

# Mount Cross Lutheran Church Annual Report for 2020



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*During 2020, we celebrated the gift of Eternal Life for these fellow members of the body of Christ.*

John Colby III (November 25, 1930 - January 4, 2020)

Barbara Buenger (February 1, 1942 - January 7, 2020)

Bernice Vang (March 14, 1927 - January 22, 2020)

Brigitte Gudrun Deering (November 4, 1939 - July 1, 2020)

Robert Jackson (July 29, 1935 - July 10, 2020)

Phyllis Gallentine (December 17, 1941 - August 12, 2020)

Janet Gay Colby (May 27, 1935 - August 19, 2020)

Jan Beat (February 4, 1928 - August 20, 2020)

Audrey Posthauer (August 29, 1934 - October 15, 2020)

Edith Frederick (January 17, 1937 - November 11, 2020)

Barbara D'Addario (November 29, 1934 - December 5, 2020)

Madaline Statton (February 27, 1925 - December 7, 2020)

A G E N D A  
for the **ANNUAL MEETING**  
of

**MOUNT CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
Sunday, January 31, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom

Record Attendance for the purposes of establishing a Quorum

Call to Order and Welcome.....Craig Blois, President

Opening Prayer.....Pastor Julie Morris

Approval of the 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes

Pastor's Report

Discussion of the Proposed By-Laws Changes (to be voted on 3/7/21)

- Virtual Meetings (recommended by ELCA Synod and Council)
- Loans from the Endowment (recommended by Committee and Council)

Treasurer's 2020 Financial Report

Approve 2021 Budget

Elections

- Nominating Committee
- Voting Members to the Synod Assembly
- Mediation Board
- Audit Committee
- Endowment/Legacy Giving Committee
- Church Council

Old Business

New Business

Motion to Adjourn & Continue (to allow voting on 3/7/21)

Closing Prayer & Blessing.....Pastor Julie Morris

**Voting Format:**

Voting during the meeting will be completed in the following manner:

- By Acclamation for all uncontested Committees
- By Voice Vote (Aye/No)
- By Roll Call Vote (if a voice vote is not clear)
- By Hand-Carried, Secret Ballot (if any Member objects to a voice or roll call vote). Ballots will be distributed only to members in attendance with instructions for how to return them.

**MOUNT CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**JANUARY 26, 2020**  
**SANCTUARY 4:00 PM**

**2019 Elected Church Council Members:** Craig Blois\* (President), Joan Brundage\* (Acting Secretary, Financial Secretary), Kevin Churchill (Personnel), Betty Ertel (Property), Ivan Fernandez (Learning), Brian Fisher\* (Vice-President), Allison Johnson (Worship & Music), Susan Prosser (Stewardship), Becky Riley (Care Team), Keith Selbrede\* (Treasurer), Bill Stoll (Service & Missions), Cecelia Travick-Jackson\* (Secretary, Policy, Continuing Resolutions), Julie Morris (Pastor),  
*\*Executive Committee*

**Quorum established and meeting proceeded:** 81 members present (66 needed for a quorum)

**Call to order:** The meeting was called to order by President Craig Blois.

**Opening Prayer:** Pastor Julie Morris

**Approval of 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes:** Randy Churchill moved to amend the minutes to correct the spelling of Cathy Channel's name. The motion received a second from Becky Riley. The motion passed by a voice vote.

**Approval of June 30 Special Congregational Meeting Minutes:** Susan Prosser moved to accept the minutes of the June 30, 2019. The motion received a second from Henry Moraga. The motion passed by a voice vote.

**Presentation-Pastor Julie:**

Her first day at Mount Cross was during Vacation Bible School and there were cupcakes and a giant inflatable unicorn in the office.

What community has been through and come out relatively unscathed.

If soil isn't healthy, nothing healthy can grow.

Acknowledged past pastors and church councils.

Mount Cross was so gracious to welcome three brand new staff members.

Highlighted this year's church council and executive committee.

Unveil a new grand vision that we listen together.

The Holy Spirit is inviting everyone to attend.

Thanked everyone including her husband, Paul.

Ended with an audio of Vacation Bible School children singing **Lord, Listen to Your Children**

**Praying:** "Lord, send your Spirit in this place; Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us power, send us grace", her prayer for Mount Cross.

**2019 Treasurer's Report**

- Pledge Giving: 106% of budget (\$17,727 over)
- Gross Income: 104% of budget (\$17,694)
- Operational Expenses: 95.5% of budget (\$19,700 under)
- Operational Reserves: \$81,854 ( up from \$36,564)
- Mortgage: \$285,441 (down \$24,926) (\$10,000 donated to principal)
- Checkbook Balance: \$241,560 (up from \$172,349)

**2019 Benevolence (\$57,171 Total)**

- Mission: \$31,141
- Hunger: \$733
- College Scholarship: \$7,500
- ELCA Disaster Relief: \$2,615
- Camp Scholarships: \$375
- Friend of Field Workers: \$5,635
- St Columba's Souper Bowl: \$105
- Harbor House: \$235
- Hickory House: \$90
- St Jude Child Research: \$730
- LIRS: \$235
- Many Meals: \$2,669
- Habitat for Humanity: \$235
- LRCC: \$235
- CDC Tuition: \$1,500
- Lutheran Bible Trans: \$400
- Maritime Ministries: \$400
- PLTS: \$400
- Lutheran World Relief: \$675
- Prayer Shawl Ministry: \$628
- LP Elementary School: \$400
- Rain Project: \$235

<b>Mount Cross Budget Comparison</b>			
	<b><u>2019</u></b>		<b><u>2020</u></b>
	<b><u>Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Actual</u></b>	<b><u>Budget(P)</u></b>
<b>Pledge Income</b>	\$ 286,535	\$ 304,262	\$ 347,248
<b>Gross Income</b>	\$ 436,112	\$ 453,806	\$ 482,450
<b>Stewardship &amp; Welcome</b>	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,165	\$ 1,620
<b>Mission Benevolence</b>	\$ 31,481	\$ 31,841	\$ 33,836
<b>Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>	\$ 280,907	\$ 262,077	\$ 289,832
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	\$ 112,888	\$ 114,246	\$ 120,625
<b>Program Oper. Expense</b>	\$ 7,236	\$ 5,243	\$ 7,801
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	\$ 436,112	\$ 416,412	\$ 469,614

## **Questions and comments regarding 2020 Budget**

President Craig Blois stated that staff budget increases represent Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) and there will be performance reviews in 2020.

Rick Gardner said endowment budget was highest it's ever been.

It was moved to adopt the council recommended 2020 budget as presented. The motion received a second. The motion passed by a voice vote.

## **Elections**

### 2020 Nominees

- **Nominating Committee-Vote for no more than 5**

- Gail Baird
- Luanne Crockett
- Mike McClary
- Henry Moraga

Craig Blois asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor for the nominating committee. Gayle Johnson nominated Joan Brundage to the nominating committee. Joan Brundage accepted the nomination. Seeing no additional nominations, Craig Blois declared the nominations for the nominating committee closed.

- **Voting Members to Synod Assembly-Vote for no more than 3**

Vote for no more than 3. 1 woman, 2 men or 1 man, 2 women

- Carol Broderick
- Gordon Henry
- Melissa Henry

Craig Blois asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor for the voting members to the synod assembly. Seeing none, Craig Blois declared the nominations for the voting members to the synod assembly closed.

- **Mediation Board-Vote for no more than 3**

- Carol Broderick
- Rick Gardner
- Jim Prosser

Craig Blois asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor for the mediation board. Seeing none, Craig Blois declared the nominations for the mediation board closed.

- **Audit Committee-Vote for no more than 2**

- Marilyn Gardner
- LaJean Wenzel

Craig Blois asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor for the audit committee. Seeing none, Craig Blois declared the nominations for the audit committee closed.

- **Legacy Giving/Endowment Committee-Vote for no more than 2**

- Jim Prosser

Craig Blois asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor for the legacy giving/endowment committee. Seeing none, Craig Blois declared the nominations for the legacy giving/endowment committee closed.

