

# THE WINDOW

Windsor Heights Lutheran Church ~ 1240 66th St. Windsor Heights, IA 50324

## WHLC Staff:

### Rev. Chris Olkiewicz

Lead Pastor

### Rev. Robin Coughenower

Associate Pastor

### Zach Meyer

Director of Youth and Family  
Ministry/Congregational  
Life Coordinator

### Heidi Hennig

Office Manager

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Earlier this morning I read an article with some encouraging news about the pandemic. The number of nursing home deaths due to Covid-19 has dropped precipitously in recent weeks. The only possible explanation is the effectiveness of vaccines, as long-term care residents were among the very first to be vaccinated. This is remarkably good news!

The other news item I read this morning is less encouraging. The overall case load, which had been declining since November highs, looks to be on the rise again. The most likely explanation is the spread of new, more contagious variants.

We find ourselves at a moment of great promise with regard to vaccines and great urgency in the need to remain vigilant. For these reasons, the Health Advisory Task Force, at its February 16 meeting, decided to offer the following advice to the congregation:

Dear Fellow WHLC Members,

The WHLC Health Advisory Task Force has met at least monthly during the pandemic. We have offered recommendations to Pastor Chris, Pastor Robin, and the church council about how to protect our members and staff during this difficult time. We see some "light at the end of the tunnel" as more people become eligible for the vaccine.

We realize that there are differing opinions about vaccines, but we are unanimous that every person who is eligible should receive the vaccine. This is not only to protect you, but also your family, your church family, and the community at large. It goes without saying that we need to continue to have safe practices, including social distancing, hand washing, and masks for the foreseeable future.

We also recommend that our congregation continue to follow the guidelines we set regarding the number of people who can gather and safety protocols to be followed. Please stay safe.

Lovingly,

WHLC Health Advisory Task Force — Deb Goss, Harriet Lewis, John Reed, Ann Rowland, Kent Thieman, Marilyn Warming, Joel Waymire

I am grateful for the thoughtful and conscientious guidance of the task force for the past year. As many of you will recognize, they represent a real brain trust of experience from various healthcare fields. Please thank them as you have opportunity.

In light of their recommendation, we will continue restricting in-person gatherings indoors to 10-15 people. This includes three opportunities to receive communion every week, and I encourage you to sign up to do so on the church website. Staff members will continue to work primarily from home, with one of us in the office every day to receive the mail, check for voicemail messages, etc. Remember that there are many ways to reach us.

My wife, Beth, who is a teacher, will receive her second Covid vaccine on March 1. I plan to be vaccinated as soon as I am eligible (no news yet on when that might be). I also encourage you to receive the vaccine as soon as you are able. The vaccines are proven to be safe and effective, and I cannot come up with one good reason not to receive it myself (though you should consult with your healthcare provider if you have questions about the safety of being vaccinated yourself).

I will be vaccinated not primarily for my own health, though I do value the vaccine's potential for keeping me well. I will be vaccinated mostly to do my part in protecting the health of the community, because once I am vaccinated, I am much less likely to make others sick. Like wearing a mask every time I leave home and practicing other mitigation strategies (even though I'm tired of *all* of them!), I see being vaccinated against Covid as an act of love for my neighbor.

Martin Luther lived during a time when the plague was ravaging Europe. Of Christians' responsibility to conduct themselves with concern for the welfare of others, Luther said, "It is even more shameful for a person to pay no heed to his own body and to fail to protect it against the plague ... and then to infect and poison others who might have remained alive ... He is thus responsible before God for his neighbor's death." We are, indeed, in this together, and that means taking responsibility not only for ourselves but for our neighbor's health.

It has been a long, difficult year, but it has also been a year of grace. I urge you to watch an excellent video made by our own Zach Meyer that reflects on our life together in Covid times. It's available both on the church website and our Facebook page. I think you'll be moved when you see the many ways that God has sustained us through these months. And I encourage you to reflect on how you have experienced God's grace along this lonely and perilous path — and to give thanks.

