

Desert Cross Lutheran Church

# **2020 Annual Report**

**Annual Meeting**  
**Sunday, February 28 • 4pm • Zoom**

Desert Cross Tempe  
8600 South McClintock  
Tempe, AZ 85284

Desert Cross Gilbert  
3225 S. Lindsay Rd, Suite 101  
Gilbert, AZ 85297

## **Desert Cross Church Council**

### **January 1—October 25, 2020**

Shannon Burns	President
Stan Fernandes	Vice President
Vince Sciamé	Treasurer
Jennifer Piellucci	Secretary
Paul Fagerman	Past President
Rebekah Doll	
Patrick Jennett	
Angela Nannenga	
Anna Pelley	
Tom Rewolinski	

### **October 25—December 31, 2020**

Stan Fernandes	President
Glenn Tischaefér	Vice President
Vince Sciamé	Treasurer
Jennifer Piellucci	Secretary
Shannon Burns	Past President
Patrick Jennett	
Bill Kalaf	
Angela Nannenga	
Anna Pelley	
Tom Rewolinski	

## **Staff**

Senior Pastor\*  
Transitional Associate Pastor\*  
Director of Operations and Property\*  
Director of Worship & Music Ministries—Tempe\*  
Director of Worship & Music Ministries—Gilbert  
Worship Coordinator (through October 2020)  
Director of Adult Ministries  
Director of Youth Ministries\*  
Director of Children's Ministries  
Children's Ministry Assistant  
Parish Nurse  
Office Manager  
Communication Coordinator  
Accountant (through November 2020)  
Accountant (beginning November 2020)  
Nursery Attendants

Musicians

Rev. Andrea L. Cain  
Rev. Doris Nolan  
Douglas W. Bjotvedt  
Daniel Decker  
Michael Lottes  
Jessica Robinson  
Denise McClellan  
Chad Diegle  
Shannon Fossett  
Kristen Roehling  
Denise Viker, BSN, RN  
Dawn Collins  
Maegan Jennett  
Flo Poland  
Deanna Soll  
Annika Beck, Joseph English,  
Madison Fernichio, Josh Fossett,  
George Robinson, Naomi  
Sanders, Ashley Viker,  
Ryan Bakalar, Wayne Jones,  
Jacob Lauxman, Austen Mack,  
Christine Soll, James Soll,  
Nat Theobald, and  
Johannes VanRossum

\*Full time staff



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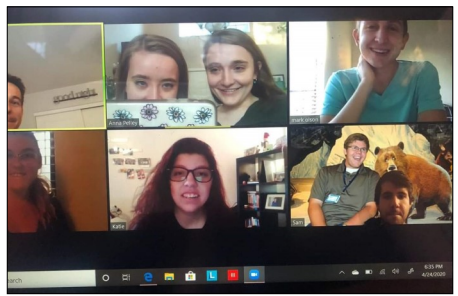
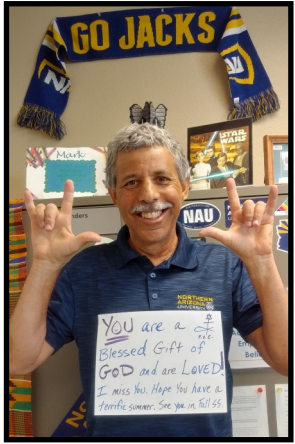
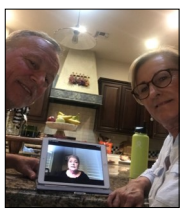
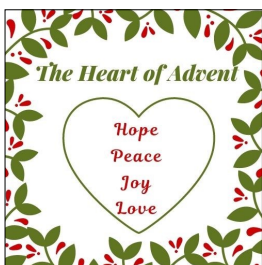
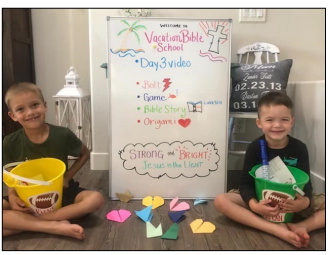
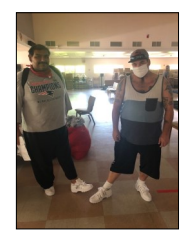
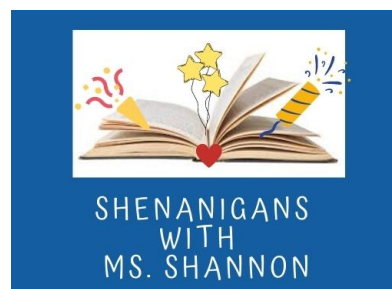
### **Mission Statement**

As a Missional Congregation, we celebrate Christ's presence,  
invite people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and equip them  
to serve in a broken world.

# Adapting Ministries During the Time of a Pandemic...



"Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind." Philippians 2:2







Photos from Pastor Andrea's Weekly Updates with encouraging messages.

## Senior Pastor

*'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' And 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* Matthew 22:36-39

We started 2020 with great hope for a new decade together of mission and ministry sharing God's love. We soon realized it was going to be an unprecedented year. No one could have anticipated the effects of a convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, social and racial injustice, and political division. We have been challenged as a country, personally, and as a church family in unimaginable ways. Our concept of loving each other has been reshaped and expanded. Desert Cross "pivoted" as we found brand new ways of doing mission and carrying out our ministry. We faced innumerable changes this year and made innovations at an extraordinary level! We've had more "firsts" in one year than ever recorded or imagined. We climbed a very steep learning curve and thrived together!

In March we instantly moved all of our meetings and ministries online and became a virtual church so we could be connected while physically apart with social distancing.



Here are the Top Ten Desert Cross Innovations:

1. Virtual worship services on the Desert Cross YouTube channel and equipping for livestreaming worship
2. Zoom staff meetings; Council, Chamber, Finance, Stewardship and ChristCare Zoom meetings
3. Pastor Andrea's weekly virtual prayer ministry, "Zoom Chat Pray"
4. Pastor Doris's weekly email devotions
5. Reopening Team to lay out safety protocols for in-person worship
6. Youth and Children's ministries on zoom and children's messages on YouTube
7. Playlists for children, youth, and adults as a virtual educational platform
8. Online giving button and hunger jar, text giving, and a new website and church app pending
9. New COVID snack delivery mission to local hospitals
10. Our first virtual congregational meeting and Zoom farewell reception for Pastor Doris

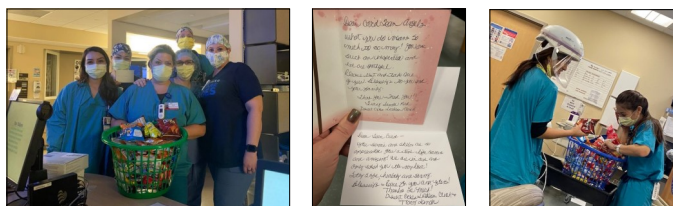
We will miss Pastor Doris and her ministry among us and give thanks to God for sending her to us! We give thanks to our fearless Call Committee who faithfully persevered in the search for our new Associate Pastor! God sent Pastor Thaddeus Book to Desert Cross, and he was worth the wait! I initiated a Welcome Team for the Book family, and the team dreamed up many creative ways to make them feel at home in Arizona and feel the love and gratitude of our community once they arrived. We had our first Zoom Worship service for Pastor Thadd's installation and a welcome reception. We are going to have a lot of fun together leading Desert Cross into the future!

I could write pages about all of the changes, innovations, and ways we have adapted but will leave this as a taste of what we've done. The spirit and energy of our people has been challenged but always sustained by the grace of God and the hope of Christ. Our staff has been absolutely instrumental in the accomplishment of continuing our mission, and each person has gone above and beyond in multiple ways to be creative and continue ministry in their gifted areas. Even with all of the challenges, we achieved an outstanding level of programming, worship leadership, education, and mission. In 2021 we will focus on growing our online ministries, livestreaming, and creating a hybrid virtual/in-person model for our church which will expand our reach in unimaginable ways as we share grace virtually to new people in new ways.

With all the changes, one thing didn't change. We are still guided by the "Great Commandment" from Jesus. We will respond and reach out in love to our neighbors and always look for ways to serve. It is my privilege and my pleasure to lead you into 2021 as we share God's love beyond the walls at Desert Cross.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Andrea Cain*



Photos from the newly established COVID-19 Snack Ministry.

## Attendance Trends—5 Year Period

Desert Cross Attendance	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Average Sunday - In Person	466	492	492	460	454
Average Sunday - Virtual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	774*
Ash Wednesday	201	188	266	274	279
Maundy Thursday	171	162	163	191	836* <sup>1</sup>
Good Friday	207	214	213	278	N/A <sup>1</sup>
Easter	1049	1031	930	884	1318*
Thanksgiving Eve	118	N/A	75	63	N/A
Christmas Eve	1096	1035	898	898	684*

\* Uses ELCA guidelines of views on YouTube multiplied by 2.

<sup>1</sup> In 2020 We offered a combined Maundy Thursday/Good Friday Holy Week virtual worship.

