

NEW LIFE CHURCH 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

January 30, 2022



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South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Dear Friends in Christ,
Bread for the Day, a daily bible reading and prayer resource published by Augsburg Fortress, ended 2021 with this prayer December 31st:

God we turn to you at year's end with these prayers: for children to be safe, for peace to reign, and for hunger to be satisfied. We trust your wisdom and your word, for you are endless love.

This is a beautiful prayer as we begin 2022 as well. Our trust is in God's wisdom and word. God is endless love. We so desire our children to be safe, for the hungry to be fed and for peace to reign.

I know that you are bringing this prayer to truth. Thank you, people of the South-Central synod, of Wisconsin for showing and sharing God's endless love throughout your communities, our state, country, and across the globe. It is because of you children are being made safe. The hungry are receiving food. Quilts are being made and sent for warmth. You proclaim and practice ways of peace and justice. You see the neighbor and include the unseen in your prayers and in your actions of care. Thank you. Each of the 138 congregations and ministries of our synod makes a difference in the lives of real people. You share the endless love of God in big and small ways each day. Thank you.

Thank you also for ways we are church together. As the pandemic drags on, we continue to yearn for its end. We continue to wonder what things will return and what things are changed forever. Thank you for the ways that congregations, leaders, conferences, laity and clergy continue to bravely pray and discern together in this uncertain time. It is a privilege to walk alongside of you in these conversations. God is present in these days. God is active in these days. We are not alone. Your congregation is not alone.

Please know that your synod, the South-Central synod of Wisconsin, is committed to being your partner in ministry. Together we are finding new ways to share God's grace, build community and to be Christ's endless love in the world.

God's blessings to you and upon your Annual meeting,

Bishop Joy

Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe

**Annual Meeting – New Life Church
January 30, 2022**

Agenda

- Call meeting to order – Kathy Nelson, president
- Opening Prayer
- Approve Minutes from 2021
- President’s Report
- Pastor’s Report
- Thank you to Outgoing Council Member – Kathy Nelson
- Election of Congregation Council Members
 - Individuals Nominated for Congregation Council for a term of three (3) years
 - Iris Christenson – 1st Term
 - Tom Olson – 1st Term
- Approval of 2022 Spending Guide – Ken Wundrow, treasurer
- Old Business
- New Business – RIC Welcome Statement discussion and vote
- Adjournment
- Closing Prayer

NLC Congregation Annual Meeting – Minutes

January 31st, 2021

The Annual Meeting of the St. Matthew's New Life Church took place at 10:33am on Sunday January 31st, 2021. Approximately 57 people attended the meeting either in-person or via Zoom.

1. Council President Paula Severson called the meeting to order and began the meeting by leading a prayer.
2. Paula Severson invited discussion of the previous year's meeting minutes. With no corrections or comments, Barb Zimmerman moved approval of the previous minutes. Kathy Nelson seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.
3. Paula Severson directed attention to the President's Report included in the available packet (attached to these minutes). Paula took the opportunity to thank members of the Common Council, Pastor Heather and the staff, and the Congregation at large for supporting each other and the mission of the church throughout the many challenges presented by the pandemic. Paula focused her report on an appreciation for what has been gained including Pastor Heather, expanded reach of the New Life message and the creativity and dedication of so many.
4. Pastor Heather presented the Pastor's Report. She echoed Paula's sense of appreciation and highlighted the work of the Vision Team.
5. Gavin Walsh discussed the Youth and Education Report. He shared his intention to build for the future and shared his vision for the youth which is centered on the theme of keeping Jesus in sight throughout the storm and maintaining faith that He remains with us.
6. Paula Severson announced that the term of Council members Dan Seeley, Terri Beck-Engel and Noah Peck were expiring. The three outgoing members were recognized for their efforts and thanked for their commitment and service. Paula announced the nominations of new members Jen Emmons, Shawn Peters and Mackenzie Swanson. Following no additional nominations, a motion to approve the nominees was made by Lynn Wunderlin and seconded by Joe Milanese. With no further discussion, the three new Common Council Members were approved unanimously to the 2021-2023 term.
7. Ken Wundrow, Treasurer, thanked the Finance Committee Members (Mary Ann Roelke, Joe Milanese, Vern Scholl and Fred Thalacker) before reviewing the proposed 2021 spending guide. Ken highlighted the grant money and need for a landscaping fund raiser.

There was some discussion:

- Ken reviewed the completed and pending facilities projects. Completed projects include painting, new flooring in fellowship area, new blinds for the sanctuary, worship area revamp, grounds clean-up, HVAC condensation leak resolution. Pending projects include a large-scale landscaping investment to feature revised signage, rock walls and a bell tower.
- Ken called attention to and provided additional detail regarding the use of the Social Purpose fund. He discussed the focus of the Social Purpose Team and thanked them for their efforts.

