

December 2020
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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 Commons at the NEW Food Bank Shelf.
- ❖ Sound & Tech Booth Volunteers
- ❖ Disinfecting Wipes.

ALC EVANGELISM

Evangelism's outreach project for the month of December, instead of an angel tree, we will continue the diaper drive. There is still a very great need for diapers and wipes for the not-for-profits who work with families in our community.

You will find the manger in the entry. Please drop off diapers of all sizes there through the month of December. Sizes 4-6 and pull-ups are the greatest need. These will be taken to Family Promise which is now the distribution center for other organizations.

Thank you for caring for the less fortunate in our community!

ADVENT and CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES 2020

Readers and Prayer Assistants are needed!

(All the following will be for online worship services!)

Sundays in Advent

(4) Households willing to record themselves doing a reading, lighting a candle and saying a prayer. We'll supply the video camera, Readings and Prayers – you supply a Candle (that will be passed along to the next homes).

Wednesdays in Advent

(4) Individuals willing to record themselves reading the evening Lesson.

Christmas Eve

(5) Households willing to record themselves doing the Christmas lessons (with one reader, or divide it up among members of your household) in your own home. Your own seasonally decorated space and nice attire will add to the richness of this experience!

(4) Family groups that would like to record themselves to lead the singing of one of our selected Christmas carols.



AS MANY AS POSSIBLE! Gather your household around your computer camera on Sunday, December 13th at 11:00am and we'll record EVERYONE sending a greeting of "Merry Christmas!".

Weather permitting, we are planning outdoor Christmas Eve candlelight vigil and caroling opportunities on the lawn between Atonement and the Little White Church – *watch for details!*

Please reply to
office@atonementbillings.org and indicate which role you are willing to fill.

Thank you!

WELCA, COME JOIN THE FUN!

Women of Atonement – are you interested in getting involved with an active group? WELCA would love to have you as part of our team!

Meetings are once a month and all kinds of activities are planned for the church year - luncheons, desserts, fun nights, plant sales, bazaar etc. New ideas are always welcomed.

If you would like to learn more about WELCA please call Julie Andersen or just join us at our next meeting on January 6th, 2021.





I would like to thank all the members of my church family. The loss of my husband, Darrell, was incredibly difficult, even though we knew this day was coming. We just didn't expect it so quickly. Your thoughts and prayers and acts of kindness have sustained me through this heart-breaking time. The words "thank you" don't seem enough to express the strength I've received from so many of you, but I have no other words. So thank you for the blessing you are.

Yours in Christ, *Marilyn Franklin*

Thank you to the Handyman Ministry who have donated the proceeds from the 2020 Sprinkler Blowout of \$1610 this year to the Atonement General Fund. Thank you for your hard work and generous contribution.

Atonement Lutheran Church

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

God is good. All the time. We continue to be amazed with gratitude for our Atonement members in their generous giving to carry on our overall goal of living our mission of Bringing the Hope We Share in Christ to All.

The financial picture for Atonement continues to be very challenging and complex. The combined giving for 2020 to all funds (General, Building and Capital Campaign) exceeds 2019 totals to this date. We are so grateful for this. That is an incredible fact considering the current circumstances that we are enduring.

However, our general income from members has not met our budgeted expenses for six of the nine months this year. As noted in the Commentator, our YTD income (January through October) is -\$13,161. The Finance Committee is very concerned about the financial stability of Atonement Lutheran. We are aware that much of

our financial shortfall is related to COVID-19. We have already distributed the received Payroll Protection Plan funds from the federal government. This federal money was required to be used for payroll and other necessary costs during the pandemic, such as utilities and mortgage interest.

We will be monitoring this situation closely as we approach year-end. It's likely the pandemic has financially impacted some people's charitable giving. However, one day this too shall pass – and we need our church to be there to support us through it all... and into the future. For those who have abundance, please consider sharing more while others may not be able. Also, please know that your church family is here to support you with whatever needs may arise. Please call the church office for any questions or needs.

Stewardship Committee

ATONEMENT FINANCIAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2020

General Fund		Building Fund		Building Fund Reserve	
Budgeted Expense	\$31,864.29	Budget Expense	\$7,925.00	8.31.2020	\$30,117.60
Actual Expenses	\$28,613.90	Actual Expense	\$7,240.00	9.30.2020	\$27,369.60
Income from Members	\$30,391.78	Income from members	\$4,669.00	10.31.2020	\$24,798.60
Net Income (loss) from Members October	\$1,777.88	Net Income (loss) from Members October	(\$2,571.00)		
Net Income (loss) from Members YTD	(\$13,161.85)	Net Income (loss) from Members YTD	(\$749.17)		

These figures reflect the Church finances based on member contributions only. Federal PPP (\$61,545.60) money not used after the month of June. Member giving has covered church expenses only 4 of the 10 months, through October 2020. Also covered Building Fund expenses only 1 of the same 10 months. August total shortfall (General and Building funds) from members (\$6,732.99). September total shortfall (General and Building funds) from members (\$7,953.78). October total shortfall (General and Building Fund) from members (\$793.12).

Tom Danielsen – Treasurer, Atonement Lutheran Church Council

Reminder for those using Simply Giving to give authorization for changes to your 2021 giving plan, please contact the church office 245-7004.

