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The Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of United Lutheran Church

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THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR ANTHONY . . .

Hate Groups. Our awareness of Hate Groups has unquestionably intensified. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), **there are 940 active Hate Groups in the United States**. Currently the SPLC has identified 6 Hate Groups in the state of Nebraska ranging, essentially, from white supremacists to black segregationists.

But first, let us ask: What is a Hate Group? The SPLC defines it as such: *“an organization that—based on its official statements or principles, the statements of its leaders, or its activities—has beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics.”* The SPLC adds that *“the organizations on our hate group list vilify others because of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity—prejudices that strike at the heart of our democratic values and fracture society along its most fragile fault lines.”* **The point:** We have become aware of the Hatred in our midst. **The greater point:** Have we really? Just how emotionally honest are we willing to be on the issue of Hate in our midst?

Could it be that in our attempt to cleanse our country of Hatred all we have really done is practiced “Hatred Transfer”? That is, in our attempt to condemn Hatred based on such factors as skin color, ethnicity, and gender identity (all wonderful developments), have we simply blessed new objects Hatred? Has Hatred for “those with wealth,” “those who live in red states,” “those who disagree with me politically,” dare I say, “those who voted for Trump,” or even those who “love the USA” (because, certainly, didn’t you know, they have to be racist for doing so?!) become the new, righteous object of Hatred?

Addicts often give up one addiction for another. They stop drinking, only to begin sex addiction. They stop eating, only to begin alcohol addiction. They quit drugs, only to pick up religion. We call this “addiction transfer.” Though particular addictions are addressed, the emotional issue of addiction itself remains untouched.

Are we simply observing among many “Hatred Transfer”? It’s easy to address, condemn particular forms of Hatred. What is challenging is to address the core issue: Our addiction to Hatred.

“Hatred Transfer” simply shifts the object of Hatred. But the core sickness remains. Hatred retains its authority and continues to devour us from the inside-out. In this case, Hatred is masked in religious garb, in the form of ministry. As if Christian love needs an object of Hatred to counter-balance and animate it. Do we only minister to certain demographic because we’ve been convinced that that demographic is a victim of people I’m convinced are my enemy? Seriously?! Are we simply in bondage to Hatred, and *not* Christ’s love? If you discovered that a “Trump supporter” was serving the poor next to you in a soup kitchen would you curse serving soup?

I can’t count the times I’ve listened to Christians who, having joined me in solidarity against one form of Hatred, turn around—under the guise of Christian righteousness—to express another hatred for those representing differing ideologies, economic strata, and political parties. It’s almost as if Hatred is the real motivator.

Has the church, our church specifically, become a Hate Group in the name of denouncing Hate? In Nietzsche’s words, have we simply become the “monsters” we have sought to “slay”?

“Hatred Transfer” is a symptom of the sickness that it is Hatred, not Love, that gives us value and ultimate meaning in relation to God and others. There are those who don’t have an identity without an object for Hatred. Which is strange for Christians: Didn’t Jesus say something about loving our enemies as a core element of how our identity is defined? Jesus did know a little something about “Hatred Transfer.” Not only does it push the “re-set” button on a new cycle of violence, it indicates that Christ’s love is not what motivates our ministry.

Were that to be the case, then that would make me a leader of just another Hate Group. Albeit a “Christian” one. And the number is actually 941. Something to think about.

- **Motivated by Christ Alone, Pr. Anthony**

Education

Sunday School:

For the safety of teachers and students, lessons are mailed twice monthly to families. These short object lessons, relating to a theme will be easy for families to talk about at home.

7th & 8th Grade Confirmation:

January 6, 5:45-6:30 p.m.

January 20, 5:45-6:30 p.m.

Text Study with Pastor Anthony:

Mondays at 1:00 p.m. beginning January 11.

Fifth Grade First Communion

January 3 is the date the Fifth Graders and parents begin meeting at 9:30 a.m. to prepare for their first communion. Their blessing will be during the 9:30 a.m. worship service on February 7.

New Book

Thanks to Karen and Barry Daffer who contributed a copy of *Bud—My Life as I Recall It from My Canoe*. Whether you know Pastor Bud Christenson or not, this is an interesting and inspirational book about his life, his ministry, his alcoholism, his family, and the loss of his wife. It's available for checkout in our library.

Towels for People's City Mission

Due to the generosity of United a pyramid of towels was taken to the People's City Mission this year. A total of 200 towels were purchased and tied with a ribbon to be given to the clients of the mission. Twenty-five facemasks and 20 dozen cookies were also delivered.

Pictured with the towels are Sheryel Marquardt, Luanne Schwartzkopf, Bev White, Susan Fertig, and Barry Daffer. Linda Stubbendick spearheaded the event through the Outreach Ministry.



