



Lifetimes

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November 13, 2016

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Why Volunteer?

By Stefanie Straka, Nursery and Children's Ministry Coordinator and Mike Helm, Incarnation Volunteer
 Stefanie Straka and Mike Helm, who were good friends in high school and have reconnected since both becoming members of Incarnation, were asked to write about what they find meaningful about serving through Incarnation.

There are several things I love about my position at Incarnation: the children, the youth, the smiles. And those hugs, those heartwarming hugs every week. Maybe topping this list is all those relationships and conversations I get to have week after week. Most of these relationships have been fostered through our SPARK programming at Incarnation. Running these programs takes some of the best people out there. Luckily we've got those people in our faith community. I've been so lucky to be on a team with them. But this fine group of friends? We're always looking to expand. Think about reaching out to SPARK ministry. Find a way to become involved in the life of your child (ren), or grandchildren, or the future of Incarnation. As a congregation, we've promised at each child's Baptism to help walk in their faith journey. Helping out in SPARK, IGNITE, being a prayer partner in Confirmation . . . this is what builds relationships. Relationships that span ages from the youngest of babies, to the oldest and wisest in our community. This is where these heartwarming relationships begin. - Stefanie Straka

A couple years back, Stefanie approached me about volunteering in SPARK Ministry. It made me think, "why volunteer at Incarnation?" These are some of the reasons why I have decided to volunteer at Incarnation, and why I encourage others to find ways to be involved.

1. It's the right thing to do - Doing the right thing does not need to be a huge ethical vs. unethical debate. This applies to volunteering. Not volunteering doesn't make a person bad, but we know it is the right thing to do. Volunteering isn't always convenient nor is it always easy. Doing the right thing or what God calls us to do, isn't always convenient or easy, but it can be quite meaningful as it has been for me.

2. Setting the right example - Volunteering sets the right example to our youth (and other adults). Our youth need parental and non-parental role models, especially in these times where they are overstimulated with the world around them. For those who don't have kids and don't have a background in teaching youth, don't be deterred from helping. It can be challenging and uncomfortable because it is not in our respective wheelhouses, but your help is still needed and God can use you. As a faith community, we make promises to partner with parents to raise youth. We must try to set the right example-even in discomfort, and to give our youth as many outlets as possible should they ever need someone to go to. If we teach, it's likely that our youth will call on what we taught them; they may also teach others, being examples of their own as they lead the next generation of faith communities.

3. It's our church - When we feel the need to pray, we do not pray to OUR self-interests or hobbies. No, we pray to our God at our church, our community and a place where we can go with all of our problems and not receive judgement, but grace. I am not saying sports, school, the arts, and other hobbies are not important, but our faith and place of worship are important to our spiritual health and deserve significant time and energy. Our church is a reflection of us, and we are a reflection of the church. It is our calling to volunteer, to build our faith community, and take care of Incarnation as it is ours.

These are some of the ways I processed stepping into ministry; what are some of the questions you can ask yourself which would help you to jump into a role at Incarnation? It is critical for us to volunteer at Incarnation. Even the simplest things help. And if you read this, and you say "I don't know everything in the Bible" or "I am not even sure how to help", that is where our staff can help guide you. You just have to ask. This is our church; let's make it the best that it can be. - Mike Helm

From The Staff

Joel Vander Wal

Pastor for Children, Youth, and Family



"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult." Another election cycle is finally over. This year seemed particularly nasty, both sides warned us that the world was going to end if they didn't win the election. There is a deeper feeling of divisiveness and conflict between the two major political parties than one I've ever experienced. My own anxiety over these tumultuous days sometimes gets the best of me. I decided in early October that whenever that would happen I would pray Psalm 46.

Over and over again I have been convicted of the opening declaration in verse one: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." What does it look like to have "God as our refuge and strength?" It goes against everything we are taught as Americans. Buried deep within our ethos we are

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Advent Begins November 27

Advent is a season of waiting and anticipation as we prepare for the coming Savior, Immanuel who is God with us. The season of Advent is also an invitation to be thoughtful about how we are present to God and others in the midst of the preparation.

