

Congregational Connector

November/December 2017

News from the Board of Directors

GREAT START PRESCHOOL: The joint project of STL with CrossBridge Action Network (a school ministry developed by the Michigan District of the LCMS) officially began offering classes for four-year-olds on November 1. Classes are held Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. We currently have 6 students enrolled, with slots available for 4 more. In order to be eligible, the student must be four-years-old by December 1, 2017. The lead teacher is Karen Gross. Working with her is Deb Barowicz. For more information on the program, please call the church office.

After the first of the year we would like to develop a weekly after school (3:00 – 3:30?) optional Jesus Time to offer to all enrolled families. If you think you might be interested in helping to develop this program, please let the church office know. Everyone else, please pray for Jesus to rise up people for this ministry that could open doors for us to serve our community in many greater ways.

DEACON JERRY: The process of change in our church body often moves at a snail’s pace. Deacon Jerry is currently going through the annual process of recertification as a deacon because the colloquy process for his ordination as a Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) will not be completed in 2017. And the reasons for his colloquy not being completed (not only his, but all of his ‘classmates’) is simply because the LCMS continues to delay their part in the process.

Rest assured that, as soon as we know more, we will let you know. Until then, please keep Deacon Jerry and his family in your prayers. It is not an easy thing to continue to faithfully minister (as Jerry does) while a part of life is on hold.

FUTURE DEACON DON COOLEY: Don is about one third of the way through his classes to become a deacon, with the spring of 2019 as the target for his commencement. He currently is taking two classes: Old Testament Survey and the Office of the Ministry. Each class meets for an entire Saturday about once each month, with a heavy load of reading and paper writing in-between.

On the ministry side of things, in addition to serving as liturgist on many Sundays, Don is now heading up STL’s FHL ministry. He has begun working with the various host/leaders, and is developing other ideas to grow the ministry. If you have any questions about how to start a group, or get involved, please speak with Don.

ADVENT WORSHIP: With so many things changing in the lives of people, so also our Advent Midweek schedule is changing. This year we will have one weekly **Advent Midweek service at 11:00 a.m. each Wednesday.** The dates are December 6, 13, and 20. Additionally, on December 13 and 20, Pastor Hetzner will lead an evening Advent Devotion at 6:30 p.m. – immediately prior to choir rehearsal. Each week’s 11:00 a.m. **Advent Midweek will be broadcast on Face Book Live** for those who cannot be here in the middle of the day – spread the word!

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE: Over half of the ornaments from our Christmas Giving Tree were taken home this past weekend, which means there are about 30 ornaments still on the tree in our narthex/lobby. Our goal is to have the rest of the ornaments gone this weekend (by December 4), as the gifts are due back **NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 10.** When you take an ornament, also take an instruction sheet, and place your name on the line corresponding with your ornament’s number.

FOOD PANTRY & CLOTHING CLOSET: On the weekend prior to Thanksgiving we gave out 60 Thanksgiving dinner baskets, while turning away another 30 families (Though our doors were to open at 11:00 a.m., cars were lining up in our parking lot at 8:30). Our goal for Christmas is to give the meals out to 80 families. We will be packing the baskets on Friday, **December 15** (5:30 – 7:30 p.m.) and then working on Saturday (**December 16**) in two shifts: 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. (final packing) and 10:30-1:00 (distribution). **We are looking for volunteers, donations** (see the board in the narthex/lobby), **and cash** (to purchase pre-cooked turkeys). The **Clothing Closet** continues to serve 50-60 families every month it is open.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Here is the report of our joint General Fund stewardship (family finances and congregational finances) from July 1, 2017 through October 31, 2017.

	Year to Date		
	Anticipated	Actual	October
Income	\$ 139,200.00	\$ 135,644.94	\$ 40,257.79
Expense	<u>\$ 147,674.68</u>	<u>\$ 143,438.43</u>	<u>\$ 36,907.36</u>
Net Excess (loss)	\$ (8,474.68)	\$ (7,793.49)	\$ (3,350.43)

**October was a good month, but income remains \$3,500.00 behind estimates.
Mortgage Balance: \$1,805,263.38**

Balance of loan to General Fund from the Restricted Fund: \$60,750.00

The Restricted Fund Balance is \$93,035.64, with \$32,285.64 available for use.