Spring is on the way. Easter will come! Will we be able to worship in person this Holy Week? Maybe outdoors in some way . . . ? Stay tuned. That is our mantra. Stay hopeful. That's the only way to live.

Be at peace. Christ is with us.

Pastor Chris





# February Council Update



WHLC Council Meeting February 22, 2021

Your WHLC met online with Halley Ryherd calling the meeting to order at 6:34 pm. Suzanne Nelson shared devotions related to Black History month and a prayer by Abraham Lincoln.

The agenda was approved. The Secretary's Report of the minutes of the January minutes was approved.

Duane Danielson provided the Treasurers Report. January was a smaller month for offerings due in part to the last Sunday's offerings falling into the month of February. Expenses were in line with budget with a quarterly insurance payment and some additional costs for snow removal adding to extra expenses for the month. Council will keep an eye on income in the coming months but there is no cause for concern at this time. One CD matured and was renewed.

Council was reminded of the personal care kit initiative during Lent and was encouraged to support it.

Pastor Robin shared her report. She included information sent to the synod on attendance and membership. It was different this year in the they asked for in person and online attendance. Additional information on salary, benefits, and other ministerial and educational expense are also provided.

Pastor Chris reported that the Easter Seals had reached out about small groups using our facility. He was going to get more information before any decision would be made. He shared his thoughts on re-integration of the congregation as we move toward meeting in person again. How do we resume our community partnerships and how can we reflect and share our thoughts on the future after going through the wilderness of the pandemic? We need to talk about what has changed (i.e. online worship is likely here to stay) and what won't. Council agreed to spend time on this topic at the next council meeting in March. The last year has taken a toll on everyone and our pastors are no exception.

The Health Advisory team met and decided to continue as-is for the coming weeks. Small groups are now meeting at the church. Small group communion has resumed and small numbers attending service on Sunday (10-15 total) allows for more participation in the worship service. The team is crafting a message to encourage members to get vaccinated.

Ryherd shared that she is collecting information from Wayne Barrett regarding re-striping the parking lot in the spring.

Ryherd led a conversation about committee assignments for council members in the coming year. Rather than having the current committee structure with liaisons, we may move to more task forces with specific purposes and timeframes. Some standing committees will need to stay in place. This will require more discussion in smaller groups. We also want to be sensitive to various levels of anxiety from members in re-integration. Outreach and re-connections were brought up and encouraged. WHLC needs to leverage our strengths in being inclusive and welcoming. Ryherd is going to have one on one conversations with each council members in the next month to gather feedback and thoughts ahead of the next council meeting.

Summer activity planning has begun for Vacation Bible School and a summer camp for Heartland Youth choir. Plans are flexible depending on the virus situation as we move through the coming months.

The next council meeting will be March 22, 2021. Ambrosion agreed to provide devotions.

Pastor Chris provided a closing Reflection focused on the loss of over 500,000 lives to date due to COVID-19. He shared a verse from Isaiah and John before closing with a prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

# Lutheran World Relief

## PERSONAL CARE KITS

Often, when natural disasters strike or when war drives families from their homes, our hearts ache with compassion, but we don't know how to help. Making Lutheran World Relief Kits is a simple, fun and tangible way to offer comfort to those suffering and express love to our neighbors in need.

LWR Kits are specifically designed to help people coping with poverty, disaster, conflict and more. Whether a kit helps someone to maintain good hygiene, care well for a newborn baby, keep education going during a crisis or learn a new vocation, LWR Kits provide dignity and hope in the direst situations.

During the Lenten season we are asking you to complete a Personal Care Kit for LWR. WHLC has been very generous in the drive-by projects this past year and our goal for this project is 150 kits!

What you need to complete a kit:

- 1 lightweight colored bath towel
- 2 bars of soap in package, no more than 9 oz.
- 1 adult toothbrush in the package
- 1 sturdy comb, out of the package
- 1 nail clipper with or with out file, out of the package



If you purchase a multipack of toothbrushes, then place a single toothbrush in an envelope.