- **Church Council-Vote for no more than 9**

- Craig Blois (3rd term)
- Barbara Cranfill (1st term)
- Allison Johnson (2nd term)
- Evonne Kuchera (1st term)
- Susan Prosser (2nd term)
- Becky Riley (2nd term)
- Keith Selbrede (3rd term)

Craig Blois asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor for the church council. Jo Holler nominated Herb Holler to the church council. Herb Holler accepted the nomination. Seeing no additional nominations, Craig Blois declared the nominations for the church council closed.

Jim Prosser moved that we cast a unanimous ballot for the slate of names as written for the Nominating Committee, Voting Members to the Synod Assembly, Audit Committee, Mediation Board, Legacy Giving/Endowment Committee, and Church Council. The motion received a second from Cy Johnson. Craig Blois asked for vote by acclamation.

### **New Business**

Bill Greason asked about how many years council members may serve. Gayle Johnson stated there are 2 years per term and council members serve a maximum of 3 consecutive terms.

Karen Cherry gave a brief report regarding the Welcome Team and encouraged us to be welcoming.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

### **Adjourned with Closing Prayer and Blessing-Pastor Julie**

Respectfully submitted,  
Joan Brundage,  
Acting Secretary



# REPORTS TO THE CONGREGATION

## Pastor: Pastor Julie Morris THANKS BE TO GOD

*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (I Corinthians 12:4-7)*

There is only one place to begin this report, and that is with thanksgiving.

**Thanks be to God for the variety and abundance of gifts showered on Mount Cross, allowing us to thrive as a church in the unusual and difficult year of 2020.** Though physically scattered for most of the year, God provided all that we needed to continue worshipping, growing in our faith, caring for one another, and being involved in meeting the needs of the wider community.

**Thanks be to God for the congregational leadership at Mount Cross.** Craig Blois, as President of the congregation, skillfully and calmly helped us navigate complex times. His love for God, compassion for others, and hope for the church were evident in every meeting he facilitated and conversation he held. He ably guided the Executive Committee and Church Council in making decisions that prioritized the physical and spiritual health and safety of our community. Thank you to all Church Council members and every committee and team chairperson for staying engaged this year and for being creative, generous, and resourceful in your areas of ministry.

**Thanks be to God for the Mount Cross staff.** Each staff member was willing and able to do whatever needed to be done to make sure Sunday worship happened and as many of our programs as possible could continue this year, and they did it with a spirit of joyful service. Following his graduation from CLU, Joe Zimmerly shifted into full-time employment in January as our excellent Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry. Carina McVeigh became our part-time (10 hours) Communications Coordinator when she moved to Long Beach for graduate school in August, and Carol Browning became our part-time (20 hours) on-site Office Manager at that time. We were further blessed by Vicar Amanda Berg joining us this summer as a part-time seminary intern. Joan Brundage, the Financial Secretary, and Heather Edwards, our Bookkeeper, continued their good and steady work throughout the year. We have a gifted, strong, and energetic team, all happy to be serving at Mount Cross.

**Thanks be to God for Bill Dawson.** Formerly Chief Engineer of Television and Radio at Pepperdine University, Bill works wonders each week to make sure people can hear and see our worship services. His are labors of love, without which 2020 would have been a very different experience of church for all of us. He is generous beyond telling with his time and knowledge, and he even mentored three interns from Moorpark College in the fall semester who came to Mount Cross for experience with livestreaming, sound, and recording technology.

**Thanks be to God for Cathy Channels and the Mount Cross Child Development Center.** When the pandemic pulled the rug out from under the CDC, Cathy and her staff found a way to re-open for a summer session and open the school safely for the 2020-21 school year. Cathy's dedication to her vocation in early childhood development and her devotion to the children, families, and staff are an inspiration. We celebrate her extraordinary years of service and bid God's blessing on her as she begins a well-deserved transition into retirement.

**Thanks be to God for Worship, Word and Sacrament.** God knows we need one day in seven to return to the well of life and love. It is our duty and joy to celebrate our Sabbath Day each Sunday. When the pandemic hit, we were able to continue with virtual worship services each week to hear the Word of God and celebrate Holy Eucharist. Some received Holy Communion spiritually in the “Prayer of Spiritual Communion,” some gathered around tables set with bread and wine in their own homes as they participated in online worship, and others came for “drive-through Communion” when we began offering it in June. Thanks to the time and talents of so many people, Mount Cross was able to offer Sunday worship, as well as all the special services, including Holy Week, Easter, Confirmation, Thanksgiving Eve, and Christmas Eve. We offered Holden Evening Prayer sixteen Wednesdays in February—June. Many people said that was a lifeline for them in the first months of the COVID-19 quarantine. Our full communion partnership with St. Columba’s Episcopal Church proved to be invaluable as we pooled technological and human resources to worship together through the Easter season and summer months. We blessed animals on Saint Francis Day, and we increasingly learned how to involve more people, often through videos, in our worship services, and to incorporate a variety of music. I think many of us will look back on 2020 worship and remember with a smile the virtual choir pieces, “We Are An Offering,” “By Our Love,” and “Silent Night.”

**Thanks be to God for the Care Team.** Next to the continuation of worship, my top priority for Mount Cross during the pandemic was making sure our caring ministries continued. Under the leadership of Susan Prosser, they not only continued, but they grew! Our Care Team members and volunteers reached out to our entire membership in the early stages of the pandemic, making sure everyone had what they needed and knew the church was here for them. People continued to care for one another through prayer, letters, cards, phone calls, and practical support, such as meals and shopping. We now have a Health Ministry Resource Nurse, Evonne Kuchera, who has already been a God-send to many families who have consulted with her about medical care needs. We also have a new Volunteer Coordinator, Jaimie Marroquin, who has helped match needs with volunteers for the Care Team and is available to help support volunteer needs for all the ministries at Mount Cross.

**Thanks be to God for the call to repent from the sin of racism, join with others in that journey of repentance, and learn to act for healing and justice.** Individually and collectively, we recognized that the killing of George Floyd in May, under the knee of a police officer, exposed the sin of racism that still holds captive parts of our hearts, church, and nation. Our Peace & Justice Team offered a well-attended, online anti-racism book study to the community in the summer and maintains a monthly Anti-Racism Check-In open to all. Our Church Council pledged to work to become an anti-racist congregation, asking the Peace & Justice Team, under the leadership of Bill Stoll, to help us live into that pledge. I am grateful to U.S. Navy Chaplain Travis Davis and Jacquanna Davis for their vulnerability and guidance in these important and sometimes difficult conversations. A workshop on “Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love” in October was the start of an ongoing effort to train all Mount Cross members in healthy communication and Christian approaches to conflict.

**Thanks be to God for you.** As you read this, please know that I thank God for you. Thank you for doing your best to follow Jesus in your daily life and for choosing Mount Cross as the place where you “live among God’s faithful people,” as we commit to do in baptism. In this very stressful year, I hope you have experienced our Good Shepherd near you, leading you towards life and hope. While the inability to meet at length face-to-face for much of the year interrupted my plan to sit with every member of the church before Pentecost 2020, I realize this year has afforded me the chance to get to know many of you more quickly and deeply than I could have under normal circumstances. The opportunity to share prayer with many of you at drive-through Communion or your willingness to engage in honest, self-reflective conversations with me over Zoom, email, or telephone, inspired by the various crises of the year, are moments of pastoral connection for which I am very thankful. If I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting with you, I hope we can do so very soon.

**Above all, thanks be to God for our Lord Jesus, for the grace and peace he shares with us and empowers us to share with others.** We get to be stewards of this grace and peace as we live and work in our families and communities. I can't imagine a more wonderful calling for each of us on our own and all of us together.

From my vantage point as your Pastor, the above report gives you a sense of what I see at Mount Cross and some of the things I have been tending this year. In a time when we have not been able to "go to church" in the same way, I am thankful and glad that we have continued to "be the church" together. God bless you and Mount Cross as we begin another year of shared ministry.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Julie Morris +

## **Seminarian: Vicar Amanda Berg**

*"...That we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith..."* – Romans 1:12

I am deeply grateful to Pastor Julie, the Lay Internship Committee, the Staff, Church Council, and the Congregation for the opportunity to be here for this year of learning!

