship and Music". The word selection for this position was one major reason I applied, because I felt this was a congregation that understood the vision for this ministry.

My vision for the purpose of music ministry is to enable the full, conscious, and active participation of the congregation by inspiring those assembled to worship in song. Music Ministry embraces its calling when those leading approach all music as disciples of Christ first, and servants of the people second, offering music that connects with the congregation's hearts, minds, spirits, and finally voices, thereby fostering and cultivating each member's relationship with God. As a church musician I see that music was not designed for the glory of humanity, but to reflect the glory of God. My desire is to use voices, hearts, and instruments to lift up the song of the *people* of God, while offering pastoral care as a layperson to the members within this congregation and the community which you serve, to the best of my ability.

As I was perusing Andrea's report from 2008, I noted her second paragraph, the beginning portion of which I will quote: "Rarely mentioned in official records are all the unplanned, personal events that change and mold a congregation and worship life. This past year presented many various sorts of hardships for several of us involved in the music and worship ministries." My own beginning here was evidence of unplanned, personal events. My personal struggle with severe back problems resulting in major surgery altered significantly my beginning months with Family of Christ following my official starting date of August 15th. God's work becomes even more obvious when we as God's servants are weakened. Lill Sather graciously filled in for me while we were finalizing the hiring of Stephanie Devine as choir/church accompanist. Stephanie stepped in not only as an accompanist, but as the interim Family Choir director just at the time I was facing hospitalization and surgery. We are truly blessed to have her musical talents, vibrant personality and strength of purpose and commitment. She ably took the reins with choral and keyboard leadership while I worked on worship planning from home during recovery. My first Sunday back in November was without Stephanie, since *she* was recovering from major hernia surgery. Thanks to many prayers and good healing, she was able to rejoin us after Thanksgiving. You will have to ask her about her foiled plans to remain a vegetarian and the little 'cow' that stands sentry in the corner, quietly overseeing the activity at the keyboard! Hardly a day goes by that I don't give thanks for God's providence, healing hand, and the collective beautiful spirit of our church musicians who supported and ministered to Stephanie and myself during difficult health events!

Since my return in November to work on site, I have been doing my best to catch up and finally work ahead with future planning for the music ministry programs. Thankfully, the programs have not dropped off through the rough times of the fall, but are going strong and growing! I would like to mention a few highlights:

**Summer Worship:** Lill Sather provided skillful keyboard leadership as interim pianist along with vocal leadership from members of the Worship Ensemble (and probably others of whom I am unaware).

**September 6<sup>th</sup>** – Women's ensemble led worship

**September 13<sup>th</sup> – Rally Sunday:** Outdoor worship with Rick Heyne, Wendi Anderson (vocals and guitar), Becky Nystuen, and Deena Jeffries leading as the Worship Ensemble - very exciting! The children also sang one of their songs from VBS

**September 27<sup>th</sup>** – Family Choir singing for the first time in the fall for both services

**October 4<sup>th</sup> – Tanzania Sunday** with guest percussionist, Krista Johnson. Family Choir again led worship for both services—a great experience of a cappella singing with a beautiful combination of rhythm and movement.

**November 1<sup>st</sup> – All Saints Sunday:** “Pie Jesu” choir anthem with Becky Nystuen as soloist. It was a truly moving anthem for the singers as well as the congregation.

**November 15<sup>th</sup>** – This was significant for *me*, as it was my first Sunday back following surgery!

**November 22<sup>nd</sup> – Christ the King Sunday:** The Sunday school children sang “King of Kings” and brought a joyful spirit to the opening of our 10:45 worship service. They are scheduled presently to sing on Transfiguration Sunday (February 14<sup>th</sup>) and Palm Sunday (March 28<sup>th</sup>). I feel it is important to draw all children into the ministry of song, which will also help the choir programs in future years.

**November 25<sup>th</sup> – Thanksgiving Eve:** Vocal contributions by both the Family Choir and a mixed ensemble provided added inspiration to a lovely service of Thanksgiving.

**December 20<sup>th</sup> – Youth Band:** My first time with the Youth Band, combined with the Worship Ensemble and guest percussionist, Ron Heyne. Wow. It was an exciting Sunday morning of high energy and many great voices of our youth leading worship on the final Sunday in Advent. They are scheduled again to provide leadership in worship for this coming February 14<sup>th</sup>.

**December 24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Eve:** Alana Anderson provided beautiful flute music with Stephanie Devine throughout the worship service, and members of the Kids’ Choir sang with the Family Choir, both with an anthem and also the beloved “Silent Night” carol that is a tradition at Family of Christ. This year, “Silent Night” grew out of the second anthem, “Peace, Peace”, arr. by Fred Bock. This may well become a future tradition at Family of Christ. We hope next year the weather will be more cooperative, although the 4 o’clock service was filled to well-overflowing!

I am looking forward to the growth of all the music teams as we enter into 2010. Grateful for faithfulness and enthusiasm of present members of the Family Choir, Worship Ensemble, Youth Band and Kids’ Choir, I feel that Stephanie and I are ready to offer new musical challenges to these disciples of Christ and servants of this church. With the changes in programming for the youth, Kids’ Choir now is open to all children grades 3-5 and the Youth Band has added 6<sup>th</sup> grade to its roster. The Worship Ensemble is involved most Sundays leading worship, so we would like to see that grow as well to provide more opportunity for rotation of Sunday morning leadership responsibilities. I am thankful for Wendi Anderson’s faithful instrumental leading with guitar and Alana’s willingness to come back and play her flute in worship when she is on break from school. So much talent and heart from within this congregation makes this position as Director of Worship and Music a joy to hold! I know I will have *much* more to share with you from 2010 when I have had a full year for reporting!

Blessings be with you all,  
Elizabeth (Beth) Mangold

## YOUTH MINISTRY

As I wrap up my tenth year on staff here at Family of Christ, I can't believe God has blessed me so much.

