

Shepherd of the Hills Annual Congregational Meeting
January 23, 2022
AGENDA

- Call to Order – Ernie Englehardt
- Opening Prayer – Pastor Neu
- Approval of January 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- Treasurer’s Report – Steve Rappold
- 2022 Proposed Budget – Steve Rappold
- Budget Vote – Ernie Englehardt
- Pastor Neu’s Time
- Committee and Chairman’s Reports (attached)
 - Pastor’s Report (Pastor Neu)
 - Chairman’s Report (Ernie Englehardt)
 - Worship Life Report (Tom Koch)
 - Property Report (Steve Rappold)
- Presentation of Council Officers
 - President – Ernie Englehardt
 - Treasurer – Steve Rappold
 - Financial Secretary – John Sweeney
 - Secretary – Andrea Englehardt
 - At Large Members: Ron Gustafson and Tom Koch
- New Business
- Announcements
- Adjournment

2021 SOTH Annual Meeting 1/17 Minutes

Pr. Neu opened the meeting with prayer at 10:45. Attending were John and Joyce Sweeney, Steve and Emily Rappold, Donald and Tom Koch, Ruth Schwinge, Ron Gustafson, Ernie and Andrea Englehardt.

The minutes from the 2020 annual meeting were approved as presented.

Steve presented the treasurer's report and the proposed 2021 budget which was approved unanimously without change. Steve mentioned the strong financial situation of the congregation and that financially we can continue to meet our obligations for several more years regardless of local giving.

Pr. Neu presented his report and Ernie expressed the congregation's sincere appreciation for his dedication to SOTH during this past difficult year.

Donald suggested and Ernie agreed that the chairman's report be edited to change the wording "virtual communion" to "at-home communion."

The slate of officers was presented. Ron moved the slate be voted in as presented and Donald seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Serving for 2021 will be Ernie Englehardt, Chair, Steve Rappold Treasurer and Building Committee Chair, Tom Koch, Worship Committee Chair, John Sweeney, Financial Secretary, Ron Gustafson, Member at Large, Andrea Englehardt, Secretary.

New Business

Donald expressed appreciation for how Zoom has enabled our worship experience to continue and allowed him to attend even when he was out of state. He suggested that even after in-person worship has resumed, SOTH consider somehow continuing with Zoom so that he might still attend when out of state and also others unable to be in Montpelier can benefit from the worship services.

Donald also expressed a hope that Easter Sunday might mark the resumption of in-person worship. Others were also hopeful but all felt the decision can not be made today and it will depend on the vaccine and when all will be protected from Covid and members can safely gather without endangering themselves or others.

Donald suggested midweek Lenten services and Pr. Neu will research materials and make the final decision about materials and time. Wednesdays will probably be chosen.

John thanked Tom for arranging for the appraisal of the building which was \$300,000 to \$349,000, and wondered if the congregation needed to vote on anything to do with marketing the building at this meeting. Emily suggested that the decision wait until the summer. She suggested that in the summer the building be put on the market for the appraised amount to see if SOTH can sell it for that amount. Others mentioned that consideration needs to be made about the continuance of an in-worship experience and the complications that brings if the building is sold. Andrea mentioned that Websterville Baptist

is still very much interested in SOTH's building despite the fact that they can not purchase it at this time because they are already expanding into another church near their school.

Ron moved for adjournment at 11:10 and Steve seconded the motion. Pr Neu concluded the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted and apologies for possible omissions since our connection was in and out throughout the meeting,

Andrea Englehardt,
Secretary

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Annual Congregational Meeting, January 23, 2021

Treasurer's Report

Our total expenses during 2021 exceeded our income by a little over \$6,000. The following table shows income vs. expenses over the past three calendar years.

	2019	2020	2021
Income	37,444	33,651	27,020
Expenses	53,144	34,385	33,270
Difference	(15,700)	(734)	(6,250)

We do not expect actual receipts will cover expenses going forward. On the bright side, we have cash reserves of almost \$111,000 in checking, savings, and an investment account. We expect to use some of our reserve funds as the year goes by.