When I began Wartburg Theological Seminary in 2018, I would have never dreamed that my year of pastoral internship would be during a time of worldwide pandemic. Yet as I reflect on my six months at Mount Cross, I cannot imagine being anywhere else. Mount Cross reflects a beautiful spirit of **faithful discipleship**. Here, *faith in action* is felt and seen, *Christ's love* is mirrored in the caring and encouragement that you have for one another and the world, and there is *faithful stewardship* in your sharing of gifts for the building up of the community.

I have had many opportunities to see this faithful discipleship first-hand as I have served alongside you these past six months through my involvement with worship, drive-through Communion, Bible studies, Youth group, Confirmation, preschool chapel, Care team, Peace & Justice Committee, and Upper Room Zoom. I have observed the work of the Church Council and other committees and have been encouraged by the dedication and faithful service that you all embody. The challenges of the pandemic have been met with creative and thoughtful ways to continue sharing Christ's love to all. It has been a joy and honor to work alongside Pastor Julie, the staff, and the congregation.

A very special thank-you to the Lay Internship Committee, chaired by Kristine Dawson, which was formed to accompany me through this year of learning and evaluation of my ministry. Thank you to *Luanne Crockett, Kristine Dawson, Bill Greason, Allison Johnson, and Brian Rubin*. Your time, guidance, and encouragement are greatly appreciated!

In Christ's love,  
Vicar Amanda  
Wartburg Theological Seminary, '22

## **Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries: Joe Zimmerly**

What a year it has been! It has been over a year since I started working here at Mount Cross, and we are soon approaching our one-year mark from the first phase of statewide shutdowns due to COVID-19. To say this year has been different is simply an understatement. Who would have thought that we would be forced to move church online in what felt like a day?

What seemed crazy at the time became our reality not just for a few weeks, but months. Seriously, who would have thought this was going to happen when we heard about this in March? Through lots of prayer and planning, our children and youth staff, volunteers, and Learning Committee members put all hands on deck making sure that we continued to operate in any capacity. Whether it was switching all programs online to back in person and then back online, we learned and adapted to keep our kids safe.

As for the state of our programs in 2021, I can say that not much has changed from the previous year. We will continue to hold all programs online and will remain doing so until deemed safe by state and county guidelines, as well as the approval of the Church Council. We will continue to think about what is best for our children and youth as we transition through this next phase of COVID-19.

I want to say thank you to everyone who has helped volunteer this past year. Thank you for being supportive of our youth, flexible with schedules, and adapting to new technology as we transition through the many waves of this pandemic. Whether you have helped by being on a committee that supports our children, youth, and families (*Learning Committee—(Chair) Tracy Blois, Patti Stouch, Jody Devere, Julie Fernandez, Lorraine Carpenter, Heather Edwards, and Lisa Saner*), volunteered in our various programs, (*Jasmine Jones, Brian Fisher, Allison Johnson, Emma Griffis, Peter Johnson*), the list can go on and on, but I want to say thank you for all you have done and continue to do for these children.

Blessings,  
Joe

## **Church Council President: Craig Blois**

Wow. 2020 has been completely unexpected. I had no idea when the Council asked me to continue in my role as President in February of 2020 what was coming ahead. My overall feeling at the end of this year though is one of gratitude and blessings, because although the path has been rocky, we have been well-equipped and blessed along the way. I am grateful for the volunteers who worked so hard in the past to set us up with the infrastructure we desperately needed during this chaotic year, from the MET Team and Call Committee (bringing us Pastor Julie), to the Learning Committee (bringing us Joe Zimmerly), to the various Patio Pavilion Volunteers/Participants (bringing us the Patio Pavilion). We have needed all these things desperately this year. I am grateful to our flexible and adaptable staff who could successfully handle every chaotic event we have endured. I am so grateful to Bill Dawson who allowed us to pivot to live-streamed services quickly and smoothly. I am grateful to all our Committees and many volunteers working diligently and gracefully throughout a worldwide pandemic. Thank you to all who give of your time to serve our church, congregation, and community! Please take an opportunity to thank some of the many volunteers who work so diligently behind the scenes to keep our church running smoothly. And I would also like to thank the members of our Church Council for working so well with me and with each other; it has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as Council President for the last two years.

A few remembrances from this year:

- Shutting down the Campus in March 2020 due to COVID-19
- Pivoting to Live-streamed services weekly without missing a single service
- Creating a Drive-through Communion option
- Sending of our Sanctuary Choir/Bell Choir Director Jane Pompey
- Sending of our Organist Guy Erwin III
- Sending of our Contemporary Music Director Carina McVeigh
- Welcoming our Vicar Amanda Berg
- Hiring of our new On-site Office Manager Carol Browning
- Re-opening the CDC in the fall with COVID safeguards in place
- The Church Council voting to become an Anti-Racist Congregation
- Drive-through Nativity with three different Holy Families on Christmas Eve

Goals for the next year include:

- Getting back to in-person worship as it becomes safe to do so
- A sustainable and successful plan for the continuation of the CDC
- A turnover and renewal plan for our generous volunteers to prevent burnout and increase engagement among our congregation

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to the volunteers of Mount Cross without whom we could not function. Thanks also to the staff of Mount Cross who have worked hard throughout this year of chaos. And finally, thanks and gratitude to every member of the congregation who truly make us who we are.

In gracious service,  
Craig Blois

## **ADULT EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

We are working to provide a variety of options for adults in the congregation to grow spiritually and intellectually in their faith. In 2020, our adult education and formation opportunities consisted of the following programs:

1. Men's Bible Study met at Denny's and then via Zoom at 7:30 a.m. every other Thursday to reflect on the upcoming Sunday's Gospel text, facilitated by Pastor Julie, Vicar Amanda, or a group member.
2. A Women's Bible Study met weekly on Tuesday mornings at 9:00 a.m., meeting first in the sanctuary, then over Zoom for the spring and summer, outdoors in the fall, and returning to Zoom in December. Over the course of the year, the group was facilitated by Pastor Julie, Vicar Amanda, or a group member and followed various *Gather* studies, read *Boundless Compassion: Creating a Way of Life* by Joyce Rupp, and studied some Bible passages we find difficult to understand or apply in our lives.
3. A weekly Wednesday evening Bible Study for all adults met at 5:00 pm. to reflect on the coming Sunday's Gospel text, facilitated by Pastor Julie, Vicar Amanda, or a group member, switching from an in-person format to Zoom in March of 2020.

4. Weekly Sunday morning Adult Education met at 11:00 a.m. in the Parish Life Center from January to mid-March and then was cancelled during the pandemic. In January and February, the group studied William Cook's video series, *The Lives of Great Christians*. In March, the focus was on prayer.
5. A weekly Christian Meditation group met on Monday afternoons in the church and moved to the Zoom platform during the pandemic.
6. Upper Room Zoom, a 15-minute noon prayer service, began in May with St. Columba's Episcopal, continued daily for a few months, and then met on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the remainder of the year.

Looking forward, hopefully we can convene an Adult Education and Spiritual Formation Committee to assess current programs and plan new offerings for the year, as needed.

## **ALTAR GUILD**

Altar Guild has not been functioning in a normal capacity since March 2020 when the church was closed for indoor worship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Allison Johnson became Pastor Julie's assistant minister and handled Communion requirements, and we changed to a single service for Sunday mornings. Having services outside and the staff at low numbers meant that there was no sanctuary preparation required. Jan Gerck continued to do the laundry. A few items were taken to the dry cleaners. Supplies were ordered based on Pastor Julie's requirements. As the chair, I have reached out to some members to inquire if they wish to continue as Altar Guild members. I let them know that we are not sure when we will need them and asked them to remain flexible. There are many of the Guild members awaiting instruction. As soon as we know what is required, I plan to have some training and prepare to serve the congregation.