I have watched your children grow up. They have been blessed, as well, by this church, by all of you and by one another. And I have witnessed God blessing their lives over and over again with his powerful love!

This year (Jan-May) I worked with Jesi Pettit, our assistant youth director, on engaging and involving the high school youth. She developed a program for 10-12<sup>th</sup> grade youth. They met once or twice a month to talk, read, discuss a topic of interest to them, play games, paint a mural and connect with God. She also worked closely with the twelve Peer Leaders (youth leaders). These high school students were chosen and trained to help mentor the 7<sup>th</sup> graders as well as the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade youth group. These student leaders met faithfully each month to develop their leadership skills and work on any issues they might have.

Jesi and I met with all of the youth leaders in what we called "one on ones". We met in a location of their choice (coffee shop, Dairy Queen, etc.) During these hour long visits we were able to talk more privately about how they were doing and find out if there were things we should be working on and what needs they each had. Each youth leader met one time with us during the school year.

We also continued with our monthly M & M Nights (Mentor & Mentee) for all confirmation students and adult & high school mentors. The 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade youth group (KFC) also met about once a month.

The Sunday CrossWalk education hour continued, as well, with Jesi and I taking turns leading the group in discussions and games.

The CrossWalk youth welcomed the congregation down to the youth room for an official "Open House" to show off the wonderful space that was built for them. Just previous to that, they participated in the Capital Fund Drive by selling blank blanket squares for people to draw on (How have you been blessed by Family of Christ?) They were to return their completed blanket square and the youth created a "Blessings Blanket" to display in the prayer room. They raised over \$200 towards the building fund.

Summer brought the Wednesday night BS/VB/CF nights (Bible Study, Volleyball and Campfire). This was a wonderful midweek get-together that involved all ages from recent 5<sup>th</sup> grade graduates to returning college students.

Two new things we did the summer of 2009: Flag Football with St. John's Lutheran Church Youth (June) and the 3-day Christian music festival in Willmar, MN - Sonshine Fest. Both were memorable and hope to be re-visited again.

In September when CrossWalk returned, Jesi and I made the decision to reorganize the CW group with her taking on the high school youth and me having the middle schoolers for all of the small group discussions. She had developed strong connections with the high schoolers during the Wednesday night "high school nights" (now called AGAPE) and it felt like the right thing to do.

I wanted to build the middle school group and in order to do that I realized that the sixth grade (new - comers to the CrossWalk group) needed their own group as well. Since Wednesday nights had the 7-9<sup>th</sup> graders in confirmation and the 10-12<sup>th</sup> graders in AGAPE with Jesi, we created Fusion - a group that would "fuse" the 6<sup>th</sup> graders into their new CrossWalk youth group. Fusion began meeting the end of September and has been growing ever since. We took on Laura Heyne's "Book of Faith challenge" to read 52 Bible stories during the year. So each week, we read a Bible story and play games.

One other new thing we did during this past year was participate in an overnight stay/breakfast at the Simpson Men's Shelter in Minneapolis. A group of 10 stayed overnight on the floor over the shelter, got up early and made and served the men their breakfast before they had to head out by 7 a.m. This became one of the youth's favorite servant projects. They went to the shelter 3 different times.

Wednesday night pizza continued so all those participating in any of the Wednesday evening activities had a chance to have something to eat.

The youth also continued servicing the pop machine as an ongoing fundraiser.

The summer mission trip was another highlight of the year with the trip to the Eastern Shores of Virginia. The group consisted of 23 students and 6 adults. It was an amazing journey!

As you can tell, I could go on and on with the busy-ness... the wonder... and the joy that this ministry has brought to me. But I will stop now and just say thank you to all who helped to make the youth ministry as wonderful as it was. Those of you who drove, chaperoned, fixed food, shopped, donated money, lifted us up in prayer, made phone calls, taught them songs, mentored them, hugged them, talked to them, learned their names and all the generous people who have supported them through all of the many mission trip fundraisers - You all rock! THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!

Keep Shining.... It makes life so much brighter!  
Sherry Goodman

## President's Report

As 2009 comes to a close, we are in the middle of another winter. I recently read an article that said winter can be a harsh season of blizzards, dreary skies, leafless trees and brown grass. But winter is so important. If the grass didn't freeze, if the trees didn't shed, if the flowers didn't fade, we wouldn't have such rich foliage and vibrant growth in the spring. Maybe you're going through a winter season in your life right now... maybe it's the loss of a job, a serious illness, or death of a family member. If so, just remember, growth comes with life's winter seasons. It's a time when life becomes more focused... when priorities become more clear... it's a time when we come to understand what life is truly all about... relationships... with God, family and friends. The FOCUS newsletter was made available on our church website in 2009. In preparation for writing this report, I went back and reviewed those issues and it was very uplifting to see very clearly that these relationships are flourishing here at Family of Christ. If you haven't done so, I suggest you too take some time and go back through old issues of the FOCUS and see just how many good things are going on in our church. I've said it before and I'll say it again. Family of Christ Lutheran Church may not be getting bigger but from where I sit, we are certainly getting stronger every day.

We continue to be blessed with so many members serving Family of Christ by volunteering for various roles and responsibilities. Thanks to every one of you for all you do behind the scenes and for your dedication, as the church could not operate without you! We are also blessed with the continued guidance of Pastor Lon Larson and the support of his wife Margaret. A simple thank you just doesn't seem like it's enough sometimes, but we sincerely do thank you for your leadership and the Christian example both Lon and Margaret set for all of us. We are equally blessed to have a growing church staff that brings a wide range of talent to the table in keeping this place running. Thank you so much Amanda Boe, Dan Benson, Mary Jeanne Benson, Karen Brettingen, Stephanie Devine, Sherry Goodman, Laura Heyne, Angie Korsas, Beth Mangold, Doris Petersen, Jesi Pettit and Quentin Pratt for keeping things running so smoothly. Like so many of the volunteers at Family of Christ, much of what you do goes unnoticed, so to all of you, your efforts are very much appreciated!