Transferred to other Churches 0

Requested Removal 2

Transferred to Inactive 13

Deaths 11

Thomas Barnes	Woody Neiman
Gerry Eller	Kathleen Pelley
Diana French	Naurine Snyder
Frieda Hahn	Howard Sullivan
Bert Johanson	Gerd Zimmermann
Leonard Landa	

Funerals (\*Denotes non-members) 8

Gerry Eller	Kathleen Pelley
Diana French	Megan Sellers*
Bert Johanson	Howard Sullivan
Woody Neiman	Gerd Zimmermann

## Pastoral Membership Records and Statistics

### MEMBERS RECEIVED

Transferred to DCLC from other ELCA Churches 2

Jack Cotton                      Joyce Cotton

Transferred to DCLC from other Lutheran Churches 0

Members Received by Affirmation of Baptism 1

Chris Wiseman

Members Received as an Associate 0

Members Received by Adult Baptism 0

Members Received by Child Baptism 0

Reaffirmation of Baptism 0

Weddings (\*Denotes non-members) 1

David Black & Cindy Loughmiller

### MEMBERS RELEASED/TRANSFERRED

Transferred to ELCA Churches 0

Transferred to other Lutheran Churches 7

## Membership Trends - 5 Year Trend

Membership	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Baptized	932	899	928*	913	888
Confirmed	786	768	752	729	712
Households	425	407	461*	448	433

\* Statistical Adjustment on Form A ELCA Congregational Report

## Director of Operations and Property

On December 8, 2019, the congregation approved a \$1,353,222 Budget for 2020. As is the case with church budgets, they are built from a full cost basis and then balanced against pledged giving, anticipated giving, and other income (facility rent, niche sales, and other faith contributions).

As for the other revenue categories of programming and outreach, those dollars are factored in as offsetting income on the expenses side. As such, budgeted income appears as zero against actual income. Similarly, actual expenses are usually higher than budgeted. However, the year of 2020 was a year of virtual programming and worship resulting in lower than budgeted actual expenses.

**Desert Cross Lutheran Church  
Income and Expenses for 2020  
Variance Actual to Budget**

<b>Accounts</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>% Used</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>				
<b>Contributions</b>				
General Fund	\$ 992,884	\$ 1,100,642	\$ (107,758)	
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>\$ 992,884</b>	<b>\$ 1,100,642</b>	<b>\$ (107,758)</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>Other Revenue</b>				
Faith and Carry-Over	\$ -	\$ 201,730	\$ (201,730)	
Facility Rental	\$ 30,927	\$ 45,000	\$ (14,073)	
Memorial Garden	\$ 4,550	\$ 5,850	\$ (1,300)	
Programs and Worship Revenue	\$ 10,587	\$ -	\$ 10,587	
Mission and Outreach	\$ 20,739	\$ -	\$ 20,739	
Other	\$ 16,992	\$ -	\$ 16,992	
<b>Sub-total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 83,795</b>	<b>\$ 252,580</b>	<b>\$ (168,785)</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 1,076,679</b>	<b>\$ 1,353,222</b>	<b>\$ (276,543)</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Payroll and Benefits	\$ 781,155	\$ 788,132	\$ (6,977)	
Operations	\$ 163,222	\$ 175,800	\$ (12,578)	
Mortgages (Debt Reduction)	\$ 91,532	\$ 92,000	\$ (468)	
Synod Benevolence	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000	\$ -	
Programs	\$ 79,859	\$ 154,290	\$ (74,431)	
Outreach	\$ 33,781	\$ 33,000	\$ 781	
Maintenance and Repair	\$ 3,954	\$ 30,000	\$ (26,046)	
Other	\$ 3,305	\$ -	\$ 3,305	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 1,236,808</b>	<b>\$ 1,353,222</b>	<b>\$ (116,414)</b>	<b>91%</b>
<b>NET REVENUES OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ (160,129)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ (160,129)</b>	

**NOTE: RENEW Campaign funds are from a capital campaign and not part of the annual budget, as such, they are not reported on the Variance Report.**

The year 2020 will forever have a footnote relating to "COVID-19" on all data and reporting to quickly explain anomalies. For this past year, you see that Desert Cross Lutheran Church's Income and Expenses were less than

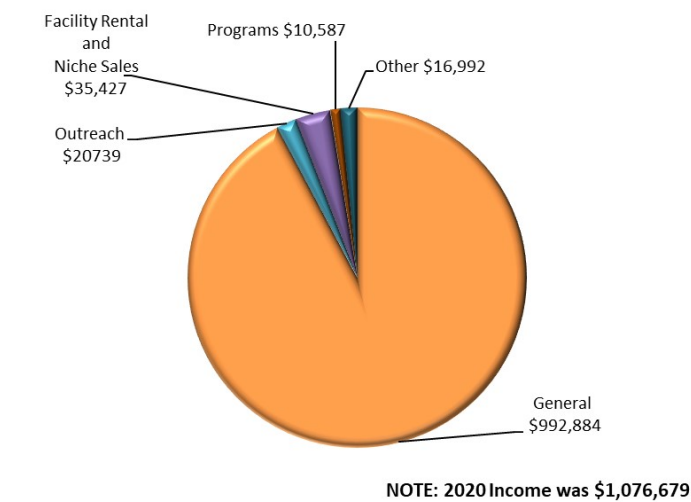
budget and we ended the year with an operational net loss of \$160,000.

Fortunately, we received \$165,000 in Payroll Protection Program (PPP) funds in the initial phase of the relief package and were able to carry on our ministries through the pandemic. An accounting explanation will follow the Statement of Financial Position explaining why we could not

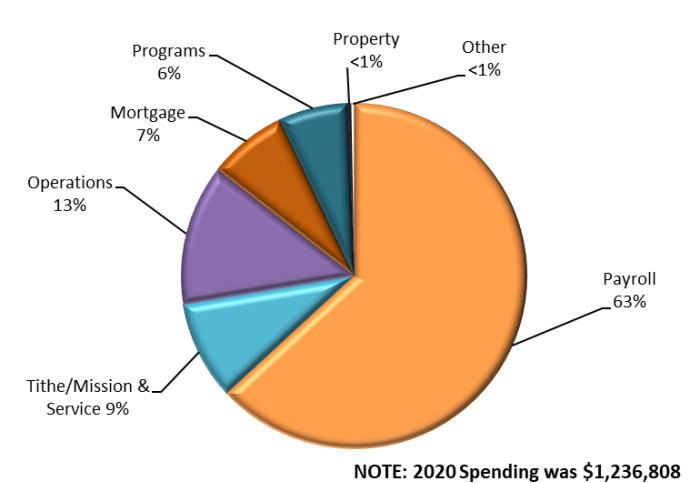
count the PPP money as income against this huge loss.

The following pie graphs provide a better visual on the income and expenses generated and utilized in the Mission of Desert Cross Lutheran Church.

### 2020 Breakdown of Income



### 2020 Percentage of Spending



In late 2019, our long-term Gilbert tenant, American Service Animal Society (ASAS), was exceeding their square footage needs and was searching for larger accommodations with little success. ASAS approached us about building out the unfinished Gilbert Suites #101 and #102 in Building B.

The Church Council agreed with the Chamber’s recommendation and a lease was drawn up for three years with an option for a fourth year. Three years rent of \$126,000 would be paid in advance and Desert Cross would use those funds to build out the 2800 square feet. That money

was received in December 2019, but not deposited until March 2020 when the lease was finally signed. **Note: Prepaid rent is reported on the Statement of Financial Position as both an asset and a liability. It is only counted as income when it is utilized.**

The Statement of Financial Position is reflective of the Assets and Liabilities plus Fund Principal as of December 31, 2020. The unrestricted cash of \$500 is a minimum carry-over recommended by the Finance Committee as we strive to achieve the goal of carrying an operational reserve of \$100,000.00. The restricted cash of \$119,611 is a total of 27 designated funds such as, but not limited to, tenant security deposits, land sale proceeds, bequeathed gifts, grants, and specific ministry support. The Mission Fund Account and Brokerages are current balances in the three accounts used for processing non-cash contributions such as stocks and certificates of deposits. Finally, the remaining cash asset of \$103,930 is that of the RENEW Campaign which concluded in May 2020 (see page 8 for more details).

General Fund contributions were down approximately 9% from 2019, and total income was down approximately 12%. Given what the country and the world went through, I believe these declines as temporary.

5 - Year Contribution and Income History					
Contributions	2016*	2017*	2018	2019	2020
General	\$1,128,199	\$1,167,722	\$1,134,639	\$1,085,208	\$ 992,884
Other	\$ 128,969	\$ 206,952	\$ 119,813	\$ 143,069	\$ 83,795
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,257,168</b>	<b>\$1,374,674</b>	<b>\$1,254,452</b>	<b>\$1,228,277</b>	<b>\$1,076,679</b>

\* General and Facilities Funds were combined for comparison purposes to 2018 through 2020

We were tracking well during the initial shutdown and lack of in-person worship until the 4th QTR. Historically, the 4th QTR, especially the month of December, is our strongest quarter as we see folks catching up on their pledged gifts and closing out the year. This, however, was not the case for 2020 as we saw nearly \$130,000 in decreased giving which put the 4th QTR down 29% from 2019.

Despite these decreases, Desert Cross Lutheran Church gave \$114,000 (11% of our total income) beyond the walls of our church buildings. The dollar amount is less than 2019, but the percentage of income remains the same at 11% for 2020.