Worship at United

As we have communicated to you these past months, we have had but two priorities with regard to our ministry together: That we are able to (1) receive the Word of God in (2) a context of reduced risk; in an atmosphere of comfort. All else has been, and will continue to be, determined in light of these priorities. These priorities have been reflected through our implementation of Federal and Local guidelines in worship and other congregational gatherings.

The "faith active in love" which has brought us this far, will continue to dictate our decisions moving forward. We thank you for your understanding, but most importantly, your ability to place the health of others over your own opinions at this time.

Homebound Status

If you or a family member has become homebound and desire to be on United Lutheran's home visitation list, please contact our Secretary for Pastoral Care, Marie Sandell. She will obtain the necessary contact information from you. Please be sure we have a current telephone number for you. Unless you contact us we cannot know for certain the candidates for homebound visits.

Additionally, as most of you know, visitation—both with regard to homebound and institutional settings (hospital/nursing home-assisted living/rehabilitation, etc.)—is important to the ministry at United Lutheran Church. At the same time, concerns over the transmission of COVID-19 have deeply curtailed this aspect of the ministry for the time being, especially with regard to the latter, or the institutional aspect of pastoral visitation.

Thank you for your understanding.

United Lutheran Church Treasurer's Report December 14, 2020

Submitted herewith is the Balance Sheet and Summary Treasurer's Report November 2020.

In review of the November financial reports for United Lutheran Church, note the following items:

On the balance sheet, our cash position remains good with Regular Checking \$145,739, Savings \$25,387, Memorial Fund \$46,116, and MIF Investment \$119,252 for a total of \$336,494.

November Offering Income was \$22,899. Total November Operating Fund Income was \$24,332.

Total November Income was \$28,514.

The November Operating Expense was \$22,707. Total November Expenses were \$27,085.

The Total Operating Fund Expenses through November 2020 (\$268,721) is \$28,619 less than the Total Operating Fund Income through November 2020 (\$297,340). Offerings through November 2020 (\$245,390) is \$13,762 less than November 2019 (\$259,152). Total Operating Expenses through November 2020 (\$268,721) is \$9,911 less than November 2019 (\$278,712).

Donations designated for Capital Improvements and/or the 2018 Renovation Project are Transferred from the Regular Checking Account to the Saving Account on a monthly basis.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Renovation Fund Balance (11/30/2020) | \$ 25,387 (Savings Account) |
| November Designated Donations | <u>1,178 (Not Transferred)</u> |
| Renovation Fund Balance (11/30/2020) | \$ 26,565 |

| Renovation Long Term Loan | Principal | Interest |
|---|------------------|-----------------|
| Beginning Balance 10/31/2020 | \$ 298,069.46 | \$ 18,687.21 |
| Payment 11/1/2020 | 1,099.73 | 1,044.27 |
| Payment-11/11/2020 (Golf Scramble Proceeds) | <u>10,516.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| Principal Balance as of 11/30/2020 | \$ 286,453.73 | \$ 19,731.40 |

Monthly Loan Payments are made via Electronic Fund Transfer from Regular Checking on the 1st of the month. The Monthly Loan Payment amount (\$2,144) is transferred from the Renovation Fund (Saving Account) to Regular Checking monthly. October Capital Improvement Donations are approximately half of monthly Loan Payment.

2020 Envelope Offerings have been monitored and compared to 2019 Envelope Offerings. Below is a Table comparing 2020 Envelope Offerings to 2019 Envelope Offerings. Total 2020 Envelope Offering are currently about \$12,000 below that of 2019.

| Month | 2019 Donations | 2019 Total | 2020 Donations | 2020 Total |
|--------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 31-Jan | \$22,174.40 | \$ 22, 174.40 | \$25,634.32 | \$ 25,634.32 |
| 28-Feb | \$26,805.05 | \$ 48,979.45 | \$23,608.00 | \$ 49,242.32 |
| 31-Mar | \$36,593.63 | \$ 85,573.08 | \$26,323.00 | \$ 75,565.32 |
| 30-Apr | \$24,035.93 | \$109,609.01 | \$19,996.92 | \$ 95,562.24 |
| 31-May | \$23,263.50 | \$132,872.51 | \$38,941.73 | \$134,503.97 |
| 30-Jun | \$22,535.89 | \$155,408.40 | \$16,089.11 | \$150,593.08 |
| 31-Jul | \$19,499.82 | \$174,908.02 | \$15,214.00 | \$165,807.08 |
| 31-Aug | \$19,249.00 | \$194,157.02 | \$22,615.56 | \$188,422.64 |
| 30-Sep | \$23,113.60 | \$217,270.62 | \$16,844.00 | \$205,266.64 |
| 31-Oct | \$18,748.31 | \$236,018.93 | \$16,256.00 | \$221,522.64 |
| 30-Nov | \$20,189.00 | \$256,207.93 | \$22,853.50 | \$244,376.14 |

Respectfully submitted,
Dean A. Jaeger, Treasurer

Thanks . . .

