



Lutheran Church of the Atonement
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Dear Atonement Friends,

Our prayers sometimes refer to the church as “the mystical body of Christ.” We are certainly experiencing the mystery of remaining connected to one another in the face of so many challenges. The words of the apostle Paul when physically distant from the Philippian church are timely for us: “I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you.” (Philippians 1:3-4)

2020 has been one of the most disruptive years that most of us have experienced. Now 3/4 of the way through, it remains so. When our lives become less stable, our thoughts often turn toward God: either to look to God for help, to blame God for the problems, or to wonder where God is.

Growing in love for God and for other people is especially important now. At Atonement, we have been adjusting and readjusting to do our best to keep our community vibrant. Our blending of in-person and virtual ministries offer everyone ways of remaining connected to God and to each other. Drive-in worship services in the parking lot have provided welcome personal reunions. We will begin to offer indoor, in-person worship service options this month. And our virtual worship includes a monthly live Zoom service and weekly recorded service, now sharper in presentation and shorter in length.

We have sustained or increased our commitment to ministry partners beyond Atonement. Whether it is PADS, LSSI, Barrington Area Council on Aging’s “A Day Out”, or Holy Family Ministries in the North Lawndale neighborhood of Chicago, we as a church have stepped up – many times in inspirational ways - to continue to love and serve with Jesus. Despite the added challenges we have launched our fall programing and are starting a new church-wide Hope Initiative this week. Our church is active and alive in the midst of disruption.

But this disruption has put a significant dent into Atonement's finances. In short, we are short. Because the last fiscal quarter of 2020 (quarter ended 6/30/20) was greatly affected by our inability to hold in-person worship services as well as economic hardship or uncertainties for many of our members, we ended up the fiscal year with a deficit in receipts of \$136,000. We used our reserves, some expense reductions, and a Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loan to cover that shortfall. Regrettably, the shortfall has continued through the 1st quarter of fiscal 2021.

We are doing everything we can to provide more in-person services, and this will help reduce the shortfall in the subsequent quarters. However, the reality is that, without increased generosity from our members, we will be facing a significant shortfall for the full fiscal year. There is still time to right the ship. We ask you to consider a) increasing your giving for 2020 beyond your commitment or prior intention level and b) provide an increased commitment for 2021. Those actions by each of us are what is necessary for us to be able to plan to get through FY21 without a shortfall.

Atonement's Commitment Sundays for calendar year 2021 are October 25th and November 1st. This is a year to be bold! One more bit of encouragement: God has given us everything we need to “get the red out” and fully provide for ministry at Atonement and with our partners. God has already provided it. We hold it in our hands. When we release it back to God, its benefits multiply.

Please join us in being the faithful stewards of the blessings He has given us and experiencing the joy of letting go!

Grace and Peace,

The Atonement Board

Sam Kramer, President, Lee Duncan, Treasurer, Josh Wittenberg, Secretary

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