**Desert Cross Lutheran Church  
Statement of Financial Position**

Accounts	2020	2019
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Unrestricted	\$ 500	\$ 5,200
Pre-Paid Facility Rent	\$ 120,400	\$ -
Designated Funds	\$ 121,106	\$ 110,519
Mission Fund Account	\$ 967	\$ 959
Brokerages	\$ 6,000	\$ 500
RENEW Restricted	\$ 103,930	\$ 120,912
<b>Total Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	<b>\$ 352,902</b>	<b>\$ 238,089</b>
Fixed Assets		
Land	\$ 1,403,900	\$ 1,403,900
Buildings	\$ 3,793,242	\$ 3,793,242
Capital Improvements	\$ 683,973	\$ 638,145
Equipment	\$ 127,195	\$ 127,195
Office Equipment	\$ 37,759	\$ 37,759
Office Furniture	\$ 19,421	\$ 19,421
Furnishings	\$ 33,372	\$ 33,372
Music Equipment	\$ 35,194	\$ 35,194
Audio Visual Equipment	\$ 170,303	\$ 130,811
Accumulated Depreciation	\$ (3,196,017)	\$ (3,007,065)
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,108,341</b>	<b>\$ 3,211,974</b>
	<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 3,461,244</b>
	<b>\$ 3,461,244</b>	<b>\$ 3,450,063</b>
<b>Liabilities, Fund Principal, &amp; Restricted Funds</b>		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Security Deposit for Facility Rental	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Prpaid Facility Rent	\$ 124,445	\$ -
Small Business Covid-19 Loan	\$ 165,000	\$ -
Short-Term Debt	\$ 52,898	\$ 50,253
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 343,343</b>	<b>\$ 51,253</b>
Long-Term Liabilities		
Notes Payable	\$ 1,000,486	\$ 1,051,976
<b>Total Long-Term Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,486</b>	<b>\$ 1,051,976</b>
	<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 1,343,829</b>
Fund Principal		
Fund Principal	\$ 2,117,415	\$ 2,346,834
<b>Total Fund Principal</b>	<b>\$ 2,117,415</b>	<b>\$ 2,346,834</b>
	<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES, FUND PRINCIPAL</b>	<b>\$ 3,461,244</b>
	<b>\$ 3,461,244</b>	<b>\$ 3,450,063</b>

**Financial Statement Footnote  
Statement of Financial Position  
December 31, 2020**

Desert Cross Lutheran Church applied for and was granted relief under the Federal United States CARES ACT of March 28, 2020. The Federal CARES ACT with a PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM (PPP) provision allowed Desert Cross to borrow funds through the SBA (Small Business Administration) to support payroll through the COVID-19 Pandemic period. The Paycheck Protection Program was later modified with revisions on June 3, 2020 (PPPFA). The CARES ACT-PPP funds were processed through Chase Bank on April 15, 2020 as a loan to Desert Cross of \$165,000. The SBA under the PPPSA provides for loan forgiveness provision as long as the participant maintains payroll for a defined period. Desert Cross has maintained payroll throughout the defined period in 2020. Desert Cross has utilized the PPP funds to support payroll and related approved operating expenses in 2020.

Desert Cross in compliance with the CARES ACT SBA guidelines has satisfied the Loan Forgiveness requirements. The SBA through Chase Bank will not begin to accept and process Loan Forgiveness Applications until 2021. Desert Cross is confident the Chase Bank PPP Loan of \$165,000 will be totally forgiven in 2021. The timing issue of the forgiveness process therefore reflects a significant loss in 2020. We are confident the loan will be reflected in 2021 as an Extraordinary Income (Grant) item of \$165,000. The Loan Forgiveness Provision and the timing of the actual forgiveness impacts both years 2020 and 2021 for Desert Cross Lutheran Church.

The largest part of our outreach was \$80,000 in Benevolence to the Grand Canyon Synod and our Mission & Service includes:

Hunger Jars	\$ 7,424
Kyrene Family Resource Center	\$ 6,964
Lutheran Social Services SW	\$ 4,500
Concordia Charter School	\$ 4,024
Lutheran Campus Ministries	\$ 4,000
Grace Pancake Breakfast	\$ 2,100
Service General	\$ 3,506
Covid-19 Front Line Snacks	\$ 764
Pacific Lutheran Seminary	\$ 500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 33,781</b>

In addition to the above, there is an Endowment Fund that was established in June of 2000. This fund was created "...to enhance the mission outreach of Desert Cross apart from the general operations of the congregation." Rhea Fernandes served as Secretary on the Endowment Committee and her report can be found on the following page (page 9). Below is a summary of the fund account activity.

**ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust  
Desert Cross Mission Endowment Fund**

Beginning Balance (Close of Business 12-31-2019)	\$ 521,891
Additions	\$ -
Withdrawals	\$ (20,000)
Reinvested - Fund A	\$ 18,801
Change in Value	\$ 39,485
Ending Balance (Close of Business 12-31-2020)	\$ 560,177

The calendar date of May 2020 saw the conclusion of the RENEW Campaign; a 3-year campaign. Actual gifts received were \$358,000 of the \$375,000 pledged, which equates to 96% of pledges being received—further testament to the generous support of and commitment to Desert Cross Lutheran Church.

**RENEW Campaign**

June 2017 - May 2020

<b>Campaign Goal</b>	<b>\$ 452,000.00</b>
<b>Pledged Amount (83% of Goal)</b>	<b>\$ 374,697.08</b>

<b>RENEW Projects Completed in 2018:</b>	<b>\$ 139,110.00</b>
<b>RENEW Projects Completed in 2018/2019:</b>	<b>\$ 78,649.00</b>
<b>RENEW Projects Completed in 2020:</b>	<b>\$ 36,387.00</b>
<b>Total Completed Projects</b>	<b>\$ 254,146.00</b>

Gifts Available as of 12/31/2020

<b>RENEW Home</b>	<b>RENEW Mission</b>
<b>\$ 94,321.50</b>	<b>\$ 9,608.00</b>

The audio-visual upgrades, begun in 2019, to the Tempe sound booth were completed in February and the final invoice was paid in early March, just before the stay-at-home orders were issued.

I remember thinking at the onset of the shutdown that we were uniquely prepared for what was to come. After all, we had new technology at our disposal, advanced financial

gifts in the form of prepaid rent, PPP funds within the first two weeks of availability, and we had talented staff both new and old that would be able to adjust worship and programs accordingly.

The Spirit is alive and well here at Desert Cross,  
*Douglas W. Bjotvedt*

**Mission Endowment Fund**

The committee received 19 grant requests and approved all. Approvals were submitted to the Church Council for action. Grant payments totaled \$21,500.

Specific Grants:  
Category One-Community Outreach  
(Scholarships and Social Programs)

16 Scholarship Grants for Colleges	\$ 16,000
Eagle Scout Project	\$ 1,500
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Arizona	\$ 2,000
Total	\$ 19,500

<u>Category Three-Desert Cross</u>	
Audio/Video Computer	\$ 2,000
Total Grants	\$ 21,500

The ELCA Endowment Fund-Fund A ended the year with a balance of \$560,177, Mission Investment Checking of \$19,410 and Desert Cross Checking of \$500 for a total of \$580,087 to start 2021.

The Committee looks forward to continuing the “outside the walls” work of Desert Cross. The balances in the Fund ensures that the committee will have resources for 2021 grants. The committee is looking forward to 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Rhea Fernandes*

**President’s Report**

2020 was a year of challenges and discovery for the community of Desert Cross, as well as for all of us individually.

We began the year with a full schedule of service, outreach, ChristCare, and youth group activities and had big

plans for a Mission trip later in the year. That all changed just as we began Lent and preparations for Easter. Instead of our usual Holy Week activities, we joined together in spirit through recorded worship services, a special Weekly Update, and other on-line material as we honored the recommendations of both the State of Arizona and our Synod by suspending our in-person worship.

Pastors Andrea and Doris, as well as our dedicated staff, rose to the challenge and were able to provide us with a worship experience that captured at least some of the magic I know we all feel when we are together in the Sanctuary. As the year progressed, these folks came up with even more imaginative ways to stay connected, with Zoom-Chat-Pray, Shenanigans with Ms. Shannon, High School Night, and the Faith Formation “Playlists” to name a few.

You, the members of Desert Cross, also rose to the challenge by continuing to provide support to the mission of Desert Cross as well as to each other throughout our tight-knit community with prayers, phone calls, and Zoom meetings with each other. Many of our outreach programs continued, some in modified form, throughout this unprecedented time. Through Hunger Jar, donations to Kyrene Resource Center, I-HELP, and even a virtual VBS, among others, we continued our call of Sharing, Loving, and Serving.

Our search for a new Associate Pastor, begun in 2019, continued into 2020. We are grateful for the hard work, patience, and diligence of the Call Committee as well as the prayers of the congregation. Those prayers were answered in late October when Pastor Thadd accepted our call to join us in our mission here in Arizona. That process culminated last month with Pastor Thadd’s formal installation at a Zoom hosted live service and ceremony, something that has become familiar to many of us during this year of pandemic.

Desert Cross has weathered the storm of this pandemic through the past year and we look forward to a year of renewal, celebration, and re-dedication to our call to share God’s love in Word and deed.

In His Service,  
*Stan Fernandes*

## Congregational Meeting Notes

### **Desert Cross Lutheran Church Annual Meeting February 23, 2020 Tempe Sanctuary**

A quorum was established, and Shannon Burns, Council President, welcomed all to the meeting.

The meeting was opened with Pastor Andrea leading us in prayer.