Follow the directions in the video to wrap your kit:

<https://www.facebook.com/windsorheightslutheran/videos/727705381227659>

Donations will be accepted if you feel uncomfortable going out to purchase the items for the kit. Checks can be made out to WHLC and designated to LWR kits. So far, 70 kits have been assembled from the generous donations from WHLC members! Assembled kits have also been dropped off at church. We are halfway to our goal!

Sometime around Palm Sunday, March 28, we will set up a time for the kits to be dropped off at church. Thank you for making a Personal Care Kit for LWR.

Please contact Linda Anderson with any questions at 515-491-9242 or

[landy12450@aol.com](mailto:landy12450@aol.com).



# WHLC News & Notes

## National Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month



I praise you, for I am  
fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Psalm 139:14, NRSV

March is National Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. There are more than 6.5 million people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the United States. During the pandemic, they've worked to stay connected with their communities.

Like everyone else, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities want to feel connected with others. Barriers like transportation needs, communication differences and limited support systems sometimes make it hard for them. Your helping hand can be day-changing for someone with a disability – and for you, too. March is National Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

Jesus's miracle multiplying the loaves and fishes to feed thousands proves there's always room for one more at the table. During March, National Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, learn how you can help make sure there's always room for people with disabilities in our community.

The Kingdom of God is not just a future reality; we shape it every day. Standing with the poor, with the stranger, with those who are different – each of those actions builds the kingdom. It is both humbling and rewarding. People with disabilities long to feel connected to their communities and you can make it happen. To find out how, visit <https://www.mosaicinfo.org/get-involved/>.



**The Mary Circle will meet in Room 127 on Thursday, March 11, at 5:30 p.m. Social distancing will be practiced and masks will be worn.**

## Lenten Devotionals



**Daily Reflections for Lent can be picked up in the Free Little Library.**

# Youth & Family News

ZACH MEYER

## A Word on Camperships!

This is the time every year when we hear about summer church camps for our students to partake in. Sadly, COVID delayed/canceled most camps last summer, and we were not able to assist in sending any kids to camp. This was such a bummer as, given how much students enjoyed the retreat we went on, we were hoping to set up ways for students to enjoy more church camp experiences over the summer. Our plans for last year sadly were not able to happen, but we have some exciting news regarding camps this year!

In the past, WHLC offered a \$50.00 campership to help pay for students to attend a church camp/retreat. After last summer's pause, most of Iowa's church camps are returning this summer, all closely following safety regulations to ensure kids have a safe, fun and in-person camp experience. As a way of returning to some normalcy, and to act as a form of COVID recovery, staff has decided that, for this year, we have decided to raise the coverage of our campership from \$50.00 per student to \$100.00 per student who attend church camps this summer!

We must be careful to note that we do not have enough money budgeted to do this every year from now on. However, given the circumstances of COVID, we're happy to raise the coverage of the camperships this year to help give kids that authentic camp experience! As for how the camperships go into the payment method, that is all up to how the camp wants to handle it. We are happy to be flexible to whatever process they prefer to have the campership help cover the cost for each student! If you have any questions about the camperships, or want to know where you can get more information about the camps available this summer, please feel free to contact Zach at [zach@whlc.org](mailto:zach@whlc.org)!

## A Word on VBS

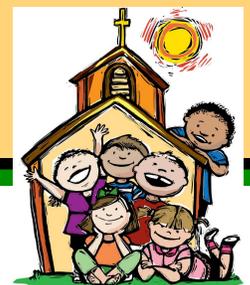
Much like summer camps, VBS was sadly one event we had to pause last year due to COVID. However, we are happy to say that this year we plan to bring it back! Of course, returning to our regular full-length day camp VBS in its exact same structure and size likely won't be an option. We'll have to do several things differently this year to make sure that we can offer a meaningful in-person experience for the students, all while following proper guidelines.

As of this moment, we don't have an official date or one strict outline for VBS: however there is a reason for this. Much of what we'll be able to offer for VBS will depend on the situation of COVID in Polk County when we reach June, July & August. Given what schools have been able to achieve and do this semester, we have a better idea of what we will & won't be able to do safely with the kids! Because we can't fully predict what COVID will be like this summer, we are coming up with multiple plans to meet/fit into whatever situation we face. We're committed to looking at every angle to make a meaningful and safe experience!

