



Dennison Lutheran Church Annual Report 2020

Sunday, March 7th

Dennison Lutheran Church Annual Meeting

March 7, 2021

Agenda

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 11:00 a.m. Worship Service | Pastor Paul Graham |
| Call to Order | Joe Amy, Council President |
| 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes | Barbara Koester Amy |
| President's Report | Joe Amy |
| Pastor's Report | Pastor Paul Graham |
| WELCA Report | Dorothy Howie |
| SEMN Synod Report | Bishop Regina Hassanally |
| Family Ministry | Pastor Paul |
| Sunday School Treasurer Report | David Wood |
| Care Team | Pastor Paul |
| Financial Secretary Report | Betsy Messner |
| Treasure's Report | Karen Zimmerman |
| Joint Treasure's Report | Betsy Messner |
| 2021 Readers, Greeters, | |
| Old Business: | |
| New Business: | |
| Adjournment | The Lord's Prayer |

"Every time I think of you, I thank God for you. I thank God for the joy we share in telling the good news."
(Philippians 1)

To begin with, some well-deserved words of thanks are in order, starting with the staff. Cheryl Brogger served as office manager until this June. Thank you to Cheryl for her multiple years of good work. In July, Betsy Messner was hired as office manager, and also want to thank her for her good work. We are blessed to have her on board!

Thanks to Vang's janitors, Denise and Nicole, for your diligence and care in cleaning the building (and Nicole's family often helps out too.) And thank you to the volunteers who keep Dennison's building looking good.

Thank you to everyone at Dennison and Vang Lutheran parish for making this community of faith a truly special and unique part of the Body of Christ. And especially, in this very trying and difficult year, thank you for your patience, your understanding, and your resilience as we navigated new territory together. *"I thank God for the joy we share in telling the good news."*

Psalm 46 says *"The mountains quake, the nations are in an uproar, the waters rage and foam."* Maybe the poet of the psalms captures something of what 2020 was like for us, feeling like the earth is shifting beneath our feet. Just think of all that happened this year – a global pandemic has taken the lives of hundreds of thousands in the US and millions worldwide, near constant political tumult, the introduction of misinformation and conspiracy theories into the mainstream, the murder of George Floyd.

This year, grief and loss touched all of our lives. When we think of grief and loss, often we think of the loss of a loved one. But we experienced grief and loss in countless other ways as well. Our high school seniors didn't have the graduation they had hoped for. We haven't been able to see family members. We couldn't gather for worship for extended stretches this year. Beloved holiday traditions didn't happen this year. Distance learning has been frustrating and challenging for many of our students and families. The kind of accumulated grief we have experienced is sometimes hard to name and we sometimes don't quite know what to do with that kind of grief. That doesn't make it any less real.

We should pause for a moment of silence to remember the ways grief and loss has touched our lives this year, and the lives of all those around us.

But as people of faith, we trust that grief and loss are only a part of the story. Christ promises that where there is death and grief, resurrection and healing are not far behind. In Psalm 46, the psalmist sings, *though the mountain quake, the nations are in an uproar, and the waters rage and foam, God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*

God was our refuge and our strength in so many ways this year. This faith community has been creative and resilient. We've learned new things, and learned to see in new ways. In 2020, the Dennison and Vang community of faith, gathered around Word and Sacrament, provided faithful ministry and witness to the gospel, and the through the challenges of this year tapped into a strength that maybe we didn't even know we had as a community.

Here are a ways Dennison and Vang provided faithful ministry and witness in 2020.

Building a Community of Christ online – This year, there were rapid changes to our online presence. Since March, we went from zero presence on line to weekly livestreamed services, a growing and active community on our Facebook page, and a new website. We provided at home activities for families, devotions, contemplative prayer, reflections, children's messages, and scripture readings – all on-line. There were online activities and gatherings for Sunday school and confirmation.