New Business:

**1. Annual Report with Financials** – Shannon Burns shared that the external audit has been completed and there were no major concerns. A summary of the audit can be found in the Annual Report. Doug Bjotvedt then presented the financial report. He reported that we received 96% of what had been pledged for contributions, and 89% of overall income that was expected. We completed 2019 with a net profit of \$11,450.00. As of 12/31/19 there was \$107,911.00 available in the RENEW Home Fund and \$13,001.00 in the RENEW Mission Fund. In 2019 Desert Cross gave \$135,000.00 to Mission and Outreach. Doug also shared information regarding the new lease with Dogs 4 Vets at the Gilbert location. They will be working to build out a suite that is currently unfinished. Dale Martin moved and Allen Ihlefeld seconded that the financial report for 2019 be approved. The motion was passed unanimously.

**2. RENEW Update** – Jessica Robinson shared an update on the RENEW Campaign. To date we have paid out \$250,000.00 towards updates and improvements. The current campaign ends in May. We are working on the final phase of RENEW which is the interior of the Tempe location. This includes paint, flooring, seating, and possibly acoustic panels and updates to the lighting. She then shared three potential options as to how the remainder of the money might be spent. They are working on getting updated quotes from a general contractor and plan to have more precise numbers to present at the next Congregational Meeting so a vote can be taken at that time. The hope is that construction will be done this summer.

**3. Nominating Committee** — Shannon Burns reviewed the Council and Chamber positions that will be open for the next term. Open positions for the next Council include Vice President and Tempe Member-at-Large. There will be

one open position on the Endowment Committee. There will be three open positions on the Gilbert Chamber. Shannon explained the process for forming the Nominating Committee and asked for four nominations from the floor to fill the open slots. Shelley Mardany, Don Pelley, Bob Rose, and Laura Krizan were nominated. Lin Bourgeois moved and Dawn Collins seconded that we elect those that were nominated. The motion passed unanimously. The Nominating Committee will include Paul Fagerman (serving as Past President), Outgoing Council Member Rebekah Doll, and the four Floor Nominations.

The meeting was adjourned and closed with Pastor Doris leading us in prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jennifer Piellucci*  
*Church Council Secretary*

### **Desert Cross Lutheran Church Special Congregational Meeting (Rescheduled from May) October 25, 2020 Zoom Video Meeting**

This Special Congregational Meeting was held via Zoom due to the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. A call-in option was also available to ensure that all voices were heard.

A quorum was established with 100 attendees logged into the Zoom meeting.

Council President Shannon Burns called the meeting to order at 4:04pm and recording of the meeting through Zoom began. She welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained to everyone how the meeting would work and how people could ask questions/make comments.

Pastor Andrea then read a portion of Psalm 46 and opened with prayer.



**1. Financial Update** — Council Treasurer Vince Sciamé shared an update of the financial year through 9/30/2020. Total giving is at \$760,614.00 with total expenses at \$888,570.00 putting us at a loss of (\$127,956.00) for the year thus far. In April 2020 the Church Council authorized Doug Bjotvedt to apply for a PPP loan which we received in the amount of \$165,000.00. This money has been in savings up until this point. Church Council recently approved the Finance Committee's recommendation to utilize these funds with plans for the money to be transferred this week. PPP forgiveness applications are not yet being accepted, but we are working with Chase Bank and will apply for forgiveness as soon as this is possible. The RENEW Campaign was also reviewed. The campaign goal was \$452,000.00 with a pledged amount of \$374,697.08. To date we have completed projects totaling \$254,146.00. Current gifts available as of 9/30/2020 are as follows: RENEW Home \$91,299.00 and RENEW Mission \$9,290.00. As soon as the RENEW Committee can meet again, we will continue to move forward with the plans for updating the interior of the Tempe Sanctuary. An opportunity for questions and comments was provided.

**2. Elections to Church Council, Gilbert Chamber, and Endowment Committee** — Shannon explained that due to COVID-19 this meeting will be treated as the Elections Meeting that is usually held in April. The newly elected positions will begin their terms upon adjournment of the November 2020 Council Meeting and will end in May 2023. Candidate for Vice President: Glenn Tischaefér; Candidates for Congregation Council Member-at-Large: Kathy Diekelman and Bill Kalaf; Candidates for Gilbert Chamber Members: Deb Gabrielson for Mission and Outreach and Rosemary Schlechty for Education; Mission Endowment Committee Member: Andy Webber. There was an opportunity for questions and comments. Voting occurred electronically through a Zoom poll. There was also the option to text Stan Fernandes with your vote. The newly elected positions are as follows: Vice President—Glenn Tischaefér; Congregation Council Member-at-Large—Bill Kalaf; Gilbert Chamber Members—Deb Gabrielson for Mission and Outreach and Rosemary Schlechty for Education; Mission Endowment Committee Member—Andy Webber.

**3. Call of an Associate Pastor** — Tracy Clark (Chair of the Call Committee) introduced the rest of the Call Committee members. The members included Lin Bourgeois, Maegan Jennett, Nancy Zine, Erin Pelley, and Chris Stone. Patric Bjotvedt was also on the committee, but had to end his commitment early due to moving out of town. The process

and timeline were shared with the congregation. The Call Committee together with the Church Council is recommending that we extend the call for Associate Pastor of Desert Cross Lutheran Church to Rev. Thaddeus M. Book. A brief bio was shared. The compensation package was also presented. It was noted that if we vote to extend the call, Pastor Thadd will have 30 days to formally accept or reject the offer in writing to the Bishop. There was an opportunity for questions and comments. Voting occurred electronically through a Zoom poll. There was also the option to text Stan Fernandes with your vote. It was voted that DCLC would like to formally extend the position of Associate Pastor to Pastor Book. If he chooses to accept, the plan is that he would start around the first of the new year. There was a question regarding moving expenses—this is something that is being considered, and we will work on in more detail as the time gets closer.

Thank you to all of the members of the Call Committee as well as outgoing Council and Chamber members. All of your work and dedication is highly appreciated. There was also recognition for Pastor Andrea and the rest of the staff for keeping DCLC going through this pandemic and all the hard work it has taken to convert to a virtual worship experience.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:59pm.

Pastor Andrea closed in prayer. There were special prayers for continued healing and peace for Pastor Doris.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jennifer Piellucci*  
*Church Council Secretary*

**Desert Cross Lutheran Church  
Congregational Budget Meeting  
December 6, 2020  
Zoom Video Meeting**

This Congregational Meeting was held via Zoom due to the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. A call-in option was also available to ensure that all voices were heard.

A quorum was established with approximately 60 attendees.

Council President, Stan Fernandes, called the meeting to order at 4:09pm and recording of the meeting through Zoom began. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained to everyone how the meeting would work and how people could ask questions/make comments.

Pastor Andrea opened with prayer.

Agenda:

- 1) Welcome & Agenda
- 2) Opening Prayer
- 3) 2020 Financial Report
- 4) 2021 Budget Presentation and Vote
- 5) Closing Prayer
- 6) Adjourn

### 1. 2020 Financial Review

Vince Sciamme gave an update for 2020:

The 2020 budget was \$1,353,222.00. As of 11/30/2020: total gifts \$916,500.00; total expenses \$1,068,959.00 with a difference of (\$152,459.00) between gifts and expenses for year. It is believed that the decrease in giving is due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was noted that the \$165,000.00 PPP loan from the SBA is not reflected in the

above numbers. Those funds are currently considered a loan and are expected to be forgiven as a grant in 2021. All of the needed documentation to apply for forgiveness is ready. We are waiting for the bank to begin accepting Applications. RENEW Campaign update: Campaign Goal: \$452,000.00; Pledge amount received: \$374,697.08; RENEW funds already spent: \$254,146.00; Gifts Available as of 11/30/2020: RENEW Home: \$92,898.00 and RENEW Mission: \$9,473.50. There was an opportunity for questions and discussion.

### 2. 2021 Budget Presentation and Vote

Doug explained the projected 2021 budget and showed comparisons to the last 3 years. Expected budget for 2021: \$1,308,780.00. Overall, this is a reduction from previous years. The major differences are a decrease in Programs and Operations, but an increase in Payroll due to the hiring of an Associate Pastor. As of now we have received 153 pledge cards with approximately \$608,429.00 pledged. We are behind on giving compared to the last 3 years, however, expenses are also less due to not meeting in-person and programming being virtual. Other faith contributions are \$67,372.00, meaning we will need this amount to have a zero balance.

Desert Cross Lutheran Church 2021 Budget					
Revenue			Expenses		
Pledges	153	\$ 608,429	Operations	\$	279,100
Prev Pledgers (not received yet)	49	\$ 212,336	Outreach	\$	103,000
Anticipated Non-pledged Giving		\$ 264,814	Programs	\$	104,180
Facility rental revenue		\$ 33,000	Payroll - Pastoral	\$	262,500
Niche		\$ 5,850	Payroll - Salaried	\$	450,000
Anticipated Carry-Over		\$ 116,979	Payroll - Hourly	\$	110,000
Other Faith Contributions		\$ 67,372			
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>\$ 1,308,780</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$ 1,308,780</b>
				<b>2020 Budget</b>	<b>\$ 1,355,222</b>
				<b>2019 Budget</b>	<b>\$ 1,383,304</b>
				<b>2018 Budget</b>	<b>\$ 1,368,502</b>

Patrick Jennett moved and Anna Pelley seconded to approve the 2021 budget as presented. There was an opportunity for questions and discussion. Voting occurred utilizing an online Google form with 58 votes to approve and 2 votes against approval.

