

## Joe's Council Report - January 2022

Happy New Year! I am excited to begin another year at Mount Cross with our families and children. As we look into the future, we will be finding ways to gather families and serve the community. I look forward to another year of memories here at Mount Cross.

Although programs went on their annual three week break during the holidays, I was able to get a few projects done in the office. One of which was updating our binders. Meredith was gracious enough to leave behind a binder and flash drive full of "how to's" before she left a few years ago. I was able to update some of the content to reflect how our programs currently operate. I also was able to update rosters for all our ages and I was also able to take vacation during the holidays.

Programs restarted on January 9th with high school youth group. January 12th was our Wednesday night programs restart with a special class being taught, Intro. To Holy Communion, by Pastor Julie. We are excited that 9 kids are taking the class!

With Omicron spreading quickly, there have been many changes to events whether they have been canceled or postponed. High School Winter Camp has been postponed to February 25-27, Family Winter Fest is now March 11-13 at El Camino Pines, ELCA National Youth Gathering Registration has been put on hold, and I am most likely attending the virtual Extravaganza *\*continuing education*.



## February 2022 Report

The Learning Committee met on February 6th for their annual planning meeting. We gathered as a group of 10 people and came away with some great ideas for the year ahead. We look forward to the energy that is cultivating and the ways in which it will influence our children's lives here at Mount Cross.

This month we had the opportunity to serve at Food Share. With 15 volunteers, we were able to sort through 6 pallets worth of nonperishable food. The math shows that we handled 3,130lbs of food equalling 2,470 meals ready to distribute in the community. We are thankful to have this opportunity and look forward to a future volunteer date in April.

As the NFL season concluded, so did the Mount Cross Fantasy Football After Worship Warrior's season with the champion being Landon Stouch. Landon put together a spectacular season tearing up the charts each week and was fortunate to have a relatively healthy team all season. With 8 youth and young adults participating this year, we look forward to bringing back this favorite tradition next year.



## March 2022 Report

We went to camp! Near the end of February and in March, our youth and families attended winter camp at El Camino Pines. Focused on the theme “Refresh”, our attendees learned ways in which we can refresh ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually. Plus, a few snowballs thrown at you will really freshen someone up!

Soup Suppers made a return as we entered the season of Lent. Cooked by our very own John Colby each week, people are welcomed to participate in offering a favorite soup of theirs as well. Our confirmands have enjoyed participating in Holden Evening Prayer as acolytes, ushers/greeters, and specifically leading the Lord’s Prayer.

We are gearing up for a busy Spring, we look forward to these events on our radar:

- Parents Night Out / March 25th / 6:00PM-10:00PM
- Presto Pasta Fundraiser / April 4th
- Food Share Service Day / April 7th / 6:00PM - 8:00PM
- Easter Breakfast / April 17th / After Service
- Movie Night / April 29th / 6:00PM-7:30PM

This summer our high school youth will be attending Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp for their summer trip. Attending with Grace Lutheran of Palo Alto and Price of Peace Lutheran in Saratoga, we are excited to experience this with our kids and grow in our faith alongside each other.



## April 2022 Report

We give thanks to all who supported our youth in various ways this past month! Whether it was dining at Presto Pasta or our Easter Breakfast, where we raised over \$1000 towards our high school summer trip. I want to give a big thanks to everyone in this generous congregation who always put the youth at the forefront. We are excited that we keep inching closer and closer to our goal of raising enough money for our trip to Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp in Montana. We will be sending out more information regarding what we will be doing as well as ways to help us in the coming weeks.

Easter Sunday was a great day! We enjoyed gathering together in many ways. Whether it was for worship, Easter Breakfast or for our Egg Hunt, we were happy to have the most normal-like Easter of the past in comparison to the past few years. We are so thankful for all who participated and volunteered their time to make this day meaningful for all.



## FLATHEAD LUTHERAN BIBLE CAMP

JOIN US FOR A WEEK OF FAITH FILLED FUN IN THE  
GREAT OUTDOORS WITH OUR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH!

JULY 23-30



CONTACT  
[JOE@MOUNTCROSS.COM](mailto:JOE@MOUNTCROSS.COM)

**COST = \$1,100 PER STUDENT**

## June 2022 Report

May and June have been full of many celebrations! We started May opening VBS registration, now currently sitting at ~50 children registered. We will maintain a capacity of 75 kids for the week and continue to take registrations until we reach capacity. Later in the month we celebrated three of our 8th graders being confirmed (Reagan Burke, Jeffrey Saner, Marli Saner). We also hosted our first Midnight Madness in almost 3 years and were enthused to have Holy Trinity Lutheran Church from Thousand Oaks join us. We hope that our Presbyterian and Methodist friends can join us the next time we host.

In June we honored our graduates as we celebrated their big milestones! We also “kidnapped” our 8th graders and welcomed them into high school youth group with a surprise breakfast trip to Denny’s. We will be sending 5 kids to summer camp at El Camino Pines June 25-30.

In both May and June I have attended over 4 hours in Continuing Ed. classes through Lifelong Faith. The first was a class on Christian Faith Formation and the second was on Faith Formation Playlists. Both of the ideas and activities used in these classes will be put towards our programs in various ways, but the main focus will go towards our redesign of Confirmation class. We will be looking at a flipped classroom model in the Fall where kids will have lessons to work on at home and while we focus on developing our community here as well as serve.

Lastly, we have hired a new Nursery Care Staff member. Her name is Isley Jackson and we are very glad to have her on our team. Isley will be working on Sunday’s with Jessica Easter.



## July 2022 Report

Near the end of June, we sent 5 kids to Summer Camp at Luther Glen Farm due to an issue with the water system at El Camino Pines. Even though it was a different site, the kids still had a great time! Unfortunately, this was the last trip our beautiful church van will ever take. It will soon be gone, but the memories will live on forever.