One blessing of all of this is we've been able to reach people we otherwise would not be reaching. We have people participating on line as far away as Philadelphia, Alaska, and Oregon. We have local people joining us on line who would likely not be joining us in person.

We often say the church is more than a building. This year we've experienced that truth in new ways. Church happens wherever the good news is heard and seen. This year the good news was heard and seen in homes and online and outside under the trees.

Thanks to Ken Vestledahl and Kris Nesseth for helping with some recent tech upgrades. Thanks to Nicole Monroe and Isaiah Stiner for helping set up the live streams every week. If you would like to help set up the Sunday live streams, please see Nicole or Pastor Paul.

Same fish, different format - There were many moments this year where this community of faith really shined. The Lutefisk Supper is one example. The lutefisk committee found a new way to make that event happen. No in-person dining this year, takeout and delivery only. And it worked! All the meals made available were sold, and it was a successful event in many ways. Thanks to all the workers and those who supported the Lutefisk Supper this year.

Hearing the Good News in new ways at Christmas and Easter - The Christmas Outdoor nativity event is another example of the strength of this community. Not being able to have a traditional Christmas Eve service for perhaps the first time in this community's history, a group of volunteers was creative and came up with a new way for this community to tell the Christmas story through an outdoor nativity event. I loved walking around out in the parking lot bringing communion to people, talking with the middle and high school kids participating in the nativity scene, reading the Christmas story while the bells tolled away in the steeple, and singing Silent Night outside. That was a special moment. And it says a lot about this community of faith. The attitude was – we can't do what we normally do this year, but what can we do instead? In addition to the outdoor nativity, we also provided a Blue Christmas/Longest Night service online, because it seemed like this Christmas there needed to be a time to name our griefs and struggles and be strengthened by God's promises.

For Easter, people also found new ways to hear the good news. People read the Passion Story from Luke's gospel in weekly installments online. Lori, Paul, and Jen (aka "The Three Amigos") provided beautiful music for Easter (and for many other online services this year.) There were online children's messages and a community zoom gathering.

Growing Generosity – It should be highlighted and celebrated that this was a strong year at both churches in terms of financial giving. People stepped up to support God's mission in this place, and our Egiving offerings have grown. But, of course, we know that financial giving is just one part of our generosity. One suggestion from the Stewardship Team was to highlight examples of good and faithful stewardship happening in this community of faith. So we've been taking a few moments during the offering time to point to examples of ministry and service that occurred the previous week. I can honestly say it was never hard to think of something to highlight. From providing meals to sending cards to shut-ins to distributing

prayer shawls to giving bibles to our Sunday school kids, to supporting the internship program, there are numerous examples of stewardship and service.

In addition, there were some significant improvements to the church building that happened this year, such as a new furnace installed, new ovens, and work being done on the steeple. Each of those improvements is fueled by generosity and good stewardship. Thank you for all you do to support God's mission in this place.

Ministry Teams – The ministry teams at Dennison and Vang have been adaptable to the changing situation. Thanks to the stewardship team, the care team, the creation care team, and the family ministry team for your good work this year. In addition, there was a church safety team established this year. Thanks to the church safety team – Marcia Maring, Nicole Monroe, Denise Olson, Dorothy Howie, and Jim Sviggum, for your good work in this unusual year. Thanks also to both church councils for your good and faithful service. There was a worship team that was starting up earlier this year, but got put on hold when the pandemic hit. Getting a worship team going would be a goal for this year. Another team that should be strengthened is a group who could support the “Growing Connections” garden. If you would like to serve on a ministry team, please let me know! Ministry teams can help sustain the ongoing work of doing God's mission in this place.

Adult faith formation. Shortly after COVID came to our shores, I began to sense a shift in my sense of call. I began to get excited about doing more with adult ed and adult faith formation. I am very much enjoying our current “Engaging Scripture” group. The intention is to continue to offer short term, high commitment opportunities 3-4 times in 2021 with a focus on a variety of approaches to discipleship and spiritual growth and health.

