

Mount Cross Lutheran Church Annual Report for 2017



2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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During 2017 we celebrated the gift of Eternal Life for these fellow members of the body of Christ.

Gene Cherry

July 13, 1936 - March 6, 2017

Marion Sanders

January 3, 1921- April 26, 2017

Dmitry Altshuller, Ph.D.

January 16, 1961 – May 26, 2017

Barbara Meyer

August 4, 1937 - August 20, 2017

*During 2017 we have welcomed into our
church family.....*

Janet Kessler

**David & Kathryn Artuso
Nathaniel, Evan**

Scott Smith

**Allison & Darryl Johnson
Nathan, Andrew**

Joseph & Karen Diehl

Sonja Demeter

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

MOUNT CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday, January 28, 2018 at 1:00 PM

Call to Order and Welcome Stan Patscheck, President

Opening PrayerPastor Jim Bessey

Approval of the 2017 Annual Meeting Minutes & June 4, 2017 Special
Congregational Meeting Minutes

Reports

Treasurer's 2017 Financial Report

Approve 2018 Budget

Pavilion Project Update

Elections

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

Old Business

New Business

Motion to Adjourn

Closing Prayer & BlessingPastor Jim Bessey

Annual Meeting Minutes **Sunday, January 29, 2017**

Having been determined that a quorum of voting members was in attendance, the meeting was called to order in the sanctuary at 4:10 by President Norm Presecan.

Pastor John opened the meeting with a prayer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE 2016 ANNUAL MEETING: It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the 2016 annual meeting with one correction--the church council made a motion to approve the recommended 2016 budget not the 2014 budget. The motion passed unanimously.

CYFM Director's report: Meredith Gardner reported that she started her position at Mt. Cross 2 years ago today and she is proud of all the programs that have been started in that time and the growth in the programs that were already here when she arrived. She is also proud of the relationships she has seen being built and growing over the last 2 years.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor John started his report by recognizing that this is Mt. Cross Lutheran Church's 51st year and sharing some other important #51's. He lifted up the quote from Martin Luther, "Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace so sure and certain that we can stake our lives on it a thousand times." In honor of the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation, his word for Mt. Cross this year will be "reform".

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Norm Presecan started his report by reviewing the 2 goals he had set for the year. The first was to bring our 2 new staff positions into a balanced regular budget and not rely on special funding for those positions. He was happy to report that goal was met with the budget that will be presented for the congregation to vote on. His second goal was to complete the patio project. While that goal has not been met, progress has been made on the project and it continues to move forward. In conclusion, he gave acknowledgement to all the 2016 council officers and members and presented the departing council members with certificates.

TREASURE'S REPORT--- Treasurer Keith Selbrede reported that during the past year the church switched from using Quick Books to using the online version of Quick Books. It took some getting used to but is being used now and running smoothly. He briefly reviewed the financial situation of the church. Over the last 2 years the church has had a downward trend in their assets because there has not been as much income coming into the church. The endowment fund assets were back in the positive column this year. The reserve account has grown but is still not at the suggested ELCA recommendation of 20%. The mortgage is being paid on schedule. There were no questions or discussion regarding the treasurer's report.

APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED 2017 BUDGET: Keith Selbrede presented the recommended 2017 budget to the congregation. The total budget is a 14.3% increase over last year's budget—largely due to funds being added in for the patio project. The operating income is an increase of \$33,000 over last year due to an 8.4% increase in pledges. The recommended

budget is a balanced budget and does not rely on any funds from the reserve account to pay for the 2 new staff positions. The 2017 budget maintains all the existing programs and staff positions. It includes the usual 1% increase in giving to Mission Support & Benevolence and a 2% cost of living increase for all regular staff members. The budget also includes \$76,500 (the balance of the “special funds” money) for the patio project.

Several questions were asked regarding the budget.

- The budget shows total payments for the mortgage in the amount of \$14,300 but that is designated for interest payments. There is nothing in the budget for the approximately \$14,000 to pay the principle portion of the budget. It was noted that this is how the budget has been written for the past several years, but there were still concerns about the additional \$14,000 being accounted for and if the budget is in fact balanced if that money is not factored into the budget. There were no immediate answers to any of questions and concerns so the council will investigate this further.
- Concern was voiced over the naming of the “patio project” instead of referring to it as a “special project”. Since no final plans and costs have been presented to the special projects committee there has been no final determination that the patio will be the project chosen to move forward with.
- There was confusion over why the budget has a line item for the Lutheran Magazine when the subscription was not funded in last year’s budget and the subscription was cancelled. The current line item is for a subscription of 20 magazines that will be delivered to the church to be given out to new members, visitors...
- There was concern raised about the amount of money in the budget for continuing education for the CYFM Director position and whether that amount (\$750.00) was enough to provide sufficient opportunities for growth so Meredith is better able to serve the church. It was noted that this is the amount that was requested by Meredith herself for continuing education. This also led to a discussion on the salary for the CYFM Director and the adjustment made by the church council to the salary in December of 2016. There was some confusion as to why the adjustment was made in December and if it was to correct for not having paid enough throughout the year to this position, was the correction retroactive back to the entire year and were the effects of the salary increase also factored into the other benefits for the CYFM Director position?
- The Make Bake Celebrate Committee would not like to have a dollar amount for their event listed in the budget, even though it is shown to be a goal only and not a set upon amount.

It was moved and seconded to approve the recommended 2017 budget amended to add \$14,471 for principle mortgage payments to be covered by the reserve fund if necessary. The motion passed.

It was moved and seconded to investigate and rectify with a budget amendment the 2015-2016 salary amount to the contracted salary amount for the CYFM Director position. The motion passed.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2017

A printed ballot was provided to each member in attendance at the meeting. As each slate of officers was announced a call was made for further nominations to the slate. There were no further nominations to any of the offices and it was moved and seconded to close the ballot. According to the church by-laws, if there are not more candidates for any of the offices than

nominees, the ballot may be approved by acclimation however, a request was made for a written ballot so ballots were collected and counted. Sixty-eight ballots were received and counted.

Those voted into office were:

- **Nomination Committee**
 - Rick Gardner
 - Bev Rueckert
 - Anne Valencia
 - John Colby
 - Barbara Burke
- **Voting Members to Synod Assembly**
 - Bob Brickley
 - LaJean Wenzel
 - Gail Baird
- **Mediation Board**
 - Nils Rueckert
 - Dmitry Altshuller
 - Becky Riley
- **Endowment Committee**
 - Barbara Sletten
 - Rick Gardner
 - Chelle Smith
- **Church Council**
 - Cecelia Travick-Jackson
 - Brian Edwards
 - Stan Patscheck
 - Norman Williamsen
 - Mike Laskey
 - Denise Sobolik

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business on the agenda and none was brought forward from the congregation.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Amendments to the Mount Cross Constitution**---Pastor John gave brief explanation on the background of the changes being requested by the ELCA to congregational constitutions. There have also been handouts available for review and links on the website regarding the proposed changes. The changes proposed deal mainly with new position titles adopted by the ELCA. It was moved and seconded to amend the Mount Cross Lutheran Church constitution as proposed. There was no discussion. The motion passed.
- **Update on the Patio Project:** Stan Patscheck gave the congregation an update on the progress of the patio project. The plans are currently with the city planning department waiting for approval. So far, approximately \$8,000.00 has been spent on the project for structural and engineering designs and fees. Once the plans are back from the city the church will decide if there is enough money in the special projects fund to move forward with all that is proposed for the project. There is currently no action required by the congregation for the project.