Over a year ago, the council was approached with an offer of an anonymous donation to allow Family of Christ to purchase a 12-passenger van and enclosed cargo trailer. There were no restrictions on the gift, except that it needed to be used for the ministry of Family of Christ. After some discussion, the council decided to accept the offer, fully aware of annual costs of insurance and upkeep, but confident that receiving this gift would be a blessing, especially for those involved in the youth program. Choices were made on make, model, color, etc., and in mid-November, we took delivery of a brand new 12-passenger Chevy van and 10-foot Featherlite trailer. However, once the van and trailer arrived, we realized the door on the church garage was not high enough to allow the van and trailer inside. Once again we were blessed in that the donation also covered the cost to modify the garage to accept a new foot door and both the van and trailer are now being stored inside the garage out of the elements. Thank you so much anonymous donor for your generosity!

Operationally, there are always landscaping, technology and building projects going on throughout the year. However, 2009 brought to a close two major, much-needed, long-standing repair issues with the church building that have been on the "to-do" list for years. The original church building was completed in 1994 and is now 16 years old. Due to the years, the elements and possible lack of attention, several window frames in the sanctuary and in one of the Sunday school rooms were literally falling apart due to rotting wood. I am happy to report, all the damaged windows have now been replaced and every other window was rejuvenated with two coats of polyurethane in an effort to keep this from happening in the foreseeable future. The other major project was correcting a severe water drainage problem on the west side of the new addition and in the back of the church where the old and new buildings meet. Lack of proper drainage caused the sump pump to run almost continually as water was just being dumped outside and recycled as it had nowhere to go. This created a swamp in the grassy area near the rear entrance making it impossible to mow, stained the concrete in that area and caused standing water and/or ice build up on the sidewalks. It was a major excavating effort but that problem, too, has been resolved and is now put to bed.

Still yet another blessing for Family of Christ is the grant we accepted from the Winter Wheat Foundation back in 2006. This grant gives our church money each year for five years for the purpose of funding, in part, the need for continued growth of staff and programs at Family of Christ. 2009 completes the fourth year of this grant which leaves just one more year of this source of revenue. The church council will continue to be diligent in its efforts to ensure the allocation of these funds is used to meet the intent of the original proposal. We also plan to re-apply for this grant but there is no guarantee we will receive any additional funding, so we need to pray and find a way to replace this gift by our own giving in 2011 or we may be forced to cut the very programs this grant money allowed us to create.

In January 2009, we kicked off our "Growing in Faith" capital fund appeal designated specifically for mortgage payments and necessary capital improvements to the church building. Nearly half of the families of our congregation participated by turning in three-year pledges totaling \$475,410. A special thanks goes to Brian Knapp and Kris Smith for heading up the campaign as co-chairs. Thanks also to the countless numbers of you who worked behind the scenes on committees, made phone calls, prepared food for special celebrations, etc. The campaign would not have been a success without you. Finally, thank you to all of you who made very generous faith-promises to our capital appeal. You are all making a difference!

The theme for this year's annual stewardship appeal was "Continue the Journey" stressing that no one person can keep this church afloat alone, but that together we are strong. Just over half of the congregation (57%) submitted pledges for the 2010 general fund totaling \$222,728. For your gifts, and for your commitment to this ministry, and for your faithfulness in each new day, thank you! Some have very good reasons not to pledge but the participation rate still seems low . . . remember, "Together We Are Strong." I would maintain that without everyone's contribution, large or small, as a congregation we are less than we could be. While as a congregation we should be thankful for those God has called to give the larger amounts, even smaller amounts that are growing each year can make a huge and essential contribution. To sustain the church's current operating costs, we need to be receiving pledges in the neighborhood of \$280,000 per year without having to make changes in next year's budget. In addition, this number will need to increase by another \$91,000 in 2011 if we are unable to renew our Winter Wheat Grant. The economy remains tough but please don't underestimate the good each of you can do with your gifts and have faith that God will provide.

Last but not least, thank you to outgoing council vice president Deb Cathcart. Your wisdom, guidance and time donated to the mission of Family of Christ is very much appreciated!

I will close with some devotional thoughts my mom sent me recently. God's faithful care will extend to every day of the new year. We can count on that promise. God holds the future in His hands, with grace sufficient day by day. Through good or ill, He gently leads if we let Him have His way. The "what" of our future is determined by the "Who" of eternity. Are we better off than we were a year ago? The year we have just lived was another year under the grace and care of our Savior, who does all things well. He worked in our lives not just what was good for us, but what was BEST for us. This has been another year lived in His forgiveness and life. Maybe this year brought heartache or pain or financial difficulties. Maybe things were not easy and smooth. But through it all, Christ has been with us. His Word has sustained us. No matter what our feelings, dreams or emotions tell us about another year gone by, look not to them but to Christ. In Him, we have all that we need. Much like I ended last year's report, there continues to be so many good things happening here at Family of Christ and as we do our best to determine the future direction for our congregation's future ministry, please consider responding prayerfully and generously to the mission of our church by giving, getting involved, building up some momentum and making this a better place than it already is.