Prepared by Carol Broderick, Chair of the Mount Cross Altar Guild

## **BUDGET & FINANCE**

Please see the separate Financial Reports for the Annual Meeting in the Appendix of this Report for information from the Budget & Finance Committee.

## **CARE TEAM**

The Care Team was formed 1) to identify areas where additional caring support is needed; 2) to help identify and/or create caring responses to needs; 3) provide support and coordination as necessary to other caring efforts and 4) to become a recognizable caring resource for the congregation.

### **2020 Regular Care Team Functions:**

- Monthly meeting with the Pastor to assess congregational needs and determine unmet caring needs. Plans and assignments including referrals to other Caring functions are made during these meetings.
- A year-round Card Ministry with 22 volunteers matched with 39 persons/households maintains ongoing regular communication through cards and notes. The number of card recipients nearly doubled in 2020 due to COVID restrictions. During holiday periods, additional persons receive cards from Care Team members and others.

- The Care Team sends sympathy cards on behalf of the congregation. Along with the card, a *CareNote* pamphlet on grieving is enclosed. The Team sends Christmas cards to those who have had a loss in their family during the year with a *CareNote* on “coping with the first Christmas after losing a loved one.”
- Updated instructions for the delivery of altar flowers and a list of suggested recipients was completed, however, limited implementation took place due to changes in our method of worship.

### 2020 Care Team Highlights:

- A Care Gathering was held on January 12, inviting the congregation to meet with Pastor Julie and the Care Team to discuss Caring needs at Mount Cross and to share ideas. This Gathering was like the ones that have been held each year since the development of the Care Team.
- Care Team submitted a successful request for funding a **Volunteer Coordinator to be used by all functions of the church**. Assistance was provided by **Jaimie Marroquin** in soliciting and scheduling meal support and needed rides for members.
- A *Mount Cross Cares* brochure was completed for placement in pews and elsewhere. It will be updated as necessary once the church is reopened and paper items can be restocked. *CareNotes* on a variety of life challenges were purchased and a method of display for congregation utilization secured. Installation was delayed and will take place when permitted.
- A **Health Ministry Resource Nurse** function was defined and volunteer **Evonne Kuchera, RN**, volunteered to assume this role. Having this specific support for Mount Cross has vastly expanded the type of caring support and knowledgeable referrals that can be offered to both those with health issues and others who offer care or have concerns for another. Evonne undertakes this role from a place of faith, which is reflected in all her interactions.

### COVID-19 Related Undertakings by the Care Team and Additional Volunteers:

- With the mid-March COVID-19 shutdown, 14 volunteers made Check-in calls to everyone listed in the Church Directory and those who had recently joined. The goal was to identify people isolating at home either by choice or directive and to offer spiritual and other forms of support. Callers also provided information about live streaming worship and other recorded and live streaming church programs. We sought to confirm that they received the church newsletter and that we had a correct address and email for them. Every call concluded with a reminder that *they could always consider Mount Cross their church home when they need support*. When phone messages were left, a more comprehensive letter was sent.
- As the result of the Check-in campaign, more than 50 persons/households were identified for regular calls or connection. Nearly 20 volunteers either maintain communication connections and/or provide support through shopping, errands, and rides. Most of these “connections” are presently active.
- A virtual Care Gathering for “connection volunteers” was held in June to check in on how they were doing and to gather feedback. The Care Team was able to thank them with “meeting refreshments” that were delivered to their doorsteps in advance of the starting time.
- Although already involved in caring activities, the Care Team was fortunate to discover that **Julie Merrick** has the right skills and personality to offer **Technology Assistance** to those in the congregation who find making remote connections to worship, Bible studies, etc. a challenge. Several laptop computers are available for loan if equipment is an issue. It seems likely that some “connected” option for worship or other congregation undertakings will continue past COVID.

- The Care Team realized many Mount Cross members would be celebrating holidays differently due to COVID. The idea was developed of doing a Care Team Fall and Winter Holiday newsletter that would include a mix of content but also give recognition to feelings that might come from missing family and friends. Prior to Thanksgiving, the first such edition was mailed to those who receive the regular church newsletter. It is hoped that the content may have provided some inspiration or diversion when you needed.

**Mount Cross 2020 Care Team:** Luanne Crockett, Gayle Johnson, Evonne Kuchera, Julie Merrick, Becky Riley, Bev Rueckert, Susan Prosser, Chair, Pastor Julie, and Vicar Amanda

**Care Team 2020 Volunteers:** Gail Baird, Barbara Burke, Karen Cherry, Jessica Easter, Vicky Edell, Heather and Kaitlyn Edwards, Lynn Enloe, Fernandez family, Jan Gerk, Mary Goodenough, Karen Gramacki, John Grennan, Gordon Henry, Melissa Henry, Cy Johnson, Mary Kienitz, Bernie Lau, Patricia Lewis, Zach Lotshaw, Jaimie Marroquin, Jan Mason, Carina McVeigh, Jayne Pompey, Vicki Ramirez, Saner family, Barbara Sletten, Margie Viets, and Judy Winters

*We endeavored to list all our 2020 volunteers. If we missed listing you, it is simply an oversight and please let us know. Each volunteer has served as one of God's angels on earth during a time when maintaining connections with one another has been so important. Bless you all and the loving work you have done.*

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER (CDC)**

It has been a challenging year for our preschool. Everything was going very well until COVID-19 hit and we had to close down in March. We were able to pass inspection by the Department of Social Services to reopen in July for summer school. We also met requirements of the church, the State, and County health to open safely in September. We did have 71 students registered for September but that dropped to 39. We now have 48 and are adding more as parents feel more comfortable with their child doing “in-person” learning. The preschool staff have been amazing with keeping our campus and school sanitized and safe. We applied for a stipend from Child Development Resources and the City of Camarillo and did qualify. We received two checks for \$3,700. This was a big help to replace some of the funds transferred from savings to the checking account. We are still working on getting a grant from the State if we qualify.

We have been able to have chapel in the pavilion area and are grateful to Joe, Pastor Julie, and Vicar Amanda for leading our chapel times. We want to thank the CDC Board and Wendy McClary (our Council liaison) and the church for all their support during these very trying times. Joe was so helpful planning a movie night fundraiser for the school. He has been so good with the students, eating lunch with them, taking time to get to know them. The preschool parents are so thankful that we are able to be open for their children to grow and develop socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

—Cathy Channels, CDC Director



# CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

## COVID-19 Events

Back in March when COVID-19 stay-at-home orders began, we had to make a pivot in how we created and hosted programs. We began using Zoom for our weekly programs. On top of Fun With Faith, Confirmation, and High School Youth Group, we created alternative online programs:

- Family Faith Night
- Coffee with Joe
- Morning Devotion
- Mental Health Seminars
- Use Your Voice

When our county-wide restrictions started loosening up, we were able to start incorporating socially distanced events outside:

- Porch/Backyard Hangouts
- Bike Rides
- Family Hikes
- Kona Shaved Ice Truck
- Drive-In Movies
- Halloween Spooktacular —Mister Softee Truck
- Kids Vote—Election Day
- Advent Wreath Making Event—With St. Columba's
- CDC Fundraiser—Drive-in movie



*Family Hike!*



*Halloween Spooktacular!*

Once again, tiers changed at the end of the year and we have switched back to online programming. We look forward to what 2021 has to offer and are excited to continue ministry with wonderful kids.

## **Other Events:**

- Parents Night Out
- Winter Camp at El Camino Pines
- Grad Recognition—Drive-By Celebrations

## Children's Ministry

### **Fun with Faith**

Every Wednesday, children from preschool to 5th grade meet from 5:00-6:00 p.m.! Reading the Bible story that follows our lectionary, doing crafts, and sharing with one another how their day/week has been going is what you will usually find us doing. On a weekly average, we see 8-12 children at our Fun with Faith program. During December, we performed our virtual Christmas play through a reading from the book of Luke. We look forward to the various ways in which we continue to grow together in our faith as the year goes on!



