



January 2021– Volume 32– Issue 1

A Look Back at 2020...It wasn't All Bad

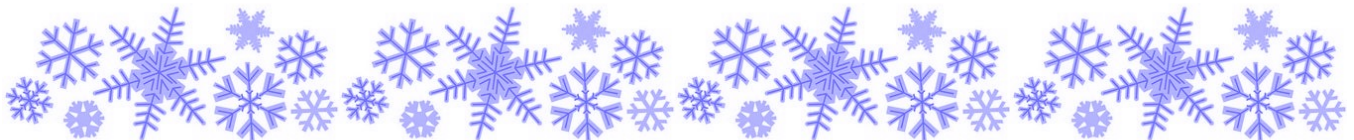
Normally, with the first edition of the newsletter for the New Year, you would see lots and lots of pictures from what we had done this year, a “Year in Review” if you will. I think we can all agree that not much about this year was “normal” so, it would only seem right that this “Year in Review” will be a little different. I asked for a few volunteers to answer preselected questions. Here are their answers.

HOW DID YOU HAVE FUN THIS YEAR?

Jenna Anderson said, “I like to do Legos, play with my sisters and friends after school, jump on the trampoline and do lots of crafts.” Sarah did say that she continued to keep daycare kids through the shut down so not much really changed for the kids, but she did say that they may have felt a bit “trapped” since they weren’t allowed to go anywhere outside of the house and yard. When asked the same question, Taylor Burge said : “I had fun during quarantine in many ways but one of my favorite things to do was to check for baby calves. Our whole family went up to our pasture and looked for them! We typically only go on weekends, but I had the opportunity to go everyday.”

WHAT NEW HABITS DID YOU START THIS YEAR?

“I am not sure what new habits we did this year, but we did more mail correspondence with others and feel like we became more aware of others and their needs. I became more aware of nature and God’s beauty everywhere. Hopefully both of these will become a part of my new routine. We both did a lot more reading and expanded our genres. Dennis spent more time outdoors with gardening and keeping things looking great. Learning to appreciate the small things along with family and friends.” ~ Dennis and Carol VanOverbeke



“Each morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most.” ~ Buddah

CELEBRATE RECOVERY THANKS YOU!

We would like to thank everyone for your generous donations of financial help and food this past year. Thank you mostly for the prayers and continued support. We could not do this without our wonderful and supportive congregation, and definitely without God. We continue to have new attendees walk through the door every week. We know that God has chosen this church and this mission to show others that He is the light of the world. Thank you again for helping us to pursue and help with His command.

God Bless~

Kevin and Jodi

FAMILY MATTERS AND CIA YOUTH GROUP

Great news!! We will resume with Family Matters on Wednesday January 6th at 6:30 pm. We will have a delicious meal, a lesson by Jordan and Sarah, games and activities. Invite your friends to join us for this fun filled evening.!!

THANK YOU!!

A big thank you to Amanda Jensen, Lisa Jorgenson and their elves. Gifts from the Heart was a wonderful success even in a pandemic. We found people that were really looking forward to it and it was a definite need in their lives. We will continue to fill this need yearly and to follow God's Command of helping others and being His disciples. Thank you again Amanda and Lisa for taking a leap of faith!

JANUARY BIRTHDAY'S

- 1– Shelby (Loostrom) Spiegel
- 5– Ty Hotz
- 6– Josee Hotz
- 8– Devlon Blauvelt
- 9– Ava Weyers
- 10– Joan Anderson, Brady Harrison
- 11– Connor McCoy
- 12– Margaret Vance
- 13– Gary Anderson
- 14– Shannon Sell
- 19– Eton Stebbins, Judy Jensen, Morgan Weaver
- 21– Glenn Schlichenmaier, Jordan France
- 23– Jamie Weyers, Sonya Gugelman
- 25– Steve Ostergard
- 27– Merril Jane McMichael, Arissa Ackerman
- 28– Keela Leichleitner
- 29– Adam Davenport
- 31– Madison Weaver