Bill Kalaf moved and Don Pelley seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Pastor Andrea lead us all in a closing prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jennifer Piellucci*  
*Church Council Secretary*



### **Stewardship**

The members of the Desert Cross Stewardship Team are John Hughes, Maegan Jennett, Tom Rewolinski, Meg Sanders, and I, Angela Borchers, am the chair.

Like all of our ministries at Desert Cross, it's been a weird year, with having to adapt to new circumstances. The Stewardship Team met on January 21 with grand ideas for a ministry fair that would also feature talent from the congregation. We met again on February 25, but with the stay home orders and campus shutdowns beginning in March, we took a few months off. We started meeting again in July to plan our fall campaign via Zoom. We met on 7/28, 8/19, and 9/28 with email communication between meetings to finalize decisions. After a four week campaign, Commitment Sunday was October 26. We met once more during 2020 on November 28 to look at the results and share feedback on our videos.

Our theme was Beyond Our Walls Together. Since everyone was staying home, we realized we needed to continue to focus on our mission and ministries from behind the walls of our homes. We feel our campaign was successful for the times we are in and are very happy that our giving units increased!

*And let us not grow weary of doing good for in due season we will reap if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9*

Blessings,

*Angela Borchers*

## **MINISTRY REPORTS**

### **Director of Worship and Music Ministries—Tempe**

Greetings in the name of Jesus!

As we look back on 2020, I think we can all attest to the challenges associated with almost every aspect of our lives in light of the global pandemic. Yet, in spite of those challenges, God is still on the throne and ministry continues.

From January until mid-March of 2020, the worship and music ministries of Desert Cross Tempe operated at full strength, providing music to all weekly services, as well as special services. The Sanctuary Choir sang regularly and were in the late stages of preparing a magnificent Easter Cantata, "The Body of Christ" by Pepper Choplin. However, due to the pandemic, we were unable to present it in 2020. Hopefully, we can do so at a later time. Ringing Praise and Ignite Choir also blessed us with their wonderful talent.

In mid-March, as the pandemic necessitated closing the church campuses, I volunteered to take on the responsibility of creating, editing and producing the online worship videos for Desert Cross. It has been a learning experience, but I am grateful for the opportunity to assist in this way. Just before the pandemic hit, we were talking about how we could eventually start an online ministry. Well, as they say, "necessity is the mother of invention." The result has been a great collaboration with Pastor Andrea and the rest of the staff.



Each week, I select music and record my musical portions for each service. Then, the pastors, readers, Michael Lottes, and other musicians send me their recorded portions. From there, I piece it all together, produce the worship service and upload it to YouTube for Saturday premiere. Special thanks to Pastor Andrea for putting the service format together in a very compre-

hensive way that makes my work so much easier. I could not do it without you.

Recently, I added a new feature where those watching can comment live during the video premiere. Online worship videos premiere each Saturday at 5PM. I encourage you to join us at this time and give it a try. In addition, I edit the children's message each week and created stewardship videos for the 2020 stewardship campaign. Presently, we are working on getting our livestream up and running. We have purchased new equipment and are pleased to welcome Malcolm Waldek to the team, who will be instrumental (no pun intended) in making this happen.

2020 saw the installation of our new Sanctuary sound System in Tempe. The result was dramatic, as the music sounded more vibrant, full and well balanced, with a tangible improvement in sound quality. The worship band and Sanctuary Choir sound incredible! We now have the technology to grow this area of ministry to new heights in 2021. Looking ahead to 2021, I look forward to reactivating the worship band and Sanctuary Choir, as health and safety conditions allow.

There are so many people I would like to thank for their contributions to the worship and music ministries at Desert Cross. Christine Soll, you are a great blessing with your leadership of Ringing Praise and Ignite Choir. We can't wait to hear both ensembles again! Joni Van Rossum, you have such an incredible gift. Your steady hand provides a strong foundation for the Sanctuary Choir and traditional worship. A special thanks to Christine and James Soll, Joni Van Rossum, Pam Brown and many other musicians for lending their talents in special music for online worship. Thanks to Shelley Mardany, Jane Yost and many others who assist in the Creative Spaces group to make our Sanctuary look beautiful.

Thank you to all of the musicians in the Saturday and Sunday services for your dedication and perseverance, as we are hopeful for return of in-person worship services in 2021. They include Christine Soll, James Soll, Steve Steffy, Nat Theobald, Mark Wenz, Ryan Bakalar, Rick Carr, Jerry Eden, Mike Mahaney, Dan Meyer, John Paul Stoop, Joni Van Rossum, and Pam Brown. Thank you to everyone in the Sanctuary Choir. You are all so awesome!! I miss all of you so much and can't wait to work with you all again!

Pastor Andrea Cain, thank you for your calm leadership in the midst of a sea of change. You are a gifted encourager and just the ideal person to navigate these waters into

new opportunities in ministry.

Pastor Doris Nolan, thank you for your wise counsel and for going above and beyond the call of duty for Desert Cross

Michael Lottes, thank you for your incredible talent, for your friendship and always being ready to help. You are a joy to work with!

Many thanks to the rest of the staff and Church Council for your support and for everything that you do for Desert Cross.

To the entire congregation, thank you for allowing me to partner with you in ministry. You bless me each and every day and make it all worthwhile. I love you all!

Yours in Christ,

*Daniel Decker*



### **Director of Worship and Music Ministries—Gilbert**

#### **Worship**

Due to the precautions Desert Cross is taking around COVID-19, we have been recording our worship and premiering our worship services on YouTube each week. During Advent, we also had a Midweek Advent worship service.

Our Adult Chancel Choir and Junior Choir have not been meeting due to COVID-19.

#### **PowerPoint Design**

I made PowerPoint slides for each worship service prior to the church closing due to COVID-19. After we suspended in-person, we have moved all of our worship services online. Daniel Decker has taken on the responsibility of editing and publishing our weekly worship services.

#### **Worship Planning**

Each week on Tuesday mornings at 10:00am, we continue to meet online for a Zoom meeting. During this meeting, the Desert Cross staff discusses what is going on in our respective ministry areas. Our worship team meets for



special meetings, when we have special upcoming worship services that need extra attention. Our education team also meets monthly to plan our Playlists. We review our prior month's playlist, work on the current month's playlist through collaboration, discuss and choose the upcoming month's playlist theme, and then select a meeting time for the next month.

Each week, Pastor Andrea sends a draft worship order/bulletin aid. I then format the document and send a rough draft to the applicable persons. After all corrections are made, a final draft is then sent out to the worship team and other staff members who need the information.

In His Service,

*Michael Lottes*

## **Director of Adult Ministries**



### **Stories of Joy**

This was our third year running Stories of Joy. Our blog gathers and promotes Modern Day Gospel Stories. It's designed to be a tool for the people of Desert Cross to share good news stories with our friends and family.

We did a Week of Joy at Easter, and we did a "crossover event" with our Desert Cross Faith Formation website for a Week of Hope at Thanksgiving.

You can sign up to follow the blog at [www.storiesofjoy.org](http://www.storiesofjoy.org) for some good news in your inbox!

### **2020 Stats for Stories of Joy:**

143 Followers

111 Stories Published

1732 Visitors to our Website

4566 Views of our Webpages

36 Different Countries Viewed our Website

The countries with the highest views (after the US) are China, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and Indonesia.



### **Desert Cross Faith Formation Website**

This was our Desert Cross Faith Formation website's second year. Our hope for this project is to provide folks with good tools to study the good news—wherever they are and whenever they have the time. Our tagline is: Exploring Faith. Making Connections.

In response to the pandemic and our inability to gather for education, our Education Team added monthly Playlists to the website. We choose a theme for the month and publish Playlists designed for Children, Youth, and Adults. Folks can explore the Playlists throughout the month at their own pace.

Please sign up to follow the website at [www.dclcfathformation.org](http://www.dclcfathformation.org) to get updates on new posts.

### **2020 Stats for Desert Cross Faith Formation:**

144 Followers

71 Posts

2547 Visitors to our Website

6712 Views of our Webpages

18 Different Countries Viewed our Website

The countries with the highest views (after the US) are China, France, and Finland.

### **55+ Adult Fellowship**

I know the group missed being together for most of 2020. When it's safe to gather again, we will see which events they want to resume and what new events they want to explore. I'm sure they're looking forward to that day!

### **Adult Study**

At the beginning of the year, Pastor Andrea and Pastor Doris offered Adult Forum at both sites with a focus on the texts from the Revised Common Lectionary. Pastor Doris offered The Sermon on the Mount and Social Justice in January. Lola Peterson and I each offered Book Groups early in the year.

I offered a Lenten Staff Study based on our Lenten Devotional book, *Wondrous Love*. That group started in person and ended online.

Once the pandemic started, we shifted to online studies. We promoted a course on Matthew offered by Church-Next. Pastor Andrea and I hosted a film discussion of Just

Mercy via Zoom. Paul Gryniwicz offered a couple of book discussions via Zoom during the summer and fall.

Thank you to the pastors and volunteers for leading studies. Thank you for studying together and learning together.



#### **ChristCare Small Group Ministry**

In January we offered the For<sup>2</sup>Given ChristCare Retreat. The event was very well attended, and Pastor Andrea did a great job leading us in a study of Holy Communion.