There being no more business, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed.

Pastor John closed the meeting with a prayer.
The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Everyone is invited to the Parish Life Center for a potluck dinner.

A full copy of the 2017 Annual Report can be seen online at
http://www.mountcross.com/uploads/1/5/9/5/15953620/2016_annual_report.pdf

Respectfully submitted by Denise Sobolik, Recorder

Special Congregational Meeting **Minutes Sunday, June 4, 2017**

Having been determined that a quorum of voting members was in attendance, the meeting was called to order in the sanctuary at 11:30 by President Stan Patscheck.

This is a single agenda item meeting called for the purpose of a congregational vote on funding for the patio pavilion project.

Pastor John opened the meeting with a prayer.

Pastor John gave some background information on where the money initially came from for this project and how this specific project was identified to move forward with. This patio pavilion project will totally replace the existing patio and provide a permanent roof for the patio. The project will be completed in two phases with the first phase to be completed this summer and costing approximately \$120,000. The second phase will be to add the serving area and wind screen protection with a cost yet to be determined. The purpose of this meeting is to vote on providing funding for the cost of this project over what has already been designated. Brian Edwards presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining the entire project. The presentation started with stating the goals for the project.

The goals outlined were to seek new or reconfigured space to permit more gatherings by a variety of groups for enhanced ministry and service to members and the community, to develop space suited to a wide range of uses with greater flexibility than the existing space that would be suitable day/night without regard to the weather and to not focus primarily on beautification, comfort or convenience but to focus on ministry enhancement. The presentation then showed artists renderings of the proposed pavilion and went through the phases of the project and the projected cost estimates for the project.

It continued by outlining several funding ideas the council considered for the project before showing the funding plan up for a vote by the congregation. The plan recommended by the council would allow no more than \$40,000 to be “borrowed” from the church’s reserve funds to augment the \$82,000 already in the budget for this project. A capital improvement campaign with of a goal of raising \$70,000 would be started to raise money to repay the money borrowed from the reserve funds and for the second phase of the project. This would allow the construction work for phase 1 to begin in June or July of this year and hopefully be completed by the end of the summer or early fall. At the annual meeting in January of 2018 the congregation would need to vote on completing the second phase of the project and providing the funding for that phase. After the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and discussion. Before taking questions, it was noted that the printed ballot given to the congregation members needed to be amended. It called for up to \$38,000 to be used from the reserve funds and the actual amount in the motion is \$40,000. Members were asked to change that number on their ballots.

Stan Patscheck was questioned about how the amount of \$120,000 was arrived at for the cost of this project. He reviewed the process he went through and what that number was based on and what it covered. That number does include a cost allowance for a 10% project overrun. He also reiterated that it is impossible to know the full and complete cost of a project of this type until the project is completed.

Keith Selbrede (treasurer) and Brian Edwards (Endowment committee member) were called on to share some of the church’s financial information. The reserve fund is currently at \$86,000. In addition, there is currently about \$400,000 in the Endowment fund. The endowment money is not normally available for operational use but the bylaws do state that if there is a catastrophic need the congregation can vote to use the money in a dire emergency when the risk of the congregation is at stake.

It was noted that the first phase of the project will not really meet the stated goals of the project. Those goals will only be met with the completion of the second phase.

There were questions regarding the role Stan Patscheck has in the project. He is acting as a builder/owner on behalf of Mt. Cross and is not being paid for this work. He is overseeing the project as a project manager.

It was noted that the “special funds” committee never made an official recommendation to the council or the congregation on this project. The proposal went straight to the council and was approved to move forward by the council.

After lengthy discussion, the question was called for by a member of the congregation. There were still people wanting to ask questions and be heard on the matter, but per Roberts Rules of Order, once the vote is called for the discussion needs to stop and a vote be taken. Stan Patscheck asked all those in favor of ending the discussion and going on to vote to say “Aye” in a voice vote and all those opposed to ending the discussion and going on to vote to say “Nay” in a voice vote. The “Nays” prevailed and the discussion continued.

After all the people wishing to be heard had had a chance to speak the council made the following

motion: The congregation approves spending \$120,000 on the patio project with \$82,000 being paid from the 2017 budget and no more than \$40,000 to be paid from the reserve fund for the completion of Phase I of the project and approves a capital improvement fundraiser with a goal of raising \$70,000 for the completion of Phase I and Phase II of the project be started immediately allowing the patio project construction to be started in June or July of 2017. The motion was seconded and votes were cast by paper ballots. After a short break to count the votes it was announced that the motion passed with 70 “Yes” votes and 14 “No” votes. There being no more business, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m. Respectfully

submitted by Denise Sobolik, Recorder

REPORTS TO THE CONGREGATION

Final Report for Pastor John Soyster

I. Activity for October & November 1-5, 2017

A. Visitation

- Shut-in/home Communion: 9 (20, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 6 (18)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 6 (30)
- Tele-care calls: 14 (54)
- Birthday cards: 46 (418)

B. Meetings

- Mount Cross: Weekly church staff meetings, Executive Committee, Church Council, Meredith, Worship & Music staff & committee; Communion Ministers planning; Mutual Ministry Committee (exit interview).
- Conference, Interfaith, other: Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via (the last one; started in 2001), Leisure Village Bible Study (the last one; started in 1992); Conference pastors.

C. Pastoral Acts:

- Baptisms – 2 (9), Weddings – 1 (4), Funerals – 1* (7) [Scattering of Barbara Meyer’s ashes]

- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 3 (31), Tuesday morning: 2 (19), Wednesday evening : 4 (32).

D. Special Events: Luther & The Reformation (#10 of 10); Worship Assistant training; CDC Back-To-School night & Staff Installation; Classical Concert; Quilt blessing; 1st CDC Chapel for the school year (and my last CDC Chapel, too); New Member Orientation & Reception; Reformation service & sermon; Meredith and Scott’s wedding.

E. Counseling Hours:

- Pre-marital: 1 (7)
- Pre-baptism: 1 (6)
- Crisis/other: 3 (45)

II. Information & Action Items For Council

- **Exit Interview.** The Mutual Ministry Committee (Becky Riley, Dianne Selbrede, Kevin Churchill and Craig Blois) met with me on October 30 to conduct an exit interview. A summary of that conversation is being sent to the Executive Committee.
- **Worship Assistant Training.** There was a pretty good turnout for the training event on October 1. Here are a few changes of which you should be aware:

○ I asked all worship assistants to check in with the new pastors prior to the start of each service, so they will know that the various assignments are covered for that service. Sheri will add this to the weekly email to worship assistants.

○ I suggested that the Greeter's job be moved outside next to the kiosk and that the kiosk be upgraded with some kind of sign that identifies it as a visitor center.

○ I added the following to the instructions for Readers: ***"You may just read the passage. You may also read the short introduction that is printed in the worship folder, but this is not necessary. Please do not add your own comments or explanations to the reading. You may inadvertently introduce a different theme than the one the preacher was intending."***

● **Membership Roster Concerns.** I have delivered to Sheri a printout of the entire list of names in our database. I have lined out in red those I believe should be removed from the data base. Many of these names are identified as 'friend' or 'visitor' or 'prospect.' I have highlighted in yellow those members/households that we have not seen in some time and should be contacted. If you should choose to use it, a sample letter and response care can be seen [here](#).