Property Report

We have again been unable to meet in person for most of the past year so our building needs have been set aside until the the COVID 19 restrictions are lifted. Though we save some money on fuel oil since we have turned down the heat, other building expenses such as utilities, insurance, etc., continue. Various members check the building weekly to ensure it is OK.

Steve Rappold
Treasurer/Property Chair

Shepherd of the Hills

Proposed Budget - 2022

	2021 Budget	2021 Actual	2022 Proposed
RECEIPTS			
Giving	31,000	24,985	25,000
Interest income	200	35	30
Transfer from savings		2,000	
Total receipts	31,200	27,020	25,030
EXPENSES			
Personnel			
Accompanist		1,780	1,800
Worker's Comp	350	522	500
Building			
Cleaning		100	500
Telephone	550	772	700
Electric	1,100	1,099	1,100
Water & sewer	700	1,231	800
Snow Removal	2,000	360	1,000
Exterior Maint			
Interior Maint			
Heat (fuel oil, service)	3,000	1,365	2,000
Insurance	2,000	2,220	2,200
Benevolence			
Community	1,000	500	500
Calumet		1,000	1,000
ELCJHL		1,000	
ELCA - NE Synod	3,500	3,252	2,500
Worship			
Choir			
General	1,000	944	1,000
Clergy Support	18,000	16,667	18,000
Office			
Publicity	200	436	450
Admin Support	100		100
Postage	50	13	50
Evangelism			
Education			
Conference			200
Confirmation			
General			
Youth			
Discipleship			
Misc	36	9	
Total expenses	33,586	33,270	34,400

**Report of the Pastor in Charge
The Rev. Frederick K. Neu
January 23, 2022**

To be honest, I looked back at my report from last year and saw so many familiar sentiments that I thought about changing the date and sending it to Laura for distribution. This is fair warning, I am going to repeat myself.

I write this report in the tenth year of working with this congregation. It's hard to believe all that time has passed. I am grateful for our ministry together. It is a rewarding relationship for me and I hope for you, too.

I appreciate being able to live out the fullness of my Call to ministry with you. Being with you allows me the luxury of keeping my call as chaplain in the context of parish ministry. It helps focus my work at the hospital as if it was a part of our congregation. Being a pastor to the hospital.

To say that 2021 was a strange year is an understatement. We all, across the globe, hoped that this year would be "normal." Resuming regular activities with family and friends, traveling like before, church life like before. I guess we'll have the same hopes for this year.

A year ago, we would not have imagined we would be meeting in little boxes on our computer screens again or receiving Communion in hermetically sealed plastic chalices. Through it all we have met these challenges with good humor and remained close. That is a hallmark of this congregation.

We have said goodbye to dear friends as they moved away. We have not welcomed anyone new, but being on Zoom has allowed folks who can't attend because of distance to be with us, as well as family from far and wide.

A blessing of this pandemic is that we learned we can do many things over Zoom without having to travel or brave winter weather. Midweek Advent and Lenten services, "travelogues," and the upcoming Bible study on the Gospel of Luke allow us to enrich our common life, lift our spirits and renew our faith.

We are a small group of folks, each with multiple jobs and responsibilities. I thank you all for the things you do. I would list everyone, but I know some people are happy to live outside of the bright light of recognition. So, please, from newspaper ads and Christmas trees, Council and tasks around the church, food shelf to bulletins and music and so much more, please accept my heartfelt thanks. This is what makes Shepherd of the Hills a special group of faithful people.

Like you, I look forward to being able to resume life, church life and family life, in some kind of "normal," familiar way this year without the fear of "catching Covid." Until that time, I pray God's blessings on each of us, our nation and the world for patience and perseverance as we live through these days.

With gratitude to God and each of you in our work together,



The Rev. Frederick K. "Rick" Neu

SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2021

January 23, 2022

Dear Members and Friends,

We continue to be blessed by the leadership of the Reverend Frederick (Rick) Neu in worship, Bible study, at council and congregational meetings and in most other facets of our ministry. We were very fortunate and are very appreciative of Rev. David Vanderlinde-Abernathy who was willing to greatly increase his service to our church during the fall and Christmas season.

