

January 2020
Volume 64 · Issue 1

The Commentator

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A publication of Atonement Lutheran

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HOW you can HELP

- ❖ Billings Food Pantry Needs –
**See list posted in the Commons at the Food Bank Shelf.
- ❖ Hospitality Ministry – Ushers
- ❖ Worship Assistants 8am Service
- ❖ Lector's 8am Services

VALENTINE'S DINNER

NYG Valentine's Day Dinner Fundraiser will be held on February 15th from 6:00 – 8:00 pm in the WyndStone Dining Room. There will be a sign-up sheet in late January to reserve your seat!

Wonderful Wednesday
& Marvelous Monday



Wednesday, January 8th
Pizza Ranch - Heights
Monday, January 27th
Applebee's
6PM

ATONEMENT CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Wonderful things happened in November with our Growing the Seeds of Faith Commitment Sunday! We prayed... and God answered our prayers. The Holy Spirit moved among us as this congregation responded to support our Capital Campaign in a wonderful way!

More importantly, people of this congregation affirmed the vision of accomplishing our larger ministry goals:

- + Reduce our principle debt and decrease our monthly mortgage obligation.
- + Fund a part-time Youth Ministry position as we are Growing the Seeds of Faith for our future generations. We will fund this position into the future with the savings from our reduced mortgage payments.
- + Support partner ministries which serve children youth and families: Christikon Bible Camp, Family Promise, and Friendship House.



Our First Report indicates that **121 pledges** were received (the most number of pledges received, compared to previous campaigns!) for the Growing the Seeds of Faith Capital Campaign **totaling \$427,424.07 over the three-year giving period**. We even had one of our youth making a pledge of \$5 a month – amazing and inspiring! Another exciting statistic is the dollar amount of individual gifts – **ranging from \$20 to \$26,000**, affirming that **all gifts** of any size and from any age are celebrated and significant.

While we rejoice in these early results, we also recognize we have not yet met our goal. **Another \$122,575.93 more in pledges are needed to meet our goal of \$550,000**. Friendly Callers will be in touch with all of our members who could not be in church and complete a pledge card. The load is never heavy when everyone lifts.

Just a final word of encouragement... **as important as this Capital Campaign is, it is equally important to regularly support the General Fund** (operational expenses) **and Building Fund** (monthly mortgage payment). Think of these two funds as the “gas in the tank” to keep our Mission in Motion. Please do not redirect funds from these vital areas for the sake of the Capital Campaign!

Our Commitment Sunday was truly “the day that the Lord has made” and we rejoiced in it. Thank you for celebrating with us!

Sincerely,

Pastor

Campaign Co-Chair

Campaign Co-Chair

WE BRING THE HOPE WE SHARE IN CHRIST TO ALL!



YOUTH LEAD WORSHIP

Music kids!! Attention 5th, 6th and 7th graders! If you are interested in helping to sing and lead worship, we're building your group. I'd like this amazing group of music kids to lead worship on Feb 2nd. We'd rehearse on Feb 1st at the church and lead the 10:30 service on Feb 2nd. Binders of music will be available to pick up in mid-January. Contact Kristin for more details!

NYG 2021 PLANNING

National Youth Gathering – We have begun our plans for the NYG in Minneapolis, MN June 27-July 3, 2021. While it seems far off, registrations begin for us this February – as do our fund raising efforts. Youth going to the 2021 National Youth Gathering please attend a fundraiser planning meeting on Monday, January 13th @ 6:30 pm. We will be discussing plans for the Valentine's Day Dinner and other fundraiser ideas for the coming year. More information is available by contacting Sara Westrope or Pastor Darren.

SIMPLY GIVING

If during either the Capital Campaign or the Fall Stewardship drive, you marked on your pledge form that you were planning to give or wished to make changes to any contributions using your **active** Simply Giving account, you must contact the church office. We will not make any change to your contribution amount or frequency without verbal consent and confirmation. Please contact the church office for more information.

ATONEMENT LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

Happy New Year Atonement Family! We are excited to start the New Year by opening the enrollment for the 2020-2021 school year! We would love to have the classrooms full next school year!