● **My email.** Effective November 6, when someone sends an email to pastorjohn@mountcross.com, they will get this reply: *Pastor John retired from Mount Cross on November 5, 2017. If you need to reach someone at the church, please email office@mountcross.com or phone [805-492-3847](tel:805-492-3847).* The Mutual Ministry Committee, during my exit interview, raised concerns about what might happen if someone truly needed pastoral care during an emergency. And if emails to my old address were forwarded to other than a pastor, would there be confidentiality issues. The Council can consult with the office manager and Jim Gucciardo (who manages our web and email services) to come to a decision and solution.

Miscellaneous leavings:

● Sheri will have all of the photos and videos I have taken of the progress of the pavilion project transferred to her computer.

● By Sunday afternoon I will have returned my keys: to the church & sound room; the video cabinet in the PLC; the safe; the personnel & Safeguarding file cabinet in my office; my desk.

● I have transferred management of the Safeguarding God's Children files and process to Meredith Smith. Background checks have all been done by me up to this point. They require getting Social Security and other confidential information which is used to submit the request for the background check. In addition, she is responsible for periodic continuing education on child safety to be sent to the names on the roster of those who have been checked. When we launched this program, it was decided that the pastor should be the one to maintain this sensitive information. The Council can decide what to do going forward.

● I was not able to find sponsors for the people who joined Mount Cross on October 22. There are many names of potential sponsors in the Time & Talent database.

● Joan Brundage, the new Financial Secretary, will now be responsible for moving the offering from where the ushers leave it after each service to the safe. This begins November 5.

● I have left a 'caring list' for the pastor(s) who follow me so they will have information on those who might need a little extra attention.

● Sheri has a folder in which are a few items related to the possible installation of a columbarium at Mount Cross, along with names of those who are interested in working on the project. When this idea was first introduced some time back, it was met with enthusiasm. I insisted that the project not get ahead of the proposed pavilion project. But now that the pavilion is underway, the Council can decide when to turn on the 'green light.' Also, there is already some money dedicated to the project:

\$100 in designated account 36000 Columbarium and an additional \$2280 in memorial funds that have been directed to the same.

Hopes for the future:

- I hope that the interim before a new permanent pastor is as short as possible, but also as long as it takes for people to move on from saying, "Pastor John never did it *that* way."
- When it is time for the MET (Mission Exploration Team) process to begin, I hope you work that process for all it is worth. It will be the key to opening the door to Mount Cross' future. The times ahead will be challenging in lots of ways. But if those you invite hear an invitation to join you in doing "God's work, Our hands," the future will be bright.
- I hope that in addition to providing much needed meeting and fellowship space for the congregation, the new pavilion can also serve the neighborhood. I hope a way might be found to allow the neighbors to use the pavilion for anniversary and birthday parties and the like. The structure might serve as a means by which Mount Cross truly becomes connected to its neighborhood. And if you're looking for a name for it, consider something like "***The Isaiah 25 Pavilion***" (see verse 4) or "***The Psalm 91 Pavilion***" (see verses 1 & 2).
- I know there are many who have reacted negatively to the recently mailed Covenant. I am sorry about that. I hope that you will be able to guide those folks to a place where they will see how necessary it is. If it seems an unnecessarily harsh way to end our relationship, perhaps if it can be seen as a way of creating a fresh start for the pastor that follow me, that will help.

Finally...Thank you! In my October report I thanked you and all the Councils with which I have worked over 26 years for your integrity, dedication and good humor while doing the Lord's work.

Let me now add to that a word of thanks to you, and through you, to the whole congregation, for

the overwhelming send off this past weekend (this is pretty much the same thank you that I will send to Sheri for the next Grapevine). Saturday's banquet and program was an absolute blast - a wonderful mixture of laughs and tears (turns out the tears were a warm up for the next morning). The many gifts and presentations were Mount Cross being Mount Cross - meaning you've shown me and my family love and support from the beginning to the end. For that I will always be grateful.

And then there was Sunday. Your generosity on Saturday was repeated with more gifts to me and to Leslie - very, very generous ones, Again, thank you. And I hope you will understand that one of my gifts back to you were the many tears that I shed that morning. As I handed the Body of Christ to each of you one last time, and as I looked at you, I briefly replayed the many experiences we shared and, as I said on Saturday, the many times and many ways you trusted me to enter into your holy times and stand on your holy ground - the joyful times and places as well as the painful ones. Those tears were my thanks for that trust and for the bond we shared, as brothers and sisters in Christ these many years.

Charter member Chuck Proctor, when he prayed, in one way or another always seemed to include the same phrase, asking that God would "*guide and direct.*" I conclude with thanks that Jesus Christ, Lord and head of the Church, which includes Mount Cross, will continue to be present with powerful grace to guide and direct you into the future that God has planned.

Supply Pastor's Report: Pastor Julie Morris

Activity for November 7, 2017-December 31, 2017 (with the exception of the week of 11/20-26 when I was away)

A. Sunday Worship: 7 Sundays

Services: 15 (including 3 Christmas Eve services)

Sermons: 8

B. Visitation

Shut-in/home Communion: 4

Member/visitor home visits: 3

Hospital/skilled nursing visits: 4

Telecare calls: 16 (including 6 related to the Thomas Fire)

C. Meetings

Mount Cross Church staff meetings: 2

Executive Committee: 2

Church Council: 2

Worship & Music: 2

Communion Ministry: 1

D. Pastoral Acts

Weddings – 1

E. Education

Sunday morning Bible Study: 5

Tuesday morning Men's Bible Study: 3

Wednesday evening Bible Study : 6

Confirmation Class: 6 (3 as main teacher; 3 as support)

CDC Chapels: 12

F. Special Events

Church Christmas Concert 12/3

(Thomas Fire 12/4-ongoing)

CDC Christmas Program 12/14

Caroling with Confirmation Class 12/20

Christmas Eve Services 12/24

Sperling/Fox Wedding 12/26

E. Counseling Hours

Pre-marital: 2

Crisis/other: 5

Note: It was a joy for me to serve as the supply Pastor at Mount Cross for two months. I have experienced the congregation as welcoming, faithful, engaged and healthy. The staff and lay leadership are gifted, competent, reliable and collaborative. May God continue to bless Mt. Cross with discernment and vision in the transition time ahead!

Director of Ministries: Meredith Gardner

Thank you to the entire Mount Cross congregation as you have shown me so much love and support this past year. This was my third year at Mount Cross and has been a transition year for me in both my personal life and work life. This year I got engaged and married to my husband Scott, and we have had a few months now to settle into married life. Thank you to all who joined in the celebration of our love at our wedding in October! My job was also reclassified to the Director of Ministries, which brings me the freedom to help bridge together programs throughout the age groups at Mount Cross. Also, this year Pastor John retired, which has been a difficult transition since he has been in my life since childhood as my pastor, mentor, and boss. Our space has even changed with the patio project getting underway. Through this whole year I have witnessed many leaders that have risen up in our congregation to help get us through the numerous transitions. Now we enter in to a new church year where we look inward at our successes and downfalls, and we also look outward at how we can be a better neighbor to our community around us. I look forward to another year of growth and the deepening of the faith and acts of service our congregation is a part of here at Mount Cross!

Fondly, Meredith

CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT REPORT

2017 was truly an eventful year at Mount Cross. All the committees continued to do the great job they do each year. It was indeed a joy and humbling experience to serve as your president as I watched the year unfold.