*Fun with Faith!*

### **Vacation Bible School—Virtual**

This past summer, we were able to have VBS once again, this time taking a different form. While hosting over Zoom, we were able to serve 23 children! We could not have gotten this done without our wonderful helpers (*Jacquanna Davis, Emma Griffiths, Jessica Easter, Marli Saner, Katie Shidner, Mia Fernandez, Melissa Henry, Miera Stouch, Jackson Burke, Tiana Stouch, Alicia Spadaro, and Pastor Julie*). The theme for the week was “On Earth as in Heaven” as we learned the Lord’s Prayer by the end of the week.

During VBS, we were able to have a canned food drive where we raised enough donations for Joe to get pied in the face! At the end of the week, we hosted a drive-in movie as we watched the movie *Up*. Thank you to the United Methodist Church of Camarillo for letting us rent their equipment.

We could not have gotten this done without your help and support. Whether it was recording, building crafts, teaching, or donating, I want to say thank you! We had so much fun learning with each other and we look forward to when we can have this event in person.



*Vacation Bible School on Zoom!*

## **Introduction to Bible & Holy Communion Classes**

In September, we were able to have our Introduction to Bible and Introduction to Holy Communion classes, socially distanced and in person at Mount Cross. Both classes were two weeks each, starting with Intro. to Bible, where we had 4 kids attend with their parents as we taught them how to read the Bible. Intro. to Holy Communion was a very special time as our kids learned what Communion is, with Pastor Julie. We are so excited to teach our young people as they are entering their faith journeys.



*Intro. to Holy Communion!*

## **Confirmation**

This past year, our confirmation program, like the other programs, moved online. As we finished the year, we were able to confirm six students as they continue their faith journey. In 2021, we look forward to confirming our four 8th-grade students in May. Prior to COVID-19, we were able to attend winter camp at El Camino Pines where we gathered with other youth from all over our Synod as we learned about what it means to be “under construction.” We look forward to when we can go to El Camino Pines once again.



*Confirmation on All Saints Sunday!*



### High School Youth Group

High School Youth Group meets Sundays from 6:00-7:00 p.m. on Zoom. Prior to COVID-19 shutdowns, we were meeting Sundays from 5:00-7:00 p.m. We were very lucky to go to winter camp at El Camino Pines with other high school youth for a snowy yet faith-filled weekend. One thing we have practiced this year was mindfulness with the help of Julie Merrick. We are so grateful to be learning about ways we can be more mindful of what we are doing.



*Youth Group!*

### Youth Band

A new ministry that began during the pandemic was the creation of our “Youth Band.” Under the musical guidance of Carol Browning, the band consists of Ben Fisher and Tiana Stouch, accompanied by their techy Collin Edwards. We are blessed that these talented youth are willing to offer their gifts for music during worship with the rest of the congregation. We look forward to hearing more from the band in the coming months.

### Young Adults

Our young adults met monthly until COVID-19, when it was decided that we would rather meet in person when this passes us.

### Staff

#### **Children’s Ministry Assistant**

Jessica Easter has been serving as our Children’s Ministry Assistant since August, 2019. Jessica has taken on quite a bit of responsibility leading various activities with our Fun with Faith program and Children’s Church. Jessica has taken on new leadership roles this year, creating and implementing our COVID-19 safety protocols along with leading activities. Jessica is so talented and we are blessed to have her on staff at Mount Cross.

#### **(NEW HIRE)—Youth Ministry Assistant**

In August of 2020, we welcomed Inger Smuts to our Children and Youth Staff. We were able to hire Inger through a creative restructuring of the CYFM Assistant role, allowing us to increase coverage and flexibility while remaining **neutral** to the budget amount funded for 2020. Inger is a Cal Lutheran Student who embodies what it means to be a joyful servant. She hopped on board in the middle of a pandemic and got right to work. She helps with our Middle School and High School Youth programs every week and assists with Fun With Faith when needed.

**Thank you to everyone who has helped volunteer! I appreciate each and every one of you!**

# CLASSICAL CONCERTS AT MOUNT CROSS

On January 19, 2020, the Classical Concert Series at Mount Cross continued its 15th Season with pianist Lincoln Mayorga. Sadly, not only was the season cut short due to COVID19 but Barbara D'Addario, our Founder and Artistic Director, passed away. We hope to resume the Concert Series next fall when we are able to safely gather in our Sanctuary and Parish Life Center. A sincere thank you to each of you who have been constant volunteers.

Joan Brundage  
Database Manager  
Classical Concert Series at Mount Cross

## ENDOWMENT/LEGACY GIVING

The Endowment/Legacy Giving Committee was diligent and engaged as they met quarterly and devoted themselves to three major tasks this year with the strong theme of fiduciary responsibility. They were:

1. Distribution to Ministry:

\$14,500.00 in total distributions were made to the following ministries.

- \$3,000 - 3 x \$1,000 scholarships. Recipients were Tabitha Ebright, Justice Jones, and Emily Valenica.
- \$500 - pastor discretionary fund (to maintain current funding level)
- \$500 - youth camp scholarships
- \$5,000 - technology committee request (camera, WiFi, tripod, iPads, but NOT the sound board + new computer monitors)
- \$2,500 - Seminarian (necessary expenses)
- \$2,500 - Seminarian (stipend)
- \$500 shipping for Service & Missions (we did this in the past)

2. The Committee diligently reviewed and made commendations to Church Council for updates to by-laws and resolutions to assure alignment with our current mission and needs.
3. The Committee engaged representation from ELCA Foundation and participated in a thorough review of its investment, risk tolerance, alignment with mission and ministry, and suitability. A vote was taken to maintain relationship with ELCA Foundation and continue investing in Fund A.

The Committee looks forward to 2021 activities and will focus on education and awareness of how members and constituents can support Mount Cross through the Endowment.

Submitted with Appreciation to the Committee for its dedication and energy,  
Lisa Higginbotham, Endowment Chair

## FELLOWSHIP

The Mount Cross Fellowship Committee provides social opportunities to engage the collective church family in sharing hospitality and entertainment experiences. As we are all painfully aware, this year was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic which brought our usual fun and festive momentum to a screaming halt. However, we did find a few new ways to reach out to our members and spread some Fellowship cheer.

Prior to the Stay-At-Home orders issued in March, we were able to enjoy being together at the Annual Meeting Potluck and welcome in the new 2020 Church Council. In February, just following Ash Wednesday, Fellowship kicked off the annual Lenten Soup Suppers before the Wednesday night church services. We were able to get only one Wednesday Lenten supper in before the governor's orders to practice social distancing. However, we did manage to put on a couple of small Fellowship events that took place following Sunday Drive-through Communion. For the Blessing of the Animals, we distributed cat and dog treats to pet owners as they left the parking lot, and for the Sunday before Veterans Day, we honored our military veterans, past and present, by handing out wearable patriotic pins following Communion.

While 2020 has been socially challenging, we are looking forward to celebrating the wide variety of Fellowship activities we are known for as soon as it is safe and we are authorized to do so. Hosting themed hospitality for Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras, Mother's Day, Father's Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, a Hawaiian Luau, Halloween, and Veteran's Day are a few. We have hosted Lenten Soup Suppers, Father's Day car shows, Winter Wonderland patio games, a talent show, Bowling Night for all ages, Thanksgiving Pie Socials, and offsite excursions to see plays and concerts, and we have ideas brewing for new future events.

We encourage anyone interested in joining our Fellowship committee, or to provide suggestions for future activities, to contact the church office or any member of the committee. When permitted, we meet at 7:00 p.m., masked and socially distanced at the church Pavilion on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. We wish everyone a very safe, healthy, and happy New Year in 2021!

Submitted by:

Henry Moraga, Dan Nelson, Valerie Patscheck, and Bev Rueckert  
Mount Cross Fellowship Committee  
Council Liaison: Susan Prosser

## HELPING HANDS



Helping Hands is the Mount Cross service group that assists by arranging and serving at funeral/memorial receptions at Mount Cross. In 2020, receptions for funeral/memorial services were stopped due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopefully sometime in 2021, funeral/memorial services and receptions will return.