In July, we had a beach day! With many members of all generations attending, we gathered together at Point Mugu Beach for some fun in the sun. We look forward to our second Play Date Sunday being held in August where we all can gather again.

The Learning Committee met in July and discussed many things along the lines of VBS, programming, etc. However, we also talked about changing our name. The Learning Committee has evolved into a group that focuses on children & youth activities, so we figured that a name change is due. Keep on the lookout for that. We also chatted about Family Worship Service Teams. These would be a team of families who volunteer to do “everything” on a Sunday morning. This would not be every Sunday, but we would ask these teams to commit to one Sunday every month or every two months, etc.

In the fall, we will be looking at our programs under a microscope. Not entirely looking for change, but under the perspective of freshening up. What does that mean? We want to make sure that our programs are accommodating all families and their needs. All things need to be freshened up over time and we want to make sure that our weekly programming reflects that.



## August 2022 - Council Report

Montana was a success! We are so thankful for the many donors and prayer warriors that supported us along the way. After spending 8 days with our high school youth, we were able to really get to know each other in ways we didn't already. Following the ELCA National Youth Gathering theme and curriculum "Boundless", we learned about Creation, Forgiveness, Welcoming Others, and a few other topics as well. I am so thankful to the camp staff who spent the week with us putting together an amazing program full of adventures. Kayaking, canoeing, hiking, sailing and trail maintenance are just a few that come to mind. I am even more thankful to our kids who tried something new and trusted that we would get to and from home safely. Next year's trip will be announced at the end of September, so stay tuned!

Vacation Bible School just finished and we had a very fun week learning about the "Tree of Healing". Our themes were Roots of Creation, Healthy Minds and Bodies, Different Bodies Different Gifts, Healthy Grief, and Bearing Fruit. We had over 65 kids attend and had over 30 volunteers from the church and community. I am so proud to say that we are one of the few churches that can offer a Vacation Bible School that has as many volunteers as we do! It is something to be proud and thankful of. I cannot run the week without them, so my appreciation flows abundantly.

Fall programming begins September 14th. We look forward to the next week where Pastor Julie and I will be re-imagining what Wednesdays might look like and communicate those changes as soon as possible. The good news is, we are not changing much! Stay tuned for more information regarding fall programming.



## September 2022 - Council Report

At the end of the summer, our middle school girls' camped out in Fillmore. They stayed at a beautiful house overlooking all of Fillmore. The night started with setting up tents and transitioned into a wonderful dinner cooked by Jessica and Joe. We are thankful for opportunities like this that bring our kids together.

In September, our programs restarted with an increase in attendance. We are experimenting with a new schedule as we try to meet the needs of the congregation, especially our families. We expect that there will be more changes along the way as the year continues. The schedule for the night is shown below. All are welcome!

- Fun With Faith / 5:00PM-5:45PM
- Rooted / 5:00PM-5:45PM
- Adult Bible Study / 5:00PM-5:45PM
- Dinner / 5:45PM-6:15PM
- Confirmation / 6:15PM-7:30PM

Another change to our programs is with our confirmation program using “playlists” for the year. As explained by John Roberto of Lifelong Faith, “the idea of a playlist is simple: it is a sequence of activities and resources on a topic designed for individual and/or small group learning, usually available on a digital form. Playlists make faith formation available at any time. They are a way to personalize faith formation around the needs and interests of each life stage and the diversity of people’s spiritual and religious needs. Playlists make the learner of any age the center of faith formation, providing multiple ways to grow in faith. The responsibility for learning and growing in faith shifts from the provider to the person.” Stay tuned for updates of how it is working. Who knows, you might want to have a playlist for your Bible study group too!

The church picnic was full of joy and laughter this past Sunday, September 18th. It was a great place where families could gather with one another. After worship, you could find the kids playing on the playground or making flower crowns. I am so thankful to everyone who showed up and cannot wait until next year.

Our Venmo is set up and has already been in use for our Wednesday night meals. We received over \$300 in Venmo transactions the first week of our meal programs making it easy for families to attend dinner without having to look for cash or run to the bank. In fact, I heard before we had Venmo some families would not attend dinner because they didn’t have cash on them and didn’t want to ask for an “I owe you”. I want to say thank you for meeting the needs of our families in this specific area.





## October/November 2022 - Council Report

October was a very special month here at Mount Cross. One day to point out specifically was October 23rd when we hosted our first ever Serving Sunday - Family Edition. This was when our youth and families volunteered to fill all the worship assistant positions. We had members of 9 different families participate in worship that day and even had some of our younger kids read! After worship, 35 people joined us at the pumpkin patch for our Play Date Sunday. The following week we hosted our second annual Trunk or Treat with over 200 people making their way through. We are so thankful for our partnership with the Mount Cross Child Development Center to put this event on where collectively we had 20 cars handing out candy from both the preschool and church. On Sunday October 30th, Martin Luther made a guest appearance for Reformation Sunday! Later that day our high school youth had a halloween party at the Saner's house

November has been a very busy month as well. Starting with our high school youth group fundraiser at Pizza Man Dan's raising over \$100 towards our summer youth trip. This year, we will be attending the Western States Youth Gathering at California Lutheran University with over 500+ youth from ELCA Regions 1-4. The theme is Revive, Reunite, Rejoice, grounded in Acts 2:1. On November 6th, we baptized 4 new members to the church while also remembering all the saints who have gone before us. During children's church, we even practiced baptizing toy babies so the kids could understand what they were about to see.

As we finish up the month of November, we begin our practice for the Advent/Christmas Program on December 11th. We have many kids of all ages ready to participate this year and I know they will do an amazing job. We thank you all for your continuous support for our youth here at Mount Cross.