So what can we say about VBS at this point? While we don't have any immediate details at this time, here are some things you can expect to be woven into our plans for VBS this summer:

- We'll place more priority on smaller groups going on various rotations throughout the space we are using.
- Masks & social distancing will still be used to help ensure students follow safety protocols inside the building.
- We can't offer our usual communal-style lunch, but we are considering options to make sure kids get individual & prepackaged food/treats/snacks they can eat outside during their time at VBS.
- We'll explore the possibility of using large spaces of the church (Parish Hall or the Elm tree) for group opening & closings each day.
- We're exploring half day camp schedules if our usual full-day camps aren't an option.
- Music will incorporate dance/instruments to get kids involved if large group singing isn't possible at the time.

We'll continue to share more information as a clearer picture comes into place these next few months. If you have any questions about VBS, have any ideas for it this summer, or would like to contribute to the planning of this awesome event, please contact Zach! We'd be happy to hear your questions and your feedback. We're looking forward to what will hopefully be a wonderful VBS experience this summer for everyone!





### **A Word on the Youth Gathering**

With everything going on this past crazy year, we haven't had a chance to get around to arguably our biggest trip of the season: The National Youth Gathering! Prior to COVID, that would have been this summer, and by now we'd have been deep in the logistical planning for our WHLC group. As many of you have probably heard, the Gathering was shifted from this upcoming summer to the summer of 2022, and is set to take place in Minneapolis.

While this event is still over a year away, the Gathering's Planning Team recently released some updates to their process for next summer's event. Any student who is in 8th-12th grade at the time of initial registration (Fall 2021) is eligible to attend the event! This is also a wonderful opportunity for adult volunteers, including parents, to attend as well! If your student is interested in going to the gathering or you're interested in joining as an adult volunteer, I really encourage you to check out the Gathering homepage on the ELCA's website. They've uploaded a helpful Q&A covering many questions facing the 2022 gathering, including COVID protocols, registration, safety policies and more! [To visit the page simply click this link!](#)

The Gathering Team has promised to give another update in the summer, and hopefully by then we'll have a better idea of the overall plan. Should the situation keep progressing as it is now, we'll begin preparing in Fall to get our group prepared for the event. This will include fundraisers for the gathering, group meetings, and planning out our travel logistics for the event. It is important to remember that, like everything else, all of this is subject to change based on the situation of COVID, and the ELCA is taking the utmost care to do whatever is safest and healthiest for everyone! We're hopeful, however, that by the summer of 2022 we'll be able to get a great group together to experience an awesome Gathering! If you have any questions about the gathering, please contact Zach!



# TREASURER'S REPORT

Below is a brief summary of the results for the General Fund followed by Special Offerings:

	January, 2021		Year-to-Date		2020 Y_T_D
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
General Offering	34,125	41,925	34,125	41,925	44,949
Other General Fund Income	190	532	190	532	652
General Fund Income	34,315	42,457	34,315	42,457	45,601
General Fund Expense	44,589	42,425	44,589	42,425	41,778
General Fund Net Income	(10,274)	32	(10,274)	32	3,823
Special Offering Income	115	-	115	-	1,060
Special Offering Expense	75	-	75	-	285
Special Offering Net Income	40	-	40	-	775
Total Net Income	(10,234)	32	(10,234)	32	4,598

January 2021 General Offering got off to a slow start. General Offerings were \$7,800 below 1/12 of the annual budget. Based upon 2018 – 2020 giving patterns (attempts to neutralize months with 5 Sundays and when holidays occur) expected General Fund Income should have been around \$47,345 versus actual January 2020 General Fund Income of \$34,315 resulting in a negative variance of \$13,030 or only 72.5% of expected.

January 2020 General Fund Expenses were \$2,164 over budget. Most Expense variance is from timing differences for property insurance premium (transitioning to new carrier with quarterly premium payment) and NON-ELCA benevolence disbursements paid quarterly. Snow Removal expenses were also over budget. Other expense variances are small by comparison.