This January, the students will be back to our regular schedule after a December filled with numbers, review, and lots of Christmas projects! We will be exploring the wilderness of God's Creation by heading to Wise Wonders for a field

trip later in the month, as well as, exploring 4 new letters.

A big "Thank You" to our friends at WyndStone for spending time with us as we performed our Christmas program and a fun Christmas craft! We would also like to thank our Atonement Family for their continued support through prayers, gifts, and time.

Blessings from your Director of Atonement Lutheran Preschool,
Sara Westrope

FRIENDSHIP GROUP (ages 50+Older)

Friendship Club will meet January 8th at noon with a potluck luncheon at Atonement. All are welcome. Questions? Call Sandi Gonzalez.

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

Are you ready to take control of your money? Financial Peace University (FPU) is a nine-lesson course designed to help you create a budget, overcome debt, build college savings, prepare for retirement, grow your wealth, expand generosity . . . and leave money stress behind! We are launching FPU at Atonement Lutheran on Sunday evenings beginning January 12, 2020 from 5:45-6:45pm. Register by going to www.daveramsey.com and "Find A Class Near You" – you'll find Atonement Lutheran.

YOUTH DIRECTOR

Youth Director Search has begun!

Thanks to the generous support of the Growing the Seeds of Faith Capital Campaign, we have secured funds to hire a part-time Director of Youth and Family Ministries! We are looking for someone who will continue to foster a spirit and culture of youth ministry to engage youth, parents and the intergenerational congregation. We plan to interview upon receiving sufficient variety of applicants. A full job description is available online at www.atonementbillings.org.

ATONEMENT FINANCE THIS MONTH

General Fund November 2019		Building Fund November 2019		Building Reserve	
Income:	\$ 27,478.44	Income:	\$ 5,383.00	07/19	\$30,192.70
Expense:	\$ 34,290.91	Expense:	\$ 7,925.00	08/19	\$26,930.10
Net Income:	\$ (6,812.47)	Net Income:	\$ (2,542.00)	09/19	\$23,893.88
Net Income YTD:	\$ (38,010.80)	Net Income YTD:	\$ (19,021.36)*	10/19	\$21,225.37
Budget Expense:	\$ 41,974.95	Budget Expense:	\$ 8,150.00	11/19	\$19,017.24

*Reminder: The negative amounts indicate the amount we are drawing down on the surplus in our Building Fund.

FROM THE PASTOR

These 12 Days of Christmas lead into the season of Epiphany. Emmanuel – “God with us!” – comes into our lives and sends us out into the world with an amazing message to tell. Just think of the stories of those who stepped up, stepped out, stepped into what God was up to... shepherds return to their fields shouting praise; Magi depart for their home countries amazed at what they just witnessed; Mary and Joseph seek refuge in distant Egypt carrying with them the Christ child – the Word made Flesh.

That’s what Epiphany is all about – those early people saying “YES!” to the message, the story, the Word – Jesus, the light of God! – as it spread into all the world. The work of the church hasn’t changed since the first witnesses of Jesus’ presence. We know that congregations that endeavor in this age-old task will always have a future. So we share the story with our children – that next generation of witnesses. We reach into the community to demonstrate that God is in this world. We welcome into our church community those who are seeking God’s healing presence in their lives. We use our God-given gifts to bless others in extraordinary ways.

I invite you into this future in these days of Epiphany. Certainly Atonement has a future – God knows it... I know it... we know it. But it always requires us to step up, step out, step into that future. As we enter into 2020, we are challenged to say “YES” for ourselves, in our time, in this place to the work God is doing among us. Through it, we will be blessed. And we will have a future.

Peace in Christ,
✝ Pastor Darren

THANK YOU FROM THE HEART . . .

A note of thanks to my Atonement Church Family! The Furstenberg Family could feel your love and thankful sharing of food, lifting up prayers for Eric and for all of us, and all those hugs and tears. For the Memorials in Eric’s name donated to our Youth Ministry. You are a blessing-Our Lord Jesus has a special way for guiding us all in time of happiness and sadness. John Mayfield is a great friend, performing his talents of love on the piano keyboard before and after the service. Thank you John. The ladies in the kitchen did their usual grand work serving the luncheon. Thank you ladies! We must not forget Pastor Darren! We love you! The readers were blessed by the Lord, giving them strength to share the gospel. God Bless You All!!! Atonement is a wonderful family and I share my love.