Respectfully,

Douglas Windhorn  
Council President, Family of Christ

## BUDGET SUMMARY

REVENUE	2009 Budget	2009 Actuals	2010 Budget
General Fund - Revenue	\$280,000	\$266,174	\$265,000
Capital Fund - Income		\$149,602	\$0
Capital Fund - Payout	\$152,064	\$69,636	\$152,064
Winter Wheat - Payout	\$91,917	\$87,257	\$91,917
Savings - Depletion/CF Loan	\$46,487	\$24,900	\$0
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$570,468</b>	<b>\$597,569</b>	<b>\$508,981</b>

EXPENSES	2009 Budget	2009 Actuals	2010 Budget
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>			
BENEVOLENCE	\$28,000	\$25,212	\$21,200
EDUCATION	\$9,900	\$8,943	\$6,400
FELLOWSHIP	\$3,500	\$3,816	\$2,000
FIN/STEWARDSHIP	\$1,100	\$1,054	\$1,100
OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$20,200	\$21,870	\$20,400
OFFICE SALARIES	\$291,784	\$275,927	\$276,797
OUTREACH	\$7,500	\$5,316	\$4,500
PROPERTY	\$47,000	\$39,892	\$41,900
WORSHIP	\$8,420	\$7,573	\$5,118
MISC/PREPAID	\$1,000	\$1,991	\$700
<b>GF EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$418,404</b>	<b>\$391,594</b>	<b>\$380,115</b>
<b>CAPITAL FUND</b>			
MORTGAGE **	\$152,064	\$166,234	\$152,064
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	\$0	\$21,667	\$0
APPEAL FEES	\$0	\$18,074	\$0
<b>CF EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$152,064</b>	<b>\$205,975</b>	<b>\$152,064</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$570,468</b>	<b>\$597,569</b>	<b>\$532,179</b>

	2009 Budget	2009 Actual	2010 Budget
TOTAL INCOME	\$570,468	\$597,569	\$508,981
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$570,468	\$597,569	\$532,179
<b>NET</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>-\$23,198</b>

**BANK BALANCES as of 12/31/09:**

General Fund Checking Account	\$4,631
General Fund Savings *	\$12,428
Winter Wheat Savings	\$99,897
Capital Fund Savings	\$62,662

**Total:** \$179,618

\* The amount in the General Fund Savings is the amount that has been contributed for special funds like the Memorial Fund and Tanzania Funds.

\*\* An additional \$14,170 was applied toward the mortgage principal from the prepaid Growing In Faith contributions collected in January and February of 2009.

## CAPITAL FUND OVERVIEW

Share the Vision	
Pledged	\$676,639
Given through 2008	\$621,204
	91.81%
<b>STV Giving through 2008</b>	<b>\$621,203.60</b>
STV Interest	
2005	\$3,302.63
2006	\$8,835.86
2007	\$15,695.30
2008	\$1,275.29
<b>Total STV through 2008</b>	<b>\$650,312.68</b>
Expenses through 2008:	
2005	\$105,075.53
2006	\$55,817.00
2007	\$196,759.00
2008	\$160,362.40
<b>Total STV Expenses</b>	<b>\$518,013.93</b>
2008 GIF Campaign Fees	\$13,263.77
<b>STV Balance end of 2008</b>	<b>\$119,034.98</b>

Growing in Faith	
Pledged	\$475,410.00
Given through 2009	\$149,449.00
	31.44%
<b>Capital Fund Beg. Balance</b>	<b>\$119,034.98</b>
Contributions	
2009	\$149,449.00
2010	
2011	
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>\$149,449.00</b>
Capital Fund Interest	
2009	\$152.88
2010	
2011	
<b>Total Interest</b>	<b>\$152.88</b>
Capital Fund Expenses	
2009	\$205,974.56
2010	
2011	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$205,974.56</b>
<b>CF Balance</b>	<b>\$62,662.30</b>

2009 Payout \$56,372.68

**2009 Capital Improvements:**

Drainage Repair	\$14,455.00
Parking Lot Striping	\$724.25
Windows	\$5,304.54
Electrical Repairs	\$1,182.10
	\$21,665.89

**BENEVOLENCE 2009**

General Fund Income:	\$59,522.55	10%	\$5,952.26
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St. Paul Area Synod:

ELCA Mission Support		\$5,250.00
Bega Kwa Bega		\$500.00
Synod Assembly		\$345.00
Lakeville Senior Parties		\$100.00

<b>1st Quarter Benevolence:</b>		<b><u>\$6,195.00</u></b>
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Running Balance:

General Fund Income YTD:	\$120,458.02	10%	\$12,045.80
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ELCA Mission Support		\$5,250.00
Luther Park		\$500.00
Highview Christiania - Registry		\$50.00

<b>2nd Quarter Benevolence:</b>		<b><u>\$5,800.00</u></b>
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Balance:

General Fund Income YTD:	\$181,312.61	10%	\$18,131.26
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ELCA Mission Support		\$4,541.00
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<b>3rd Quarter Benevolence:</b>		<b><u>\$4,541.00</u></b>
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Balance

General Fund Income YTD:	\$252,119.55	10%	\$25,211.96
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Foodshelf Donations		\$1,812.92
Bega Kwa Bega		\$600.00
ELCA Mission Support		\$6,263.04

<b>4th Quarter Benevolence:</b>		<b><u>\$8,675.96</u></b>
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<b>Total Benevolence:</b>	<b><u><u>25,211.96</u></u></b>
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## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Community Relations consists of three groups:

**OUTREACH**— responsible for planning and expediting programs and events which enhance the spiritual life of prospective and current members.

**PARISH FELLOWSHIP** – responsible for planning and carrying out programs and events that encourage fellowship and social interaction among members.

**SOCIAL CONCERNS** – responsible for identifying and addressing socioeconomic needs in our community.

**Outreach** – During 2009 Family of Christ welcomed 14 new family units and one reinstated family unit into membership (35 total; 28 adults and 8 children) and hosted several New Member Orientation sessions. Thanks to Barb Nylund for all of the time and energy she has put into welcoming and helping to acclimate our new members.

**Parish Fellowship** continues to help us all get to know one another better by providing fellowship opportunities to connect us, both after services where we can meet new members and re-connect with long-time members, as well as with the special meal opportunities they so graciously serve. A big thank you to all those who have helped with getting the goodies to church, setting up, serving and cleaning up. Parish Fellowship is also responsible for assisting with the Bloodmobile, organizing and decorating for the Ladies' Luncheon in December, All Committee suppers, potlucks on Rally Sunday and after the Christmas Program, serving for funerals, weddings and special receptions, as well as soup suppers and special event Sunday treats. Glenda Lind, Lori Hall, Jeanie Bergquist, and the rest of the committee deserve your thanks for all they do.

