

# 2020 Annual Report

2019-2020 Fiscal Year  
[Plus COVID-19-related impact]



good  
shepherd



## A MESSAGE FROM SENIOR PASTOR MARK CARLSSON

September 2020

*“For I know the plans  
I have for you,”  
declares the Lord,  
“plans to prosper  
you and not to harm  
you, plans to give you  
hope and a future.”*

*Jeremiah 29:11*

Dear Good Shepherd Family,

As I look back on this past year, I am amazed at the faithfulness of God. In the midst of a global pandemic, societal tensions and personal challenges, the vision of our church has continued to bear fruit, by God's grace. People have been reached with the good news of Jesus, transformed by his Spirit and connected to one another; they have served with their gifts and deepened in their love for God. This continues to inspire hope for the future of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

With that being said, the past six months have been challenging for many. According to a recent survey of our congregation, the top areas that people are suffering include: connection to church family (53%), mental health (27%) and personal relationship with God (16%). My heart goes out to you! Know that I am praying for you and that we are in this together.

As we make plans for the coming year, we seek to address these concerns.

**We encourage small group Worship Watch Parties** to deepen our connections with one another. People can worship together either online or in-person, followed by sermon discussion and prayer.

**We are expanding our Care Ministry** by training more care givers and starting new grief support groups. We will continue to offer Hope for Mental Health resources and provide one-on-one support through Stephen Ministers.

**We are exploring a discipleship pathway resource**, which would allow people to develop their personal relationship with God. We hope to introduce this program to the whole congregation by next year.

In these and many other ways we will care for one another, grow together and reach out with the good news of Jesus.

We may be going through the most trying season of a generation, but the presence, power, purposes and promises of God have not changed. I look forward to what He has in store ahead!

Thank you for your steadfast generosity, service, love and support. It is truly a privilege to partner with you on this journey.

Love in Christ,  
Pastor Mark



## How has God worked through your ministry during these last few months of uncertainty?



As we transitioned our women's bible study to Zoom and YouTube, we were amazed at how well the curriculum that had been planned months in advance felt like perfect timing — we had lessons like *Feeling Safe in a Storm*, *Finding Hope in Uncertainty*, and *Joy in Suffering*.

**Christine Myka,  
Adult Ministries**



Inviting someone for the first time to connect on Zoom isn't the easiest. However, YAM took on the challenge and we hosted virtual gatherings specifically for our non-Christian friends. During the month of May/June, 18 new people showed up!

**Tia Walter,  
Young Adult  
Ministries**



While everything has changed—God is the same. This has been the hope that I have held on to and have encouraged families to hold on to. He was with us then. He is with us now. And He's with us forever. We can always lean on Him and depend on Him for anything we need.

**Danielle Schaeffer,  
FUSION Special  
Needs Ministries**



Missions/outreach grew even more during the Pandemic. The willingness to serve by Good Shepherd's generous hearts made it all possible! We were flexible and found new and alternate ways to make an impact. And, we wanted to change the mindset that missions and outreach isn't just a way that we serve several times a year, but more the way we live our day to day life.

**Jeannine Allen,  
Missions Ministries**



The 1310 Prayercast has been one of the most special initiatives to come out of this time as it has made people feel closer to the church and helped us deepen our value and practice of prayer. Also, God is opening our eyes to how we can be part of overcoming division across racial lines and be a healing solution that gives witness to the power of Jesus' love.

**PJ Malin,  
Pastor of Family  
Ministries**

### GENEROSITY FACTS *Contributor: April Fecht, Finance Director*

- General offering contributions remain strong: 4% below last year, 2.7% below budget, about the same level as pre-COVID
- 176 new electronic givers in the first few months of COVID
- 90 first time givers, or gifts from “sporadic” givers, in the first few months of COVID
- 20 electronic givers gave additional electronic gifts or increased recurring gift during COVID
- Over 50% of general offering contributions given electronically, up from 29% last year

## FAMILY MINISTRIES

*Contributors: Bethany Hammer, Danielle Schaeffer, Ryan Schaible, Caryn Schatz*



## CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Our family life vision is for every family is pursuing authentic faith with Jesus. Whether it is our Sunday morning, Sparks or Wednesday evening Club 45 or even some of our family events, we want to pursue a relationship with Jesus! Understanding that the most influential spiritual leader in a child's life is Mom or Dad, we desire for faith to a focus every day of the week - not just on Sunday. Our goal is for faith to be family-centered and church-supported.