There were some questions:

- Dave Mullen sought clarification regarding the benevolence items. Ken indicated \$1,000/month goes to the Synod and another \$1,000/month goes to benevolence. He explained how the benevolence funds are directed and, in responding to another question, named the agencies selected to receive funds: YMCA, Nehemiah Community Development Organization and Porchlight.
- Shawn Peters asked if funds could be set aside to purchase a snow blower. Ken confirmed ~\$9k had been earmarked for this purpose.

Following the discussion, Cheryll Steinke motioned to approve the 2021 Spending Guide. Greg Schieve seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously without further discussion.

8. Paula Severson invited discussion of any old business. There was none.
9. Paula Severson invited discussion of any new business. There was none.
10. Paula Severson asked for a motion of adjournment. Ken Wundrow provided the motion. Ann Krebs Byrne seconded the motion. Following no further discussion, the motion unanimously passed.
11. Pastor Heather closed the meeting with a prayer.

Minutes were recorded by Dan Seeley, Council Secretary

New Life Church – Annual Congregational Meeting

President's Report – Kathy Nelson

We have come through 2021! Our God, who is good and gracious and has been with us every step of the way!! Despite the challenges of COVID, and in some ways thanks to COVID, I feel like we've accomplished a great deal this year.

Through a great deal of discussion and prayer we opened our services to include in-person worship while maintaining our Facebook Live broadcast each week. When weather permitted, we continued parking lot worship as a fun way to interact while celebrating the presence of God. I have so much admiration for the team of people it takes each week to accomplish these worship services. Our dedicated AV techs, musicians, leaders, and of course, each of you in attendance. We attend church not so much for own selves, but so that the doors are open for those seeking a relationship with God with welcoming partners in Christ.

Our Worship Center stage had a facelift. Down came the curtains and up came the Dempsey Road cross. The cross was framed, lit, and hung as a focal point on our newly painted front-facing wall.

The New Life webpage also received a new fresh look and became live in June 2021. Many thanks to those individuals who contributed many hours to that task.

Plans to revitalize our landscaping were put into motion. The plan includes constructing a self-standing bell tower, improving outdoor signage, trimming existing trees, planting new trees and shrubs, and adding stonework to help prevent land erosion and help with the natural beauty of our setting. This project to the front of our church building will make our property more visible and inviting to those passing by. Funds to complete these projects are being collected now.

New Hires: In June we hired a new property manager, Queen Turner. In December we offered Jessica Korrison the Children & Youth position. Her start date began in January 2022.

We celebrated our 2021 high school graduates with a cookout on Sunday, June 27 to celebrate the 2021 graduates. Brats and hot dogs were provided with people bringing side dishes.

Community Engagement:

Two *Concerts on the Hill* events took place. These were free events intended to invite and welcome the community to our property. June 13, 2021 was our first event and featured Sarah Kahle opening for our headliners, Mad City Funk. More than 100 people attended (40% from outside of our congregation).

The second concert event happened on August 29, 2021. This fall celebration kick-off was complete with live music (Jeff Rohlwing and Ed Boswell), food, and games. Reverend Walter Baires attended to honor Pastor Heather Hayward's 20th anniversary of being ordained. More than 130 people were in attendance.

Our popular *Field of Dreams* and *Field of Screams* event was held on October 23, 2021. More than 100 volunteers and attendees were at the *Dreams* portion and a record breaking 313 attended the *Screams* portion of the event.

On Saturday, December 4, 2021, in conjunction with *Christmas in the Grove*, we hosted *Breakfast with Santa*. Volunteers provided a delicious breakfast and a visit from the jolly old man himself, Santa Claus! New to the event this year was a shopping center. Children were invited to "shop" for family members from donated items. Volunteers wrapped the gifts for the children to take with them. All functions of this event, breakfast and shopping were free (donations were welcome). 178 adults and children (excluding the many volunteers) attended this event. More than 80% of those who attended were from outside our congregation!

It certainly has been my pleasure to serve God as your Council President over the past year. I am thankful for the leadership of my fellow council members, a dedicated and talented group of people. I will also remain forever grateful for those who stepped forward to volunteer and continued our mission to welcome all. We are a strong community of faith. And by no means lastly, I am forever grateful to God who guided me here to this community. I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish in 2022!

Pastor Heather Hayward's Annual Report 2020 for Jan. 30, 2022 Meeting

DEFINED BY PANDEMIC?