Soup and Bread continues to see more and more members come in out of the cold for a warm winter supper. A bonus - the soups just keep getting better and better, with lots of the old favorites still being served. The opportunity to meet and get to know those who may attend a different service is a gift to us all and another opportunity to get to know our many new members.

Parish Fellowship also oversees the Prayer Chain Ministry. Our thanks to Lori Hall, Lisa Cecchini and the members of the prayer chain. You are very much appreciated.

**Social Concerns** —Committee is probably not the correct name for how we have been approaching social concerns at Family of Christ. We are more or less individuals who have been gifted by God with servant's hearts. These individuals bring passion, albeit subtle, to their particular area of social concern and help to provide ways for other members of our congregation to give of themselves to help others.

Our areas of service to others can be divided into three kinds: collection, direct participation and a combination of the two:

The first, collection, provides an opportunity for many members of our congregation to help without a large time commitment:

**Food Shelf:** *We have continued to collect food for Community Action Council's food shelf. We would like to thank Maury Bartz for faithfully delivering 84 bags of food which we collected this last year (This was up from 74 in 2008). This is in addition to the \$750.72 we have donated in cash.*

**Shoes for Haiti:** *Marion Clay was going on a medical mission trip to Haiti, one of the items that her group hoped to be able to provide were shoes. We were able to provide her with several boxes of new and gently used shoes.*

**Kitchen Kits:** *We worked with the St. Paul Area Council of Churches (SPACC), to provide household items to women who have found they need to rebuild their households after leaving a shelter. Our donations filled 2 large boxes.*

**School Tools:** *This was another opportunity where we were able to team up with SPACC to provide children with the school supplies they need to be successful. We were able to deliver 9 bags of supplies as well as 4 backpacks.*

Our second service area provides our members with the opportunity for active participation:

**Feed My Starving Children (FMSC):** *On June 13<sup>th</sup> Laura Heyne led a group from our congregation to FMSC in Eagan, to put together nutritious meals to help combat hunger in impoverished nations around the world. Then again on January 23, 2010, Laura provided her guidance with another 20 members of our congregation. We are pleased to announce that Jane Wegleitner will be helping to organize our future participation with FMSC.*

**Trinity Care Center (Gift Garland):** *Once again we had the wonderful opportunity to provide Christmas gifts and spend a marvelous afternoon with the 65 residents of Trinity Care Center. We had about 75 members of our congregation in attendance. This event was a tremendous success due to the wonderful organizational skills of Kristin Cuddigan.*

The last type of service opportunity we were able to provide for our members was a mixture of donating and participation:

**Fair Trade** - *This came in the form of the sale of Fair Trade products. These products are grown on small farms by hard working people who are often exploited by big business. We started selling coffee and chocolates, in hopes that the proceeds would eventually be enough for all the coffee we serve to be Fair Trade coffee. We would like to thank Mary Sadek and Kaelene Klemick-Hutchinson for helping with these sales.*

It is our hope that we have been able to provide enough variety to our social concerns to give everyone in our congregation opportunities to participate.

Respectfully Submitted: Sandy Soukup

## EDUCATION

Amanda Boe, Education Chair; Shannon Flegal, VBS coordinator, Sue Condon; Sunday School assistant coordinator; Ann Huseby, special programs; Angie Korsa, Christmas Program; (in need of volunteer) Adult Education.

The education program at Family of Christ continues to strive to meet the needs of the growing congregation. It has been a year of transition, change and growth. At the beginning of the year, Ann Huseby and I put together a pamphlet that tried to define the children's ministries programs and how people can become involved with them. We have tried new ways of doing things and have tried to strengthen programs that have been effective in the past.

The winter semester of Sunday School included a Lent Rotation of four weeks where we explored the meaning of lent. We had parents and teachers volunteer to run stations which the kids rotated through each week. We sent 80 dried soup mixes to a food shelf, baked buns, had a drama re-enactment and made crafts to take home.

Our 2009 Sunday School year ended with a "Gifts of the Spirit" talent show. This was a fun event, led by Laura Heyne, with many people from the congregation participating. It was the beginning of an annual event that we will look forward to at the end of each year.

The 1-2-3- group had a special opportunity this summer as Lill Sather came and offered a special music class. "God's Children Sing" was offered for children under the age of 3 and their siblings from June 21<sup>st</sup> -July 26<sup>th</sup>. There was no cost to parents; the funds to pay for the class came from the education budget. The 1-2-3 group also enjoyed some unseasonably cold July beach play days.

Vacation Bible School was from the "Group" series, with the theme of "Crocodile Dock". It was held August 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>. We tried something new this year and changed the time of day from morning to evenings. We started with a quick meal at 5:30, then began the festivities at 6:00 p.m. We had an outdoor kick-off picnic Sunday night where we served hotdogs and chips. Shannon Flegal was the lead coordinator of 80 participants and many volunteers. We created a decorating co-op with other churches this year so that we could re-use items and pass our decorations on after we were done using them. We enjoyed the evening time and will continue to do so this year, as well. The evening time offered two advantages that we were very pleased with; one, we had many working parents come and volunteer; two, we had kids who have never been able to attend our VBS be able to attend.

Sunday School began this year with Rally Sunday Service outside under an outdoor tent. We had one service at 9:30, then a kids' carnival, and potluck which followed. Parents also had an opportunity in the sanctuary with Laura Heyne and Janie Wegleitner as they spoke about the Book of Faith initiative. Rally Sunday was not as much of a success this year in attendance and we will be looking at ways in which to change this for next year.