Despite these unfortunate results our General Fund Working Capital remains strong.

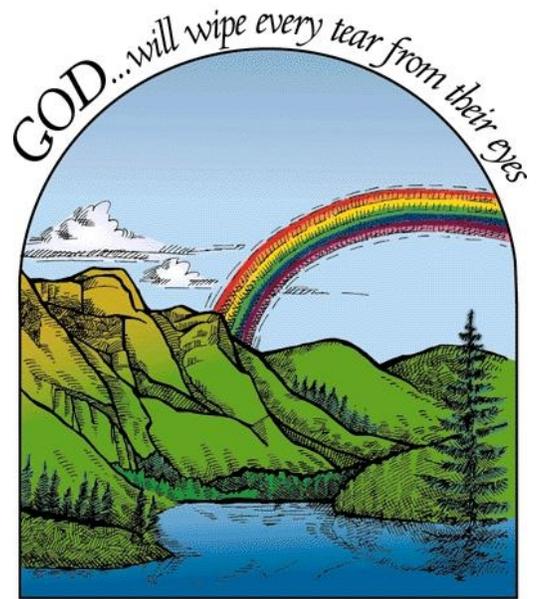
Thank you for your generous offerings.

Duane Danielson, Treasurer





*Sympathy to  
the family of  
Sue Burt, who  
died on  
Tuesday,  
February 23.*

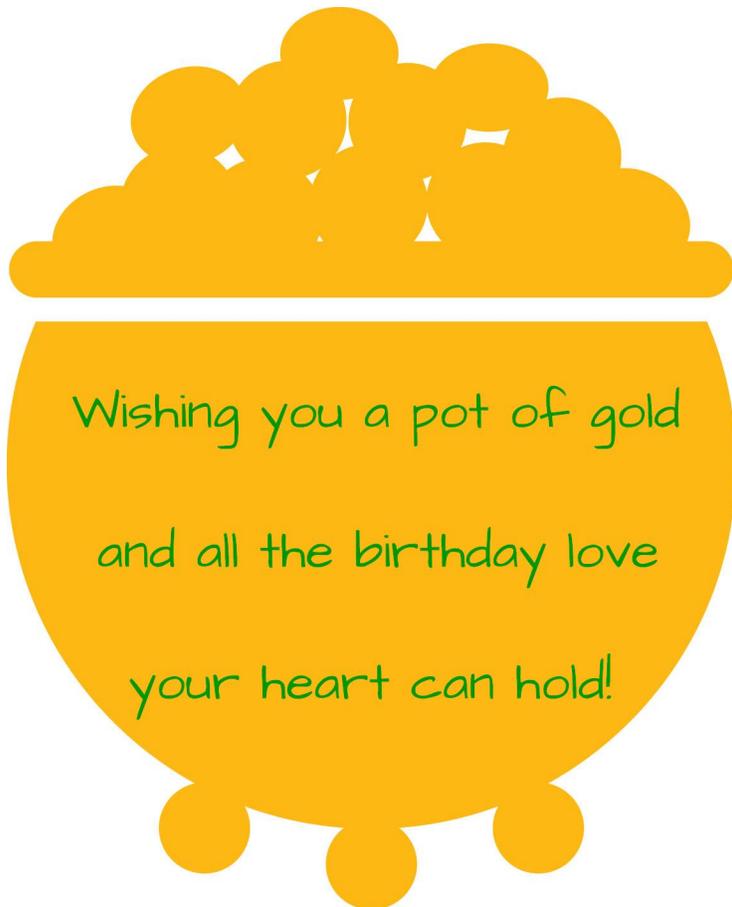


*There will be no more death or  
mourning or crying or pain.*

Revelation 21:4



Happy  
BIRTHDAY  
to  
You!



