



February  
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# The Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of United Lutheran Church

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## THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR ANTHONY. . .

Inevitably someone will have asked the question this past month: What is your New Year's resolution?

The gamut of answers is endless. For some it will be eating a healthier diet and losing weight. This may mean drinking less alcohol and soft drinks; consuming less junk food and empty calories. For some it will be reading more. For some it will be about spending more time nurturing relationships. For some it will be about becoming more physically active. The list goes on.

But here's the problem: We're surrounded by convenience. Or, as a quote I came across, the matter is this: "What is right is often forgotten by what is convenient."

Concretely: We would eat a healthier diet. But McDonalds is right there and it's quick. We would eat less junk food. But it's already in the pantry. We will focus more energy on cultivating and maintaining friendships. But have you seen how many "friends" we have on Facebook? (For some this "friend list" actually builds their sense of self worth!) We will become more active, walk more, get outside more. But it's cold outside and there's snow on the ground. It's so much more convenient to drive.

And so convenience, ultimately, wins out. When our commitment is reduced to convenience, our reliability is diminished. Once we're on this path, nothing ever becomes too convenient. Like a solvent, convenience reduces our world to the only commitment self-centered people know how to cultivate: want and comfort. And the same logic applies to our Christian Walk.

Indeed, we're watching this reality unfold in mainline churches before our very eyes.

Anecdotally, a colleague and friend of mine in Minnesota has indicated that, now that his congregation—and congregations like his—has conducted Zoom worship for the past year, many want to keep the option of Zoom worship moving forward, even when COVID19 has passed. Why? The feedback that has been received has tended to sound like this: The people like worshiping on their laptops around their own kitchen tables, in their pajamas, in the privacy of their own homes.

Convenience.

Years ago, certainly in the name of reaching those who work on Sundays, churches started to offer Saturdays services. What started with good intentions then began to have a corrosive effect: The worshipping community of congregations began to be divided and the target crowd for worship morphed into those who wanted something not only quick and informal, but something for which they didn't have to go to bed early. Convenience.

As my colleagues have learned all too well, folks will fight for their convenience.

But the irony is revealed: The fight for convenience, ultimately, is the fight for death. In this case, the death of the body of Christ, the community which worships together, serves together, fellowships together. And worse: The death of Christian commitment; the diminishment of a life which constantly makes room for Christ's presence, Christ's priorities, Christ's commitments.

But where in all of Scripture, let us ask, is convenience with regard to our walk with God encouraged? But what we do know is that Christ does not have kind words for those who are "lukewarm." (Rev. 3: 15-16) For some, all it takes is the removal of convenience and they flee. Or is it a really a pruning?

**Serving Christ the Center,  
Pr. Anthony**

## 2021 Election Results

### Congregation Council

Dan Chesnut  
Linda Stubbendick  
Mick Von Busch

### Nominating Committee

Debbie Thomas

### Altar Guild

Diane Clark      Sue Ham  
Tonia Green      Jeanette Heikes

### Endowment Ministry

Marian Anderson



### First Communion— February 7

February 7 at 9:30 worship, the students who completed a five-week class will receive their first communion. They are:

Shannon Anthony      Gavin Frazier  
Lauren Schmeeckle      Rylen Sullivan

Pray for these youth on this important step of their faith journey.

### United Achiever—Emalea Dean

Emalea Dean has been named the winner of the January “Heart of 4-H Award” by the Lancaster County 4-H organization. For five years, Emalea has contributed to Lancaster County 4-H. She helps with several clubs as a parent volunteer.



### Noisy Offering Coins and 2021 Special Lenten Offering for ELCA Good Gifts

How far did you walk today for a drink of water, to get water to take a shower, wash your dishes, or wash your clothes?



Probably you turned a handle or pushed a button and had clean safe water.

How blessed we are here in Nebraska!  
Our Good Gifts Fundraiser for 2021 will direct funds for building wells for communities.

Lenten offering envelopes will be placed by the offering plate in the Narthex.

Please turn in your envelopes no later than Easter Sunday (April 4).

### Confirmation

February 3      5:45—6:30 p.m.

February 17 (Ash Wednesday):

Students and families are encouraged to attend  
Holden Prayer Services at 5:00 or 6:30 p.m.

### Adult Education

Mondays, 1:00-1:45 p.m., Text Study .

### Christian Ed Schedule

**February 7**

5<sup>th</sup> grade “First Communion” Service  
at 9:30 a.m. Worship Service

**United Lutheran Church Treasurer's Report  
Monday January 11, 2021**

Submitted herewith is the Balance Sheet and Summary Treasure's Report for December 2020. In review of the December financial reports for United Lutheran Church, note the following items:

On the balance sheet, our cash position remains good with Regular Checking \$154,312, Savings \$24,428, Memorial Fund \$48,014 and MIF Investment \$119,252 for a total of \$346,006.