While we were disappointed to not be able to host VBS live, we tried something new! Virtual VBS would not have been possible without our amazing staff helping with editing, green screens, music, Bible stories and so much more! What else is fun about Virtual VBS - we can offer it twice! We didn't have building restrictions or a time crunch.

Another opportunity COVID allowed was for entire families to come together and worship. We realize that sometimes this can be hard, so we provided age-appropriate church bags with activities that teach biblical truths about God. On each bag has a Bible verse printed on the outside which reads, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!" Whether we are 1, 2, 3, or 83, we can all praise the Lord!



## STUDENT MINISTRIES

General 2019/2020 Stats:  
(Pre-COVID)

327 Student Participants (Fuel, Ignite, Faithwalk)

58 Ministry Leaders

44 Worship Leaders (increase from last year)

2019/2020 Retreats

Middle School Overnight - 58

Delta Retreat - 109

Fuel Winter Retreat - 48

Ignite Winter Retreat - 57

Student Leader Overnight (HS) - 25

COVID-19 Ministry Notes:

We held 55 unique online Student Ministry Events (midweek, Sundays, concerts, video game nights, parent events, Confirmations, small groups and Eternal Impact).

Since students are used to doing things online (social media, youtube, etc.), it wasn't too difficult to shift to an online presence. We were inspired to be creative and find new ways to connect with families for special, traditional events like Confirmation and the Senior Dinner.

The last few months have showed us the importance of TEAMS We have depended on our small group leaders to stay connected with students. Plus we've shared online responsibilities within our staff team.



## FUSION MINISTRIES

Not many churches have a ministry dedicated to families of kids with special needs, so it's always a goal to continue networking with other churches in the area that have those ministries. We can support each other as staff, share ideas, work together on large projects, and help serve our families better. Fusion continues to have strong relationships with Compass Church and Chapelstreet Church in Geneva.

We have 71 families engaged with Fusion Ministry. About 70% of our families are engaged at Good Shepherd. Another 15% have other church homes. The rest are an extraordinary opportunity for outreach!

Audrey Gerhard came on staff in the spring as the FUSION Coordinator for Children's Ministry. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in special needs, especially in the area of autism.

Prior to the COVID-19 sheltering order, Buddy Break hosted 60-70+ kids and 70-80+ leaders monthly! The growth has been exciting.

One of the best, positive outcomes of COVID-19 has been the forming of a support group for FUSION parents. Being in a small group for our families can be difficult because of time constraints and finding reliable care for kids with special needs. Suddenly we become very familiar with Zoom, meet on a weekly basis, support each other, laugh together, and seek God's guidance with our new normal.



## GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

As a centrally located preschool, we have a great opportunity to welcome unchurched families or those that do not have a church home in the communities of Naperville, Plainfield, Aurora and Oswego.

In 2019-2020 we had our highest enrollment ever! 126 students enrolled, which is a 19% increase from the previous year. When the quarantine began, the staff was very creative and resourceful in connecting with the children and their families. The staff provided daily recorded story times and weekly Zoom meetings with the classes. To close the school year, the staff and families had a car parade where the students got a chance to say a final farewell to their teachers. We were very blessed to be able to refund tuitions paid for the time we were out of school, while still being able to compensate the staff.

This past summer we made the transition from conventional Summer Camp to Summer Camp to Go, with drawstring backpacks containing all camp materials. The teachers did a fabulous job of creating videos of story time, action and movement, and directions and supplies to make a project for each day virtual Summer Camp.

Registration for 2020-2021 is looking strong, with 74 students registered as of September 4.

God has given us an opportunity to grow closer to Him through devotions and prayer time with our staff, as we continue to search for trust and hope.



## ADULT MINISTRIES

### SMALL GROUPS

# 55

96 leaders in 55 small groups

### ADVENT TEA

# 350

Because we offered two tea times, we accommodated an additional 110 women. That's a 46% up from 2018.

### CRHP EVENT

# 120

CRHP alumni renewal event participants, from over the course of four decades!

## YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (YAM)

Contributor: Tia Walter, YAM Coordinator

Entering its second year, Young Adult Ministries continues to build an inclusive, Christ-centered community for adults ages 18-35 to explore their identity, belonging, and purpose.