It's often helpful to take a 30,000-foot view of life. As the calendar changes from one year to the next is often an ideal time to do that. As we look back on 2021, it seems to be yet again centrally focused on how the COVID-19 virus affected our life together. Many events either didn't happen or were significantly changed, worship was virtual only through the middle of February and then gradually got back to "normal," our youth ministry had a hard time gaining traction with the back and forth of virtual, and the cultural changes around us continued to cause us to have some oftentimes hard conversations. If we were only to look at things through a negative lens, there might be plenty for us to complain about with regard to 2021. **BUT** I believe God has been up to so many good things! We are NOT defined by the pandemic – we are defined and given our identity by a powerful and loving God. And with that identity as children of God, we can look at things through a different lens: the lens of faith. Yes, there were things that didn't happen as we expected this year, but look at all that did:

WORSHIP

Constantly re-visiting our COVID-19 plan as well as many resources from our Synod and other church bodies, the Council discussed safe ways to begin offering in person worship as early as was safely possible. We felt like we had a good plan for cleaning, masking, and distancing that meant we could get back in the building for Ash Wednesday services on February 17. Thereafter, our Sunday 9:30am service was limited to 10 people. In mid-March we added the 8:15am traditional worship, also with a 10-person limit. Then for Holy Week we increased those limits to 25 people. Easter Sunday was so joyous and filled my heart to overflowing – to not only see people, but to celebrate the Risen Christ with such exuberance and hopefulness! As we approached summer, we added our parking lot worship along with the early service inside and discerned that a limit inside was no longer necessary. Several of our parking lot services – including Pentecost with the Magnum Opus dancers and welcoming new community partners – needed to be moved inside, but we were able to do parking lot services well into the fall. Both services continued to grow through the end of the year. We had wonderful in person services for Christmas Eve that capped off an unusual, but faith-filled year. I am constantly thankful for the amazing people that make worship possible each and every week: our Welcome Team, the band and its leaders, and our Sound Team. If there's any appreciation due, it's to them. Thank you for your faithful giving to the worship ministry of this community! The energy in worship continues to draw people to God and New Life!

TEAMS

The heart and lifeblood of St. Matthew New Life is its people – and you all are ready to get to work for the gospel! As we were able to be back in person, the volunteer ministries of this community also came back to life slowly but surely. We did extra training for the **Welcome Team** members to keep worship a safe and uplifting experience. Our **Prayer Team** regularly receives prayer requests to hold when the individual would rather it be more confidential. Our **Social Purpose Team** continues to do such good and important work as we see a world in need of justice and truth. We offered a group twice this year that participated in Justified Anger's "Black History for a New Day" Course with the very capable Kathy Michaelis as our facilitator – such an excellent eye-opening experience for all of us! These conversations along with those had with the full team continue to make us ask where else can be at work for the cause of equity and justice? Mary Ann Roelke continues to lead this team of go-getters, and in addition to our community awareness and involvement, we also have utilized the Social Purpose Fund so successfully this year to help so many people! You should be very proud of your church! As this group sought more ways to be inclusive, I felt it was time to talk about becoming a **Reconciling in Christ** congregation (more of which will be discussed at the meeting). The Welcome Statement that we will be voting on at our meeting is a result of months of hard work by 8 very amazing people – Terri Beck-Engel, Jillene Fisch, Sandy Kowal, Margo McBain, Wayne and Barb Meyer, Noah Peck, and Barb Zimmerman. We had wonderful conversations, they engaged some of you about this idea of welcome, and we held education and listening sessions throughout the fall. I am very proud of our Welcome Statement, but more so of the people who put it together! In addition to

all of this, there were an additional 8 people who said yes to a great honor we received this year. In June we were selected from among 400 churches in Dane County to participate in a program called **Awaken Dane**. It is a two-year process by which we will be listening for God's movement in our community and discerning where God calls us to interact within our greater community. Dave Beck-Engel, Leanne Havertape, Deb Kohlwey, Louise Miller, Tom Olson, Tamra Oman, Kathy Scholl, and Gregg Schieve have been on this journey with me since September and we're so excited to see where the Spirit takes us! More to come!

COUNCIL

I love all these Teams and the work they're doing, but the group I must honor the most is our Congregational Council. They have so faithfully weathered the last 22 months and I am so grateful for their leadership and faith! We've had some members step down this year and those who were asked so generously said YES! A big thank you to Kathy Nelson who stepped into the role of President when Paula Severson left. Kathy has so graciously walked me through many moments of struggle and weariness – I truly cannot thank her enough! She will be missed as she goes off the Council as of this meeting. Also to be thanked is Joe Milanese for fulfilling Paula's term on the Council and Linda Sime for filling Kendra Gassner's term when she needed to step down. I am very excited to say that those able to stay for a second term – Janice Newell and Linda Sime – have agreed to do so, and those who have been nominated to fill open positions on the Council – Iris Christianson and Tom Olson – will be excellent additions to this team of faithful leaders. Thanks also go to our officers: Kathy Nelson as president, Joe Milanese as vice president, Janice Newell as secretary, and Ken Wundrow as treasurer. Please thank your Council members as they go above and beyond for this community!