When we resume, we will need help with many tasks:

- Food donations—platters of desserts, sandwiches, fruit, veggies and cheese,
- Set-up of tables and chairs,
- Plating and setting up for the reception,
- Serving during the reception,
- Clean-up including taking down the tables and chairs.

If you are interested in participating in Helping Hands in 2021 after COVID, please contact the church office.

In His Service,  
Marilyn Gardner, Gail Baird  
Helping Hands Coordinators

# LEARNING COMMITTEE

Highlights from the past year:

- Committee met at least 11 times in 2020 (primarily via Zoom) with the **highest average meeting attendance** than we have had in recent years:
  - Huge thank-yous to our past and present committee members for their discussion, ideas, and engagement! You are all amazing.
- Supported Joe and Mount Cross staff in their **incredible pivot** to online programming during quarantine.
- Safely **re-opened** certain youth and family events outdoors with masks and social distancing (although have since switched back to virtual only due to the latest COVID-19 surge).
- Kick-started a new campaign for our children, youth, and families called “**Use Your Voice,**” a series of events and discussions circled around speaking up when injustice is present.
  - Inaugural events held on September 20 and 23 were led by Stacy Germundson, a school counselor for middle and high school students who has also created a camp and organization for young women called BOLD. The focus for this event was to teach every child to believe they are precious and important with infinite potential. When young people know they are loved unconditionally and are empowered with a purpose, they can do amazing things. *“In order to know how to use your voice, you have to understand and know how good you are first.”*
- Restructured youth assistant staffing to **add Inger Smuts** and introduce greater staffing flexibility and coverage of youth events.
- Successfully **rolled out Safe Gatherings**—a new program to maintain our safety training for anybody working with youth and children.
- **Major events** included:
  - “Use Your Voice” kickoff event with Stacy (see above).
  - VBS (seamlessly pivoted to virtual offering) —exceeded expectations in every way even in spite of being virtual! Based on feedback in past years, explored flexible volunteer/staffing options to be mindful of volunteer burnout (and will continue to do so).
  - Morning Devotion Zoom calls (these were especially a blessing to our family at the start of quarantine for our kids to stay connected with other kids on a daily basis).
  - Porch hangouts with Joe, Jessica, and Inger.
  - Age-specific dedicated programming: Fun with Faith (virtual or in-person) for preschool through 5th grade, Confirmation for middle school, High School Youth group, plus all family and congregation-wide events too.
  - Plus more!
- Re-established **annual review** of CYFM Director to support their development.
- Looking forward to a **dedicated 2021 planning session** on January 24, 2021, to refresh our vision for children, youth, and family, as well as optimize our Learning Committee's ways of working to optimally execute our vision for this critically important ministry.

Peacefully submitted,

Tracy

Learning Committee Chair on behalf of the entire committee

## **MANY MEALS**

Many Meals dinners were served by volunteers from Mount Cross, partnering with volunteers from Peace Lutheran Church on our regular 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the Month for the months of January and February. Thank you to the many members and friends of our congregation who continued their regular support of this important program during this period. Your shopping, cooking, serving, and cleaning made a difference in the lives of others.

The final 2020 Many Meals Thursday night dinner was served by Mount Cross and Peace Lutheran on Thursday, March 12, at our regular location, Trinity Presbyterian Church. It was agreed that we could proceed to serve our intended meal if we prepackaged the dinners in “to go” containers and had all food bagged and ready for each diner to enter the dining hall, take a bag, and depart. No on-site consumption of food was permitted that evening. Sadly, that was the final interaction we had with the program for the remainder of the year.

Mount Cross is one of five churches that work collectively to provide the Thursday night dinners at the Trinity Presbyterian Church location. It is understandable that Public Health restrictions have made the distribution of homemade food from a church kitchen by volunteers to be eaten in a church meeting hall out of the question for the time being. Mount Cross Many Meals volunteers are a faithful group, and we expect that when vaccinations have provided broad protection and restrictions are lifted, they will once again commit to this ministry. Concern continues for those in our community who are without adequate food, knowing that their numbers have grown.

We remind all Mount Cross members of the current overwhelming issue of hunger and suggest that you support the St. Columba’s Food Pantry with non-perishable food donations and/or donate, as you are able, to local charities dedicated to fighting hunger.

*For I was hungry, and you fed me. Matthew 25:35*

2020 Many Meals Coordinators: Karen Gramacki, Susan Prosser, and Trish Whalen

## **MUSIC MINISTRIES**

Mount Cross started 2020 with a music ministry program consisting of the Praise Band (directed by Carina McVeigh), the Sanctuary Choir (directed by Jayne Pompey and accompanied by Guy Ervin III), and the English Handbell Choir (directed by Jayne Pompey). The congregation was blessed each week by the musical offerings of many members sharing their time and talents to enrich our two Sunday worship services.

When in-person worship was suspended in mid-March and those over 65 were encouraged to stay safe at home, we had to shift to one Sunday worship service and a skeletal music program. Through the spring and summer, Brett Hanley from St. Columba’s played piano on Sundays and Carina McVeigh led hymns and songs on the livestream. We extended our Lenten Wednesday Holden Evening Prayer services through June, using Carina McVeigh, along with volunteers Carol Browning, Brian and Tiana Stouch, Kate Fisher, Jayne Pompey, and Keith Selbrede.

As it became known that group singing was a high-risk activity for the spread of the coronavirus and that it would likely be many months before our Praise Band and Sanctuary Choir could rehearse or lead worship, the Church Council made the difficult decision to eliminate the music ministry staff positions. We held a bittersweet drive-by celebration to thank Guy, Jayne, and Carina for their excellent service to Mount Cross.



They have all graciously served us since then as occasional guest musicians for Sundays and other services. Carol Browning, hired as the Office Manager in August, also offered her wealth of knowledge and experience as a liturgical musician to help us through these times. She coordinated our virtual choir productions of “We Are an Offering” and “Silent Night,” helped Joe Zimmerly support a newly forming Youth Band (thank you, Tiana Stouch and Ben Fisher!), and worked with bell ringers and a quartet to provide some of the music for Christmas Eve and Christmas Lessons & Carols. We were very blessed to have Bill Dawson, Joe Zimmerly, and three interns from Moorpark College—especially Justin Thai, who helped us with recording most of the virtual choir participants and the special music groups for Christmastime.

It has been beautiful to see all the people who are contributing as they can to our worship music, including youth, volunteer soloists, and virtual choir participants. In addition to the all-church virtual choir pieces mentioned above, some members of the Praise Band came together virtually to offer us the worship song, “By Our Love.”

One good use of the extended time of not worshipping in-person was the opportunity to send our 5-octave Malmrk handbells back to the manufacturer for refurbishing and repair. Thanks to Jayne Pompey and Keith Selbrede for coordinating the shipping and work order, and to Aimee and Bill Stoll for checking the shipment on its return and handling the storage of the bells. Our bell ringers have missed being able to play and were excited to have the opportunity to contribute to both the “Silent Night” virtual choir video and to our Christmas season worship videos.

Looking ahead, the Worship and Music Committee has identified a need for an Interim Music Director to creatively lead our music ministry program through the rest of the pandemic and to plan for when and how we return to in-person worship and congregational singing, offering a variety of musical styles and using the abundance of musical gifts we have within our Mount Cross congregation.

Submitted by Pastor Julie Morris

## **PEACE & JUSTICE**

We started the year meeting monthly, focused mostly on gun violence prevention. We also planned to attend a training called “Alternatives to Violence.” However, COVID interrupted those plans. We cancelled our meetings in the spring, but the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor woke up our Church Council to their obligations as leaders of an ELCA congregation. In July, they unanimously voted to take a pledge for Mount Cross to become an anti-racist congregation. They charged the Peace & Justice Team with the task of guiding the congregation in living into that pledge.

We began in July and August by hosting a four-week Zoom book study of Ibram Kendi’s book, *How to Be an Antiracist*. The event was attended by as many as 80 attendees from across the county during the course of the study.