Times to remember:

- We celebrated the 500th anniversary of the reformation with a year-long party as Pastor John instructed us about the events through which Martin Luther lived leading up to, and beyond the day his 95 Theses were posted
- The long-awaited Patio Pavilion project was approved by you, the congregation, and was kicked off this past Summer
- We waved goodbye to our beloved Pastor John who faithfully served Mount Cross for 26 years before his retirement
- We welcomed Pastor Julie as our fill-in supply pastor while we anticipated Pastor Jim Bessey's arrival
- We showed Meredith Gardner Smith our appreciation for her tireless service as Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries by reclassifying her to Director of Ministries
- Pastor Elizabeth accepted a call to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Thousand Oaks and joined Pastor Erik as assistant pastor

Times to come:

- Pastor Jim Bessey graciously accepting our invitation to be our interim pastor
- Putting into place the Mission Exploration Team (MET) to develop the Mount Cross mission objectives to use in calling a new permanent pastor
- Drafting a new Make, Bake, Celebrate committee
- Completion of Phase I of the Patio Pavilion project

- Consideration of a storage facility and new restrooms
- Business as usual (which always seems to be unusual each year)

My sincere thanks to the congregation for being the welcoming, friendly folks you are as we greeted new members and guests throughout the year. Thanks also to the Mount Cross staff for working as hard as you always do to continue our mission. And thanks to all for putting up with the Patio Pavilion construction inconveniences. Be aware there will be more to come.

I am sure you all join me in looking forward to a blessed and successful 2018.

Yours in Christ,

Stan Patscheck

ADULT EDUCATION

2017 was a year of transitions and changes. Pastor Elizabeth accepted a call at Holy Trinity, Pastor John (the bedrock of Mount Cross) retired, and Pastor Julie came and went as a long term supply pastor. Throughout all of these changes, the resiliency and Christian fortitude of the congregation prevailed. Below is a list of Adult Education opportunities led by the Pastors, guest speakers, and members of the congregation.

- † A variety of Bible studies continued and grew: 11:10 Sunday morning Bible Study
- † 5:00 PM Wednesday evening Bible Study
- † 6:30 PM Wednesday evening Bible Study was added as requested by members of the congregation
- † House Missions
- † Men's Bible Study
- † Mary and Martha Social and Cultural Bible Study

Special Discussions and Classes on

- Christian Muslim Relationships
- Christian Jewish Relationships
- The Reformation

Additional opportunities for Christian growth included:

- † Meditation Mondays
- † Prayerful Mile Walks
- † Christmas in July-Viewing and Biblical Discussion of the Movie “It’s a Wonderful Life”
- † Book Review and Discussion (Fierce: Women of the Bible and their stories of violence, mercy, bravery, wisdom, sex and salvation by Alice Connor)
- † Craft project based on the Eucharist
- † Prayer Labyrinth
- † Introduction to English Hand Bells

The Adult Education committee is thankful and humbled by the participation of the congregation during our year of transition. Attendance at Adult Education activities remained stable in many cases, and even grew in other instances.

We look forward to maintaining and providing many more opportunities for Christian growth in 2018.

Beginning on Thursday, January 18 at 7:00 PM in the Parish Life Center we will have a new class. The class will be about: How Lutherans Interpret the Bible- a seven week video and discussion group on how Lutherans understand Biblical text. Please RSVP to the church office at office@mountcross.com or 482-3847. (It is not too late to join.)

Also in 2018 we will continue

- † Our Sunday and Wednesday Bible Studies
- † Maintain the Men’s Bible Study and the House Mission
- † Meditation Mondays
- † Prayer Labyrinth Opportunities

We are exploring

- † Theology on Tap
- † Book Reviews and discussions
- † Muslim and Lutheran Relationships
- † Christmas in July using a different classic video Dramatic video presentations of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians and the Gospel of Mark
- † Guest Speakers and Presenters

Please consider joining the Adult Education Committee. We need you and your ideas as we enter this new and exciting spirit filled year.

Prayerfully submitted by,
Adult Education Committee
(Cecelia Travick-Jackson-Chair)

Budget & Finance Report

Members: Joan Brundage, Heather Edwards, Karen Gramacki, Herb Holler, Kathleen Jones, Keith Selbrede

Recognitions: The committee wishes to thank Jenny Christensen and Susan Prosser for their many years of service to B&F.

Financial Highlights:

- Pledge Giving*: 95.3% of budget
- Operating Income*: 95.7% of budget
- Overall Expenses*: 93.1% of budget
- * Not including patio pavilion project

Patio Pavilion Project:

- Spent to date: \$111,620
- Income to date: \$142,608
- Net available: \$ 30,988
- Need to complete (P1): \$65,000

Reserves: Improved to \$109,935 from \$96,854
Mortgage remaining: \$325,473 (was \$341,421)
2018 Budget Methodology: The new 2018 uses a different methodology currently in use by Trinity Lutheran Church in T.O. The method is

simpler with only 6 pages, easier to understand by users and has fewer accounts to track (4 pages instead of 23). The method is expected to be easier, more efficient and more effective to use during the year and in developing our 2019 budget. Thanks to Heather Edwards for leading this conversion.

Respectfully submitted,
Keith Selbrede
Treasurer

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Starting this school year in September has been challenging! The patio demolition and construction really tested our teacher’s skills to work together. They had to reorganize schedules, try to find a quiet place for circle time, and greet and dismiss our students in different locations when the doors to the classrooms were blocked off. I must say our staff is amazing! They never complained during this time. Our preschool parents were very patient and kind also. Thanks to Stan Patscheck for his efforts to work with the school schedule as best as he could. Thanks also to Rick Mann for keeping us posted as to what would be happening and when.

Pastor John’s retirement was also a big change for us. Pastor Julie came at a time when the family Christmas Program needed planning! She did a very good job helping us organize the celebration of the birth of Jesus. She also had a wonderful way of explaining to our students about changes in our lives.

Another recent challenge came when the fire caused poor air quality and we could not go to the playground and had to keep the children inside. We are truly blessed with our staff, our preschool families, Sheri, our church secretary

and Mount Cross members for keeping our school running as well as possible through it all.

Our enrollment is great this year and the budget reports are good. I am happy to report, our Mission Outreach is alive and well! I am truly blessed to be at such a wonderful school! chool!

Cathy Channels

Legacy Giving/Endowment

As of March 31, 2017, the Endowment Fund was valued at over \$340,000. Using our distribution formula, the Legacy Giving Team recommended an annual distribution of \$14,500. This was approved by the Church Council as follows:

Scholarships (1 x \$1,500)	\$1,500
Mount Cross Youth	2,500
Youth Discretionary Fund	1,000
Pastor’s Discretionary Fund	2,000
ELCA Mission Support	1,000
Capital Project – Patio Cover	3,000
Lutheran Retreats, Camps & Conferences (LRCC)	700
Lutheran Social Services	750
CDC Playground Refurbishment	1,500
Quilters - Shipping	300
Lutheran Border Concerns	250
Total	\$14,500

In addition, at the request of the Church Council the Team voted to allocate \$1,400 in leftover funds from previous years to the retirement dinner for Pastor John.

The college scholarship was awarded to Wyatt Phipps, graduate of Camarillo High School. Wyatt is now attending California Lutheran University.

The Legacy Giving Team gratefully acknowledges a sizable gift from the Estate of Gerry Bradley, which was invested in the Endowment Fund. The Fund is growing rapidly due to this gift along with approved deposits from the memorial funds and the rise in the stock market. As of November 30, 2017, the Fund was valued at \$476,933.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Legacy Giving Team,
Rick Gardner

FELLOWSHIP

2017 has been an eventful year at Mount Cross, and the MC Fellowship team has been busy helping to celebrate those memorable events. The year started with a Winter Wonderland hospitality. Remember all that rain last year? Our wonderland was rained out twice but it will be on the agenda to try again this year, offering warming-hut refreshments and activities between services to help lift those wintertime blues. We also hosted various other Sunday morning hospitality occasions in 2017 including theme events celebrating Mother's Day, Father's Day, the Fourth of July, a Hawaiian Luau, and our Summer Fruit Bounty.