STAFF

In addition to the community partners who serve so faithfully, New Life has been blessed with an amazing staff. We've had some transition with several positions this year, but I'm thankful that the interview process in both occasions brought us excellent people! Kathy Scholl continues to serve so capably as the Office Assistant, Nancy Schmidt as our proficient Bookkeeper, and Shane Peters as our Custodian. In May, Megan Hoffmaster was offered a dream job back in the banking business, which of course we encouraged her to take. We interviewed only one person – and knew that she was the one! Queen Turner joined our staff in June as our Property Manager and has shared her skill in event planning and decorating that perhaps you've noticed! In October, Gavin Walsh also desired to pursue a dream of becoming a phlebotomist with the Red Cross. After interviewing many candidates, we offered the position to Jessica Korrison, who began her work with us at the beginning of this year. I'm so excited to see where God will take us with all these gifted and faithful people working toward the common goal of sharing the gospel! This staff desires to work hand in hand with the whole congregation as we all set about this important work!

SMALL THINGS WITH BIG IMPACT

We also continued the efforts from 2020 of beautifying the space God has given us. Gregg Schieve completed his project in the Worship Center with **paint** on the back walls of the stage area. And it looks like it's been that way forever! It was such a blessing to be able to celebrate a beautiful space to worship a beautiful God! With a team of people and the help of local design company Makin-Hey, I designed our **new website**. We all know it's the digital front door of our church and making it more user friendly for everyone was a huge deal! We welcomed **22 new community partners** at two celebrations this year – and first utilized that nomenclature instead of "member" to remind us all that we're in this together and this isn't a country club! These new partners have jumped in with both feet and serve alongside you in many aspects of our life together. We had **two concerts** this summer that were so celebratory – the one in August surprised me with a celebration of my 20th ordination anniversary as well! Gavin was able to host a **Summer Camp** VBS-like experience for our community and we were so excited to see that ministry come back! We also held two big events this fall that opened our doors to the community in ways we have been longing to do for 22 months. **Field of Dreams and Screams** was as big as it's ever been with over 500 people interacting with our space in that one day! It was awesome! A huge thank you to Kathy Nelson, Janice and Bruce Newell, Bob and Lisa Haefner, and Jeff and Gretchen Lennberg for so many hours of work to pull this

off! We were also able to bring back **Breakfast with Santa** this year, with additional enhancements! Jillene Fisch organized a way for kids to shop for the adults in their lives to surprise them with gifts. It was wonderful to watch these little ones think about giving (instead of getting!) in this holy season. Thanks also to Linda Sime, Kathy Nelson, Terri Beck-Engel, Cheryl Steinke, and Janice Newell for leading the different areas of this successful event. We had over 200 people through the building that morning – and a special thanks to Santa Tom! Toward the end of the year, just as we were interviewing for a new youth person, Jen and Shannon Erb approached me about an idea that they had for holding a high school youth group that wouldn't be able to meet at the school. I said, "Of course!" and so the **Silver Eagles Athletes of Faith** began. Every other Monday night, there are 25-30 high schoolers gathered in our space to grow in faith together! God is indeed good!

GOD'S UP TO SOMETHING

See what I mean? Just when we think the pandemic limits us, God says "Nope – the Spirit's still moving. I'm still working in and through you!" I believe that too – and I hope you'll join me in that belief. 2022 has such promise for us. I am deeply hopeful that with Jessica's leadership, we'll be able to reestablish New Life as a place that exists for kids! We're making plans for a really exciting summer trip for our high schoolers. We want to continue to grow New Life Kids. As our Welcome Statement is voted into reality, we want to make our space look and feel more welcoming to more and more people. We have plans for some landscaping and building improvements that will enhance that welcome to everyone. I have some exciting thoughts and plans for Adult Faith Formation and Lent/Holy Week this year. And we really can't go wrong keeping the New Life vibe going strong, right?! I am deeply honored to serve as your pastor and ask you to pray with me that God will continue to show us the path and the ways of service. I said in my New Year's email that this year was going to be all about how we perceive what God is up to. Notice, recognize, realize, become aware of how and where God is working in YOUR life, and when we do that together we can't help but perceive God's hand working in the whole community as well.

My blessings to you – Peace.

Pastor Heather Hayward

2021 Pastoral Statistics

New Community Partners	22	Weddings	1
Baptisms	3	Funerals	2
Affirmations	0		

2021 Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report
January 30, 2022

We have, by the Grace of God, survived another year of the pandemic. As we continue to increase our worship size, it is refreshing to see old faces once again and also the new faces that we welcome as new members.