In addition, I hope to offer adult forums. With everything that has been going on recently, we would do well to ask together, what does scripture say and what does the church teach? We've had two open forums regarding race and racial justice. These are not easy conversations to have (nor should they be), but in both cases the conversation was thoughtful, honest, and respectful. I was encouraged at the way we discussed a difficult topic using scripture and church teaching as a guide. We had an adult forum on immigration and the Bible presented by the border immersion group. (That presentation was the Sunday before we suspended worship due to COVID back in March, so some of that work got put on the back burner for a while. There will be a follow-up work to come, such as a presentation during Lent.)

There was a “Deliberative Dialog” time scheduled for January, but had to be postponed. Deliberative Dialog is a process for discussing difficult issues in a very intentional way that honors multiple points of view. It is focused on learning from each other and finding shared values. It offers an alternative to the partisan divides we get to accustomed to living with. We will be coming back to that in the spring, using the deliberative dialog model to discuss issues of mental health.

So, as you look back at the past year, what are some things you have learned? Here are a few things we have learned together last year, or learned to see in new ways.

The church is more than a building – We learned we can be church even when the church building is not available. That is a valuable lesson to learn over and over.

We can talk about difficult things – Churches should be safe places that provide healthy and stable communities where the gospel can be proclaimed and the sacraments received. But sometimes we put too much emphasis on stability, and are hesitant to take on difficult topics. But to learn and to grow as a disciple of Christ requires us to be uncomfortable sometimes. I know talking about things like race or climate change or immigration are uncomfortable. But churches have a moral obligation to provide opportunities for people to engage in these kinds of conversations and learnings, and I hope to see that work continue in 2021. And if churches don't do it, other voices will. The voice of scripture and church teaching should be very much in the mix.

A resilient community – Dennison and Vang is a gifted and caring community. Back when the pandemic started, we asked the question – would it be possible to come out of the pandemic stronger than when we went into it? So far, that is what has happened. What a great story that will be to tell for future generations. Consider how you can use your time, talents, and treasure in strengthening this community of faith.

“The Lord is near” – Your faithfulness this past year bore witness to God's presence among us. *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything, with prayer and thanksgiving, make your requests known to God, and the God of peace that passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ.”* (Philippians 4)

Other highlights of 2020 include:

- Border Immersion trip. I can not express in words how deeply impactful this experience was. I saw Jesus in the people we met and the stories we heard. We learned a lot about the immigration system and how it impacts people, and reflected on it from a scriptural and theological perspective.
- Internship supervision. I get to be the internship supervisor this year, and it has been a joy to accompany Lucas for this leg of his seminary journey. He is very gifted, and we can be thankful that God is calling Lucas into the ministry of Word and Sacrament.
- Order of Lutheran Franciscans – The postulancy process has been put on hold due to the rapid growth of the Order. This gives a chance to revamp the postulancy process. I look forward to seeing where this may lead.
- Confirmation trip to the Faribault Islamic Center
- Ministry at the Faribault Correctional Center. All activities were suspended due to COVID, but hopefully may be resuming soon.
- Car parade for the graduating seniors. That was awesome!
- Gathering Baby Care supplies for Lutheran World Relief.
- First Communion with the 5th graders
- Outdoor services at Dennison and Vang
- Evening Vespers Services at Dennison

Goals for 2021 include:

- Focus on adult faith formation opportunities
 - 3-4 adult ed groups/year
 - Adult forums
- Establish a worship team
- Continuing to adapt safety measures. The virus makes for an often changing and fluid situation, so continued adaptability is required.

- Caring outreach – With the pandemic and all the changes it brought, staying connected is an ongoing challenge. A phone call or a card goes a long way. The Care Team has been active reaching out, but it also takes the whole community. Maybe there is someone you haven't seen for a while who would love to hear from you.