Advent Theme: People of Promise

This year, Advent begins on Sunday, November 27. The preaching theme for the four Sundays of Advent will be “People of Promise” as each week we explore how we carry God’s promise of hope and healing into a hurting and hungry world.

November 27: People of Promise
December 4: Bearing Fruit
December 11: Seeing with God’s Eyes
December 18: God with Us

If you are interested in exploring this theme more deeply, sign up for the Advent to Epiphany E-Retreat. You can participate by receiving devotional emails 3 - 4 times per week or on the Facebook group. Learn more at incarnationmn.org/prayer.

Additional Advent Opportunities:

Advent Coloring Project

Beginning November 27, the first Sunday in Advent, you will have the opportunity to contribute to a community wide art project that will be displayed in both worship spaces after Christmas. People of all ages are invited to take time to color on the giant Advent coloring posters whenever you are in the building. Coloring stations will be set up around the building; check the monitors for locations. This is a great activity to share across generations!

Blue Christmas: A Prayer Service

Tuesday, December 6 at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Blue Christmas is a prayer service for anyone who has mixed emotions about the holiday season. While our culture proclaims it the happiest time of the year, people struggle during December for a variety of reasons. The Blue Christmas prayer service is a chance to name these realities and seek comfort in our God who took on flesh and walked among us precisely because this messy world needed a new way to hope. Come for yourself or bring someone you care about for this quiet, candlelit service.

Mid-Week Advent Worship

Wednesdays, November 30, December 7 & 14 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

This half-hour worship service is a wonderful way to inject some calm and peace into what can be a busy season. The frame of the service is Holden Evening Prayer. The reflections will connect to the Advent Theme “People of Promise.”

Thanksgiving Service

Wednesday, November 23, 7:00 p.m.

All are invited to the Thanksgiving Eve worship service at Incarnation, which is followed by pie and connecting time.



Director of Serve and Inviting Ministries



As of November 1, Becky Benson has become Incarnation’s Director of Serve and Inviting Ministries. Becky has served as the Director of Inviting Ministries for over 15 years. She will now be responsible for Serve Ministries in addition to Inviting Ministries, in this new full-time staff position.

The inviting portion of this role includes helping all of us to reach out to others to share God’s Good News and inviting people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and the church. Becky reaches out to first time worshiping guests as well as others who seek information regarding Incarnation, oversees ministries that help Incarnation to create helpful first impressions, coordinates Discover Incarnation (new member orientation), coordinates external communications for the purpose of raising the visibility of Incarnation in the community, and other activities that help us be more than just welcoming, but rather an inviting faith community.

The serve portion of the role includes helping all of us use our God-given gifts to serve others in Jesus’ name, inside the walls of Incarnation, within the local community, and globally across the world. It includes working directly with Incarnation’s ministry partners; planning, coordinating, and promoting the involvement of as many as possible in: mission trip opportunities; service with and through such partners as Solid Ground, LifeHaven, the Ralph Reeder Foodshelf, Feed My Starving Children, and other local outreach opportunities. Becky will also support and work with the Serve Ministry Team and the many Action Groups supported by that ministry team.

The potential for synergy between service and inviting is exciting. Please pray for Becky in this new position and for all of us involved in Incarnation that we would faithfully reach out to others and give ourselves away in service to the others in Jesus’ name.

From the Staff, continued from pg. 1

taught to find strength in our independence. Over and over again we are reminded of the strength found in our military prowess that protects us and our ideologies as a people. On the one hand, we may say, “God is our refuge and strength.” Yet, on the other hand, when it comes to the concrete reality of how we live our lives we turn to something else. Perhaps we say “Democracy is our refuge and strength.” Or, “My bank account is my refuge and strength.” Or, “Our vocation/job is our refuge and strength.” Or, “My _____ is my refuge and strength.”