In August, we resumed monthly meetings, meeting on the first Tuesday of each month on Zoom. In addition to members taking part in several educational events, we also hosted 2 candidates for Camarillo City Council.

In December, we joined with Padre Serra to host “A Conversation with Camarillo Police Chief Tennesen.” We also began supporting our youth in their endeavors to become more involved in social justice issues. Two of our youth, Jaida Jones and Meagan DeBusschere, became Mount Cross representatives to “Cali Strong,” an anti-racism youth group for high schoolers that is made up of youth from the three ELCA Synods in California.

We continue to explore ways to educate and involve Mount Cross' congregation in issues of social justice and welcome participation from all who would like to join us.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Stoll

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

The Personnel Committee is a standing committee of the church and, as described in the "Handbook For Church Council Members," its responsibilities are to: Develop and maintain job descriptions for all non-called church staff (including Nursery); Develop and administer a program for staff performance review and evaluation; and, Make salary recommendations to the Budget Committee. In 2020, the Committee's work was primarily devoted to finalizing an employee handbook and streamlining the church's employment practices and legal compliance.

In January, the committee finished its work on a comprehensive Employee Handbook. The draft was presented to the Church Council and was adopted with modifications. All existing employees were provided with a copy, as will all future employees. Future changes in personnel policy or procedures will become modifications to this handbook. A copy of the handbook is available on the church website (under "Resource Material") and in the office.

With the adoption of the Employee Handbook, the committee also assisted in eliminating the practice of having separate contracts with each employee that separately provided for such matters as holidays, sick leave, vacation time, and other routine matters. These matters are now governed by the Employee Handbook. All employees, except the pastor, now sign a single page Notice of Employment that sets out the required legal notifications (name of employer, workweek, and paydays), the employee's job position, rate of pay, and any special conditions. One of the standardized job descriptions, previously approved by the Personnel Committee, is then attached. This greatly simplifies the hiring process.

Except for updating the Employee Handbook to comply with any new legal requirements, the committee does not have any current pending issues.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mount Cross Personnel Committee  
James Prosser  
Randy Churchill  
Steve Michel  
Becky Riley (Council Liaison)

## **PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

### **Our 2020 Maintenance and Repair Program**

Throughout 2020, our committee members and many parishioners have given of their talents, energy, and funds to maintain and improve our facilities and grounds. Their accomplishments were:

#### Recycling

Collection of all recyclables from the property

## Maintenance

Prayer Garden and flower beds maintenance and planting  
Hillside clearing, maintenance, and planting

## New equipment

Easy-ups for outdoor worship

## Contracted Services, Maintenance and Repair

Additional electrical outlets for outdoor worship  
Carpet replacement in office suite  
Point-of-use water heater in restrooms  
Lavatory drains replacement  
Hose bib replacement  
Freezer repair  
Glass door repair  
Pine tree removal  
Tree trimming on playground  
Janitorial services (incl. carpet cleaning)  
Trash and yard waste collection services  
Grounds maintenance  
Pest control services  
Van maintenance and repair  
Fire extinguisher services

Respectfully submitted

**Your Property Committee**

## QUILTERS



**Medical staff who  
received our masks!**

The **Quilters** at Mount Cross are a group of church members that come together to make quilts for **Lutheran World Relief (LWR)** “*Mission Quilt Project*” and for our local community emergency needs.

In March of 2020, we were challenged to change our mission slightly. With the outbreak of COVID-19, members of our group, along with others, began sewing masks. We continued to sew masks for several months and made over 500 masks for the following groups: Friends of Fieldworkers, Harbor House, COVID-19 Unit at Los Robles, The Lighthouse, Gabriel’s House, Community Memorial Hospital’s Lab technicians, the five Urgent Cares in Camarillo, the ER and Sub-acute Units of Pleasant Valley Hospital, and the Mount Cross staff/congregation and friends.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who helped sew, donate, and cut fabric, purchase/donate supplies, and deliver masks. Special thanks to our seamsters ...

Dian Blois, Carol Broderick, Marion Cole, Luanne Crockett, Kris Dawson, Diana Hagen, Marilyn Gardner, Jan Mann and neighbor Barbara, Valerie Patscheck, and Nanci Paulson and crew from the Women Interfaith Network (WIN). Thank you to those who helped in other ways ... such as delivery, correspondence, and moral support ... Brian, Kaitlyn, and Heather Edwards, Rick Gardner, Mary Goodenough, Norma Harvey, Melissa Henry, Carina McVeigh, Pastor Julie Morris, Susan Prosser & the Care Team,

Jean Scott, Meredith Smith, and Joe Zimmerly. Everyone played a part in this mask-making mission. **May the Lord reward you for your kindness. Ruth 1:8**

As well as making masks, we continued to make quilts remotely. In 2020, we made and sent 64 quilts to Lutheran World Relief and 7 quilts to Camp El Camino Pines.

We are thankful for our church family members who continually donate fabric, sheets, and thread. Without these generous donations, we could not accomplish what we do each year! Also, thank you to members of our congregation who have used their **Thrivent Action Grants** for purchasing batting, thread, and other supplies for the quilts.

We hope to have made a difference locally and around the world with our mask- and quilt-making this year. We will continue to create quilts remotely until we are able to meet again in person.

Please consider joining the Mount Cross Quilters when we are able to convene again after the pandemic. We meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the month at 9:30 a.m. ... no experience necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

**The Quilters**

Jan Mann, Carol Broderick, Jean Scott, Marilyn Gardner, Valerie Patscheck, Diana Hagen, Norma Harvey, and Marge Viets



## SERVICE & MISSIONS

**Many thanks for all the support the congregation shared with the many projects coordinated by Service & Missions in 2020.** What a different year 2020 was. The Mount Cross Service & Missions team started the year off normally by asking for support of the *Souper Bowl of Caring* and the *Camarillo CROP Hunger Walk*. Both were very successful. From the *Souper Bowl of Caring* in February, funds were donated to *ELCA World Hunger* and donated food went to *St. Columba's Food Pantry*. Church World Service and seven local hunger agencies received funds from the *CROP Hunger Walk*. Mount Cross had 35 walkers and volunteers and raised over \$3,000. In February, we shared a potluck and watched the movie *Emanuel* about the shooting at the Charleston AME Church, discussing gun violence.

**Then things changed in March and we had to get creative!** To support local neighbors struggling during the sheltering in, we started collecting food donations via Drive-through Communion on the church patio for *St Columba's food pantry* and many of you responded generously. The *Monthly Fair Trade sale* started doing curbside pick-up on Sundays and home delivery in support of small farmers. Working with the Quilters and others at Mount Cross, many face masks were made and delivered to members of the congregation and the *Friends of Fieldworkers* organization.

In support of *Lutheran World Relief*, many people donated school kit items and personal care kit items in the fall, plus over \$1,000 to buy more items for both projects. Many of the school backpacks were sewn by volunteers and we had a fun, socially-distanced Sunday afternoon where we filled over 200 backpacks with the school supplies! In November, we collected diapers in partnership with *Graceful Diapers Pantry* (working with Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer in Oxnard) and donated more than 4,400 diapers and more than 50 containers of baby wipes. In December, our "Gifts of Hope" alternative Christmas gift program supported *Friends of Fieldworkers*, which was generously received, along with the gift card collection for our neighbors living at the *Hickory House* care facility.

Throughout the year, we lifted up other opportunities for individuals to reach out to help the community, like making a blood donation, helping with *Harbor House* food programs, and advocacy issues through the *Lutheran Office of Public Policy*.

Our new Peace & Justice group has also been very active throughout the year, holding a book study and monthly anti-racism check-ins on Zoom. They have also reached out to the community on various Peace & Justice issues with several other congregations.

The Service & Missions Committee meets the first Monday of each month via Zoom and would encourage you to attend a meeting if you are interested in getting more involved. Contact me to get the link for the meeting.

Thanks to the committee members: Bob Boyer, Bill Stoll (Council rep), Mary Goodenough, and Melissa Henry. Additionally, thanks to John Colby, Jr. and Peter Johnson for their help with St Columba's food donation delivery.