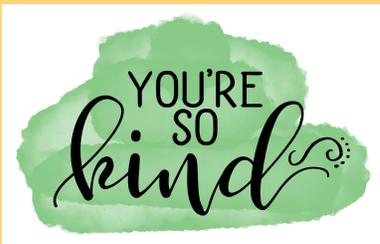
- 1 Bonnie Hunefeld, Emily Roose
- 2 Naomi Rowland
- 4 Scott Magnani, Travis Reinders
- 5 Lynn Prim
- 8 William Lewis, Dave Logan,  
Lily Nelson
- 10 Linda Rye
- 11 Margaret Hoffmann, Amy Morris
- 12 Erik Carlson
- 13 Sally Benson, Tony Dahlman
- 15 Tim Schneckloth
- 16 William McGowan, Mary Wegner
- 17 Cash Hennig
- 18 Tricia Richards
- 20 Cindy Petersen, Paul Rye
- 21 Alexis Eakins
- 22 Karen George
- 25 Jordan Eakins
- 26 Lori Nicolet, Chris Olkiewicz
- 30 Melissa Krumm
- 31 Ron Stoen

Thank You!  
THANK YOU!



To my WHLC family,  
Thank you for your caring concern through my brother Howard's illness and death due to Covid 19. I am so appreciative of your prayers, calls, and cards that gave me so much comfort. I am blessed to be a part of the caring community of WHLC.

Marilyn Warling



Just a note to say thank you to all who pray, send notes of encouragement, make phone calls and visits to my mother, Elaine Hamilton at Wesley Acres in Des Moines. Such acts of kindness do not go unnoticed and give her encouragement during this difficult time.  
Sincerely, Ann, Rand & Rebekah Reynolds

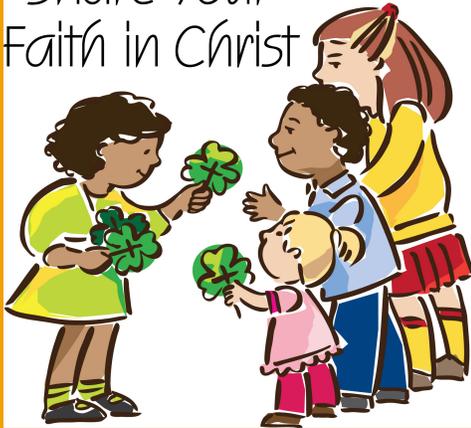
WE APPRECIATE YOU

So far, 70 kits have been assembled by Linda Anderson's trio of angels: Cindy Ambroson, Ellen Graham and Vivien Wells. The kits were put together from the generous donations from WHLC members! Assembled kits have also been dropped off at church. We are halfway to our goal!



## Saint Patrick's Day Fun Facts

Share Your  
Faith in Christ



Don't forget to change your clocks! Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 14.

1. **We really should be wearing blue on Saint Patrick's Day!** The 5th-century saint's official color was "Saint Patrick's blue," a light shade of sky blue. The color green only became associated with the big day after it was linked to the Irish independence movement in the late 18th century.
2. **Saint Patrick wasn't Irish!** Although he made his mark by introducing Christianity to Ireland in the year 432, Patrick wasn't Irish himself. He was born to Roman parents in Scotland or Wales in the late 4th century.
3. **There's a reason for the shamrocks!** According to Irish legend, the Saint Patrick used the three-leafed plant (which is not to be confused with the four-leaf clover) as a metaphor for the Holy Trinity when he was first introducing Christianity to Ireland.
4. **Cold weather helped Saint Patrick's claim to fame!** In Irish lore, St. Patrick gets credit for driving all the snakes out of Ireland. According to the fossil record, Ireland has never been home to any snakes. Through the Ice Age, Ireland was too cold to host any reptiles, and the surrounding seas have staved off serpentine invaders ever since. Modern scholars think the "snakes" St. Patrick drove away were likely metaphorical.
5. **There's no corn in that beef!** Corned beef and cabbage, which has become a St. Patrick's Day staple for Irish Americans, doesn't have anything to do with the grain corn. Instead, it's a nod to the large grains of salt that were historically used to cure meats, which were also known as "corns."

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/93246/13-lucky-facts-about-st-patricks-day>