

NEWSLETTER

January, 2018

Vol. 25 No. 1

Budget Summary For 2018

Top line budget number will grow in a nominal manner from 2017 to 2018 from \$407,182 to \$413,545. The net effect is a 1.6% increase year over year. The areas of growth were employee salaries which Elder's are recommending an average 2.6% increase which aligns with many of our own personal life experiences with our own employers. The other area of growth that we are putting significant focus on this year is Outreach. We added dollars to support our Russian missionary fund to build a church. We added dollars for promoting Life in Christ more assertively in our community. Promotional opportunities like a seven-second spot at our local theatre – to adding a blurb on the back of the Coborns receipts. We also added \$ for Outreach projects like being involved in some community networking opportunities. The net effect is still a nominal increase in the Outreach budget of \$2,800. We in fact, reduced or held steady in all other major areas to present a fiscally responsible and reasonable budget recommendation.

Year in Review

We are very blessed with so many talented individuals in our church family. We are so thankful for the generosity of time, faith, love and giving.

2017 Successes

1. New organ paid solely by charitable giving by our church body.
2. Highly successful (again) Pork Chop Dinner where the proceeds will be going to an Outreach project still to be determined.
3. Our preschool is in its very best place it has been in years. Financially stable and responsible - great effort to market and attract families and success to support the goal of being self sustaining and huge effort to market it in more effective ways. Many thanks to the leadership of

Lisa Anderson and to the 2 amazing teachers/leaders in all they do.

4. New shed/garage...a wonderful effort with so many working together the burden was light.
5. Wonderful Sunday treats, Wednesday soup suppers, and simple suppers and all those who give of their time and talents in the many ways they do have made our church hospitable and welcoming.

Life in Christ Preschool Open House Thursday, January 11th 5:30-7:30 pm

Join Life in Christ Preschool for their 2018 Open House. The preschool will be accepting registrations for fall enrollment of the 2018-19 school year. We invite you to visit, play with toys, try an art project, and meet our teachers!

Life in Christ Preschool offers 3 Preschool Classes that are play-based and focus on Kindergarten readiness.

3 year olds Sheep Class - 2 Days per Week
Tue./Thu. 9-11:30am

4 & 5 year old Fish Class - 3 Days per Week
Mon./Wed./Fri. 9-11:30am

4 & 5 year old Butterfly Class - 4 Days per Week
Mon./Tue./Wed./Thur. 12:30-3pm

We also offer private tours. Call 763-497-5174. We have openings in January 2018 in our Butterfly and Sheep Class.

Music Department Policies on File . . .

Curious about who can use the sanctuary organ and piano? Curious about how musicians are scheduled to play services? Policies which answer these questions are available from the Church Office upon request.

Live as if...

Another year passes, another year of memories flash before our eyes. I cannot help but notice how time seems to be speeding up. In second grade I remember how very slow the clock in front of the classroom seemed to move. Each minute was like an hour. Each second like a minute. That's how I felt then, but now I feel quite differently. Time is accelerating! It's taking on speed. Obviously, that is my perception, but it's a common perception shared by many.

I remember visiting with an 80 year old man some years ago and we were talking about this very subject and he said "Wait until you get to be my age! Time will whiz by so fast that you'll be able to watch the corn grow". As cool as that would be, it's kind of frightening to think about. It seems we are hurdling through time...faster and faster. This unsettling feeling of living in fast forward is most likely caused by the fact that we sense our own mortality. Each moment is more and more precious to us since we have begun to understand that our time is limited.

But a new and comforting understanding overrides the fearful thought of speeding time. We Christians never really will run out of time; we're beyond that. Jesus said "Whoever believes in me will live even though he dies." and "Whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have life everlasting." In Christ, we are eternal. So we are not so constrained by time as we are given to think. We should live our lives on earth as if we are eternal.

What does that mean, practically? Does it mean that I don't have to do the dishes? Does it mean that I don't have to pay my taxes or renew my license tabs? Not hardly. For you see, eternal people like us have a relationship with our eternal God; because of that, we have begun to perceive things as he perceives them. We value things that he values like love, family, friendship, faithfulness, duty...all of the things that come from having a good character.

There's a game show called super market sweep where contestants run through a grocery store grabbing as much food off the shelf as possible, at the end they total up the values and who ever has the most wins. This is a rather good illustration of the way many people live: limited time; running, running, running, grabbing as much gusto as possible, believing that the sheer volume and value of what they have put in their "shopping carts" is

the measure of their lives. Like so many fighting chipmunks stuffing their faces with seeds! I always had a sort of sick feeling about that show because of the way it demeans the human race.

God has made us to be a bit higher than chipmunks. We have a relationship with him and we trust in him. We know that he will look after us. The mad dash through the supermarket of life is out of character for us. We are eternal, we have different values, we can calm down.