We end up trading a concrete incarnational experience of God ministering to us in our times of need, for an idea of what could be. Ideas don’t have the power to minister to us. God alone, (and sometimes through the work of God’s people) has the power to minister to us.

Towards the end of the Psalm in verse 10 God speaks directly to us ministering to us, saying, “Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.” Begin your devotional time each day this week allowing God to minister to you through this conversational prayer. One way I practice this is by using these words as a breathing prayer. Try breathing in while saying the first half of each statement below then, breathe out saying the second half of each statement. End your prayer time by simply “Being” in the presence of God, as God ministers to you.

“Be still and know that I am God.”

“Be still and know that I am.”

“Be still and know.”

“Be still.”

“Be”

Incarnation Receives Memorial Gifts During the Third Quarter of 2016

In the third quarter of the year, July to September 2016, Incarnation Lutheran Church received the following memorials. We would like to publicly thank these people for remembering Incarnation. "We gratefully acknowledge these gifts and join in loving remembrance."

In Remembrance of: Brian Anderson.

A Gift was Received from: Harry and Polly Forse, Jr., John and Pat Nyman, George and Constance Aram, Samuel and Cheryl Cooke, Linda Dehn, Richard Granquist, Earl and Kathleen Currie, Carolyn Folke Trust, Joe and Bev Stepka, Maribeth and Mark Spreeman, David and Kathy Eckmann, Arnold and Mary Blomquist, Nancy and Randy Erickson, Rev. Don and Eunice Fultz, Joan Hoffman, Anne Cremons, Larrie and Lou Ann Reese, John's Family Trust, Stanley and Sharon Anderson, Paul and Ruth Tillquist, Thomas Hansen and Catherine Hufkins, Al and Joyce Anderson, Carol and Jeffrey Klein, David and Gloria Spong, Dorothy Delegard, Marlys J. Nelson, Shirley Kangas, Anna Thorstad, Roger and Dorothy Mattison, Gerald and Carol Ganske, Diane and James Anderson, John and Barbara Balfanz, David and Martha Dobratz, Janet Moses, Luther and Roberta Dale, Roger and Venita Anderson, Joanne Hinchcliffe, Bill and Bev Seabloom, Judith and Forest Chaffee, Yvonne Belin, John and Pat Miller, Dick and Mary Jo Tein, Nedra Granquist, Keith and Susan Lingwall, Arne and Phoebe Peterson, Jan Odell, Lisa and Ted Jacobson, Gary and Mary Lunstad, Jerry Walen, Physicians of Tri-State Pulmonary Assoc, Inc., William and Carol Nancy Swenson, Lynda Thompson, Kathleen Winchell Trust.

In Remembrance of: Sharon Wilson's Mother.

A Gift was Received from: Jim and Carol Fruehling.

Gifts to the Endowment Fund in memory of Brian Anderson were received from Kenneth and Rosalie Grosch, Jerry Walen, Marjorie Baab, Harry and Marian Johnson, Sharon Wilson, Marlys M. Nelson, Carl and Jan Johnson, Peter and Elaine McGillivray.



Incarnation Lutheran Church

Worship, Prayer & Among the Congregation

Those hospitalized: Anna Thorstad; Pat Miller; Bill Fitzsimmons; Doug Oliver; Dean Brynjulfson.

Sympathy to: Pat Nyman and family on the death of her mother; Nancy Stutzman and family on the death of her father; Todd Maesse and family on the death of his brother; The family of Carl Nerison on his death.

Congratulations to: Jeff and Amy Bergstrom on the birth of their son, Samuel James.

Connect and Grow

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.

When: Once a month on Sundays, 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. OR 9:45 - 10:45 a.m., November - May.

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.

Alternative Giving Fair

Browse the many opportunities for giving Christmas gifts in honor of a loved one, by purchasing something or volunteering your time in a way that can change the life of someone you may never meet. A number of gift options will be available to you at the annual Alternative Giving Fair.

