

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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ROOTED AND GROWING

# 2020-2022

## A TURNING POINT

On March 1, 2020, the worship services at St. Paul were full. People of all ages gathered to sing God's praises, participate in a community of disciples, committed to learning about God and serving our neighbor. A pandemic seemed "out there."

On March 6, 2022, the worship services were full. People of all ages gathered to sing God's praises, participate in a community of disciples, committed to learning about God and serving our neighbor. A pandemic seemed "back then." Besides some people wearing masks, one might be tempted to think that not much had changed.



*"Behold, I make all things new." -God, Isaiah, 43:19*

Yet, if we reflect more deeply, the past two years have brought profound changes to our congregation. These changes will shape our congregation for years to come. They were not simply reactions to COVID, but were intentional responses, as we found innovative ways to move forward that aligned with our mission: "Rooted in God's grace, we grow loving relationships with Jesus and each other to serve in the world." Here are key ways in which God has been at work among during the pandemic, more deeply rooting us and causing us to grow in unexpected ways.

### Challenge #1

*COVID meant outside worship was safer.*

**Response:** We consecrated a Sacred Ground, planted multiple gardens and built an outside worship center.

**Result:** We have a worship space that has allowed our neighbors to worship with us in the summer; we have new ways of serving, engaging our neighbor and praying through the land.



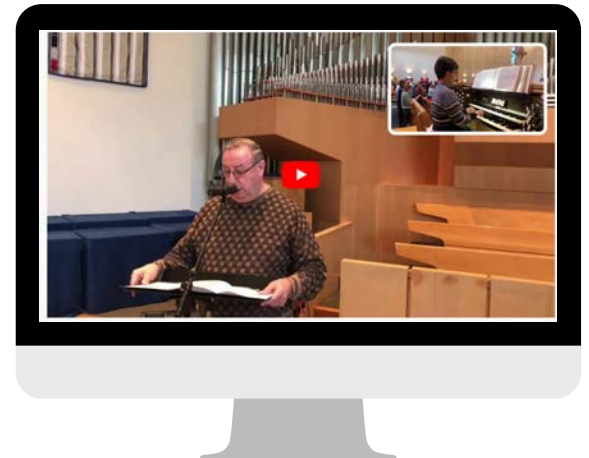
## Challenge #2

### *COVID forced us online.*

**Response:** As we realized the pandemic would continue for some time, we hired a high schooler AJ Paynter to broadcast our worship services.

**Result:** After many iterations and learning, we have a quality live-stream. Even as people resume worshipping in-person, weekly we have about 30 hours per week of live-stream watching. This translates into about 75 people who worship online with us, with an additional dozen or so who call-in.

Also, we hired Rev. Robert Wallace for Community Care, we have given him the task of seeking to building connection and community among those who worship with us online.



*Our online worship services  
are larger than the average  
ELCA congregation!*



## Challenge #3

### *COVID increased need for small groups.*

People suffered from profound loneliness and had safety concerns about large gatherings.

**Response:** We hired Kimberly Todd to coordinate Adult Education and Small Groups.

**Result:** We have nurtured our existing groups, formed new ones and supported ministry in a variety of formats. The result is that we have a congregation in which we are offer people more opportunities for fellowship with each other and ultimately, Jesus. Kimberly has also started attending Seminary to pursue an MDIV degree and ordination in the Lutheran church.



## Challenge #4

*COVID demanded flexibility in worship; it challenged our neat categories of traditional and contemporary worship and meant our volunteer base was always changing.*

**Response:** We hired one music director, Becky Rairigh, who is leading all music ensembles.

**Result:** She is helping us move the 10:45 service toward a more “blended” service, less defined by music style and more by a commitment to liturgy, sacraments, the Word and broad participation. She is also offering more short-term commitments for those wanting to offer music leadership during worship.



## Challenge #5

*COVID produced great social needs, yet everything was viscerally political.*

**Response:** We re-committed to being servant leaders in our community, seeking to be engaged without being overtly partisan.

**Result:** We launched or renewed our commitment to the following local initiatives: Racial Healing and Justice conversations within our members; A mentoring group for Bridge of Hope (Homeless moms); An Afghan refugee welcome team; and a to-be-announced Healthy Communities Adult Forum series. Most significantly, we embraced the CELC even more deeply, reworking our Agreement to give the church more governance oversight; accomplishing significant and joint building projects; and worked more closely than ever through the constantly changing pandemic rules.



# 2022 & BEYOND!

## PREPARING FOR THE CHURCH OF 2040

St. Paul Lutheran can tell a good story about how we handled the pandemic. Our momentum will carry us forward into this year, which promises much energy, excitement and even some exploration. We will welcome people back to worship; we will have our first congregational meal inside in over two years; and we will look for ways to help people online feel more like part of our community. We are ready for a year of rejoicing and being church together.