Our mission statement reads, "We are a Christian church in the Lutheran tradition welcoming all people, worshiping God with Spirit-led preaching, and seeking to serve the community around us." With this statement as our guide and despite Covid, SOTH has continued to serve the community. Ruth Schwinge raised over \$200 for the Food Shelf by making and marketing Christmas tree ornaments which have had a wide circulation to many states. During our seventh annual 'Trees for Food' program, over 30 trees and piles of greens were given away. Five men from Capital Community Church cut 15 of the trees. Trees could be picked up outside the church for free and SOTH asked those who were able, to give a donation to the Montpelier Food Shelf in appreciation of receiving a free tree. Tom Koch wrote cards which were attached to the trees explaining the symbols of Christmas and included an invitation to worship with SOTH while Steve Rappold printed them onto cards including attractive designs.

Annual committee reports will go into detail about other activities and accomplishments.

As 2021 drew to a close, we had a very meaningful Christmas Eve service organized by Laura Amell. Special music was provided by Laura Amell, Donald Koch, Julie Hutchison and her children along with Patrick Sweeney's children. A reading was done by Russell Shopland and the service was led by Rev. Vanderlinde-Abernathy.

I want to thank Pr. Neu, the church council and the entire the congregation, all of whom have worked hard to make 2021 another year of blessings for SOTH. Special thanks to Laura Amell who continues to be essential to our functioning by coordinating accompanists, printing the bulletins, emailing bulletins and notices, and so much more!

The church council is always appreciative of new ideas and opportunities to serve the larger community, and the willingness of members to take on responsibilities within our church family. The council hopes that you will attend the annual meeting on January 23, 2022 immediately following the worship service. Please come worship with us via Zoom whenever you can! No specific time to resume in person worship has yet been established.

May God bless you and your family and keep you safe in his embrace.

Ernie Englehardt, Chair

OUR WORSHIP LIFE, 2021

Difficult as it may seem, perhaps we should look at the worship life at Shepherd of the Hills in 2021 as an opportunity for new experiences, rather than a problem. Certainly, the year was different as a result of the pandemic.

We began by continuing worship online while waiting for the newly approved vaccines to become widely available. In the course of this forced community-without-contact, we struggled with the theology of “in-home communion,” eventually concluding that as the Church has adapted to changing situations through the ages, so it is appropriate to meet the challenges of the pandemic with technology never before available to the Church. So we began to experience Holy Communion while physically separated, each in one’s own location, courtesy of ZOOM! In so doing, we tried to make clear that Holy Communion under these circumstances was not “virtual” but real, for if it were not real, we wouldn’t be doing it this way in the first place.

Admittedly, worship via ZOOM has its obvious disadvantages, especially when we have glitches in the technology. On the other hand, online worship enabled several people to attend regularly who otherwise would have been too far away to join us: Pastor’s relatives in New York, Florida, and Italy; Sicards in Danville; and Donald wherever he might “be truckin’” on any given Sunday morning.

As we moved into summer, we were able to resume in-person worship, though with some restrictions: no hugs, kisses, or even handshakes during the Peace; the Sacrament offered through individual, pre-packaged, kits; sometimes trying to sing through masks; etc. But at the end of the year, the Omicron strain of the virus left us wondering how long we could continue to meet in person. [Update: As of this writing, we are back worshipping online until such time as we believe it is safe and responsible to gather once more as a congregation.]

As we moved into a new liturgical year, Pastor Neu also led us in four online mid-week devotions.

We appreciate more than words can express the faithfulness of our worship leaders: Pastor Rick Neu, Rev. David Vanderlinde-Abernathy; and Rev. Patricia Harris, who left mid-year with her husband, John, to live permanently in Florida. Thanks, as well, to Lea Hatch and Matthew Nunnelley for leading us in music. And very special thanks to Laura Amell, who faithfully chooses our hymns and prepares and distributes our worship bulletin each week; she also leads with piano when her schedule allows (which we wish could be more often!), and she prepared special music and played at our Christmas Eve service. Laura, you are appreciated more than you know!

It is perhaps well to remember that the Church has dealt with challenges throughout the ages, and this pandemic probably rates as one of the lesser such challenges. Through it all, we are still “The Church,” and we need to remember the words with which we are dismissed at the end of each Communion service: “Go in peace; serve the Lord!”

Tom Koch, Worship Chair
Pentecost III, 2022

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