The December Offering Income was \$24,717. Total December Operating Fund Income was \$27,195. Total December Income was \$36,077.

The December Operating Expense was \$21,966. Total December Expenses were \$27,720.

The Total Operating Fund Expenses through December 2020 (\$314,900) is \$9,635 less than the Total Operating Fund Income through December 2019 (\$324,535). Offerings through December 2020 (\$270,107) is \$19,299 less than December 2019 (\$289,406). Total Operating Expenses through December 2020 (\$290,688) is \$24,211 less than December 2019 (\$314,899).

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 (12/31/20) - \$24,428 (Savings Account)  
 December Designated Donations - \$ 3,534 (Not Transferred)  
 Renovation Fund Balance (11/30/20) - \$27,962

**Renovation Long Term Loan**

	<b>Principal</b>	<b>Interest to Date</b>
Beginning Balance 11/30/20	\$286,453.73	\$19,731.40
Payment – 12/1/20	<u>\$ 1,137.40</u>	<u>\$ 1,006.60</u>
Principal Balance as of 12/31/20	\$287,591.13	\$20,738.00

Monthly Loan Payments are made via Electronic Fund Transfer from Regular Checking on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. The Monthly Loan Payment amount (\$2,144) is transferred from the Renovation Fund (Saving Account) to Regular Checking monthly. December 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 Offerings are currently about \$16,600 below that of 2019.

United Lutheran Church

Comparison of Envelope Offerings - 2020 vs 2019

<u>Month</u>	<u>2019 Donations</u>	<u>2019 Total</u>	<u>2020 Donations</u>	<u>2020 Total</u>
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	\$19,499.62	\$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
31-Dec	\$29,405.66	\$285,613.59	\$24,658.00	\$269,034.14
		\$285,613.59		\$269,034.14

Respectfully submitted, Dean A. Jaeger

## Thanks . . .

Christ's Peace to You,  
Pastor Anthony and United Lutheran Church,  
Thank you for the opportunity to serve the congregation through the ministries of the pulpit and the altar.  
This has truly been a Blessing.  
**-In Christ, Pastor Fred Andersen**

Members of United,  
Thank you to all members of United for prayers and unnamed support this past year since Bud's death. United's family has been supportive beyond belief. I cannot find words to express my gratitude.  
**-Betty Dasenbrock**

United Lutheran Church,  
Thank you for your continued faithful contributions to support the Lutheran Food Pantry. So many of our neighbors are struggling to meet basic needs, and facing hunger on a daily basis. The Lutheran Food Pantry packs boxes for 32 families each week for the City Mission and Matt Talbot. Requests are made every week from Lutheran Churches for emergency boxes. United's contribution for 2020 was \$3,652.00 and 1,824 pounds of food.  
**-With Deep Appreciation, the Lutheran Food Pantry**

United Lutheran Church,  
When you give, you matter; kindness and compassion matter. Thank you from all of us!  
**-People's City Mission, signed by over thirty clients**

Dear Friends,  
From everyone at Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, we are so thankful for your end of the year giving. This Christmas, The Darlene M. & Reuben T. Swanson Foundation matched your year-end gift.  
**-NLOM, Kristin Herrera, Director of Development**

Dear Members of United Lutheran Church,  
Thank you for your generous gift in support of our mission to aid the reentrants we serve. We appreciate that you care enough to help us give second chances!  
**-Bridges to Hope, Rhonda Mattingly, Executive Director**

**Bridges to Hope Donations**  
United's generosity provided Bridges to Hope with \$250 monetary donation, 109 items for men, 13 items for women, and 65 various toiletries.

**In Our Prayers**  
Please let the church office know if there has been a birth, baptism, marriage, illness, or death in your family that you would like to share. Let us know if someone is hospitalized or needs our prayers. If you give your permission, this request will be added to the list of prayers in the "Weekly Witness". If you would like immediate prayers for the individual, the office will initiate the Prayer Chain.

## In Our Prayers . . .

Lee Loschen	Darlene Willmann
Sandy Avila	Owen & Carol Hansen
John Nason	Phyllis Bachman
Scott Behnken	Jim Hauptmeier
Jeff Peterson	Glenn Sorensen
Illene Fry	Kathy Jaeger

## Our Sympathies to . . .

Sam Truax and family as they mourn the death of Sam's wife, Ida, on December 25.