Special Fellowship events included the 3rd annual Wine and Appetizer Tasting held at the Altshullers' home in January, and sharing a simple meal on Wednesday evenings at the traditional Lenten Soup Suppers beginning in February. In March we organized a group of 30 members and friends to see the incredible 1970's rock opera production, "Jesus Christ Superstar", at the Thousand Oaks Civic Plaza. Other events that Fellowship either hosted or assisted with in 2017 were the annual Worship Service in the Park followed by a potluck picnic, an evening under the stars at the Camarillo Community Band Concert in July which included Pastor John playing his clarinet, as well as the festivities surrounding Pastor John's Retirement Celebration Banquet and the special

worship service led by Pastor John as we bid farewell to our beloved leader after 26 years at Mount Cross.

In September, Fellowship participated in the annual Rally Day event designed to introduce the various programs and activities available to participate in at Mount Cross. Our focus was to survey parishioners on the Fellowship activities that they have enjoyed in the past, which events they would like to see revived or continued, and what other activities or events they would like the Fellowship Committee to consider sponsoring.

We heard you! We greatly appreciate the feedback from the Rally Day survey and other proposals, and we plan to include many of these ideas in our 2018 agenda, e.g., reviving the October Birthday Bash to commemorate Martin Luther's birthday and discover our own "birthday buddies" within the parish; possibly holding a Talent Show Coffee House to highlight our members' many hidden talents; and organize one or more of the suggested offsite events or excursions to a concert or play. Please keep the suggestions coming as we make plans to enhance and encourage your Mount Cross fellowship experience! In addition, if you would like to join our fun and energetic Fellowship team, please contact the church office or any member of the Fellowship committee, or you may contact Valerie Patscheck at (805) 312-3497 or email to vpatscheck@gmail.com.

Submitted by
Valerie Patscheck, 2017 Chair

CLASSICAL CONCERTS AT MOUNT CROSS 2006 - 2018

When the Concert Series was initiated, the purpose was twofold: first as an outreach to the community and secondly to foster the performance of Classical Music. The intent was to present three concerts each Season with professional musicians at a subscriber cost of \$45. The continued support enables the Series to continue to engage a variety of performers.

2017-2018 Season is the 12th Season. Although the conception of this was my inspiration, it is very important that success would not have been possible without those of you who have supported the concerts and especially the special people who are involved to make a Sunday afternoon concert a memorable success. A sincere “thank you” to all.

Barbara D’Addario

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Children’s Ministries: Preschool-5th Grade

Fun with Faith (approximately 10 children each week)

Every Wednesday (minus some holidays) we had Fun with Faith available to our Mt. Cross Kids! Fun with Faith runs from 5:00-6:00PM as part of our Wednesday Night Programs. Katie Robinson is our Children and Youth Ministries Assistant and she creates a curriculum each week that goes along with the church’s lectionary. Every Wednesday we celebrate birthdays, sing songs, and have time for highs and lows together and to hear the message at their own level of understanding. We play games to go along with the message, and have them act out the message in skits, and do crafts for the various holidays and messages. After Fun with Faith we gather the children together to have dinner with their families and the other Mt. Cross families.

Children’s Church (5-10 children each week)

Every Sunday morning (minus some holidays) we have Children’s Church during both the 8:30AM and 10:00AM services. After the Children’s Message in the church service, the children exit with Meredith and/or Katie and any youth helpers to gather together in Meredith’s office. We celebrate any birthdays we have missed, and read the gospel message out of our colorful Spark Children’s Bibles. We have time to check in with each other, and then one of the children does a closing prayer. We go back into the service after the sermon. The whole point of Children’s Church is to teach the children about what is being talked about in the sermon, but in a more age appropriate way. This also gives a little time for the children to be active during the service and get out their wiggles!

Vacation Bible School (130 children, 30 middle and high school youth, 20 adults)

Vacation Bible School this year had the theme of “Hero Central” and was July 31-August 4. Our decorations were big buildings and colorful streamers making you feel like you were in the city. We asked for school supplies for school kits through Lutheran World Relief, canned goods for the food pantry at St Columba's, and asked for offering for Lutheran Social Services. We got so many supplies that the youth got to dump a whole bucket of water over Meredith’s head in front of all the children on Friday.

Summer Camp at El Camino Pines (8 children, 7 middle school youth)

Summer Camp is always a great experience at El Camino Pines! This summer we brought 15 children and youth to camp. They had a great experience spending time with their counselors and growing in their faith. This ministry is long standing at Mt Cross, and is sacred time for all that attend.

Middle School Ministries: 6th-8th Grade

Confirmation (10-20 youth, 3-5 adults)

Every Wednesday evening (minus summer and holidays) we gather our middle school youth together to learn more about our beliefs as Lutherans. Our curriculum is all written by the pastor and Meredith, and runs in a three year cycle (Old Testament, New Testament, and Lutheran Beliefs and Traditions). In the Spring and Fall we have used some YouTube videos on a channel called “The Bible Project.” Pairing these videos and our own research on the books of the bible has been very successful and we plan on continuing this plan.

Service Projects

During Confirmation we have done multiple service projects. We have done quilting for Lutheran World Relief. Every Fall we put together Health and School Kits for Lutheran World Relief. We also have a long standing tradition in Confirmation to go Caroling at Christmas time to some of our elderly or sickly members. This tradition has always been a favorite of our Confirmation students, and this year we ended by caroling at Rolling Pin Donuts!

Summer Camp at El Camino Pines (8 children, 7 middle school youth)

Summer Camp is always a great experience at El Camino Pines! This summer we brought 15 children and youth to camp. They had a great experience spending time with their counselors and growing in their faith. This ministry is long standing at Mt Cross, and is sacred time for all that attend.

Winter Camp at El Camino Pines (3 youth)

Winter Camp in 2017 was in February and we took 3 youth. They joined along in worship, workshops, and heard the camp staff speak. The highlight of this trip for the youth was making new friends from our area.

Day Trips (5-15 youth at each event)

This year the middle school youth have made great use out of the church van and have been on many adventures with Meredith. We have gone hiking in Thousand Oaks, Ventura, and in the Santa Monica Mountains. We also have gone to the beach multiple times, and we always end up at In N Out.

High School Ministries: 9th-12th Grades

High School Youth Group (6-13 youth)

Since Fall 2015 our high school youth group has met on Sunday evenings from 6:00-8:00PM. We start out the night with making dinner together. Everyone pitches in and helps, and then we enjoy our dinner time together in fellowship. After, we sit and reflect on the past week. We do high’s, low’s, and prayer concerns. Our youth are open, honest and vulnerable in these moments, and this group has become more like a support group because of that. We talk about real issues going on in their own lives, the lives of the people around them and what is going on in our community and world. We end the night by praying for all the things we discussed, and lifting all of our sorrows and anxieties to God.

Christmas Overnighter (7 youth)

We travelled to Huntington Beach on December 22nd to go on an all night event. We joined churches from the area and went down on the Ascension bus. We played group games, went to Sky High, Denny's, played broom hockey, and did a photo scavenger hunt.