Growing Edges

- Ministry team structure to support on-going work
 - Talking about difficult social issues from a scriptural perspective
 - Promoting home-based faith practices for families
 - Inviting people to use their gifts for ministry
 - Increasing participation in adult faith formation activities. If you've never done anything like that before, this could be your year to try it out
-

Pastoral Acts: Dennison and Vang Lutheran Parish 2020

Deaths: Thomas Blegseth, Duane Buchta, Marlene Castle, Sandra Fogelson, Michael Owen, Leroy Daniel Pflaum, Lavina Stadstad, Mennetta Stordahl, Leo Underdahl, Shirley Underdahl, Lisa Warner

Baptisms: Braydon Geiger, Dylan Geiger Grant Major Paul Maher

Confirmations: Sophie Amy, Eivind Brogger, Cal Luebke, Isaiah Stiner

Weddings: Bryant and Madison Nygaard

New Members: Kaylen and Martin Geiger, Bryant and Madison Nygaard. In addition, the Facebook group has grown to over 215 members.

Dennison WELCA Report for 2020

| | | | |
|------------|---------------------------|---------|------------|
| 01/01/2020 | starting balance | | \$1,114.49 |
| 02/08/2020 | Cub Foods (funeral) | -27.92 | 1,086.57 |
| 02/11/2020 | Bierman's (funeral) | +150.00 | 1,236.57 |
| 02/25/2020 | Dorothy Howie | -193.00 | 1,043.57 |
| | (6 new coffee pots) | | |
| | No more activity all year | | |
| 12/31/2020 | ending balance | | \$1,043.57 |

Submitting by Dorothy Howie



Evangelical
Lutheran
Church in America

Southeastern Minnesota Synod

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



2020 SYNOD MINISTRY REPORT

Welcome to the new year! Many of us are entering 2021 full of hope; 2020 was a year of unexpected challenges. There were disappointments: canceling our 2020 Synod Assembly ranks among them, as I was so looking forward to gathering with all of you. There were steep learning curves: moving worship and gatherings to digital platforms. There were radical adjustments: finding new ways to connect when in-person visits were unsafe, learning to work from home while caring for those who depend on us, to name a few.

Yet, as I reflect on 2020, I am filled with deep gratitude. In the face of a quickly and constantly changing reality, the Southeastern Minnesota Synod rose to the occasion. You learned to worship in new ways. You reinvented confirmation, Sunday school, and adult education. You found new, primarily outdoor, spaces to gather in. You found ways to continue your outreach to your communities and beyond. You proclaimed the gospel with grace and fervent hope.

It has not always been easy. There have been moments of tension, fear, and uncertainty. There have also been moments of joy, creativity, and sacred spaces.

As I reflect on 2020 and look forward to 2021, I am immensely grateful to be called to serve among you. As we look to another year of ministry, I pray we will continue to be full of grace, truth, courage, and hope. I pray that the lessons we have learned will continue to shape and inform us. I pray we will remain open to the work of the Holy Spirit, and I trust, by God's grace, we will continue to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thank you, dear church, for your tenacity and generosity. Thanks be to God for God's faithfulness in all things.

Our work continues. If you have not yet taken space for deep Sabbath rest – please do so (and ensure the people around you do too!). No matter what our new year brings, our call to proclaim the gospel remains. May God gift us with all we need to share this Good News!

In Christ,

Rw. Regina Hassanally

Bishop Regina Hassanally

Family Ministry – Annual Report

Our Mission Statement: Through family ministry at Vang and Dennison Lutheran Parish, we seek to grow faith, build relationships, and serve together.

This has definitely been a changeling year to say the least. Our main goal has been trying to stay in contact with families through various ways with the focus on families serving God from home together.

A few things that we have done this past year:

- *Zoom Sunday school Lesson
- *Socks of Love
- *Mailed back to school blessings to all SS families
- *Bibles to 3 year olds and 3rd graders
- *A reading of the Christmas Story
- *Live Nativity
- *Intergenerational event on Beatitudes
- *Confirmation
- *Recognized Seniors with drive through

Some upcoming things to watch for:

- *At home project for Lent
- *In Person Sunday school activities after Easter.