Betty Jo Furstenberg and Family

A Special Thank you to all the members of our congregation that made, bought and donated, gloves, hats, mittens and scarves for the “*Festival of Trees*” this year. The tree Atonement sponsored went for \$400. Ron & Judy Nissen and Tom & Bernish Hash had the top bid. Items were given to the WIC program.

June Canfield –WELCA

Dear Atonement Lutheran Church, Thank you so much for your “Food Bags” to the Medicine Crow teen pantry this holiday season. We are incredibly thankful for the “village” that helps support our community in the Heights. Every day we are humbled at the hurdles families face. The little things the pantry offers (food, school supplies and hygiene supplies) is a gesture of love and caring to our students and a message of hope for better times! When asked where the stuff in the pantry comes from, we always say “people right here in your own town who care for you!” Thank you for helping us share these items with them.

Nikki Hofmann, Principal-Medicine Crow Middle School

WEDNESDAY ADULT BIBLE STUDY

WyndStone Private Dining Rm 10am

Jan.8

Promise for God’s People
Isaiah 7:10-16

Jan. 15

The Birth of the Messiah
Matthew 1:18—2:12

Jan. 22

This Is My Son, the Beloved
Matthew 3:13—4:11

Jan. 29

You Are the Salt of the Earth
Matthew 5:1-16 [17-20], 21-48

ADULT FORUM

Sunday mornings at 9:15am. Grab a cup of something hot and join us in the Jerusalem Rm.

Jan.5

We are CHURCH FOR THE SAKE OF THE WORLD Part 4

Everyday ideas to build a lasting faith in your kids. Whether you are a parent, grandparent or loving church member, we pray that our kids emerge from adolescence with their faith intact. The faith we desire is one that guides and sustains them through the challenges, adversity and complexity that comes with adulthood. As a group, we will engage powerful strategies, explore practical ideas, and establish a network of trusted partners that enable us to impart a deep and lasting faith in our children.

Jan. 12

Sticky Faith Essentials

Jan. 19

A Sticky Identity

Jan. 26

Family Conversations about Faith that Sticks



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 God's work. Our hands.



JANUARY 2020

- ☞ Jan 1 Church Office Closed
- ☞ Jan 3 Men's Square Breakfast
- ☞ Jan 8 Friendship Club 12pm
- ☞ Jan 8 WW Meal – Pizza Ranch
- ☞ Jan 12 Financial Peace University
- ☞ Jan 13 Nation Youth Gathering 2021 Planning Meeting
- ☞ Jan 16 Hope Circle Ladies Bible Study
- ☞ Jan 19 Financial Peace University
- ☞ Jan 21 Church Council Meeting
- ☞ Jan 26 Potluck/Business Meeting
- ☞ Jan 26 Financial Peace University
- ☞ Jan 27 MM Meal – Applebee's

Coffee Servers for January 2020
Evangelism Committee

YOUTH & FAMILY NEWS

The time is here to sign up for an adventure, the 2021 ELCA National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis, MN. We are so excited to start moving forward with plans! There has been a tentative schedule made which includes visiting ELCA Colleges, the Gathering, and many more possibilities. Each attendee is expected to pay \$200 out of pocket and participate in all the fundraising events to cover the remaining costs.

Deposit Timeline:

- Feb. 2, 2020 \$100 Deposit #1 Due
- Sept. 13, 2020 \$50 Deposit #2 Due (At this point, we'll send in the \$150 non-refundable deposits to the ELCA)
- Nov. 15, 2020 \$50 Deposit #3 Due

We can add additional registrants after these dates, but cost goes up after Nov. 20

If you would like more information or have any questions please contact Sara Westrope or Pastor Darren.

Calling all men! Make plans to join us for Men's Square Fellowship Breakfast. Friday, January 3rd beginning at 6:30am. For more information please contact Todd Koepp.