The finance team has worked diligently throughout the year to do the best with the church's resources. You as a faithful community have continued to give of your resources so that the church's programming can continue. For that, we are extremely grateful. Several very beneficial undertakings were successfully completed this year.

The first occurred early in the year. When the government released a second wave of Payroll Protection Plan money, we applied for and were granted \$30,590 of support that will not need to be paid back. This allowed us to continue our program staffing at a time when giving had greatly reduced. Later in the summer, we applied for and negotiated a refinance of the mortgage we hold with Mission Investment Fund. As the result of those negotiations, our interest rate was dropped to 3.875% and our loan was refinanced to a 15-year loan. Though we were down to just over ten years left on the original loan, payments were at \$8,000 a month. Our new payments are not \$3,400 a month. This savings will allow us to both set aside funds for the increasing cost of building maintenance as well as seeding our landscaping projects. We have a roof that is now twenty years old as well as nine HVAC units that are aging out and beginning to need replacement as they require additional maintenance. We anticipate as much as \$100,000 being needed for this maintenance over the next five to ten years. This funding of a maintenance set aside will go along ways in meeting those needs. If for some reason, those costs are less or our giving sees a substantial rise, we can at any time apply the funds to paying off the mortgage. Our loan, which once stood at \$1.3 million is now down to just over \$600,000.

There was a myriad of other smaller projects accomplished over the past year and we, as your finance team, will continue to manage the church's resources as we continue to meet both the physical and ministerial needs of His church in the upcoming year.

In closing, I want to again thank you for your continued spiritual, financial, and time support of the mission of New Life Church.

Respectfully,

Ken Wundrow
Treasurer St Matthew's New Life Church

2021 Special Events/Highlights:

JANUARY

- Annual Congregational Meeting on January 31, 2021
- Faith Formation (Youth and Adults) Wednesday nights
- Distribution of Gift Cards (Social Purpose Team) began, first and third Mondays of the month

FEBRUARY

- February 7 - Black History Course begins
- Second week of February “Cabin Fever” activities (virtual)
- Ash Wednesday Imposition of Ashes (drive-through and also 7 p.m. service), in-person and livestreamed on Facebook Live
- Sunday evenings 6:30-8 p.m. Youth Fellowship
- Feb. 21 – in addition to Facebook Live streaming of 9:30 a.m. service, we began 10 people in-person gatherings, with Welcome Team ensuring COVID social distancing, masks, cleaning and precautions

MARCH

- March 14 – Youth in-person sessions began after second service
- March 22 – Painting project in Worship Center; upgraded and beautified the Sanctuary
- Holy Week – In-person (25 people) & Facebook Live 7 p.m. Maundy Thursday & Good Friday services

APRIL

- Easter Sunday April 4 – 8:15 a.m. & 9:30 a.m. in-person services; Facebook Live service at 9:30 a.m.
- April 24 – Spring Clean-Up (with social distancing)
- April 28 – Awaken Dane meetings begin; Pastor Heather participates in first meeting via Zoom

MAY

- May 3 & 4 – In-person and virtual information meetings for new Community Partners
- May 13 – Staff training on new website
- May 22 – Band members meeting and AV/Sound Board training
- May 23 – Welcome Sunday celebration for new Community Partners during parking lot worship, with guest dance troupe Magnum Opus and a cookout
- May 26 – Reconciling In Christ team holds first meeting (in-person and virtually)

JUNE-AUGUST

- June 13 – Parking Lot Worship at 9:30 a.m. service (livestreamed on Facebook Live)
4:30 p.m. Concert on the Hill with Sarah Kahle and Mad City Funk
- June 21 – Shakia “Queen” Turner begins as Property Manager
- June 27 – Blessing of High School Seniors, and Cookout / Cake

JULY

- July 19-23 and July 26-30 – Youth Summer Camp

AUGUST

- August 8 – Parking Lot Worship and Baptism
- Aug. 29 – Baptism and at 4:30 – 7 p.m. Fall KickOff and Games Night for Families, plus a Concert on the Hill with Jeff Rohlwing & Ed Boswell and recognition of Pastor Heather’s 20th Anniversary of ordination (Sep. 2, 2001)

SEPTEMBER

- September 5 – “First Sunday” Breakfast begins again
- Sep. 14 – Common Threads group begins
- Sep. 15 – Youth and Adult Faith Formation gatherings restart
- Sep. 19 – New Life Kids begins (family friendly portion of 9:30 a.m. worship service)
- Sep. 20 – Door Creek Condos Association meeting held in Worship Center
- Sep. 22 – 5:30-6 p.m. Wednesday Night Dinner before Youth and Adult Faith Formation
- Sep. 25 – First meeting of Awaken Dane (full group) is held at Warner Park
- Sep. 27 – Black History Month 9-week course begins (virtual)

