



# Lifetimes

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October 16, 2016

Mailed: October 12, 2016

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## October 30: Commitment Sunday



*By Pastor Gary Medin*

As Christians, we believe that all life is a gift from God, and that everything we have ultimately belongs to God. We have been given the privilege and responsibility to steward it, to manage it, as people who know we are created and loved by God. Our gifts, our pledges, our offerings, are an expression of gratitude for all that God has given us. They are a part of our worship. They are a reflection of our faith in God providing for our lives. They are a demonstration of the priority God has in our lives. They are an investment in God's work and mission through the church.

The good things that we have been able to accomplish together as a faith community are the result of faithful people coming together and joining their gifts with others. Every person who is a part of Incarnation matters to our ministry together. Every single gift given and shared matters to our ministry. Take away one person, take away one gift, and something we have done or will do as Jesus' hands and feet in this world would not or will not happen. You and your gift matter in the work we do together.

Commitment Sunday is Sunday, October 30. Every member and friend of Incarnation is encouraged to be in worship on Sunday, October 30. On that day, you will be able to pick up your pledge card as you arrive, complete it during worship, and then place it in the offering as a part of worship. Only those who are not in worship on the 30th will participate in the green bag neighborhood route or mail system to submit their financial pledge for 2017. You will soon receive in the mail, your sample pledge card, cover letter, and instructions for how to fill out your pledge card in worship on the 30th. Commitment Sunday was a huge success last year, and promises again to be an exciting day in the life of Incarnation Lutheran Church. Make every effort possible to join in worship that day.

Between now and Commitment Sunday, I ask you to prayerfully consider how God is calling you to financially support the ministry that we are about together. If your giving is not at a level where you feel it reflects the priority you want God to be in your life, make a plan to grow it. Start with doable, but perhaps steps that stretch you in your giving. Being generous with the gifts that God has given us gives us life as we experience the joy of giving and bringing more of God's love into this world as it allows us the incredible privilege of working with God in making a different world. Generosity changes not just the world around us, but ultimately it changes us.

## Kiwanis Awards

Each fall, one high school senior from Incarnation receives an award for outstanding leadership through the Kiwanis Club of North Suburban Golden K St. Paul. Youth who receive this award are leaders within their local congregations and often times their schools as well. The Kiwanis Club of North Suburban Golden K St. Paul has been an established civic institution in the Northeast Suburbs of St. Paul and Minneapolis since 1982. As a premiere service club of the St. Paul Suburbs, the Golden K Kiwanis Club represents an active roster of members serving the local community in numerous ways. From food shelf, to school tutors, to financial support of local non-profits working with children, their projects focus on the Kiwanis mission of helping children and making our communities a better place to live.

This year's Kiwanis Award recipient, Susie Jackson is a shining example of youth leadership here at Incarnation. Susie has been actively involved within Incarnation's high school ministry program since her freshman year of high school. Susie, a senior at Mounds View High School, attends youth group weekly, helps lead worship for SPARK Wednesday by playing guitar, sings in both the youth choir and the senior choir, volunteers with summer youth camps, works in the nursery on Sunday mornings, attends Sunday morning worship regularly and is willing to help wherever she is needed.

Thank you, Susie, for all you do here at Incarnation and for the ways that you show God's love to those around you!

# Time Traveling

*Nine people from Incarnation travelled overseas to Tanzania from September 9 to September 25. This is an excerpt from the "Incarnation in Iringa" blog about one of their experiences. You can read more about their travels online at [incarnationmn.org](http://incarnationmn.org) by typing "blog" into the search field.*

Today we visited Incarnation's partner congregations of Kigamboni and Mkwawa Lutheran Churches and the preaching points. Mkwawa has three preaching points and Kigamboni has two. Preaching points are smaller congregations that are affiliated with a larger congregation in the area so that people don't have to walk so far to worship together. Typically preaching points have a small worship space. At our partner congregations those in the preaching points number from around 160 people to 21 at Kitasengwa, one of the preaching points for Kigamboni.



Kitasengwa was the first preaching point we visited. The building is almost finished - we walked around inside the church that doesn't yet have a roof. It seemed like a normal visit to a small preaching point in Tanzania until Jonathan, the evangelist for Kitasengwa, invited us to visit the home of the family who has been hosting this tiny congregation for worship. We walked for about three-quarters of a mile through fields on a small path to a typical Tanzanian home and as we walked, we wondered how many people in America would walk this far to worship.

When we reached the home, the mama invited us into the worship space and as we entered the dark and cave-like room, we were transported back in time to the first century when Christians met in the homes of the faithful. All of us mentioned how we felt surrounded by the very real presence of the Holy Spirit in that place. Pastor Liton said a few words and then we sat in silence

until one of our group suggested that we sing a hymn. We talked very briefly about the sense of blessing and peace that seemed to fill the space until the newest member of this community of believers arrived and presented us with a chicken! As we left, we talked about how the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us, grew from a gathering of about this size and we felt the presence of them all in that small, dark room. Words can barely begin to describe this experience; one that I think none of us will ever forget.