Western States Youth Gathering at CLU (8 youth)

Our house boating trip was hands down the most important trip of this year. Six of our youth attended as we went on a road trip to the Bay Area. We met up with Holy Trinity in Thousand Oaks and Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Huntington Beach, for a total of 26 people. We stayed at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, did community service in the Bay Area, and did touristy stuff. Then we went to Don Pedro Reservoir for five days on the water. The best way to explain house boating is camping on the water. We had a blast and enjoyed getting to know each other better. Then we went to Fresno to wrap up and the youth did not want to leave each other. It is pretty amazing to see that over a week so many youth could love each other so much.

Winter Camp at El Camino Pines (11 youth)

Winter Camp this past year was fun as we went up to the snow. The youth always look forward to this weekend, and we took 11 high school students. They immediately made friends from other youth from around our area, and caught up with friends from previous camp experiences.

Day Trips

The high school youth are constantly out on adventures in the church van. We have gone to the beach, on multiple hikes and to CLU for different events.

Family Ministries: Everyone!

Wednesday Dinners (approximately 30-40 people)

During the summer in 2016 we started a Wednesday night dinner and fellowship time. Since then we have decided to continue this program with a few changes for the school year. We meet from 4:30-5:00 for Joyful Noise, then from 5:00-6:00pm there is both Fun with Faith running and an adult bible study. Then from 6:00-6:30pm we have dinner provided by a confirmation family and supported with salads and desserts from other members. Then from 6:30-8:00pm we have the Confirmation teaching time and all the choirs practice. This Wednesday program has proven to be successful by creating a fellowship time with people invited from all ages.

Service Events

In 2017 we made a point to support our Service and Missions committee with the events and projects they have promoted. The families have helped with cleaning up Nancy Bush park, raising money as well as walking in the annual CROP Hunger Walk and the LSS Poverty Walk. We also had kids and adult of multiple ages help with collecting donations and sorting through them for the victims of the Thomas Fire.

Day Trips

In 2017 we had a few events where the whole family was invited, and all of them were a hit. We had a trip to the pumpkin patch in October, had a movie under the tent the day before the Make Bake Celebrate, and we went on multiple hikes.

Family Winter Camp at El Camino Pines (9 adults, 7 children & 2 youth)

Family Winter Camp in 2017 was in January and we took 18 people in total. We joined along in worship, workshops (broken up with the adults in one group, children, and youth), and heard the camp staff speak. The highlight of this trip for the youth was making new friends from our area.

Parent's Night Out (15-35 children, 10-20 youth at each)

While Parent's Night Out is a fundraiser for our youth trips, the nights we have together with our youth and children combined has been so precious to watch. The middle and high school youth have taken ownership of being in charge and making sure the kids are having fun while being safe, and the children love the time with the older youth and really look up to them. These nights have also been a great opportunity for parents to have some time to themselves or with their own friends! We did 4 of these evenings in 2017.

Fundraising

Parent's Night Out's

In December of 2015 we started a new kind of fundraiser called "Parent's Night Out." During these nights the youth babysit the children of our congregation and throughout the community. We have dinner, games, crafts, and a movie at the end. For these fundraisers we had a Thrivent Action Team that gave us \$250 for food and supplies for the night. Then we charged the parents \$20 per child to make money to go on our youth trips. These nights have been a fun and precious watching the older and younger kids at our church bond.

Make Bake Celebrate

The Make Bake Celebrate in 2017 went well with a large number of middle and high school youth helping to serve. We wore Hawaiian shirts and leis to go with the Hawaiian theme. The youth did a great job at working together. We made over \$2,000 through “Tips for Teens” to go to our summer trip.

Cookie Jar

In December we did a new fundraiser making cookie jars for Christmas time. This was a huge hit and we sold over 70 cookie jars for \$10 apiece. All of the proceeds will go to our families going to Family Winterfest in January 2018.

Staff

Children and Youth Ministry Assistant

Katie Robinson has been employed at Mt Cross since October of 2015 and she has taken on a lot of responsibility. Katie helps with the planning and implementing of our Fun with Faith program. She works on Sunday mornings for Children’s Church, and assists with youth group occasionally. Katie ran the music portion of our VBS program. Katie has become a very important member of our Mt Cross family.

Nursery Staff

Kayla Lindquist and Shaun York have been our faithful nursery attendants for many years. They are here every Sunday morning ready with fun activities for the youngest members of our church community. Many of the small children look forward to come to church to go be with Kayla and Shaun, and their dedication to be here every Sunday for so many years is appreciated!

Intern from California Lutheran University

This summer we had an Intern from CLU, Alicia Spadaro. She helped plan and implement our Fun with Faith Program, Youth Group, and our Sunday morning Children’s Church. Her project for class was creating our VBS craft curriculum. We are excited to continue in this Intern program with CLU to help strengthen their students and enrich our programs at Mount Cross with new ideas.

Thank you to everyone who has helped volunteer!

Learning Committee

A huge thank you to all who helped in any way with our Learning Committee! We meet once a month at 7:00PM at Yolanda’s. These ladies have helped me greatly with planning events and giving feedback on our programs. A special thank you to Tracy Blois this year. Thank you also to Heather Edwards, Lisa Saner, Patti Stouch, Anne Valencia, and Aaron Laskey for all your support and help! Thank you Mike Laskey for being our liaison to the Church Council!

Vacation Bible School

Thank you to all the people who make VBS happen! Putting on our VBS is a lot of work, and so many people help in different ways. If we did not have people who cared so much about this program then there is no way we could put it on. I am truly grateful to everyone who helped in any little or big way!

Confirmation Families with Dinner

Thank you to all of the middle school families who faithfully bring dinner every week for our confirmation program. Thank you also for stepping it up majorly this year with bringing even more food to help serve all of the families instead of just the youth!

Confirmation Guides

Thank you to all of the guides in 2017! We have been blessed to have Brian Fisher, Brian Stouch, Mike Laskey, Allison and Todd Ebright, Patti Stouch, and Karen Fanner as trusted adults for our middle school youth. Thank you for your time and love for our Mt Cross youth!

Lastly, thank you to all of the parents and youth who have made this such an enjoyable and exciting year for me! You are what makes our program successful, and I looked forward to what we have in store for the future!

**Fondly,
Meredith ☺**

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Utility Conservation Update

We have taken actions to reduce our water usage. As a result, we have dropped our annual water consumption by forty percent. Our investment in water-saving toilets will amortize after 18 months in service.

Our 2017 Maintenance and Repair Program

The Property Committee meets at 7 PM on the last Tuesday of each month. Throughout 2017, committee members and many parishioners have given of their talents and energy to maintain and improve our facilities and grounds. Their accomplishments are:

Recycling

Collection of all recyclables from the property

Maintenance

Prayer Garden and flower beds maintenance and planting

Hillside clearing, maintenance and planting

Kitchen drain routing

Van maintenance

Lighting maintenance

Contracted Services, Maintenance and Repair

Major water line repair and replacement

Interior painting in two rooms

Freezer repair

Kitchen range repair

Janitorial services (new contractor in 2017)

Pest control (new contractor in 2017)

Fire extinguisher services

Grounds maintenance

Trash collection services

Respectfully submitted,
Your Property Committee

SERVICE & MISSIONS

As 2017 draws to a close it's a good time to look back on the many accomplishments supported by the church, its members and friends. Thanks to all who worked to support the many projects that are coordinated by your Service and Missions Team. We continue to support the various outreach and service projects that are dear to many, including:

- The Souper Bowl of Caring fundraising in February was sent to ELCA World Hunger. Our weekly food donations continue to support Saint Columba's food pantry.
- Mount Cross hosted the annual Camarillo CROP Hunger Walk in March and helped address hunger issues here and around the world.
- Additionally, the Many Meals program continues to provide a hot meal on the second Thursday each month in partnership with Peace Lutheran.
- Many Mount Cross members and those in our neighborhood are Blood Donor Heroes, helping save lives with their donations to United Blood Services.
- Lutheran Social Services collection bin gathers supplies to help those served from the Thousand Oaks office and a small group walked during the LSS Walk on the CLU Campus.
- The coffee, chocolate, tea and olive oil sold at the monthly Fair Trade sales had some new items added this year and continues to be well received by the congregation.
- The Hickory House Christmas party was a success again thanks to the generosity of many at Mount Cross.
- The Habitat for Humanity build site in Santa Paula completed the final 2 homes in 2017 (of 8) and had a celebration in June. A new 6 home project started in Oxnard and work dates are planned for 2018.
- We had a team of 10 help clean the river bed on Coastal Cleanup Day. 115 pounds of trash was cleaned up and then we shared a meal.
- The 2017 Gifts of Hope project continues to be a wonderful alternative Christmas project. This year, we supported Lutheran Disaster Response in their hurricane Maria recovery work.
- We continued to support Lutheran World Relief by creating school and health kits for them to distribute. Many thanks VBS for by starting the collection of school supplies.
- Our love reached all the way to Djibouti when we were asked by a past member serving on the military base there to gather medical supplies for a clinic. The clinic serves children living on the streets, providing a safe environment. We sent two boxes of supplies, enough to keep them in Band-Aids for a year!
- A few families of Mount Cross spent a fun afternoon back out at the RAIN Project working in the drought tolerant garden we helped create in 2015. We weeded and trimmed as we laughed and talked.
- More than twenty five people participated in our outreach to the neighborhood when we spent an afternoon working in Nancy Bush Park. We cleaned, painted, picked up trash and worked on pathways to make our neighborhood park a nicer spot. Lunch and play afterwards made it all worthwhile and the tree ripened plums delivered by a thankful neighbor were delicious!

The SAM Committee meets each month. Please attend a meeting if you would like to take a more active role in one of these ongoing missions or if you have ideas for a new outreach. We strive to uplift service projects that fulfill our mission statement, and that respond to needs brought forth during the year.

Thanks to the committee members: Bob Boyer, Bill Stoll, Mary Goodenough, Cy Johnson, Melissa Henry and Mike McClary (council rep). Additionally, thanks to John Colby and John Colby Jr. for their help with St Columba's food donations and many others for the gifts of their time and talent in bringing many projects to successful fruition.

Most importantly thanks to all of the members and friends of Mount Cross for their continued support both physically and financially in accomplishing so much this year.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Service and Missions Committee
Gordon Henry - Chair

Many Meals

The Thursday Many Meals Program celebrated seven years of dinner service to the hungry in our community in September 2017. We are now well underway with the eighth year of the program. It seems difficult to imagine how fast that time has passed. At the seven year mark, Mount Cross with 2nd Thursday partner Peace Lutheran had served 7,300 guests based on 13 nights a year and an average diner count of 80.

The Many Meals volunteer base is nearly 60 people who routinely receive an email notice of each upcoming dinner and the food and service needs for the meal. That is not to say that all 60 are needed or are able to respond, but that they look at what is needed and assess their ability to respond each time. This method of soliciting volunteers for each meal has worked well over the years. We have people who are involved almost every month and others with occasional involvement. We deeply appreciate them all. We also value the relationship we have Peace Lutheran volunteers.

There are some specific work assignments that may need particular emphasis in 2018 since either the tasks or the time requirements have not recently seemed to mesh with our current volunteers. Watch for targeted recruitment information in the future. If you are already interested, ask one of the coordinators and we will be happy to provide further information.

It is unfortunate that Many Meals does not take place on the Mount Cross campus so that more members could have a glimpse of what goes on. Please don't hesitate to drop in at Trinity Presbyterian Church any 2nd Thursday of the month between 4:30 and 6:00 pm to get a first-hand look. Look for a familiar face and we will gladly show you around.

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" Matthew 25:35

Submitted by Karen Gramacki, Susan Prosser and Trish Whelan
Many Meals Coordinators

CARING TASK FORCE

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you”

In early September 2017, we created a Caring Task Force following two years of leadership gatherings that resulted in identification of needs in the area of Caring as having the highest priority for attention. We offered ourselves in no official capacity with the intent of initially identifying what might be the specific needs within our congregation and surrounding community.

Emails were sent to current leaders and those who lead/participate in existing caring activities to alert them that their input was sought from their experience regarding any needs and/or gaps that exist. The congregation as a whole was invited to participate in casual sessions labeled Conversations About Caring at Mount Cross held September 11th and 24th. Over 20 persons participated between the two sessions with a good mix of new and longtime members; those already involved in the Caring Area and those with concerns or ideas; and all interested in an open conversation.

Here is a glimpse at the some of the discussion:

- Concerns about the welcoming of visitors and the integration of new members
 - Need to learn their names and they need to know ours
 - Do we know enough about what has brought them to Mount Cross
 - Is information about events/activities/opportunities to serve the same as inviting, encouraging and accompanying?
 - They need a person/people as their link beyond Pastor
 - Are enough events planned with the comfort of new people in mind?

NOTE: With the congregation facing a transition, it was felt immediate proposals for actions were needed. Communication was sent strongly urging the reinstatement of New Member Sponsors beginning Oct 22nd. A member Name Tag project was initiated with the goal of all members wearing tags every week – with special thanks to Karen Cherry.
- How do we respond to needs since the deactivation of the Stephen Ministry Program
 - Communion Ministers are in many homes and can be alerted to other Caring ministries and/or serve as referral agents to other programs
 - Stephen Ministry materials intended for direct use should continue to be made available
 - Can Mount Cross partner with another area Stephen Ministry church
 - Can we “deconstruct” the Stephen Ministers role to see if any of the caring services can be met by non-Stephen Ministers in the absence of a program
- Need to maintain more of a congregational connection with homebound and members with long term health challenges.
 - Add to current card ministry with other volunteers maintaining ongoing contact
 - Daily phone calls to or among those at home
 - Involve children and other ministries on organized basis to communicate

Also discussed:

- Care/ministry needs of Women on Their Own
- Care/Ministry needs of members with special needs
- Greater use of Meal Support programs – may have been underutilized
- Sharing holiday meals with other members – Room at the Table – this was implemented for Christmas 2017
- Use of local resources with “loving referrals” from members who have used and benefitted
- Need for a clearing house – coordination of volunteers and referrals
- Caregivers support
- Meeting broader needs of senior members
- Other cares and concerns

None of the discussion was critical of any current program/service offered by Mount Cross but rather focused on areas where effort can be expanded, better coordinated or better focused. All participants gave recognition to the “heart” of Mount Cross and its members and want to make certain that spirit is spread through all we do.

The Task Force intends to make recommendations to the Church Council early in 2018 as to how to best pursue response to what we have learned thus far. With Council’s input and support of church staff, we hope that 2018 will become a real year of awakening in the Caring Area at Mount Cross. If you have an interest in working in this area or a particular need or concern, we encourage you to speak to any one or all of us. This is a work in progress and your involvement and input is welcomed.

Respectfully submitted, Gayle Johnson, Susan Prosser and Beverly Rueckert

CARD MINISTRY

This past year, Janet Colby, on behalf of Mount Cross, sent out thirty thinking of you/get well cards and three sympathy cards to members. These cards are mailed out based on prayer concerns received at the church.