OCTOBER

- October 2 – Women’s Retreat at Holy Wisdom Monastery
- Oct. 3 “First Sunday” Breakfast
- Oct. 7 – Cub Scouts Pack 145 begins holding meetings here first and third Thursdays
- Oct. 10 – Last parking lot worship for 2021 season
- Oct. 11 – Covered Bridge Condos Association meeting held in Worship Center
- Oct. 16 – Band Retreat (Worship Center) and Baby Shower (Community Room)
- Field of Dreams and Field of Screams on October 23rd with Trick or Trunk from 4-5:30 p.m. and Field of Screams from 7-9 p.m.)
- Oct. 28 & 30 – In-person and virtual information meetings for new Community Partners
- Fall Clean-Up on October 30th

NOVEMBER

- Interviews being held for the Youth Position
- November 7 – Welcome Sunday celebration and “First Sunday” Breakfast
- Nov. 8 – First meeting of Silver Eagles youth group (ReCreation Center)
- Nov. 16 – Awaken Dane meeting via Zoom
- Thanksgiving Eve service in-person and on Facebook Live, and kickoff of food pantry collections
- Nov. 28 – First Sunday of Advent

DECEMBER

- Breakfast with Santa/Pets in the Stable/Shop with an Elf event from 8:30-11 a.m. on December 4
- December 12 – Reconciling In Christ team listening session at 10:30 a.m. after second service
- Dec. 21 – Longest Night Service at St. Stephen’s in Monona
- Teen Gift Drive for Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Christmas Eve services: 5 p.m. Family Worship and 7 p.m. Candlelight Service
- Jessica Korrison was chosen as the Children & Youth Ministry Coordinator, to begin duties Jan. 2, 2022

2021 Teams

Awaken Dane

Awaken Dane is a 2-year long journey that is a movement of churches awakening to God's call, forming life-giving friendships and partnerships, and growing in love for their home communities. A network of church leaders and representatives from several area churches in Dane County have been meeting to talk about the mission and discuss approaches and strategies of reaching out to individuals in our communities. The first meeting of the entire group was held on Sep. 25 at Warner Park, followed by Zoom meetings in November and January (Plenary online). Currently the New Life Church small group is working on plans for getting started and stepping out into the community as God guides us. Representatives are: Dave Beck-Engel, Leanne Havertape, Deb Kohlwey, Louise Miller, Tom Olson, Tamra Oman, Kathy Scholl, and Gregg Schieve.

Reconciling In Christ (RIC) Team

Our Reconciling In Christ Team as well as the Church Council worked on and approved our Welcome Statement – an intentional welcome to LGBTQIA+ and Transgendered people as well as a commitment to racial equity and justice. Then we held two listening sessions, took paper and online surveys, and edited the statement based on those conversations. We will vote on adopting this statement today during our Annual Meeting. Thanks go out to the team for their work: Terri Beck-Engel, Jillene Fisch, Sandy Kowal, Margo McBain, Wayne and Barb Meyer, Noah Peck, and Barb Zimmerman.

Social Purpose Team

The purpose of St. Matthew's New Life Social Purpose Fund (SPF) is to aid members of our community in times of need. This would include congregational partners, community members not connected to the congregation, and/or other qualified charitable organizations. We attempt to strengthen the person's relationship with Christ by demonstrating His love to as many people as we are able, in a fair and equitable manner to encourage and empower self-agency. This fund is intended to be for needs that are rare and emergent rather than ongoing needs that may require more social service involvement.

Through your contributions, New Life has been able to help 47 families for a total of \$14,000. Twenty-five families were helped through food and gas gift cards and 23 families were helped with housing, utility, funeral, and other miscellaneous expenses. Helping with the housing and utility costs specifically help people stay in their homes or obtain housing when they otherwise would have been unable. In addition, we have established a partnership with the Nehemiah: Center for Urban Leadership Development to promote relationships, solutions, and systems within the African American community by educating, affiliating, and donating. We educate through offerings of Black History for a New Day course, affiliate with Nehemiah Center, and donate financially and with goods (diapers, toiletries, etc.) to their organization.

Current members are: Pastor Heather, Terri Beck-Engel, Jim DePass, Kathy Mullen, Kathy Mathias, Noah Peck
Previous members have been: Kendra Gassner, Vicki Schultz, Melanie Stepherson, and Ken Wundrow.