Because of the pandemic, our ChristCare Groups have been apart physically for most of the year, but they're staying connected spiritually. THANK YOU for all of the ways the leaders and group members are staying connected. Some meet online via Zoom or Skype. Some communicate via email, text messages, or phone calls.

We all look forward to gathering together safely. It will be a great celebration!

In Joyful Service,

*Denise McClellan*

### **Director of Youth Ministries**

**High School Night**—High School Night has continued this year, in spite of COVID-19, and actually has gone well! We jumped into the Zoom arena pretty quickly - I think by April. We have met almost every week since including over the summer months. Our group varies in numbers, but averages 10 or so at a time and over 18 youth have attended throughout the year.

**Confirmation Grades 7 & 8**—Confirmation was canceled last spring, but we have since started to integrate Confirmation classes into our weekly Jr. High Night curriculum. Two weeks a month we gather to just chat and play games, and the other two nights we focus on content from the Bible and education. We currently have the 6th grade students participate in all meetings as well.

**Jr. High Night**—Jr. High Night met almost weekly since April. We had several new students start attending, and they are very faithful! As you might imagine, growing in a relationship via Zoom can be a challenge, but this group has achieved that! Some of these youth have never met in person, but they are absolutely friends now. I believe they

will one day get to gather in person and an outsider would never know that they only know each other via Zoom.

**Sunday School**—Sunday School was terrific prior to the shutdown but has yet to resume. Mark Sanders and Laurie Selby led the Tempe classes, and I led the Gilbert students.

**Confirmation**—Due to COVID-19, classes were canceled. Pastor Andrea and I discussed changes that we both saw as beneficial moving forward. We typically would have our 10th grade students be Confirmed in October, but we chose to delay this until May of 2021. We also decided to begin Confirming our youth during their 9th grade year and not delaying it until they are sophomores. In order to keep service projects as a priority of the curriculum, we will be integrating service into the coursework during their 7th and 8th grade years. I look forward to working with Pastor Thadd and getting his input on this as well!

**Highlights**—Last January we did get some of our High School students together for a weekend retreat! We had a great time up in Prescott. We joined several other Valley churches for this event. No snow fell on us, but we did enjoy the company, laughter, and growth from our time together.

2020 was not an easy year for any of us, but having the staff at Desert Cross to lean on and navigate these crazy times was a blessing from God. Jesus is still at work, and we are all thankful to be a part of his mission among us.

Peace,

*Chad Diegle*

### **Children's Ministry:**

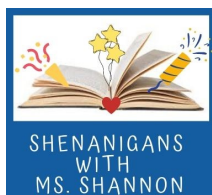
**Sunday School:** DCLC is committed to nurturing our children, youth, and the adults who love them as we discover and experience God and community throughout life's journey. We believe the "passing on of faith" is done in community—there are HUGE benefits to having all generations praying, learning, and growing together. This year came with challenges and changes that none of us expected. I continued to keep in touch with families with a weekly newsletter when the quarantine started. These newsletters contained ideas for faith at home, but also allowed me to check in and help families to still feel connected. When worship was moved on-line, Kristen and I recorded weekly children's messages for families to view

at home. We created faith formation playlists to help families continue to explore faith at home. This included a way to celebrate Lent at home. I sent “create a turkey” stickers to the kids for a fun Thanksgiving contest, and I offered Advent Bags for them to experience the joy of Advent at home. We kicked this off with a fun Zoom event. I am so thankful for the amazing teachers at Desert Cross who share their hearts and time. And even though their time with our Sunday School kids was short this year, they still made a difference! I continued to check in with our teachers weekly as well. Thanks to Kristen Roehling for her partnership in Children’s Ministry. Her presence is a huge blessing, and one positive aspect of the virtual ministry is she can still participate while she is going to school at U of A! Also, thanks to our amazing families for their commitment and participation, even during these crazy times!



**Pre-Confirmation:** The 2nd-3rd graders received Bibles in September. Our 4th-5th graders would have received instruction for *Holy Communion* at a seminar during Lent, but this was postponed due to the pandemic.

**Family Night:** In January we had a Family Night where a speaker came to talk to us about the Ben’s Bells organization. We had a lot of interest and I think we will do more with them in the future when things open up again. Unfortunately, the remainder of our Family Nights had to be canceled due to no gathering.



**Joyful Noises/Parent-Tot:** This outreach program is dear to my heart. I love spending time with these kiddos and their parents. When we were unable to gather in person I created “Shenanigans with Ms. Shannon.” We meet over Zoom, listen to a story, connect, and I offer a fun science or art activity they can repeat at home. These preschoolers are amazing on Zoom. I love that they get to see each other, and it is the highlight of my week!



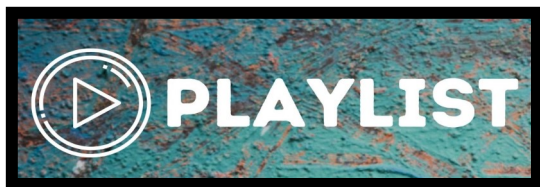
**Kids Connect:** Kristen offers a monthly meeting time in Tempe called Kids Connect. The kids gather for games, crafts, planned activities, and lots of fun. When we were unable to gather, Kristen moved Kids Connect online. She offers a Zoom meeting bi-monthly for the kids to join. She always plans awesome activities, and the kids have fun!

**Vacation Bible School:** Vacation Bible School this past summer (June 2020) was still a success despite being very different. This is such an important ministry for the volunteers and the kids. We were heartbroken to not be able to gather in person, but we did the next best thing and offered an on-line version. Kristen, Ms. Denise Viker, Ashley Viker, and I created videos to add some of the DCLC aspects to an on-line VBS that I ordered. Families were able to pick up a fun bucket of supplies to help them do the games and crafts from their home. We had 70 kids participate in our virtual VBS. 35 were from DCLC, 23 from other churches and 12 who don’t attend a church. We even had 4 join us from out of state! For our service project, families brought snack donations for the Kyrene Resource Center. The KRC was so excited to receive these when I delivered them. I’m happy that the kids were still able to have fun and feel the love of Jesus during a VBS format that we had never done before.



Photos from Virtual VBS submitted by families.

**Service Sundays/Family Events:** Our usual Service and Family Events were cancelled due to no gathering (Transportation Day, Trunk or Treat, Feed My Starving Children, and more). I have continued to incorporate opportunities and ideas for service into my newsletters, playlists, and faith formation site.

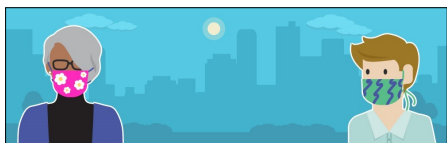


**Faith Formation Website:** This Faith Formation website was such a great tool during these difficult times. We continue to offer monthly articles and resources on this page. But it also allowed us to expand and create our monthly playlists. We know that faith begins in the home, and these resources allow families and kids to explore at their own pace in a “choose your own adventure” format. The playlist is based on a monthly theme and kids and families can pick and choose the activities, prayer, service, books, videos, music, etc that they want to do.

I want to thank the Desert Cross staff, council, congregation, families, and children for riding this difficult year with us. I appreciate your support! Please know you provide the light in my days and I wish you all health and happiness in this next year!

In Faith and Love,

*Shannon Fossett*



### **Parish Nurse**

When I work with nursing students, we talk about pandemics. In the past, it has always been a theoretical discussion with me imparting wise words about how we would follow public health guidelines, quarantine cases, and perform contact tracing. I had NO idea that we would be implementing these strategies in 2020. At the start of the pandemic, I was working with students from Chamberlain University. We did a quick pivot and finished our sessions remotely. I was able to have another student during the early fall when COVID-19 case counts were low.

I appreciate working in partnership with Pastor Andrea during this time of COVID-19. I strove to provide her and fellow staff members with the best information possible around the virus. Each week we discussed community spread including numbers of virus cases, hospitalization rates, and death counts. We reviewed information and recommendations from the ELCA, faith groups, health

leaders, and government agencies. I provided information for our congregation and our website on ways to stay mentally and physically healthy during this time of public health crisis. I led a national Health Ministry Association group as their Vice President, coming together across the country with other people who are committed to faith and health. I served the Dignity Health Center for Faith Health Partnerships as the Field Coordinator, providing leadership to other local faith/health ministry teams.

I met with groups and individuals to create plans to keep them as safe as possible. In summer, I chaired the committee creating strategies for reconvening small groups and worship. I am grateful to Pastor Andrea, Doug Bjotvedt, Daniel Decker, Michael Lottes, Angela Nannenga, Tom Rewolinski, and Nancy Zine for their thoughts and work on this committee. Doug Bjotvedt and I devised strategies to obtain important supplies in a time when the supply chain was disrupted. A big thank you to all who adapted our physical spaces to provide for adequate physical distancing. I appreciated Melissa Needens and the International Minute Press who helped us obtain appropriate COVID-19 signage for our sites in Tempe and Gilbert. I am grateful for Denise McClellan and the ChristCare leaders who implemented unique and safe ways to meet in their small groups.