The rest of our visits on this day were of a lighter note of praise and laughter as each group met us with singing and we heard a short report of the activities of the preaching point. One of the most unusual was at Ikonongo, which is located a very short distance from Mkwawa main church building. This formerly small congregation is quickly growing because people are moving from the center of Iringa Town into the close-in suburbs. Last year one of our projects was to work *bega kwa bega* (shoulder to shoulder) to

help these folks move rocks closer to the space where they would build the foundation of what they thought was going to be their new worship space next to the old building. Plans changed and the congregation decided that they would build the new building around the old building so we were led, dancing all the way, into a church within a church!

At each of the preaching points we felt the joy of the Lord as our brothers and sisters in Christ greeted us with dancing and song—you can't go into any Lutheran worship space in Tanzania without dancing—snacks and liquid refreshments. Although each preaching point has its own personality, they all reflect the love of Jesus and we feel blessed to call them our Christian family. As we talked about our experiences this evening, we all agreed, it was a very good day.

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## Goodbye to Pastor Lynda Thompson



After 14 plus years on staff at Incarnation, Pastor Lynda Thompson is retiring. Lynda joined Incarnation's staff in 2002 as the Coordinator for Adult Retreating and Mission Trips. In 2011, she became an associate pastor as the Pastor for Missions. We will miss Lynda's many ministry gifts and contributions to the mission of Incarnation.

She has done much to help us move out into the community, locally and globally, to share the life-giving Good News we know as followers of Jesus Christ. We wish her well and send her with our blessing as she looks forward to her retirement and the opportunities that will afford her in more time to be with family and friends, serving in new ways, and assisting the larger church through preaching and other ministry opportunities.

Pastor Thompson's last Sunday as a pastor of Incarnation will be on October 23. On that morning, we invite you to visit with Lynda and thank her for her ministry with us during a continuous reception in Grace Hall from 9:30 to 11:30 and in the Gathering Space following 10:45 worship.

## Welcome to Kelsey Mackereth



Welcome to Kelsey Mackereth as Incarnation's new Financial Secretary. Formerly from Buffalo, MN, Kelsey studied at Luther College and has worked numerous years in Outdoor Ministries. She has recently completed a degree at Anoka Technical College in Occupational Therapy Assistant. Kelsey is looking forward to working at Incarnation, pursuing a career in Occupational Therapy, and meeting people in the community. If you have questions regarding contributions, pledges, or stock transfers please contact Kelsey at [kmackereth@incarnationmn.org](mailto:kmackereth@incarnationmn.org) or 651-484-7213.

## Volunteer Appreciation Event

A Volunteer Appreciation Event will be held on November 17 from 6 - 7:30 p.m., but different from previous years, individual invitations were not sent to homes. ALL are invited to be a part this event, who have committed significant time to Incarnation service for the last year and/or the upcoming year! In addition to dinner, entertainment will be in house and will include a hymn sing, the Senior Choir, and members of the 10:45 worship band. Contact the Incarnation Office at 651-484-7213 to RSVP by November 10; those who RSVP after November 10, will be placed on a waiting list. With an advanced registration, Kids' Zone will be available for children who need care during the event. Thank you to the Endowment Fund for the generous gift that allows for this event to happen.

# Solid Ground Announces HomeFront Program for Veterans

By Diane Betterley

Solid Ground is now providing individualized support services for 10 veterans and their families in a new 50-unit apartment building in Maplewood. It was an exciting day for all when the first families moved in. One of the veterans literally kissed the ground upon entering his new home. A few families received help in moving their personal items from storage to their brand new apartment, while others arrived with sparse or no furnishings at all. Sadly, a bed was not available for one of the new arrivals. Rochelle Washington, the HomeFront Advocate, told the man she would bring in an air mattress for the floor until a bed could be found. Barely containing his emotions, the veteran told Rochelle how thankful he was to have a place of his own and how sleeping on the floor would be a blessing.

In the HomeFront program, veterans and their families receive affordable housing as well as the transformative support services offered by Solid Ground's staff. Solid Ground will help veterans connect with resources in the community, address health issues, pursue employment, strengthen their families, and build strong foundations for their future. Please pray for the families, staff, community partners and volunteers at Solid Ground as they begin this new venture. Praise God for all the good things happening at Solid Ground!

Contact Diane Betterley, 651-483-4916 or [dianebetterley@gmail.com](mailto:dianebetterley@gmail.com), to get more information about Solid Ground or learn about volunteer and donation opportunities.