When: November 20, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Congregational Business

Congregational Meeting on November 20

There will be a brief congregational meeting, for the sole purpose of election, following all four worship services on Sunday, November 20. The worship service will end and the meeting will begin immediately with each portion recessed after the election vote. As this is a continued meeting throughout the day, the only opportunity for presenting additional names from the floor will be the portion of the meeting immediately following the 8:45 worship gathering. Elections will be held to serve in positions on the Congregation Council and as Synod Representatives. Those recommended for election by the Nominating Committee and the Congregation Council are: Kristi Hartman; Don Martin; and Gary Trettel. Synod Representatives: Kevin and Brenda Roloff.

When: Sunday, November 20 following all worship services.

Stewardship

October 30 was Commitment Sunday at Incarnation. Members and active participants who have requested financial pledge materials who were present in worship completed their pledge cards for the 2017 Operating Budget and the remaining year of the three year Capital Appeal and placed them in the offering as an act of worship. The pledge materials for those not present in worship on October 30 will be delivered either via neighborhood routes or through the mail. Thank you to everyone for taking part, including completing your materials and moving the bag to a neighboring home within three days of receiving it, or mailing in your materials by November 20 if not on a route.

Incarnation Lutheran Church Office: 651-484-7213

Web Site: 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.

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

REVENUE	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Member Envelopes/Loose	1,220,203	\$1,286,410	(\$66,207)
Special Env./Misc.	\$25,499	\$37,667	(\$12,168)
Total Offering	\$1,245,702	\$1,324,077	(\$78,375)
Other Income	\$8,342	\$9,475	(\$1,133)
Total Income	\$1,254,044	\$1,333,552	(\$79,508)

EXPENSES	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Missions	\$167,708	\$168,450	(\$742)
Salaries/Wages	\$983,870	\$1,031,250	(\$47,380)
Ministries	\$54,349	\$80,512	(\$26,163)
Administration	\$42,294	\$55,125	(\$12,831)
Building	\$124,524	\$148,913	(\$24,388)
Total Expenses	\$1,372,746	\$1,484,250	(\$111,504)
Net Income (loss)	(\$118,701)	(\$150,698)	\$31,997

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Beginning of the Month balance	\$132,512
Net Income for the month	\$25,639
Mortgage Payment	(28,540)
Other Capital Expenses	(110)
Monthly Ending Balance	\$129,500

Stock Gifts to Incarnation

The transfer of stock, to qualify for a 2016 charitable contribution deduction, must be completed before December 31, 2016. Incarnation's policy to all brokers is to sell the stock immediately, but because of the volume of stock transfers the last week of the year, it often takes a number of days to complete the transaction. If you are making a stock gift, please do it in November or as early in December as possible and let Kelsey MacKereth, Incarnation's Financial Secretary, (kmackereth@incarnationmn.org) know what your intentions are for the gift. Thank you!

End of Year Reminder

Checks and cash that are placed in the offering plates, paid on line or delivered to the Incarnation Office on or before Saturday, December 31, will be credited to your 2016 giving statement and may be claimed as a charitable contribution deduction for 2016. Contributions received on Sunday, January 1 will be counted as 2017 contributions. Mailed gifts must be postmarked on or before December 31. Thank you for your support!



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 U.S. POSTAGE
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 Permit No. 538

Address Service Requested
 4880 Hodgson Road
 Shoreview, MN 55126
Incarnation Lutheran Church



Incarnation's Christmas Garden

The order deadline for poinsettias is Monday, December 12. The cost is \$9 per plant. Turn in your order, along with payment, to the Incarnation Office. Plants may be picked up after the 10:00 a.m. Christmas Day service. The Christmas flower garden list will not be printed in the bulletin. If you wish to have a printed copy, you may pick one up at the Information Center or in the Gathering Space.

Number of red plants: _____ Number of white plants: _____

_____ In Memory of: _____

_____ In Honor of: _____

From: _____ Phone: (_____) _____