**All in all, we feel Mount Cross has still managed to do A LOT of God's Work, and we thank you for being willing to try new ways of serving!** 2021 will give us new challenges, but we know that, together, we can address old problems with new solutions, and perhaps even reach further into the world, sharing Christ's love and God's abundance with our neighbors.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Service & Missions Committee  
Gordon Henry, Chair

## STEWARDSHIP

In 2020, the Stewardship Team continued to use Lent as an opportunity to consider Stewardship from a different vantage point. Starting with Ash Wednesday, the Team offered options for the observance of Lent providing "taking on" and "giving of" options to use along with or instead of "giving up." In other weeks, the practices of observing Lent were presented with alternative approaches, such as Prayer, with ways to pray that went beyond the obvious—such as by moving our feet with the CROP Walk as a wonderful example. We look forward to Lent 2021 for weekly Lenten observance.

The monthly church newsletter was used throughout the year to inform the congregation about the broad range of missions we support through contributions to the national and international efforts of our church. These are ways our stewardship serves brothers and sisters far beyond our immediate congregation or neighborhood.

The annual fall Stewardship campaign embraced our circumstances with the theme **"Our Church in Changing Times—Ready To Go Where God Leads"**—*"Perhaps you are here for just such a time as this."* **Esther 4:14**. By October, there was no question that most everything had changed except the continued faithful support of the Mount Cross congregation to the ministries of the church. Remarkable volunteer support and dependable financial support allowed for nearly seamless modifications in the way worship, education, and programs were offered to members, friends, and the community. This was also apparent in the way members helped bring the Stewardship message through technology, with videos made by and with members sharing their experiences with modified worship and programs. While the actual Team has few members, in 2020, we were blessed with others who told us that we can adapt to continue God's work and that some of the new ways had unexpected positive impacts.

Whether you are a hands-on volunteer, a home-based supporter, a faithful giver, and/or one who provides ideas and encouragement to staff and leaders as they use new ways to serve and meet changing needs—**YOU are here just for such as time as this!** We thank and bless each of you for your part in the family that is Mount Cross.

Stewardship Team: Barbara Cranfill; Luanne Crockett; Susan Prosser, Chair; and Pastor Julie

Major support from: Joan Brundage, Financial Secretary; Jaimie Marroquin, Volunteer Coordinator; Carol Browning, On-site Office Manager; Joe Zimmerly and Mount Cross Technical Crew, and Rick Gardner for his amazing video on Drive-through Communion

## WELCOME

Through it all, we kept our eyes on Jesus' words, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Matthew 25:35  
This report comes in three parts:

- our rebirth in the fall of 2019,
- the specialness of how COVID re-formed the welcome of the Mount Cross family, and
- the hope that we have in the Lord and in 2021.

During the fall of 2019 and early 2020, the Welcome Team was re-formed and grew to 7 members who:

- created a welcome center on the patio where we greeted members and visitors alike on Sunday mornings,
- created a poster with photos and the names of our new members so that all may greet them by name,
- shared information about the many activities at Mount Cross,
- handed out copies of *Living Lutheran*, a wonderful magazine,
- answered questions, and
- created new pew cards to gather information from members and visitors so that our church staff could be in touch.

Then began the COVID era. How would we continue to welcome when we were distanced from one another? No handshakes? No hugs? To support our new reality, our creative staff and dedicated volunteers created an outdoor worship that is enjoyed virtually, including Drive-through Communion. With safety and helpfulness in mind, the team made small bottles of sanitizing spray labeled "Mount Cross Cares" (because we do!) and handed them out on Drive-through Communion days. The new "Connection Card" found at the end of the worship service online bulletin is designed to replace the "red attendance books" we used to use and gives a way for the church staff to reach out and to keep in touch. So important!

The new year brings hope—and opportunities for you to be part of welcoming worshipers on Sunday morning. You can support the work of the Welcome Team by volunteering to help with the Welcome table or as a communion greeter. On the home page of the [Mount Cross website](#), there is a blue box labeled *Sunday Worship Assistants*. Clicking on the box will bring you to the sign-up page with two options, "Worship Assistant" or "Communion Assistant." You will find Welcome table opportunities under Worship Assistant and greeter opportunities under Communion Assistant. These and many other volunteer opportunities exist and your help will be greatly appreciated.

Now we prayerfully look forward to the post-COVID era. With God's blessings, we will still be family, strong in our beliefs, strong in our service, and strong in our togetherness. We are so very grateful for the dedication and creativity of all the people who have made our worship and learning activities so meaningful. It will be a blessing to once again greet one another with hugs.

With heartfelt thanks to the team and in the peace and love of Christ,  
Your Welcome Team

Karen Cherry, Sonja Demeter, Jim Dinges, Jeanne Michel, Henry Moraga, Becky Riley, Bev Rueckert

## **MOUNT CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH STAFF**

**Pastor Julie Morris**                    **805-482-3847**  
Pastor    (cell) **805-312-1978**

**Vicar Amanda Berg**                    **805-482-3847**  
Seminarian

**Carol Browning**                        **805-482-3847**  
On-site Office Manager

**Carina McVeigh**                        **805-482-3847**  
Communications Coordinator

**Joan Brundage**                         **805-987-5369**  
Financial Secretary

**Joe Zimmerly**                         **619-456-8201**  
Director, Children, Youth, and Family  
Ministries

**Jessica Easter**                         **805-482-3847**  
Children's Ministry Assistant

**Inger Smuts**                            **805-482-3847**  
Youth Ministry Assistant

**Cathy Channels**                        **805-482-9706**  
Director, Child Development Center

**Jaimie Marroquin**                    **805-482-3847**  
Volunteer Coordinator

## **Church Council and Congregational Leaders – 2020**

### **Church Council**

Craig Blois - President  
Brian Fisher - Vice President  
Becky Riley - Recorder  
Keith Selbrede - Treasurer  
Joan Brundage - Financial Secretary  
Kevin Churchill  
Barbara Cranfill  
Betty Ertel  
Herb Holler  
Allison Johnson  
Evonne Kuchera  
Wendy McClary  
Susan Prosser  
Bill Stoll

**Committee Chairs**

Adult Education and Spiritual Formation -  
 (vacant)  
 Altar Guild - Carol Broderick  
 Budget and Finance - Keith Selbrede  
 Caring - Susan Prosser, Gayle Johnson,  
 and Bev Rueckert  
 Classical Concert Series - (vacant)  
 Endowment/Legacy Giving - Lisa Higginbotham  
 Fellowship - Valerie Patscheck  
 Learning - Tracy Blois

Personnel - Jim Prosser  
 Property - Rick Mann  
 Service & Missions - Gordon Henry  
 Worship & Music - Randy Churchill

**Team Leaders**

Peace & Justice - Bill Stoll  
 Re-opening - Pastor Julie Morris  
 Stewardship - Susan Prosser  
 Welcome - Karen Cherry

## **CONGREGATIONAL REPORT**

### ***Report Submitted to Synod February 2020***

	<b>Baptized</b>	<b>Confirmed</b>
<b>Membership, end of 2019</b>	<b>919</b>	<b>649</b>
<b>Members received during 2019</b>		
By baptism (children)	6	0
By baptism (adults)	1	0
By affirmation of faith	10	0
By transfer from other congregations	6	0
From other sources and statistical adjustments	0	0
<b>Total members received this year</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Baptized youth confirmed in 2019</b>		<b>5</b>
<b>Members removed during 2019</b>		
By death	3	0
By transfer	2	0
<b>Total removed this year</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Membership, end of 2019</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>666</b>

*Note: The Church Council is working with Pastor Julie to confirm an accurate count of current church membership numbers.*

## **2020 Sunday Worship Attendance**

<b>January</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>4 Sundays</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>4 Sundays</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>654</b>

*As of Sunday, March 22, 2020, in-person worship was suspended due to COVID-19. We do not have reliable online or limited in-person attendance data for Sundays from March through December.*