~ Submitted by Mary Ann Roelke ~

New Life Band Annual Report 2021

The worship band saw many changes and challenges over 2021. We began the year with a down-sized band on Sundays - to stay safe and comply with local Covid mandates. As the year progressed, we were able to increase Sunday participation. By December we were almost back to our full on-stage band. We still have a number of members who have stepped back and do not feel safe participating yet. We look forward to welcoming them back into the fold – hopefully soon!

Some highlights:

- We have been blessed to welcome some new members to the team, both on stage and in the A/V booth.
- We held a mini-retreat early in 2021 via Zoom. It was great to see everyone and connect as a group.
- We gathered for a team practice in October. We safely spaced ourselves in the worship center and learned new music as a group. It was very productive and we've added a number of new songs to our repertoire.

One of the biggest challenges last year has been the addition of live streaming our Sunday worship. We are fortunate to have some members who took on this challenge, learned the technology and trained others on the team. We appreciate our A/V members taking the time to learn something new. In the new year, we continue to work on improving our streaming quality.

And finally, looking forward, one of our priorities remains recruiting new members to join our team. JOIN THE BAND! God rocks.

~ Submitted by Sandy Kowal ~

St. Marks Food Pantry: Food Pantry Ministry

Th St. Mark's food pantry has been functioning during the pandemic and has not had to close down because of it. We function as a no-contact pantry but we specialize what the order is for a family by reading down a shopping list each time. I update the list twice a week to account for what we have. I thank New Life for continuing to be a part of this ministry. St. Mark's served 1233 people within 41 families. A total of 23,521 pounds were donated this year with New Life contributing 1200 pounds of it. I appreciate the continued support. Without the volunteers of time and food donations we would not be able to exist. Our hours are: 10 AM-12 PM on Tuesday and 5:15-7:15 PM on Thursday. Please come to us or any other pantry if you have food insecurities. Everything is kept confidential. A quote from several clients is that we have the best food pantry in Madison. This would not be able to happen without the support of New Life.

~ Submitted by Barb Zimmerman ~

Women's Thursday Bible Study Group

Our group continues these Thursday morning meetings to read book passages, at times watch a video, and then discuss the theme. We use our Bibles to look up verses that pertain to what we are studying and have discussions. We are an informal group coming together to connect with Jesus and learn to walk the path He has laid out for us. We've formed new friendships. We meet every Thursday from 9 to 11 a.m. Anyone is welcome. Come and join us.

~ Submitted by Betty Sundbakken ~

Stamping Group

The Women's Rubber Stamp Group met in November and December of 2021 after restrictions lightened from COVID, and it continues to meet on the second Monday of the month from September through May, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend at no cost; items to create cards are supplied. We usually make three cards each month with varying themes. Of note, the pre-made cards on the stand in the Community Room have been created and donated by the group's leader, with sales proceeds going directly to the church as a ministry.

~ Submitted by Cheryll Steinke ~

Common Threads

Common Threads relaunched in September as a prayer shawl ministry for New Life Church. We are open to anyone who would like to participate and have both morning and evening meeting times to try to accommodate varying schedules. We are a group of knitters, crocheters, and weavers who enjoy the creative process of working with our hands and the colors and textures of yarn. Gail Kriel and I welcome you to our group.

The goal of Common Threads is to provide a safe, peaceful, supportive space to meet while working to bless others with the shawls and blankets we create. Anyone is welcome to come – we have varied levels of experience and a willingness to help each other along the way. We each work with colors and patterns that inspire us, not knowing who the recipient will be, but trusting that it will be exactly the right piece to bless one special person. The completed shawls and blankets are on a table in the fellowship hall. They are available to be given to anyone who could use that physical representation of our prayers and being wrapped in God's love.

We meet on the second Tuesday of the month from 6:30-8:30 in the evening and the fourth Tuesday of the month from 9:30-11:30 in the morning. You are welcome to come to either or both sessions as you are able. We meet off site in my weaving studio at 2454 Gaston Road, Cottage Grove. If you have any questions you can contact me at Ginny@fevoldenfarm.com.

~ Submitted by Ginny Olson ~

Property Team

Over the past year, the Property Team oversaw both Spring and Fall work days. Volunteers helped tidy up the grounds and also with the removal of a significant amount of brush from the south slope of the property. This was done to unblock the view of the large cross on that side of the building from the street. Dave Kohlwey enhanced the cross's visibility by replacing the lights behind the cross. Other exterior initiatives include the addition of new mulch in front of the church and around the labyrinth, tree-trimming and generally keeping things looking nice. Many people have contributed their time toward keeping the grounds looking nice, for which we are thankful.

We look forward to a major landscaping initiative in the spring, designed to make New Life Church look as welcoming on the outside as it can to mesh with our Mission and Vision. And we will also honor our past by incorporating the church bell and some panels of stained glass from the Dempsey Road location into these plans.