Our Stephen Ministers continued to care for individuals in creative ways during this time. Some were able to meet by phone while some could only send caring through cards and messages to their hurting people. They are an amazing group! I have been doing preparatory work to process grief after this virus subsides. My husband has noted “everyone has lost something during these times.” I know many of us have been grieving the loss of our in-person community. I deeply appreciate the DCLC family for being willing to stay apart to keep us safe. I miss you more than I can say in words, but I know that we will be able to be physically together in the future. I cannot wait to give you hugs and celebrate the fact that we made it through. Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) “*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.”*”

In grateful service during this unusual time,

*Denise Viker, BSN, RN*



## **Communication Coordinator**

This was quite a year for communication and Desert Cross! January was fairly normal and by the end of the month and into early February we were finalizing some of the advertising plans for the year. I had a Lenten banner designed and ordered for the Gilbert campus that was hung and then taken down a week later. I worked with Shannon to get a banner designed for Transportation Day and was just about to order it when the decision was made to wait. And then March and the pandemic really hit. New information and recommendations were coming out daily, and I was the “means” that Desert Cross had to get all of the information out to the congregation as quickly and in as many ways as possible.

Banners were put up on the homepage of the website, and I put together a page designated to COVID-19 information and community resources. I also created a Spiritual Resources page on the website to host the weekly devotions, virtual worship links and bulletins, and spiritual practice techniques that Pastor Doris put together. I helped get staff members set up on the Desert Cross YouTube channel so that they could begin posting our virtual worship services and children’s messages. Most of this was all in place by March 19.

Next came the email campaigns. Because information was changing rapidly, Pastor Andrea began sending out a Weekly Update to the congregation on Friday evenings. We sent out Worship links on Saturdays. On Mondays, an email went out with the Daily Devotions and several reminders for that week. These were the consistent emails for most of 2020. Naturally, there have been weeks when more than these have gone out, but I do my best to keep in mind that we do not want the congregation getting “spammed” by Desert Cross emails.

Throughout 2020, the Call Committee continued to meet. We reviewed candidates, held interviews, discussed, discerned, and spent a lot of time in prayer. Thankfully, we were already holding interviews via Zoom and the only real hiccup along the way was when we met with a candidate that the entire Call Committee was excited about and wished to plan a visit with. Schedules permitting, this visit was planned for the end of September. It didn’t look exactly the way that any of us had envisioned, but our Associate Pastor candidate was able to visit both the Tempe and Gilbert campuses, meet with Pastor Andrea and staff, and get to spend some time with the Call Committee. All of this was done in as safe a way as possible.

On Reformation Sunday, October 26, Desert Cross participated in a lot of firsts. We held our first in-person worship (with registration, masks, and physical distancing requirements) that was livestreamed on our YouTube channel. There was a lot of communication that went out ahead of this to prepare the congregation for what this would look like. We hosted our first Congregational Meeting via Zoom. It was recorded and polls were used in order to gather votes. The Church Council spent a lot of time planning and preparing for this meeting so that the entire congregation was informed and able to participate. At this meeting, the congregation voted to call Pastor Thadd as our new Associate Pastor. This weekend also served as the culmination of the 2020/2021 Stewardship campaign: Beyond the Walls Together and Commitment Weekend.

In January and February, the Stewardship team met and started the broad planning for what we wanted to accomplish in 2020 with stewardship. It involved a ministry fair that included an emphasis on talents within the congregation. When the pandemic hit, we took a break. In July, I attended the Grand Canyon Synod’s presentation on stewardship and took this information back to the DCLC Stewardship team. From there we hit the ground running, while also being forced to re-think the original plans that we had for this year’s goals. Due to ministering in a virtual world, the campaign was planned around weekly videos exploring ways that Desert Cross was continuing to meet the needs of the congregation, the community, and our world. I designed a theme graphic as well as weekly graphics for this campaign. I also collected all of the photos, graphics, and supplemental material for these videos. Daniel then took all of the pieces and plans that I put together and created the weekly videos to communicate the Stewardship team’s vision for the campaign. I appreciate working with the Stewardship team each year and experiencing their creativity.

In addition to what has been mentioned above, Pastor Andrea was approached by a member of the congregation who was interested in helping Desert Cross pursue a new website. She connected me with Chris Stone, and he was a huge help in narrowing down the website provider that would meet the needs of Desert Cross. After his initial research, he shared his findings with Pastor Andrea and me, and we all agreed that we would move forward with Tithe.ly. We signed up in September, and I began working first on getting the online giving portion of their services set up. I then set to work on the website. It has been a much slower process than I originally anticipated, mostly because Desert Cross has so many ministry opportunities

and we have continued to adapt those ministries during the pandemic. At several times throughout the fall, I was hopeful for a launch but wasn't able to make it happen. It is a project (along with the Church App) that I am very hopeful will come to fruition shortly into 2021.

Throughout this report, I have touched on the big tasks from 2020. There were always smaller projects or communications happening on the side. Each month I published a newsletter. Most weeks, I have had almost daily posts on Facebook. Since October, I have been maintaining both our current website as well as the one under construction. We had several issues in 2020 with members of our congregation (of a concerning number) not receiving email communication from Desert Cross and in a time when that is our way to connect with them, each instance was a pressing issue that needed resolving. I have done my best to support all of the ministries that Desert Cross has continued to offer or create during the pandemic.

It has certainly been a year, and I am so grateful for this community and the Desert Cross staff. It has been a pleasure working with Pastor Andrea as she has led us through all of the uncertainties that this year has brought. God is good! We will continue to do all that we can to live out the mission of sharing Christ's love with the world. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of it all!

In His Service,

*Maegan Jennett*



### **Gilbert Chamber**

Deb Christiansen  
 Deb Gabrielson  
 John Hughes  
 Patrick Jennett\*  
 Susan Johnston  
 Angela Nannenga\*  
 Rosemary Schletchy  
 Nancy Zine

\*Church Council Members

## **Gilbert Campus Chamber Reports**

### **Communications**

The Gilbert Chamber meets on the second Tuesday of each month. During 2020, three Chamber members completed their terms, and three new members were accepted. Deb Gabrielson is the new Mission and Outreach coordinator replacing Angie Stone, who completed her 3+ years of service. Rosemary Schlechty is the new Education representative replacing Laura Krizan, who completed her 3+ years of service. Nancy Zine is the new Worship representative replacing Susan Carroll. Kelly Kaiser Borning also came on in the Communications position at the start of 2020. The Gilbert Chamber participated with I-HELP during the month of September by providing dinner and breakfast to the group. The Gilbert Chamber has been meeting virtually on Zoom since April and was meeting at the Gilbert campus during the first three months of the year.

*Kelly Kaiser Borning*

### **Finance and Stewardship**

Our focus as the Gilbert Campus Finance and Stewardship Team has been to promote and communicate BEYOND THE WALLS TOGETHER.

Our Stewardship focus throughout our COVID Pandemic has shifted toward technology and the virtual environment. Our Community of Faith at Desert Cross has been challenged with Spiritual, Emotional, and Financial issues. Our Faith in Action structure at Desert Cross has responded and adjusted in a very positive and proactive way. We continue to make adjustments and anticipate the virtual environment well into 2021. The Stewardship program BEYOND THE WALLS TOGETHER was successfully initiated in late September and continuing through October. The program via virtual presentations to our Congregation evolved to our Commitment Weekend on October 24/25. The virtual program was presented through weekly presentations as follows:

- BEYOND THE CHURCH WALLS AND INTO OUR HOMES
- BEYOND THE CHURCH WALLS AND INTO OUR COMMUNITIES
- BEYOND THE CHURCH WALLS AND INTO OUR WORLD

Our Stewardship program yielded several positive responses relating to our Financial Commitments into 2021.

The COVID Pandemic has dramatically impacted the Financial support of Desert Cross throughout 2020. Our entire National United States Economy was dramatically forced into a recession in the second quarter of 2020. Desert Cross was very proactive through efforts of the Finance Committee and Church Council coordinating through the Federal CARES ACT for PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM (PPP). The PPP was implemented on March 28, 2020. Desert Cross implemented several significant steps and responses. Desert Cross implemented a maintaining of Payroll and Position throughout the Pandemic. In addition, Desert Cross through the Federal SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION and Chase Bank initiated an application to receive operating funds and a forgivable loan (Chase-SBA) to support Payroll through the Pandemic.

The CARES ACT funds represented \$165,000. The CARES loan funds have been utilized in 2020. Desert Cross has initiated the steps to apply for loan forgiveness in 2021. We believe firmly the loan will be forgiven. When we evaluate the Financial condition of Desert Cross for the year ended December 31, 2020, the PPP Loan will provide Financial strength for Desert Cross as we go forward into 2021 and beyond.

The Finance and Stewardship Team of the Gilbert Campus will continue our focus forward into 2021 through Communication of our needs BEYOND THE WALLS TOGETHER—Financially. We continue to meet and communicate virtually. Desert Cross has implemented virtual giving methods through our website and all communication links.

The Gilbert Campus Giving/Offering Metrics continue to improve. The Offering for Gilbert in 2020 was \$194,957.24 compared to \$192,014.22 (increase of +\$2,943.02, a +1.53%). We look forward to a positive growth in 2021. Our expense evaluation at the Gilbert Campus experienced a +3% growth inline with our historic GAP CHART Metrics.

The Finance and Stewardship Team for the Gilbert Campus is represented by Deb Gabrielson, Maegan Jennett, Sharon Lewis, and Jim Moore. John Hughes is the Team-Chamber representative. We are always interested and focused on expanding our Team. Please contact us.