## INCARNATION LUTHERAN CHURCH GENERAL FUND - INCOME & EXPENSE REPORT FOR THE MONTH ENDING AUGUST, 2016

REVENUE	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Member Envelopes/Loose	\$1,097,433	\$1,137,989	(\$40,556)
Special Env./Misc.	\$24,330	\$35,915	(\$11,585)
Total Offering	\$1,121,763	\$1,173,904	(\$52,141)
Other Income	\$6,832	\$8,017	(\$1,185)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,128,595</b>	<b>\$1,181,921</b>	<b>(\$53,326)</b>

EXPENSES	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Missions	\$149,725	\$149,733	(\$9)
Salaries/Wages	\$874,420	\$916,667	(\$42,247)
Ministries	\$52,990	\$71,567	(\$18,577)
Administration	\$38,286	\$49,000	(\$10,714)
Building	\$114,844	\$132,367	(\$17,523)
Total Expenses	\$1,230,264	\$1,319,333	(\$89,070)
<b>Net Income (loss)</b>	<b>(\$101,668)</b>	<b>(\$137,412)</b>	<b>\$35,744</b>

### CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Beginning of the Month balance	\$137,872
Net Income for the month	\$23,289
Mortgage Payment	(28,540)
Other Capital Expenses	(109)
Monthly Ending Balance	\$132,512

Thank you for supporting the ministries, missions, and programs of Incarnation with your continued contributions. Your gifts are greatly appreciated.



## Incarnation Lutheran Church

### Worship, Prayer & Among the Congregation

**Those hospitalized:** Larrie Reese; Dorothy Molzen; Mary Gustafson; Bill Fitzsimmons, Pat Miller.

**Sympathy to:** Luther Dale and family on the death of his brother; Joel Vander Wal and family on the death of his father-in-law; Ken Grosch and family on the death of his brother-in-law; Pat Nyman and family on the death of her mother; Nancy Stutzman and family on the death of her father.

**Congratulations to:** Tressa Johnson and Thayer Clinton Davis; Brianna Barnes and Ryan Blake; Carlene Fitzsimmons and Bill Bouley on their recent marriages.

### Connect and Grow

#### NOOMA Small Group for Women

Watch short videos on a variety of faith topics and explore their messages for life today. This small group for women will connect with one another and use the *NOOMA* video series created by Rob Bell. This on-going small group is eager to welcome new people. Register: [dfloe@incarnationmn.org](mailto:dfloe@incarnationmn.org).  
When: Once/month on Mondays, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

#### Sunday Morning Small Groups

Meet and connect with others, while taking a new step in your faith on Sunday mornings. New small groups will connect once a month, for 60 minutes, to take part in a short faith study and guided conversation. If you're new to small groups, this is a great starting place. Register: [dfloe@incarnationmn.org](mailto:dfloe@incarnationmn.org).

When: Once/month on Sundays, 9 - 10:00 a.m.

OR 9:45 - 10:45 a.m., October - May.

#### Small Group: Women of Advent and Christmas

Explore the stories of Elizabeth, Mary, and Anna, as you prepare for Advent and Christmas. This small group will read and talk about the book, *The Women of Christmas*, by Liz Curtis Higgs. Together, you'll enter the Christmas season with a fresh perspective and a growing relationship with Jesus. Suggested contribution: \$5. Register: [dfloe@incarnationmn.org](mailto:dfloe@incarnationmn.org).

When: Four Wednesdays, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m., November - early December

#### Discover Incarnation

Discover Incarnation is offered for anyone who wants to learn more about Incarnation's mission, vision, and values, and is required for those who wish to step into membership. Childcare is available for those who make an advanced registration. Registration is due by 4:30 p.m. November 2.

When: Saturday, November 5, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

## Children, Youth and Family

### Evening in Bethlehem

Come for an Evening in Bethlehem in Incarnation Hall to celebrate the season of Advent. The evening will include stories from special visitors about what happened that holy night in Bethlehem. There will be activities and food for the whole family. Register in the Incarnation Office by December 5. Cost is \$15.00 per family.

When: Friday, December 9, 6 - 8:00 p.m.

## Congregational Business

### Hospitals Have Changed Notification Practices

Hospitals have changed policies to protect patient privacy and care centers no longer notify churches when a member has been admitted. The only way the Incarnation staff will know if you or a loved one is in the hospital is if you contact the Incarnation Office at 651-484-7213 or email one of the pastors. For an emergency over a weekend or holiday, call the Incarnation Office and listen for the prompts to leave a message in the Pastoral Emergency voicemail. The on-call pastor will contact you as soon as possible.

Incarnation Lutheran Church Office: 651-484-7213

Web Site: [www.incarnationmn.org](http://www.incarnationmn.org) - If registering online, most major debit and credit cards accepted  
If payments are made at the Incarnation Office, Visa and Mastercard are accepted for payment.

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