Submitted by Amanda Flom

2020 Vang/Dennison Sunday School Annual Report

Prepared by David Wood the Vang/Dennison Sunday School Treasurer (507)-259-3914 (Cell) 507-789-5589 (Home)

| Account | Date | Transaction | Checking Balance | Savings | Checking Balance | Savings Balance | Total |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Vang Sunday School Account | 1/1/2020 | Starting Balance | | | | | |
| Vang Sunday School Account | 2/27/2020 | Deposit | \$1,547.13 | \$1,405.36 | \$1,547.13 | \$1,405.36 | \$2,952.49 |
| Vang Sunday School Account | 3/31/2020 | Interest | | \$45.00 | \$1,592.13 | \$1,405.36 | \$2,997.49 |
| Vang Sunday School Account | 6/8/2020 | Deposit | | \$0.61 | \$1,592.74 | \$1,405.36 | \$2,998.10 |
| Vang Sunday School Account | 6/31/2020 | Interest | | \$50.00 | \$1,642.74 | \$1,405.36 | \$3,048.10 |
| Vang Sunday School Account | 9/30/2020 | Interest | | \$0.62 | \$1,643.36 | \$1,405.36 | \$3,048.72 |
| Vang Sunday School Account | 12/31/2020 | Interest | | \$0.63 | \$1,643.99 | \$1,405.36 | \$3,049.35 |
| Vang Sunday School Account | | Year End | | \$0.63 | \$1,644.62 | \$1,405.36 | \$3,049.98 |
| | | | | | \$1,644.62 | \$1,405.36 | \$3,049.98 |
| Account | Date | Transaction | Checking Balance | Savings | Checking Balance | Savings Balance | Total |
| Vang Youth Fund Account | 1/1/2020 | Starting Balance | | | | | |
| Vang Youth Fund Account | | Year End | \$655.03 | \$797.00 | \$655.03 | \$797.00 | \$1,452.03 |
| | | | | | \$655.03 | \$797.00 | \$1,452.03 |
| Account | Date | Transaction | Checking Balance | Savings | Checking Balance | Savings Balance | Total |
| Meals Account | 1/1/2020 | Starting Balance | | | | | |
| Meals Account | | Year End | \$16.80 | \$70.00 | \$16.80 | \$70.00 | \$86.80 |
| | | | | | \$16.80 | \$70.00 | \$86.80 |
| Account Totals | | | Sunday School Funds | Youth Funds | Checking | Savings | Total Funds of all Accounts |
| | | Meal Funds \$86.80 | \$3,049.98 | \$1,452.03 | \$2,077.19 | \$2,511.62 | \$4,588.81 |

Dennison and Vang Care Team

The Dennison and Vang Care team does caring outreach in the community through things like visits, cards, and phone calls with people who are homebound, in care centers, recovering from surgery, or who may be need of a little extra care and concern

2020 presented challenges, and much of the person to person visitation ministry could no longer happen. The care team continues outreach by sending cards, making phone calls, delivering food, and praying for others.

If you would like to be a part of the Dennison and Vang Care team, please contact Pastor Paul. This team meets 3-4 times a year for updates and trainings.

Offerings 2020

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| General offering | \$37,542.94 |
| Building | 0 |
| Missions | \$55.00 |
| Special/Initial | \$1,439 |
| Loose change | \$343.15 |
| Misc. | 0 |
| Interest | \$4.35 |
| Memorials | \$2,270 |
| Total | \$41,654.44 |