*John Hughes*

## Worship

The mission of Worship is to provide sustaining support for worship activities of Desert Cross Lutheran Church at the Gilbert campus, primarily through volunteer efforts. The vision is to build community through service, which also benefits our greater community.

Worship volunteer roles include Altar Guild, Bread Baking, making coffee, Ushers, Scripture Readers, Communion Assistants, Hospitality, and Clean Up/Lock Up. Recruiting for volunteers is done formally with stewardship surveys and informally by an individual letting the scheduler know.

Families are encouraged to take at least one turn in providing food for hospitality. Scheduling worship assistants and administrative support for services in a volunteer role that was performed by Sherry Branham. In October 2020, Sharynn Jennings accepted to become our Worship Assistant Coordinator, since Sherry's plans changed. Thank you goes out to Sherry Branham, Dana Hargis who continues as Altar Guild Chair, and to our communion bread bakers, Betsy Moore and Kathy Hughes.

A special thank you to Susan Carroll, our first Worship Chamber Chairperson. Susan has been a tremendous asset to the DCLC Gilbert community. Her establishing worship assistant guidelines continue to make the worship experience run smoothly.

I assumed Susan Carroll's role in June 2020.

Due to COVID-19, in-person worship and activities came to a halt on March 15. Since that time, worship has been conducted over YouTube. In September, a group, led by Parish Nurse, Denise Viker, met over Zoom to discuss what actions needed to be taken in order that in-person worship could safely resume. One in-person worship service occurred before the COVID-19 numbers began to increase. YouTube worship continued throughout the remainder of the year.

In September, the donation of a votive candlestand and picture were given to enhance the worship space in Gilbert.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nancy Zine*

## Education

The past year in Sunday Education at the Gilbert campus has consisted mostly of online education opportunities. Prior to the closure of in person church due to COVID-19, the Sunday Education program took an exciting path. The Kindergarten to 6th grade kids engaged in a Vacation Bible School format of education. They had station type activities based around a Biblical theme. The preschool kids stayed in a traditional setting for Sunday school, with two teachers focusing on traditional Bible stories. All of the Sunday School kids started out with music and a Bible reading prior to disbanding to the Sunday Education classes.

*Rosemary Schlechty*

## Hospitality

For Valentine's Day in February of 2020, the Hospitality team did an Arts and Crafts in the Fellowship Hall at the Desert Cross Gilbert campus. We started to make plans for an event for Easter, but it was canceled because of COVID-19. In the month of November 2020, the Hospitality team sent Christmas cards to the Gilbert worshipping community.

*Deb Christiansen*

## Facilities

This year's annual report related to the Gilbert facilities mostly has to do with the landscaper, Arturo. He has done a wonderful job in keeping our campus nice and landscaped as well as cutting up trees and hauling them away. He had to cut and haul away down trees in January, May, and August. Arturo re-seeded the grass in October. He also had to fix leaks at the main box and the sprinkler lines.

We had to have the plumber, a Gilbert attendee named Ryan, come in and replace the water unit in the men's and women's bathrooms. There was also an issue with locking a couple of the doors this last year as well.

Thanks,

*Susan Johnston*

## Mission and Outreach

First a word of thank you to the congregation for their generous donations of money and time throughout 2020. The Outreach Ministry is a group that reaches out to serve the needs of others with emphasis on serving the local community. Even though it was an unusual year due to the pandemic, Angie and her team were able to make many contributions to groups within the Gilbert community. Unfortunately, some of the activities that were planned needed to be canceled due to public gathering restrictions.

January included a blood drive and restocking school supplies.

Souper Bowl Special Hunger Jar and food collection during the month of February benefited the Kyrene Resource Center.



The group was able to incorporate some work with the Starbright House of Hope in Gilbert, a safe haven for children who suffer from abuse, however other projects needed to be curtailed when the pandemic hit.

Back-to-School collections were coordinated as well as a blanket and jacket drive.

In December, the Angel Tree collection was modified to provide gift cards, rather than the traditional angel tree ornament, and use the gift cards to buy sweatshirts. \$500 was raised to buy sweatshirts for the students of Concor dia Charter School.

The Outreach team is looking forward to 2021 to continue, and at times, rework based on COVID-19 risks, our programs that contribute to needs in our community. We also look forward to finding new ways we can serve others in our outreach ministry.

As the new committee chairperson, I would love your input. If you have a heart for service, please reach out to me at [debgabrielson@gmail.com](mailto:debgabrielson@gmail.com) or 480-628-1736.

Blessing,

*Deb Gabrielson*

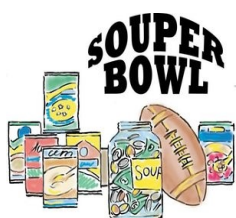


## Tempe Community Outreach Ministry

The Community Outreach Ministry is a group that reaches out to serve the needs of others with emphasis on the local community. The ministry achieves its goals through the efforts of volunteers who give of their time and talent, along with the generosity of the congregation. This group is responsible for monthly collection of donations to help those in need.

The Outreach Program for 2020 was established and approved, committee members were preparing for the projects and months that the project drive would take place.

The blood drive in January took place with 18 donations. Contributions for Restock School Supplies were given for Step Up School in January, also.



In February the project was the Souper Bowl with collections of 371 pounds of food and \$772.00 for Kyrene Resource Center. It is fun to observe which team receives the most contributions in the Hunger Jar. Invariably a third team receives a few contributions also!

The first weeks in March many donations for the Baby Box Program were received. THEN COVID-19 HIT! Thanks to a gift card from Thrivent Financial more items could be collected. Overall, 185 items were collected and delivered to DCS, and parents and babies received these items.

In April we have a used purse drive through Shoebox Ministries for women in shelters. A few purses, scarves, and sundry items were delivered to the ministry.

The church campus was shut down and staff were working from home in April. It became most difficult to continue many of the project collections. But members were anxious to contribute in some way, so a process for giving online to the Hunger Jar was developed and most of the collections were made through that process.



Two additional blood drives were conducted in 2020. A combined total of 44 donations were completed on site.

Summer projects were funded by contributions to the Hunger Jar online. Often there is a great need for water

at Grace Lutheran Church, but the need for food and other essentials for the homeless was so great this year, an adjustment to the program included curb side respite because of COVID restrictions. We were able to contribute \$1,536.00 to that need.

\$500.00 in gift cards was given to the Kyrene Resource Center in August for supplementing their personal care inventory.

The coat and blanket project in September provided a good contribution of items to Paz de Cristo. Contribution to the Hunger Jar provided \$1,570.00 in gift cards for Kyrene Resource Center to help with the many needs their population was experiencing.



The normal process for our November Be Thankful Food Drive was not possible, and again, the opportunity to contribute to the Hunger Jar was given. We were able to provide \$2,300.00 to the Kyrene Resource Center to buy food stuffs for the population they serve.



The Angel Tree has become an annual project during the Advent and Christmas season at Desert Cross. Providing gifts for the families at the Kyrene Resource Center continued this year, but in a different format. Through your generous gifts 121 children, from 20 families including the refugee families, each received a \$25.00 gift card from Target or Walmart prior to Christmas.

A big thank you to June Bowman for her assistance and liaison with different agencies involved. Thank you, also, to Doug Bjotvedt for assisting with the logistics of the financial aspects involved. And, thank you to the Committee members for their willingness to assist in various ways as necessary.

A "thank you" is not sufficient for the contributions of gift cards and money during the pandemic. You are a special group of people who care and follow up in various forms and means of contributing to the needs in our community.

Blessings,

*Lola Peterson*

## I-HELP

Despite the upheaval of 2020, I-HELP continued strong, and we served this ministry every month but one. Chandler I-HELP (Interfaith Homeless Lodging Program), sponsored by AZCEND, is a program that supports those who are homeless and are working toward self-sufficiency. Normally, once a month we open our doors to serve dinner to an average of 25 homeless guests. We provide showers and a safe place for our guests to rest and sleep, and each morning we say good bye with a hot cup of coffee and a sack lunch. However, most of 2020 we were unable to support this program on campus, and the I-HELP guests were housed at one church campus from March-December. We provided a hot dinner, breakfast, and sack lunches for the following day.

The I-HELP program would not run without the help of many volunteers who each month have continued to provide meals. Thank you to the ChristCare groups, Church Council members, choirs, and groups of friends who get together to serve. This ministry would not run without YOU.

If you'd like more information or are interested in serving, please contact us. We thank DCLC for supporting this ministry.

Blessings,

*Glenn Tischaefer and Claudia Huss*



## Memorial Garden/Columbarium

The Memorial Garden/Columbarium was completed in 2009. It was established as part of our ministry that begins with baptism and continues to the end of life. It is available to members and associated family members. Provision was also made for inurement because of a serious financial need.

Two niches were purchased in 2020, making a total of 63 niches purchased. There is room in each niche for two urns.

Maintenance of the fountain took place in October for the one Sunday of worship. New materials for the twice yearly maintenance are being researched.

Projects for 2021 include:

- Replacement of the dead trees. This is a result of the extreme heat during the summer and breakdown of the watering system.
- Replacement of the watering system.
- Improvement of the lighting on the garden.

You are encouraged to consider purchasing a niche as you contemplate the end of life planning. The placing of an urn at the completion of a Celebration of Life service is a special time for the family and friends. You are also encouraged to take the time to sit and pray and meditate from time to time.

For the Oversight Team,

*Lola Peterson*

## NOTES