However, I would like to take this opportunity to focus less on 2022 and invite our congregation into a season of discernment and vision about where we are headed in the longer run.

*“Indeed seven years of great plenty will come”  
-Joseph to Pharaoh, Genesis 41:29*

The next seven years likely bring plenty to St. Paul

- As most other Lutheran and mainline churches in our area continue to decline (rapidly), we will welcome a lot of transfers (as they have been).
- Boomers will continue to move into Lititz. If boomers visit us – people who are looking for a church that does church well – they will likely join (as they have been).
- Many millennials are starting to leave ‘evangelical’ churches in which they grew up, curious about liturgy and turned off by the politics in church. This group is potentially open to a place like St. Paul (this demographic describes most new members under 45).

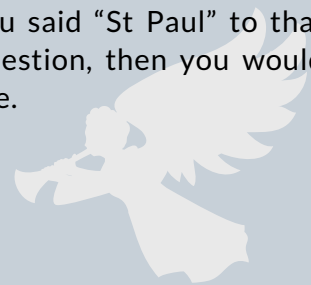
These factors suggest that the next seven years could potentially mean numerical growth here. Which brings up the question – what might this growth look like for us? How could we make room for new people? But it also brings up another question: What then?

When the housing stock in Lititz turns over sometime around 2030, I am less confident the people moving in will look for a Lutheran church -- or any kind of church. In 2020, fewer than half of Americans claimed affiliation with a Christian church (and the younger, the smaller that percentage). It is hard to overstate that what we experience at St. Paul – a (Lutheran) church that can afford staff and has children – is becoming the exception. We will experience a “push” to be church in new ways, as we are less able to rely on “attracting” people and instead needing to “grow” relationships in the community that can lead people to Christ, prayer and worship.

Furthermore, there is a tremendous “pull” by the Spirit to move ahead; countless people in our community have no church home; they have no relationship with God that is rooted in the teachings of the death and resurrection of Jesus. If you were an angel looking at this area, which church would you say, “Yes, this is a church that has the resources and heart to answer the call: Form a community of disciples who have deep relationships with each other without becoming exclusive; who serve their neighbor without becoming overly partisan and who experiment with the new without abandoning their heritage?” There might be others, but this call is for St. Paul.

This Spring will offer a number of small group meetings in which we discuss and lay plans for where God is calling us in the next 10-20 years. I ask that if you said “St Paul” to that (imaginary) angel’s question, then you would sign up for one of these.

~Pastor Rob



# 2021 ANNUAL FINANCIAL SUMMARY

JBT Bank Acct Balance	12/31/2020	12/31/2021
General Fund	\$ 198,000	\$ 274,000
Designated Funds	\$ 66,000	\$ 117,000
Capital Campaign	\$ 24,000	\$ 36,000
Cemetery Fund		\$ 12,000
Church Endowment	\$ 1,000	\$ 16,000
<b>Total JBT</b>	<b>\$ 289,000</b>	<b>\$ 455,000</b>
Church Endowment Fund	\$ 673,000	\$ 822,000
Cemetery Endowment Fund	\$ 219,000	\$ 251,000
<b>Total Account Balances</b>	<b>\$1,181,000</b>	<b>\$1,528,000</b>

*Your generosity in 2021 was remarkable. We give thanks to God on your behalf.  
When Council needed to pivot or staff needed to try something new, resources were there.  
Thank you!*