| 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2021 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| \$1,804.00 | \$1,975.00 | \$1,689.11 | \$2,313.39 |
| \$1,516.60 | \$2,197.95 | \$1,534.07 | \$4,709.17 |
| \$5,907.41 | \$3,480.21 | \$4,701.65 | \$4,577.53 |
| \$4,179.77 | \$4,771.50 | \$4,324.50 | \$2,540.38 |
| \$3,057.00 | \$1,903.67 | \$1,450.17 | \$1,420.31 |
| \$1,511.00 | \$1,857.00 | \$1,645.09 | \$2,350.30 |
| \$3,524.71 | \$3,013.08 | \$3,920.07 | \$3,690.37 |
| \$1,273.00 | \$1,500.09 | \$1,466.08 | \$1,682.84 |
| \$1,776.00 | \$2,206.06 | \$3,854.08 | \$2,410.31 |
| \$2,341.45 | \$2,146.47 | \$6,635.12 | \$3,458.34 |
| \$2,113.33 | \$2,101.12 | \$2,817.33 | \$2,755 |
| \$6,708.00 | \$3,785.88 | \$6,967.29 | \$5,635 |
| \$35,712.27 | \$30,938.03 | \$41,004.56 | \$37,542.94 |
| From Previous Year | From Previous Year | From Previous Year | From Previous Year |
| \$5,385.25 | \$-4,774.24 | \$10,066.53 | \$-3,461.62 |

This chart is tracking the last four years of offerings.

Submitted by: Betsy Messner

1/1/2020 12/31/2020 Dennison Lutheran Treas. Report

beginning bal \$7,851.10

Expenses

Deposits January \$3,600.31

February- \$4,656.52

March \$4,565.80

April \$2,378.68

May \$1,533.68

June \$2,388.68

July \$1,897.22

August \$1,496.76

September \$3,012.03

October \$3,444.76

November \$2,850.76

December \$5,691.49

interest \$1.82

Pay Roll Taxes

City of Dennison

Propane-

Xcel energy-

Cannon River Conf

share of budget

Guide-One insurance includes wks comp & audit

Misc.-organist, Augsburg,

Publishing, suprt plies

Dennison/Vang joint acct

Dehumifiers

Lawn care

Paul's plumbing

web site set up & hosting

S E M'n synod

transfer to Savings

\$174.42

\$422.10

\$1,981.01

\$1,451.44

\$57.60

\$4,435.41

\$190.79

\$11,250.00

\$386.51

\$0.00

\$0.00

\$1,310.85

\$200.00

\$13,000.00

Total- \$45,369.61

Total-

\$34,860.13

Savings Balance 12/31/2020

ending balanc \$10,509.23 12/31/2020

1729-----\$22,532.07

1737-----\$238.30

Dennison Vang 2020 Annual Joint Report

| EXPENSE | ACTUAL | <u>Budget 2020</u> |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| US Bank/Coordinated | \$3,232.17 | \$4,500.00 |
| Century Link Phone | \$620 | \$600.00 |
| Northfield WIFI | \$453.22 | \$455.00 |
| Secretary | \$3,942.50 | \$4,000.00 |
| Postage | \$1,350.49 | \$1,200.00 |
| US Treasury | \$299 | \$750.00 |
| 1517 Media | \$1,331.60 | \$2,100.00 |
| Pastor Paul salary | \$65,000.04 | \$66,500.00 |
| Portico Benefits | \$24,040.32 | \$21,123.72 |
| SE MN Synod | \$0 | \$700.00 |
| Organist | \$3,030 | \$7,000.00 |
| Vanco (offering fees) | \$596.53 | \$600.00 |
| Family Ministry/Conf. | \$62.90 | \$500.00 |
| Lent/Soup Supper | \$62.9 | \$100.00 |
| Advertising | \$104 | \$600.00 |
| Supplies | \$308.54 | \$1,000.00 |
| Misc. | \$210.47 | \$1,000.00 |
| Pulpit Supply | \$0 | \$750.00 |
| Bank Charges (Checks) | \$0.00 | \$25.00 |
| Continued Education | \$665.00 | \$800.00 |
| Total | \$106,678.33 | \$114,303.72 |