Accomplishments within the past year include:

- 5 weekly small groups, 60 participants on Monday nights, averaging 40 per week ... more than doubled weekly attendance compared to last year! Plus 10 new small group leaders are serving this year.
- Increased attendance in outreach events, averaging 50+ young adults compared to 35 average last year.
- Launched YAM<sup>2</sup> (Young Adult Marrieds Ministry) & YAM Fusion (Special Needs)
- 2 young adults accepted Christ, 2 young adults were baptized and 1 young adult reaffirmed her baptism

*"God has given me a resting place in YAM where my gifts are developed, relationships are cultivated, and questions are welcomed."* — Kendra B.

*"Community has played an important role in my faith journey. Through YAM, God's word has become clear and I have felt the warmth of the Holy Spirit in me. This would not have been possible if I didn't have the support and love from those around me."* — Alyssa T.



## CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRIES

Contributor: Pamela Palmer,  
Director of Congregational Care

We provide compassionate care to the members of our church through individual connection, group support, prayer, and events. We serve those experiencing difficult situations in life, grieving, and/or struggling with emotional and mental health.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, it has been hard to see church members suffer from loneliness and isolation, many longing to see their family and friends, and missing in-person services at church. Utilizing online platforms to provide ministry has been a positive and exciting way to connect. Our care ministries have been able to still offer meaningful support over the phone, through written letters, and online meetings and webinars.

Accomplishments include:

- 5 prayer team members served during online services as hosts and to take prayer requests.
- 12 Hope for Mental Health team members served 70 attendees at the COVID webinar. Four looking for confidential local counselling resources were served.
- 7 visitation care team members served 25 recipients, two of whom were new over the summer
- 5 Stephen ministers provided one-on-one crisis care to six care recipients.
- Call campaigns were initiated in April and July due to the pandemic. Two campaigns reached 3,100 church members (ages 55+, Fusion families, and young widows, then ages 36+). 105 church members signed up to help on the call campaigns.

### GOALS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

- Launch new GriefShare support groups and seminars to assist grieving congregants and reach out to the local community.
- Transition Stephen Ministry team to a new care model – update training curriculum and expand on core team that already exists by adding new members who can care for congregants going through a difficult time, such as grief, divorce, job loss, cancer. Ministry name change to come.
- Expand visitation care team, reach the hospitalized congregants, create more visibility, connect with those who would benefit from receiving care from the team, and create a handbook for the team for more effective and consistent ministry
- Discern the best use of the hope for mental health team and evaluate their impact and presence

Church members have adapted and have opened their hearts to connecting with one another online, and keeping the faith in the midst of experiencing losses of all sorts due to the pandemic. We are grateful to the leaders of the Congregational Care ministries, running this race with faith, enthusiasm, and changing in light of these unique and trying times.



*God inspires creativity, developing in us a willingness to adapt, to still meet people where they are. He has been faithful to guide our steps as we prayerfully discern various ways to implement the prayer and care ministries.* — Pamela Palmer, Director of Congregational Care

# WORSHIP, COMMUNICATIONS, ASSIMILATION

## AVERAGE WEEKEND WORSHIP ATTENDANCE 2019

**1,083** In-Person

Based on six services per weekend, several worship styles. On Christmas Eve, 3,752 gathered to celebrate the birth of our Saviour among seven services.

## ENCOUNTER CHRISTMAS ATTENDANCE 2019

**917**

917 people experienced two Encounter Christmas services.

## ONLINE EASTER VIEWS 2020

**789** YouTube Peak Views  
per device

**1,024** Facebook 1-minute  
minimum views  
per device

## FACEBOOK 2020

**61%** Increased Reach

9,011 people were reached in a single day on our best day in 2020. (Our reach is up 61% from 2019. Page/posts reached 294,800 people in 2020 so far.

**440** New Followers

bringing our total to over 1,900 from 30 countries. Our posts got 355 likes this year, which is 43% more than last year!

## ONLINE WORSHIP VIEWS 5/10/20 - 8/16/20

**205** YouTube  
average Peak Views  
(per device, all styles)

**239** Church Online Platform  
average Peak Views;  
(per device, all styles; live chat)

## YOUTUBE 2020

**800** New Subscribers

compared to 19 new subscribers last year, an increase of over 4,000%

## INTERNATIONAL VIEWERS

1 out of every 1,000 views comes from an international viewer, whether from India, France, Sweden, or Honduras, just to name a few. These international views are all brand new in 2020.

## NEW MEMBERS 2019

**165**

In 2019 we welcomed 41 new members by baptism, and 124 by New member class, transfer and/or Pastor Authorization, totalling 165...exactly the same as 2018.