## FINANCIAL GIFTS GIVEN IN 2021

Capital Campaign  
\$40,200

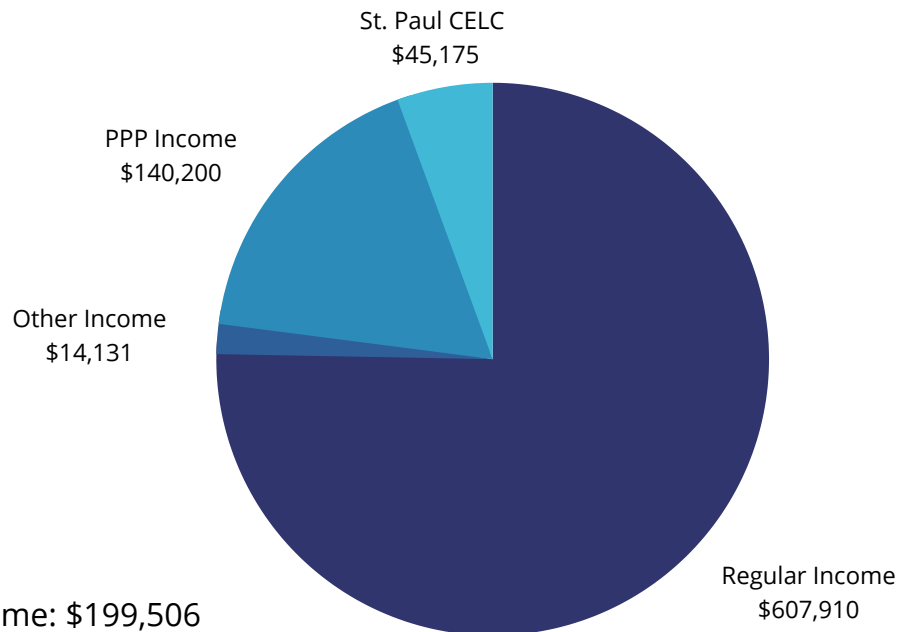
Church Endowment  
\$66,400

Unrestricted Memorials  
\$16,985

Restricted Designated Funds for Local  
and National Organizations and  
Projects  
\$39,111

# GENERAL FUND

## Revenue



Total Other Income: \$199,506

Total Income: \$807,838

## Expenses

Music Ministry	\$6,320
Worship Support	\$3,999
Children's Ministry	\$8,499
Youth Ministry	\$7,556
Mission & Outreach	\$26,537

### *Parish Administration*

Salary & Benefits	\$402,274
Building & Grounds	\$156,625
Office Administration	\$37,744
Finance Administration	\$5,679

Governance \$1,129

**Total Expenses: \$660,918**

**Net Total: \$146,920**

### Church Projects Completed in 2021

- Roof in Social Hall - \$46,000 (money from Capital Campaign, General Fund) + \$9,000 from Endowment Grant
- New Boiler - \$24,000 (money from General Fund- Capital Expense)
- Payoff new Mower - \$10,000 (money from General Fund – Building & Grounds)

### Projects in Process

- Lights and Ceiling in Sunday School rooms - \$20,000
- Structural Engineer Inspection of the Building - \$15,000
- Repair of Cemetery Wall - \$20,000 (Memorial funds)

Two financial administration goals we have in 2022 are:

- Get a better sense of long-term cemetery financial needs.
- Prepare for an external audit.

# CHURCH DONATIONS TO ORGANIZATIONS

<b>Local Organizations</b>	<b>\$18,330</b>
<b>National Organizations</b>	<b>\$31,537</b>
<b>Churchwide Mission Support</b>	<b>\$16,000</b>

## **Endowment Grants                      \$37,000 Distributed**

This year the St. Paul's Endowment distributed \$37,000. We thank those who have given money to the endowment over the years. We thank the committee: Mark Nestleroth (Chair), Dick Mearig, Jane Brye, Mary Turner, Jonah Ahlers and Council rep. (Sandy Bingaman) for their work. Off-going Council member, Brenda Penny has been nominated for election to the endowment committee.

1. Capital Repairs - \$9,250 for the Property committee to spend on capital projects. The specific project chosen will depend on availability of supplies. (The endowment resolution indicates that a minimum of 25% must go to capital repairs.)

2. Seeding St. Paul ministries - \$9,500 to seed three projects: National Youth Gathering Fundraising (\$3,000); Broadcasting 2nd service (\$2,000); and Support of the Afghan Refugees St. Paul will support (\$5,000)

3. Key partner support - \$7,000 to support: St. Paul CELC scholarship fund (\$3,000); Wittle Farm (\$2,000); Swanson Family at the NICU, Arusha Medical Clinic (\$2,000).

4. Other organizations - \$11,250 to organizations on whose behalf members applied:  
Local: Lititz Senior Center (\$750), Lititz Springs Park (\$750); Lancaster-Lebanon Habitat for Humanity (\$1,000); Bridge of Hope (\$1,000)  
National: Luther Seminary (\$1,000); Lutheran Disaster Response (\$1,000); Our Savior Lutheran Church, Rocky Boy Indian Reservation (\$750); Soaring Eagle Retirement Community, Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation (\$750); Son Word (\$750; organization our youth worked with on their mission trip last summer)  
International: Heifer International (\$1,500) and Medan Initiative (\$1,500 - while directed toward Ethiopia, it was founded by church members, the Charles family)

We thank the out-going Council members: Audrey Hovan, Brenda Penny and Meghan Shober. The following people have been nominated and approved by Council for election: Briana Legerlotz (returning), Rick Maryinak, Zoë Buchanan and Darla Shober.

We conclude with a further thanks to everyone in the congregation for their patience, cooperation and flexibility as we proved that even in divided times, people can still come together to worship, serve and learn. To God alone be the glory.