Sunday School Curriculum: With 2009 fall curriculum we made a few changes from the previous spring. We decided on Augsburg Fortress' Akaloo program for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes. This web-based curriculum seems to fit these classes' educational needs very well. The other classrooms decided that the Augsburg's Spark curriculum best met the needs of this group of children. The children have Bibles that are used each week to look up that week's Bible lesson and complete a worksheet that is full of activities. The attendance in the fall was lower than average. Our winter semester has seen attendance gradually increase, especially in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades.

Our current teaching team includes: Amanda Boe & Corrine Peick in the preschool room; Kindergarten teacher is Jackie Knudsen; First grade is Karen Schmidberger, Second Grade, Tammy, Elizabeth and Amanda Juran; Third Grade, Sue Condon and Shannon Flegel; Fourth Grade, Kris Olsen; Fifth Grade, Kristin Cuddigan and Rhonda Arnold; and Alisa Lawrence has also helped us by maintaining order to the nursery and quiet room.

Elizabeth Mangold has been a wonderful addition to our Sunday morning gathering by providing an opening centered in faith and music for the kids for the first 15 minutes of each Sunday.

Elizabeth Mangold has continued to do work with the Children's Choir on Wednesday evenings. Their choir, along with the Sunday School kids, have all performed periodically during church services.

Angie Korsa was lead coordinator of the Christmas program this year. She and many volunteers did an amazing job putting together practices. The theme this year was "God made a way in a manger." We had a supporting cast of Sunday school students, volunteer actors and teachers. Together they pulled together another successful program. We had good attendance and another 'Reason for the Season' potluck hosted by our fabulous fellowship team.

Adult Education was not able to provide an adult forum during the education hour for the fall semester. We were able to start some Bible studies during the education hour for Advent and Lent; these were three and four week sessions led by Laura Heyne. We are still looking for someone to facilitate the program.

Beginning this fall, we've agreed to be a Book of Faith Congregation through the ELCA. As a part of that, we started a challenge to read a Bible story a week for 52 weeks. There is an on-line site where people can follow along with those and comment, etc. This is by invitation only, so if you'd like to participate in the on-line 52 Weeks study, contact Laura Heyne and she'll send you an invitation via email. Each week Laura posts a new story for discussion as we work chronologically through the Bible. There was an Advent study during the education hour titled "While We Wait" and attendance grew each of the four weeks of that study. The weekly Women's Bible study continues every Thursday morning at 7:00 a.m. and follows the gospel readings that we'll have in worship for the next Sunday.

Women's and Mens' Bible Study groups offered at FOC during the week include: Women's Book Study meeting the last Tuesday of every month, Men's Bible Study meeting every Tuesday and Thursday morning, Women's Thursday morning study and Women's Monthly ELCA Bible Study meeting the fourth Monday of the month.

In summary,

We are blessed with a miraculous group of staff and volunteers that make all of these programs happen. We will continue to strive to provide programs to meet the needs of our members. We will continue to listen to ideas and ask for input to give as many opportunities for people to strengthen their faith through faith education.

It has been a joyful task of serving as the education chair and children's ministries coordinator. Thank you for allowing me to do so.

Amanda Boe, Education Chair

## **OPERATIONS/PROPERTY**

Annual Spring Cleanup day was held, Saturday, May 16. As in previous years we had a great turnout and much was accomplished both inside and out. Many thanks to those who participated and we all look forward to this fellowship event again in 2010.

We continue to have our custodial and light maintenance duties performed by staff in a two week on/off arrangement. This works very well for all concerned. Lawn care and snow removal contracts continue with the same parties as in the past, J & J Bros. and Reisinger, respectively.

Major projects addressed included solving the drainage and landscaping issue on the south and southwest portions of the building and property, repairing and replacing sanctuary windows and the purchase of a 12 person van and trailer and changes to the garage per an anonymous donor.

Operations continues to welcome those willing to step forward to help maintain and improve the wonderful property we have been so blessed with. Those with special talents in building, grounds and equipment maintenance, construction, repairs, facility planning, or who are willing to learn or to provide their enthusiastic support are encouraged to contact us.

Thanks to all who are involved in this ministry. Your continued support is so greatly appreciated!

Operations Chair, Dan Benson

### **Landscaping Report 2009**

Outdoor spring clean-up was organized by Chuck and Deb Cathcart this year. Roger Gilb helped by delivering mulch. David Buswell and Max Werdin, Boy Scouts from our congregation, helped move landscaping rock. Doug Soderberg and Dan Benson also helped during the year with grounds upkeep.

J and J Landscaping, Joe Donner and Jared Simon, did the mowing. They also were in charge of maintaining the sprinkler system and some repairs to the church grounds from snow removal.

A large landscaping project was completed by Fenne's Outdoor Service to repair the church grounds after drainage problems were fixed on the south and west side of the church building. This involved regrading, rebuilding a boulder wall, landscape barrier, landscape rock removal and replacement and sod repairs.

Ethan Hellier completed an Eagle Scout project which involved the construction of 4 benches to allow for seating at the church entrances. A picnic table was added to the area near the cross and the cross was repainted in August. A large pine tree was donated by Diane and Rick Krueger, that will be planted on the west lawn this spring. The family of Dallas Blenkush is also planning a an outdoor memorial that will be installed summer of 2010.

—Kitty Soderberg

### **Altar Flowers 2009**

Altar flowers were given this year on 37 Sundays by 22 different people or families. People could order altar flowers or bring their own altar flower arrangements. Flora, Etc. in downtown Lakeville arranged and delivered the flowers that were ordered. There were 24 lilies, mums and tulips ordered for Easter and 14 poinsettias ordered for Christmas. Plants are from Eisele's Greenhouse in Apple Valley/Lakeville. Thanks to all who participated in this ministry. A special thanks to Vickie Heggen for all the flowers donated from her flower gardens.

—Kitty Soderberg

## YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM ANNUAL REPORT

Sherry and Jesi team efforts involving the youth in every way possible to teach them how much God loves them. Because of their excitement and energy, another great year of spiritual growth, with God at the center of it all, has been provided to our youth and all the adults who help make this program such a success.