~ Submitted by Joe Milanese ~

Welcome Team

A faithful group of volunteers works together to form a network of welcome, while also ensuring a safe and friendly environment for people to experience worship at New Life Church. Our volunteers greet people at the door when they enter the building (or in the parking lot) for worship, help make sure they have information and can submit their prayer requests and offerings, guide them to places to sit and provide communion packets. We also have volunteers who serve as tellers to count offerings, people who make and serve coffee, and helpers with Audio/Visual in the booth for the services and music. In early 2021, our group underwent training sessions regarding "Guidelines for Resuming In-Person Worship, Events and Gatherings" and New Life's Reopening Policies, as COVID restrictions lightened, so that we could gradually bring in 10 worshippers, then 25 at a time, and finally open it up to in-person worship at 8:15 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., which is also livestreamed on Facebook Live. Watch the weekly email newsletters that go out with the sign-up sheets to help on the Welcome Team; we are always looking for new people to step into the duties on a rotating basis. Thank you to all our helpers!

~ Submitted by Kathy Scholl ~

New Life Church Golfers

This past summer, a few of the normal house chores and career requirements were set aside every Thursday evening, so some New Lifers and a few other interested community members could gather and enjoy time together. Our friends at the Door Creek Golf Course worked with us to schedule weekly standard tee times from late May through August, and graciously allowed us to rotate weeks on the front and back nines, which enabled us to see much more of God's creativity of well-placed sand traps, ball deflecting tree lines, and deep water holes. We were not a league. We were a community of faith and played for enjoyment, realizing the game of golf can be enjoyable no matter what skill levels we possess.

~ Submitted by David Hayward and Verne Scholl ~

We are so very grateful to ALL of the people who helped coordinate or participate in all of these awesome events and opportunities to connect with others as part of our community of faith! We could not do any of this without all of you – *everyone* in our New Life Church family – and there are so many individuals and groups who have shared your time, talents, and resources for God's missions. A big THANK YOU, everyone!

Candidates for Council (Elect)

There are two Congregation Council members whose terms have either expired (Kathy Nelson, who also served as Council President) or need to be filled (Jen Emmons). We thank them for their service. There are two individuals nominated to join Council (in alphabetical order). Here is information about each of them.

Iris Christenson



I would be honored to serve on the church council during this time of many changes and challenges. I would hope to support the efforts already underway to increase diversity in all areas of New Life's programming, including worship, education, ministry to our community members and ministry to the community. I have participated in the adult study programs sponsored by New Life whenever possible, including the most recent Black History Course offered by Nehemiah.

A bit about me...

I would best describe myself as a grandmother who tries to be as wacky as possible so my grandchildren want to spend time with me. I have become an expert in shadow puppets during bedtime story telling and I know how to make cakes and sandwiches out of playdoh.

Beyond that, I sing in the New Life band several Sundays each month. I pride myself in singing as low as George and Dale. I also love to take photos at church events (e.g. Fields of Dreams and Screams and the summer camp programs). My husband, Gregg, and I have been community partners at New Life for more than 39 years. For many years, I co-taught high school classes and facilitated community ministry efforts involving the youth (e.g. backpacks for the homeless and holiday parties for children with cancer).

After 29 years of practicing law, I sold my practice and retired in May of 2019. I took a few months off and then, in the fall of 2019, I began volunteering for the Catholic Multicultural Center in the legal immigration program. I've been able to continue my volunteer work with immigrants throughout the pandemic since I'm able to meet with clients virtually. Recently, I spent a few days at Fort McCoy helping our new Afghan neighbors learn about their legal rights and responsibilities.

New Life has been a huge part of our family's life since our children were 11 and 3. The pandemic has changed how we attend church (we follow the CDC guidelines) but it has not changed the fact that we worship with our New Life family nearly every week (in person or virtually).

Iris Christenson

Tom Olson



My name is Tom Olson and my wife, Ginny, and I have lived in the Cottage Grove Community since 1977. We have two grown, married children who each have two children. I have worked as an Educator and Administrator for the bulk of my professional career. I also volunteered as an EMT with Deer-Grove EMS for 10 years. In 2002 we joined forces with my sister and brother-in-law to purchase several alpacas to begin Fevolden Farm LLC which we continue to operate. I currently serve on the Boards of the Great Midwest Alpaca Festival, the Friends of the Cottage Grove Library, and am past president of the Great Lakes Alpaca Association.

We joined this Church in 2004 and have participated in various ways including worshiping and attending various bible studies and retreats, serving as parking lot greeter, assisting with vacation church school, preparing/serving breakfast pastries and most recently, serving as teller. I look forward to serving the congregation as a member of the church council.

Tom Olson

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