From the Pastor's Desk



New Year's greetings,

Hope smiles from the threshold of a year to come saying, "It will be happier." (Alfred L. Tennyson)
The year 2020 brought numerous unexpected challenges. Reflecting on the past year, I can only say we have come this far only by God's grace. We have known joy and we have known sorrow. We have known abundance and we have known scarcity. We have tasted disappointment and we have relished victory. We have felt loss and have received gain. I am reminded of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 4:8-9 "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." Whatever your situation might have been, I pray that the new year 2021 will bring blessings and healing to you. See the promise of God to His people Israel in Isaiah 43:14ff following verses. "...This is what the Lord says- He who made a way through the sea... Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the waste lands..." When this passage was written, the Israelites were at a bleak period of their history. They were in captivity, they had lost everything, and they were home sick for the land and the blessing God had promised them. They had also experienced God's blessings and victories in many ways and times. But now they are in captivity. All their previous victories were doing nothing to set them free. They needed a new work, a new miracle, a new victory. God promised this but also required faithfulness on their part. While 2020 has been full of trial, we know that God can bring healing, hope and progress in 2021. I pray the words of this hymn by Brian Wren will encourage and be true for each of us as we leave behind a year of unimaginable pain and embrace a new year. This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember and move on, time to believe what love is bringing, laying to rest the pain that's gone. For by the life and death of Jesus, love's mighty Spirit, now as then, can make for us a world of difference, as faith and hope are born again. Then let us, with the Spirit's daring, step from the past and leave behind our disappointment, guilt, and grieving, seeking new paths, and sure to find. Christ is alive, and goes before us to show and share what love can do. This is a day of new beginnings; our God is making all things new.

Wishing each of you blessings in 2020.

Invitation to a dialogue

Mental health has been an issue of public concern in our country for a long time. Many Americans whether or not they have a personal experience with mental illness, share a sense that something is wrong when it comes to mental health and mental illness. More and more of us are taking medications for depression, anxiety, hyperactivity and so on. On the other hand, many people avoid conversations around mental health. Those conversations can be uncomfortable and at times divisive. However, the challenges of 2020 have made it clear that we need to engage in these conversations more than ever before. As Christians we have a mandate to be the voice of the voiceless. This is the reason I am inviting you to participate in a dialogue regarding this issue. On Sunday January 17, my sermon will be addressing mental illness (from a biblical perspective) and inviting you to a dialogue session that afternoon from 4-5:30PM. The following Sunday January 24, I will preach a follow-up sermon based on our conversations. Whether you have experience with mental illness; know someone who does, are concerned or simply curious, your voice will enrich our dialogue and added to other voices, could bring change in the way we relate to and care for those who struggle with mental illness. If you will be able to attend, please let me or Becky know so I can have enough materials for everyone. We will follow all guidelines to keep everyone safe. A virtual option will be available, but one will need to request a link when you call.

A Look Back at 2020

Continued from page 1.

WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YOU LEARNED THIS YEAR?

“I’ve learned to be happy with time to myself. Staying home is very different for me and I love being around people. I enjoy sharing, laughing and helping them see the good things life has to offer. However, being home I’ve accomplished a lot of projects that have been waiting for me. Living is when you can look past the bad and find some good.” ~ Anne Anderson

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR LAST-YEAR SELF

Amanda Jensen answered, “Be flexible, kind, and respectful. Don’t judge other’s choices. Don’t let the stress, worry, anxiety, and fear control you or the way you treat people. Love thy neighbor. (Leviticus 19:18) “Do no harm” John Wesley.”

WHAT IS THE BEST THING THAT HAPPENED TO YOU THIS YEAR?

“Family is the most important part of my life; always has been and always will. My family is the best thing that continued to happen to me in 2020. Five siblings, their spouses, nieces and nephews (from seven states) all kept in touch with me although we never met face to face. Ut the most, MOST important thing that happened was the never ending love I received from Robin, Hallie and her family, and Lindsey and her family. Being able to spend time with them throughout the whole year was the BEST!”~ Lynnette Stevens

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED IN 2020?

I think one question that we can all ask ourselves is; Jodi Hinds says she has learned, “This is the year of uncertainty and craziness and opportunities to grow. I’ve learned that God has my back in everything. My faith has deepened this year like none other as I have learned to rely on Him and Him the glory for my blessings. I learned to rely on God for new business as new jobs happened and have learned through it all that He is there for us. I’ve learned that I am stronger than I thought and my boundaries have no end. I’ve learned that God places us in unexpected places and challenges us to be better people, better leaders, and better Christians. I’ve learned that people could come together and be a team and make miracles happen with God’s help. As I look back on 2020, yes it has brought tragedy and turmoil but I feel it’s also brought growth. We have come together and need to learn to appreciate what we have and who we have in our lives. Bring on 2021.”

FACTS AND FIGURES

General Giving Thru Dec. 31 Actual: \$154,717
Budgeted: \$203,887

Percent of Budgeted: 75.9%

Paid Apportionments Thru Dec. 31 Actual:
\$14,431 Budgeted: \$19,241

Percent of Budgeted: 75%