O.W.L.S. Christmas Gifts



Thank you to everyone that contributed to the O.W.L.S. fund to purchase Christmas gifts and donated blankets for the residents at Havelock Manor.

They were delivered to them on December 1. Because they have been in lockdown since March their gifts this Christmas were VERY much appreciated.

In addition to the individual gifts, we gave the Manor a gift card from Valentino's so all the residents could have a classic pizza party with all the trimmings. A modest monetary donation was also given to the Lincoln Food Bank.

Thanks to Jo Hill, Barb Westlake, Luanne Schwartzkopf and Marie Sandell, for helping me with the shopping!

-Susan Fertig

Susan Fertig and Church Volunteers,

We thank you so very much for your kindness and generosity to our residents at Havelock Manor. We cannot thank you enough. This year, 2020, has been hard, stressful, and dark for our residents, so the gifts certainly make a resident's day! God Bless!

Janine Pebracek, Administrator at Havelock Manor

Members of United,

I can't tell you how excited I am to share that with your help and donation, and with Thrivent's matching dollars, we raised \$45,750 on Giving Tuesday! This just totally blows my mind when I think about the generosity you continue to show Bridges to Hope!

Rhonda Mattingly, Executive Director at Bridges to Hope

Members of United,

On behalf of the Women of the ELCA, thank you for our ThankOffering gifts. The offering of \$425 will be used to support the mission and ministries of church women in the wider church.

-Ruth Pearson, United WELCA Treasurer

Dear United Lutheran,

Thank you! In spite of recent unimagined challenges, we want to thank you for your continued support on Mission Share, which continues to do God's work in your community, in Nebraska, and around the world. We are grateful for your ministry and partnership with gratitude and God's blessing, on behalf of the whole Nebraska Synod.

-Nebraska Synod Staff

Thanks . . .

Thank you so much for your kind words, cards, calls, and memorials given after the loss of Dan's father, Dale! Gods blessing to you all!

-Dan, Karla, Shelby and Mason Chesnut

Greetings. . .

To the Members of United,

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas season. I keep you all in my prayers through this difficult year. Ruth Pearson and Otis Ninneman have kept me up to date of your journey through 2020.

Praying for strength to continue.

-Yours in Christ, Malinda Eccarius—Former Member

In Our Prayers . . .

Glenn Sorensen

Lee Loschen

Jeff Peterson

Kay Rung

Michelle Tichota

John Nason

Owen Hansen

Darlene Willmann

Phyllis Bachman

Phyllis Bachman

Cliff Becker

Jim Hauptmeier

Shirley Thomsen

Scott Behnken

Carol Hansen

Evelyn Abele

Sandy Avila

Our Sympathies to . . .

Dan & Karla Chesnut and family as they mourn the death of Dan's father, Dale.

Alice Bergt and family as they mourn the death of her sister, Elinor Roesler, who died on December 12.

Mike Junker and family as they mourn the death of his father, Harold, on October 3.

United Achiever



Faysal Alhaskany Khudir

Faysal Khudir and his family are the Yazidi refugees United help get established when they first arrived from Iraq.

Faysal completed a course in cosmetology from Joseph's School of Hair Design and passed his state boards in October of 2020. He also achieved Team Leader position at Walmart where he remains employed as well as styling hair at Stilo B located at 4502 W Street.

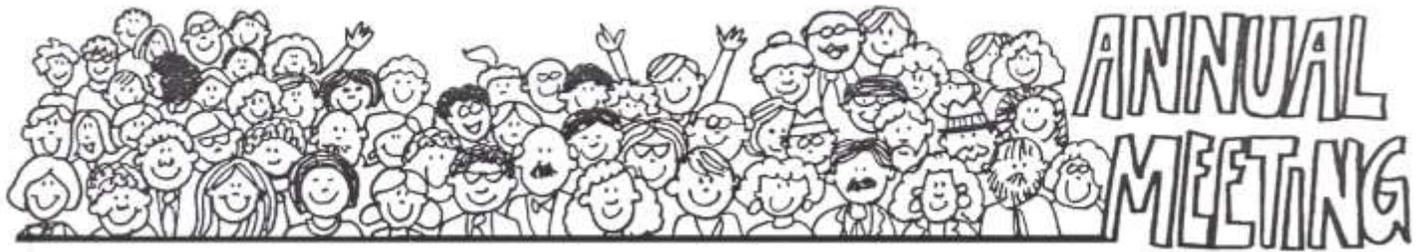
Congratulations to Faysal on his accomplishments!



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JANUARY 24
FELLOWSHIP HALL

BEGINNING AT 10:30 A.M.

Participate in the vision and direction of our congregation
at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
Elections will be held and
a plan of spending will be adopted for 2021.

The Annual Bulletin of Reports will be available on Sunday, January 17.