MOUNT CROSS QUILTERS



**Tied in Faith.
Sent in Hope.
Wrapped in Love.**

The **Mount Cross Quilters** make quilts for Lutheran World Relief’s “Mission Quilt” project.



First and foremost, recipients use their LWR Quilts to shield against the cold and rain, and for warm bedding. But their versatility also makes Quilts useful as simple tents, floor coverings, or a wrap to hold a baby on a mother's back. To those that receive them, they are a tangible symbol of God's love and compassion.

This year the Mount Cross Quilters used a NEW method of storage for the quilts made throughout the year....**SPACE BAGS**. This allowed us to store ALL of the quilts in the church's attic. Great space-saver!!!



Our goal was to make 100 quilts. We exceeded our goal and made 111 in 2017!

In 2017, we also said farewell and Godspeed to **Pastor John Soyster** and sent him off with one of our mission quilts.

Many helping hands from Mount Cross members are needed to make the quilts. We receive donations of materials. Members help with cutting, organizing by color, sewing squares, tying, storing and shipping the boxed quilts. Making quilts provides an opportunity for us to answer God's call to love and serve our neighbors in need.

Please consider joining the Mount Cross Quilters twice a month on Thursdays to pin and tie quilts....no experience necessary. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 9:30 AM in the Parish Life Center.

Respectfully submitted,
The Quilters



Interim Pastor Committee

The Interim Pastor Committee was created by the church council after Pastor John announced his intention to retire. Denise Sobolik was the chairperson of the committee. Other members of the committee included: Herb Holler, Tina Riley, and Cecelia Travick-Jackson. The committee was tasked with providing a list of job requirements for the interim pastor to the Bishop's office and giving their recommendation of approval to the council for the Interim Pastor selected for Mt. Cross by the Bishop's office.

The committee held their first meeting on September 13, 2017 and met a total of 7 times including their last meeting on October 26, 2017. During their initial meeting, the committee decided that they would ask the Bishop's office for a full time interim pastor. Committee members were then tasked with talking to and gathering information from different committees and staff at Mt. Cross to aid in their recommendation to the Bishop. By the end of September a list of the requirements for the Interim Pastor position had been sent to the Bishop's office and in early October, the committee received the name of the proposed Interim Pastor from the Bishop's office.

Soon after receiving the name, the committee met with the proposed Interim Pastor, Jim Bessey. The committee was in unanimous agreement that he was a good fit for the needs of Mt. Cross during the interim period and they would recommend that the church council approve his hiring. The committee then shifted their focus to crafting the Letter of Agreement for an Interim Pastor provided by the Bishop's office and tailoring it to fit the needs of Mt. Cross. The letter detailed the responsibilities of Pastor Bessey and the salary and benefits that would be provided to him. Once the letter was completed and it was determined that Pastor Bessey was in agreement with all the provisions of the letter, the letter was submitted to the church council for approval.

During discussion with Pastor Bessey, he informed the committee that due to previously scheduled travel plans, he would not be able to start working at Mt. Cross until 1-1-18. The committee then focused on finding a long-term supply pastor to serve from 11-6-17 to 12-31-17. We were fortunate to receive the name of Reverend Julie Morris from Pastor John before he retired and she was willing to serve at Mt. Cross during the initial transition time until Pastor Bessey could start in January. A letter of agreement was created for her position as well by the committee and approved by the church council and Pastor Julie was able to start working at Mt. Cross immediately after Pastor John's retirement.

Respectfully submitted by Denise Sobolik

Sanctuary Choir & English Hand bell Choir

A choir is made up of many blenders to make a beautiful perfume of song to the Lord!

It has been my privilege to lead this group for the last 10 years. We have a lot of fun during our rehearsals and Sunday anthems along with a healthy dose of the Holy Spirit leading us through our rehearsals. Our anthems are a gift to the congregation during our Sunday services.

We have welcomed 1 new member to the Sanctuary choir and one returning member has rejoined us. This years Christmas concert was entitled "A Christmas Mosaic" and was very well received with a dessert reception following the concert. Our latest project was discussing the need for new choir, acolyte and assisting minister robes and updated stoles for the various church seasons. We are happy to announce that the order was recently placed and anticipate having the robes delivered by mid January.

Another new change has been moving the choir downstairs in the sanctuary. We realized that it was becoming difficult for some members to negotiate the balcony stairs so it was decided to come downstairs and join the congregation. This has resulted in very positive comments.

Your Musical Servant,
Jayne Pompey

MOUNT CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH STAFF

Jim Bessey	562-986-1418	Devin Milligan	402-6404
Interim Pastor		Praise Band Director	
Meredith Gardner	558-5687	Joan Brundage	987-5369
Director of Ministries		Financial Secretary	
Sheri Groenveld	482-3847	Katie Robinson	908-9661
Office Manager		Children & Youth Ministry Assistant	
Cathy Channels	482-9706	Shaun York	
Director, Child Development Center		Kayla Lindquist	
Guy Ervin III	495-8688	Nursery Attendants	
Organist			
Jayne Pompey	479-6619		
Sanctuary Choir & English Handbell Director			

Church Council and Congregational Leaders – 2017

Church Council

Stan Patscheck – President
Norm Presecan—Vice President
Denise Sobolik – Recorder
Keith Selbrede – Treasurer
Craig Blois
Joan Brundage
Bob Burrow
Brian Edwards
Betty Ertel—Child Development Center Representative
Mike Laskey
Mike McClary
Marsha Niedens
Cecelia Travick-Jackson
Norman Williamsen

Financial Secretaries - Jenny Christensen and Joan Brundage

Committee Chairs

Adult Education - Cecelia Travick-Jackson
Altar Guild – Jan Beat and Joanna Wullschleger
Budget and Finance – Keith Selbrede
Caring Task Force - Susan Prosser, Gayle Johnson & Bev Rueckert
Concert Series – Barbara D’Addario
Endowment/Legacy Giving - Brian Fisher
Interim Pastor Committee - Denise Sobolik
Fellowship – Valerie Patscheck
Learning – Tracy Blois
Personnel - Jim Prosser
Property – Rick Mann
Service and Missions – Gordon Henry
Worship and Music – Randy Churchill

CONGREGATIONAL REPORT

	Baptized 929	Confirmed 658
Membership, end of 2016		
Members received during 2017		
By baptism (children)	8	0
By baptism (adults)	0	2
By affirmation of faith	2	4
By transfer from ELCA congregations	8	8
By transfer from other Lutheran congregations	0	1
From non-Lutheran congregations	0	2
From other sources and statistical adjustments	0	0
Total members received this year	18	10
Baptized youth confirmed in 2017		7
Members removed during 2017		
By death	4	4
By transfer	11	10
Total removed this year	15	14
Membership, end of 2017	932	661

2017 Sunday Worship Attendance

January	Average	Total	July	Average	Total
5 Sundays	145	725	5 Sundays	152	762
February	Average	Total	August	Average	Total
4 Sundays	157	627	4 Sundays	139	554
March	Average	Total	September	Average	Total
4 Sundays	167	669	4 Sundays	162	646
April	Average	Total	October	Average	Total
4 Sundays	184	922	5 Sundays	165	824
May	Average	Total	November	Average	Total
5 Sundays	159	636	4 Sundays	205	818
June	Average	Total	December	Average	Total
4 Sundays	198	791	4 Sundays	156	781

2017 Total Sunday Attendance: 8,755

2017 Average Sunday Attendance: 168

For a detailed Sunday-by-Sunday report, see
Current Year Statistics in the Church Council section of the Mount Cross website: www.mountcross.com