Youth Ministries Team – A committee of 10 meet once a month to be liaisons in helping Sherry and Jesi fulfill their dreams of creative activities and learning to reach our 70+ youth. It is our goal to keep their spark lit at baptism strong and active. Sherry and Jesi spend countless hours planning activities which include all kids and their own learning style. What great leaders! Thanks also to this team for dedicating their time and talents.

With Wednesday “Church Night” growing strong, so does our Pizza Night by providing fellowship for families and friends before we all go to our own ministries.

KFC – Kids for Christ (*grades 4 & 5*) - Kids meet once a month. Sherry and Jesi plan games, activities and snacks using the youth leaders to execute.

CROSSWALK – (*grades 6–12*) - Meet on Sundays between church services. The kids meet as a group then divide into Middle/High School groups for more age appropriate discussions and lessons.

Fusion – (*grade 6*) - Meet on Wednesday Church nights. Bible study and lessons (include using the “Book of Faith”), games and activities are all planned to encourage kids to learn about God, meet new friends and have fun in the process.

AGAPE - (*grades 9-12*) - Meet on Wednesday Church nights. Although these kids have been confirmed, they have asked for this time to gather. This fall they studied “What it means to be Lutherans”. In addition, they play games and activities to open dialogue and enrich their faith while giving them a place to belong.

Youth Leaders – A group of 12 kids who are willing to commit extra time to meet among themselves for more spiritual growth, as well as be the “Go To” kids in mentoring the younger kids. They do this by planning the Fall Youth Retreat, being mentors in the M&M Program, and being available at CW and KFC to help execute Sherry and Jesi’s program.

M & M – 22 Adult Mentors/12 Student Mentors are matched up with 43 Mentees to grow our relationships between our youth and adults. Lots of planning goes into these 6 Wednesday nights for the group to meet while including the Youth Leaders in skits/games before the break-out in Small Group discussions. This program ensures confirmation students have at least one adult who cares and knows them and in many cases, a friend for life. Thanks to all who participate and make this a huge success.

Prayer Room – Located downstairs and across from the Youth Room is a room totally dedicated for quiet meditation - all youth and adults are welcome. Please come!

**YOUTH BUDGET FOR 2009 = \$1700** - The Youth Ministry Team tried to keep the costs for all youth ministry needs below \$1700, not including the Summer Mission Trip.

February – 16 kids attended the lock-in for Souper Bowl Blitz, with Service Projects where the kids broke into groups serving at 2 Men’s Shelter/Soup Kitchens.

March – Depot Skating Event with Spaghetti Factory Dinner. Joel from Luther Park came and talked to our youth over Ed. hour about summer camp. Mission Trip kids and chaperones attended an event for team building at a High Ropes Course in Loretto, MN.

April – 13 kids/10 adults attended/helped in our Night to Remember – an overnight lock-in where kids experienced the last hours of Jesus' life. KFC ended their year with "Luau for the Lord" and was a huge success.

May - End of the year Confirmation Party at FOC included volleyball and flag football. Kris Olsen brought and served the students ice cream sandwiches.

June - Our youth competed in FLAG FOOTBALL. Fun!

Summer – Wednesday Night BS/VB/CF (Bible Study/Volley Ball/Camp Fire) with our new pit was available for all 6-12 grade. In addition, some FOC Youth camped at Luther Park.

June/July Mission trip to Onancock, VA – 1300 miles (23 kids and 6 adults). Thanks to chaperones Becky Nystuen, Rhonda Arnold, Paul Nadon, Dan Benson, Sherry and Jesi. A very hard week of serving in many ministries, as well as fundraising \$15K prior to trip; (\$800/student) by baking goodies, bagging groceries, washing cars, assembling papers, serving breakfast, working a thrift store, selling floral arrangements, rent-a-kid and writing letters to family/friends. They couldn't have done it without the support of a kind and caring congregation like ours. THANK YOU!! Kudos to the kids and parents for all your hard work! This year we helped to support these organizations with our tithe money: Families Moving Forward, Luther Park, Dakota Woodlands, Simpson's Men's Shelter, Lewis House, Feed My Starving Children, and our Tanzania student – Enelika. The group donated a total of \$960 to these outside organizations.

July – Adults organized Necklace Sales. Sherry and Jesi took 7 kids to SonShine Festival in Willmar, MN.

August – New Youth Leaders were announced and attended a retreat and helped with VBS.

September - Annual Fall Retreat at Luther Park and Mission Trip wrap-up for Congregation.

October – DEDICATION OF THE VAN DONATED TO THE CHURCH!!!  
Sherry and Jesi took 9 kids to Cardboard Box City. The group raised money and awareness by sleeping in cardboard boxes on the Minnesota State Fair Grounds property.

November – Men's Shelter/Soup Kitchen. A group of high school students went to the Simpson Men's Shelter to sleep and then got up early to make & serve the men a hot breakfast.

December – Bell Ringing for Service Hours and a concert to Club 3 Degrees.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Cecchini, Youth Committee Chair

## 2009 Family of Christ Tanzania Mission

***“But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge,  
in complete earnestness and in your love for us—  
see that you also excel in the grace of giving.”  
2 Corinthians 8:7***

2009 continued to be a remarkable year for Family of Christ’s Tanzania Outreach Ministry. Even though 2009 was a tough economic year for many, members/family/friends of FOC continued their generous support and the following were accomplished in God’s name:

- 24 secondary student sponsorships (same level as 2008)
- 1 University of Dar Es Salaam student
- 1 St. Luke Foundation of Pharmacy diploma in pharmaceuticals student

Tanzania Sunday presentations helped raise funds to sponsor 24 secondary students. Other activities that raised additional funds included the selling of Bachman gift cards and Christmas tree skirts, hosting a BBQ hamburger/hot dog dinner after the Tanzania Sunday services, and selling Tanzania baskets, scarves & jewelry.