Pastor Trask

THE KANTOR'S VOICE

Ministry Manifested

This month, I wish to start out with some musings from another Kantor friend of mine, David Cherwien – director of the National Lutheran Choir and Kantor at Mt. Olive Lutheran in South Minneapolis. I've shared some of his previous thoughts with you, and wish to do so again – since he addresses a challenge that all of us in church work seem to face these days. (This is edited for space concerns.)

"I've dealt with people's schedules in several churches since starting out as Kantor. Musicians (volunteers) are scheduled for services and events at certain times on certain dates. We Kantors put that schedule out there and cross our fingers about who will actually be able to come. One thing has been very clear since the start: people DO have time for that which they feel is important, no matter how busy they are. The line, "I wish I could come, but . . ." simply means that something else came out higher on the priority list – most often very understandably.

"Being busy is a great distraction, isn't it? It's easy to forget things we wished we wouldn't have. But in my experience, it's not much of an excuse for forgetting things or neglecting people I wish I hadn't.

(continued on next page)

(continued)

“Many years ago I had a young 12-year old organ student. He LOVED the organ and everything about it. He was involved in many activities, however, and when I chastised him about not practicing enough, he burst into tears: ‘This is what I WANT to do but I’ve signed up for so many after-school activities, there’s no time left for it!’ How tragic.”

Jesus started His earthly ministry directly after His baptism in the Jordan. He prioritized His life’s responsibilities out of love – love for us broken people and love for His Father in heaven. All His work pointed to one thing: redemption of the world. A world that for the most part had no time for Him and His ministry – all the while going about their normal busy-ness of living. Epiphany once again shows how Jesus manifested his ministry for the good of the world - even though it was misunderstood, if understood at all: healing; teaching; feeding; loving.

It is my hope that all of us will take stock of our lives again – after all, isn’t that what we do every New Year? In so doing, my hope is also that we put the service of our Lord in first place – whatever our place in His kingdom (or His congregation) – manifesting our talents for His sake first and foremost. His kingdom needs faithful workers now more than ever as our world becomes more “unhinged” (to quote synod president Matthew Harrison). Whether youth or adult, Christ calls us to joyful and committed service in order to carry out His purpose on earth – *and that’s good news.*

See you in church –
Kantor Duane Esterly

It’s a new year. It’s a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It’s a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.

Often we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless. But it doesn’t have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions: Who are you? To whom do I give? And how much?

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the Small Catechism informs us. Are you a hearer of God’s Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, family. We don’t particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties and our questions arise in giving to the church.

So, what is our duty as members of the church with regard to giving? The Table of Duties, again, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer, a member of the church who receives instruction, St. Paul taught: “Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor” (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary.

Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord’s blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the church, He has the local congregation in mind. For “the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are these: to give regularly (1 Cor. 6:1–2), proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12), and generously (2 Cor. 8:20) of our first fruits (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

LCMS Stewardship Article

Sunday School News

January 7th

In Sunday School, the children studied “The Conversion of Paul” and learned that as God did with Paul, so God does with us. Through the Law, we are crushed by the weight of our sin and are helpless. As God revived Paul through Ananias (Acts 9:1–31), He revives us through our pastors with the proclamation of His Word and the administration of His Sacraments granting forgiveness, life, and salvation to all who believe. Talk to your children about how the Sacraments and God’s Word revive you so that you may live as God’s child.

The Sunday School lesson also focuses on Acts 9:36–43, the story of Dorcas. Discuss how Dorcas used her gifts and talents to support the mission of the Early Church. Who would you consider a Dorcas in your congregation?

January 14th

In Sunday School, the children learned the story of Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10) and how the Good News comes to us as it did to them. Talk about how in church we receive the Good News that, although we are judged unrighteous and deserving of death, God mercifully declares us holy, righteous, and innocent because of Christ. “What does this mean for our daily lives?” is a good question to discuss as a family.

January 21st

As it was for Peter, so it is for us is the message of this Sunday School lesson (Acts 12). The Word of God is never proclaimed in vain. Though we suffer because of the sin of others, God’s will is done. Talk with your children about modern-day persecution of the Church of God and how, even in the midst of persecution, God sustains and increases His Church. How does God’s Word break through the chains of our sin and the suffering it causes?

January 28th

In Sunday School, students learn the story of “Paul’s First Missionary Journey.” Just as God sent Paul and Barnabas to spread the Gospel, so today He sends pastors to preach the Gospel, baptize, and feed Jesus’ body and blood to His children, against whom the gates of hell cannot prevail. Consider discussing, “Who gave Paul directions on where to travel? What was Paul’s message?”