Wayne & Marny Janssen and family as they mourn the death of Marny's brother, Alan Linsenmeyer, who died on January 7.

Carolyn Keil and family as they mourn the death of Carolyn's son-in-law, Stuart Kucera. Stuart died on January 11.

Kendra Peacock and family as they mourn the death of Kendra's father, Ken Westerhold.

## Greetings from Minnesota . . .

Dear United Lutheran Church Friends,  
I wish you all the Blessings of the Baby Jesus who fills our hearts and world with Love and Light. I think fondly of my time with you—I surely miss playing the piano for Saturday services. And I miss Denice's organ music, especially during Advent and Christmas. I am enjoying teaching at two universities here in Minneapolis, and I'm not quite done with my graduate work. Teaching virtually is quite challenging during this tumultuous time. But I recognize that my students are under a great deal of stress, so I strive to be positive and encouraging.  
I wish you all good health and better times in the coming New Year.  
**-God's Peace, Scott K. Iseminger**

**Rally 4 Kids**  
Lutheran Family Services is having a state-wide event the week of March 7-11. During the COVID pandemic there have been many more families in need of services. Donations to support these families are needed. You may send your donation to:  
LFS; 124 S 24th St. Ste 230; Omaha, NE 68102

**2021 Offering Envelopes**  
If you use offering envelopes, they are ready for you to pick up.  
If you cannot pick the envelopes up, please call the office at 402-466-2277 for arrangements to be made.

## UNITED LUTHERAN CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1</b> 9:00a LWR Quilters 1:00p Text Study	<b>2</b> 7:00p AA	<b>3</b> 9:10a Staff Meeting 5:45p Confirmation	<b>4</b> 6:30p Boy Scouts	<b>5</b> <i>Pastor's Personal Day</i> 6:00p NA 7:30p Al-Anon	<b>6</b>
<b>7 FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY</b> 8:15a Holy Communion 9:30a Holy Communion with First Communion	<b>8</b> 1:00p Text Study 6:00p Congregation Council Meeting	<b>9</b> 7:00p AA	<b>10</b> 9:10a Staff Meeting 7:00p Altar Guild Meeting	<b>11</b> 6:30p Boy Scouts	<b>12</b> <i>Pastor's Personal Day</i> 6:00p NA 7:30p Al-Anon	<b>13</b>
<b>14 TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD</b> 8:15a Holy Communion 9:30a Holy Communion  Deadline for March "Messenger" information	<b>15</b> 1:00p Text Study	<b>16</b> 7:00p AA	<b>17 ASH WEDNESDAY</b> 9:10a Staff Meeting 5:00p Imposition of Ashes/ Holy Communion 6:30p Imposition of Ashes/ Holy Communion	<b>18</b> 6:30p Boy Scouts	<b>19</b> <i>Pastor's Personal Day</i> 6:00p NA 7:30p Al-Anon	<b>20</b>
<b>21 FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT</b> 8:15a Holy Communion 9:30a Holy Communion	<b>22</b> 1:00p Text Study 7:00p All Ministry Meeting Night	<b>23</b> 7:00p AA	<b>24</b> 9:10a Staff Meeting 6:30p Holden Evening Prayer Service	<b>25</b> 9:00a Assemble March Newsletter 6:30p Boy Scouts	<b>26</b> <i>Pastor's Personal Day</i> 6:00p NA 7:30p Al-Anon	<b>27</b>
<b>28 SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT</b> 8:15a Holy Communion 9:30a Holy Communion						

### OFFICE HOURS

Office hours Monday through Friday:  
8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon

Watch the "Weekly Witness" for changes of upcoming events or check-out our website  
at: [www.unitedlutheranlincoln.com](http://www.unitedlutheranlincoln.com)  
Website contains the "Messenger," "Weekly Witness," calendar, and the recorded sermon.



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# LENT

Midweek Worship Services

Wednesdays at 6:30 P.M.

- February 17**    **Ash Wednesday—Services at 5:00 and 6:30 P.M. Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion**
- February 24**    **Holden Evening Prayer Service**
- March 3**        **Holden Evening Prayer Service**
- March 10**      **Holden Evening Prayer Service**
- March 17**      **Holden Evening Prayer Service**
- March 24**      **Holden Evening Prayer Service**

Lenten Preaching Series

***“I Am . . . ; The Identity of Jesus in the Fourth “Gospel”***

The purpose of this Proclamation Series is to develop the identity of Jesus Christ as he is presented in the Fourth Gospel through his well-known “I Am” declarations.

Through this Proclamation Series we will widen our understanding of Jesus’ identity.

And ours through Him.