Frank Sanga, pharmacy student sponsored by FOC, continues his studies at Saint Luke Foundation School of Pharmacy in a diploma course in pharmaceuticals. After completion of the 18 month course in 2010, Frank will help teach pharmacology to other staff members at the Ilulla Hospital and nursing school. Frank’s father continues to run the pharmacy while he is at school.

Not one, but two, sewing classes were started in Usokami. Due to the marriage of the first sewing instructor, the Usokami sewing classes were put on hold late in 2008. But word was received that new classes were started in June, 2009.

Arrangements are currently being made for FOC 2010 Tanzania Mission Trip. Fifteen members of FOC will be traveling to Tanzania and visiting Usokami and the Iringa area during June/July.

The Tanzania Outreach group wishes to thank those members, friends and families who continue to support Family of Christ’s Tanzania Outreach Program. Your generosity enabled the group to make a difference in the lives of those in need.

# Luther Park

Camping and Retreat Center • (715) 656-7244  
30376 Lakes Drive • Danbury, WI 54830

## Luther Park's 2009 Annual Report to Member Churches

Blessings to you in this new season of Epiphany! In October of 2008, Luther Park's Executive Committee reviewed outstanding bills, projected expenses, and income sources. The shortfall was serious and there were no funds from which to draw. Our Board of Directors sent a letter to our congregations and individuals inviting support and advice regarding the future of Luther Park. Should Luther Park exist? Is there still a need for what the camp offers?

The response was a resounding yes! We entered 2009, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our ministry, with a wellspring of support.

- Tons of former staff members came back for reunions and hundreds of people attended special events during the year including the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in July.
- Donors and congregations provided 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary gifts throughout the year.
- Volunteers, as part of the "Fit for the next 50" renovation project, reroofed the program director's house, painted cabins, began renovation of Fir Cabin, removed the old staff house, painted and reroofed two buildings at the top of the hill, and added finishing touches to the Welcome Center. Our plan is to renovate all buildings on site, upgrading energy efficiency and improving aesthetics.
- Luther Park was able to sell a small acreage, a property across from the main site, for \$250,000 (\$50,000 was used to pay down the line of credit; \$50,000 was set aside to be used as matching funds for gifts received for the "Fit for the Next 50" renovation projects.)
- Bethel Lutheran's gift of \$200,000 (announced in previous years) arrived at Luther Park and is safely invested in the Mission Investment Fund, earmarked for the New Retreat Center as a naming gift at their request.

As planned, Luther Park made reductions in budget totaling about \$100,000. This included downsizing staff and reducing remaining staff positions to a part-time status for much of 2009. We reduced operating expenses in a number of ways including fewer newsletters and mailings, decreasing the number of weeks of summer camp, increased use of the internet, and in-house printing of publications.

The result of all of this? Your camp will continue to be the number one place where youth remain active long after confirmation. Bible camp will continue to be a reason people in their 20's and 30's remain active in their faith life. Dynamic college-age counselors will continue to ignite the faith of children and youth!

At our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Luther Park's ministry, the stories poured in...stories about lives changed, youth connected, pastors called, lay people serving, counselors married, babies baptized, corporate churches enjoying fellowship and communion together in the body of Christ.

Please consider how you might invest in this important ministry of your congregation. We continue to need your prayers, as well as gifts of time and financial help in 2010. If you have questions or comments or would like to be involved in your camp, you can contact me at 612-987-6628, or [Jlegred@lutherpark.com](mailto:Jlegred@lutherpark.com). You can also reach Anna Treague, our Program Director, at 715-656-7244 or [Anna@lutherpark.com](mailto:Anna@lutherpark.com). Feel free to check out our web site [www.lutherpark.com](http://www.lutherpark.com) to register for summer camp, make a donation, or to learn more about upcoming events and activities. May God bless you and keep you in the New Year—a year of hope and promise for God's work among us!

Yours in Christ,

Joel Legred, Executive Director



## Saint Paul Area Synod

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*A synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

### 2010 Annual Letter to Congregations

Dear Partners in Ministry,

As you gather for annual meetings, I want you to hear the thanks of countless people beyond your congregation's walls, who thank you for the witness and ministry you do that touches their lives in ways you don't fully recognize. In most of these reports, you will also receive the thanks of Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson. He and I and many others see with regularity the fruits of the life we have together in this synod and church body.

So we thank you on behalf of people in Tanzania and Guatemala who receive food during drought, clean water, support for the pastors and evangelists who care for them, education for the children and pastoral leaders, and a host of other connections that give their lives hope and dignity. People in more than 80 countries in the world hear of and feel the love of Jesus because of what we do together as church.

We thank you on behalf of new and supported ministries in this east metro area—the Saint Paul Area Synod. People here also hear of and feel the love of Jesus in what we do together—in supporting new ministry efforts, in guiding each other through transitions in ministry that match the gifts of leaders with the needs of congregations, in expanding ministries as we successfully did through our Crossing Bridges work. These people thank you.

We thank you on behalf of all the connected and related ministries and the people who are touched by them as well—the largest social service network in the country is Lutheran and together we support colleges and seminaries and campus ministries to prepare future citizens and leaders to bring the values of our faith into the world of the future. These emerging leaders and the people whose lives they touch thank you.

I could go on. For some of our congregations feeling the effects of the economy, this has been a hard year. For our church body as we seek together to find ways to be connected and faithful and yet different as we face different contexts, this can be a stressful time. Yet I continue to give God thanks that in the midst of these challenges, God continues to send us forth with this dizzying array of ministries and uses us to tell and live the love of Jesus in the world. Your support for the work we do together makes all this and more happen!

For your faithful telling and living the love of God, I thank you. And I thank God for each one of you!

Grace and peace,

Peter Rogness  
Bishop, Saint Paul Area Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