FROM THE PASTOR

Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, Faith. These gifts that we receive from God – here, now, today – anticipate a final gift that is yet to be given. As we venture into these coming advent days, we celebrate the blessings already bestowed upon us through God’s Spirit. This is one of those times in history when it is ever more important to claim **Hope** in Christ, **Peace** in simplicity, **Joy** through service, and **Faith** that perseveres. These are God’s abundant gifts which aid us in our pilgrimage through this challenging world. Yet we wait expectantly for the final gift of Christ’s presence. Then we shall see and know God face to face.

Have you considered how you will be celebrating Christmas this year? COVID has undoubtedly altered your travel plans and how you will spend this time. While there is much joy in giving and receiving gifts within your network of family and friends, please consider extending your generosity beyond that circle. There are many struggling individuals, households, and local businesses. Our hospitals and staff are overwhelmed. This has been the most active hurricane season in recorded history.

Our local *Food Shelf* is receiving requests for assistance – nearly outpacing their cash and material donation resources. *Lutheran Disaster Relief* continues to provide for those communities who have been devastated by natural, environmental and economic disasters. *Family Promise* continues to serve the needs of homeless families, even though congregations are unable to host them. These are but a few agencies working on behalf of our God who “so loved the world...”

Thank you for being positive! It is appropriate to offer some words of thanksgiving to God and gratitude to you, the members of Atonement Lutheran, for your generosity in giving. This past year has been – as my grandmother would say – “quite a doozy.” Thanks to wise decisions on the part of boards, committees, council and staff, we have continued to provide mission, ministry and outreach in new and creative ways.

As we enter December, many are eager to see the end of the year 2020. But in all the adversity we’ve experienced, may you also discover the truth in the Apostle Paul’s words in Romans 5:3-5 “...*knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*”

May you experience the Hope, Peace, Joy and Faith that is yours in Christ Jesus, our expectant Lord!

✝ Pastor Darren

YOUTH & FAMILY NEWS

Atonement Lutheran Youth will be hosting a preorder Christmas Bake Sale. Online Sales open via the church website on Black Friday! (Friday, November 27th) and go through Noon (12:00pm) on Thursday, December 10th. Items can be picked up during scheduled times blocks on Sunday December 13th at the church.

Saturday, December 19th from 3:00-4:30pm Atonement Youth 6th-12th grade are invited to a no cost get together at Yellowstone Valley Skating Center. Youth will get a free skate lesson, skate rentals and an hour of free skate time at this new indoor skating facility that uses unique plastic “ice” panels that allow for skating in a warm building. Space is limited to 20 youth so please **RSVP** to save your spot by contacting Nikki at doxfam@atonementbillings.org or by calling the church 245-7004.

WEDNESDAY ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

All are invited to join as we continue our study in Revelation.

Dec. 2 - The Fall of a Great and Powerful Empire – *Rev. 18:1-24*

Dec. 9 - Our New Home is here but Not Here – *Rev. 21:1-8*

Dec. 16 - Jesus is Coming Soon – *Rev. 22:8-21*

Dec. 23 - *No Study*

Dec. 30 - *No Study*

Email the church office to get the Zoom link and join us Wednesday mornings at 10am, facilitated by Pastor Darren.



New Ministry Opportunities await at Atonement Lutheran!

If you enjoy engaging with folks, all while in the comfort of your home, the NEW “Atonement Phone Ministry” has an opportunity for you!

We are looking for willing callers to provide “phone call ministry” to “check in” with our membership.

During these days of remoteness there is a great need to stay connected with one another. Through this ministry you can **bring the HOPE we share** to your brothers and sisters of Atonement. You can start today!

Call the church office at
406-245-7004

WE BRING THE HOPE WE SHARE IN
CHRIST TO ALL!



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DECEMBER 2020

- ☞ Dec 2 Friendship Club 12pm
- ☞ Dec 2 Midweek Advent **Online**
Service Dec 2th, 9th, 16th, 23rd
6:30pm
- ☞ Dec 5 Christmas Baking Sessions
- ☞ Dec 6 Christmas Baking Sessions
- ☞ Dec 12 Christmas Sale Assembly
- ☞ Dec 13 Annual Cookie Sale
- ☞ Dec 15 Church Council Meeting
- ☞ Dec 18 Preschool Christmas Program
- ☞ Dec 19 Youth Ice Skating 3pm
- ☞ Dec 24 Christmas Eve **Online** Service
4:00pm
- ☞ Dec 24 Candlelight Services 5, 6, 7pm
- ☞ Dec 25 Christmas Day Office Closed
- ☞ Dec 31 Annual Reports Due

Friendship Club will not meet in December or January. Hopefully February will bring good news. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas. Remember Jesus is the reason for the season.

ATONEMENT LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

Advent Greetings from Atonement Lutheran Preschool!

I am thankful for the dedication of our students, parents, and volunteers. During the month of November, when I reflected over our preschool program, I felt blessed to have the wonderful support our parent and board volunteers. Without their help our program would not be able to run. Thank you! We had a fun time in November learning about the letters F-H, exploring the autumn season and about the Thanksgiving turkey.

As we enter into the Advent season we prepare ourselves for the miracle of our Savior's birth. Advent is a time of patience. During the month of December, as the preschool students wait patiently for Christmas, we will be working on the letters I and J along with discovering the Cheeky Chipmunks and all about Holiday helpers. We will be working on our Christmas program, crafts and activities.

We could use your help with some of the supplies we will be working with this month. If you are able to find and donate these items, it would help us are great deal!

- ♥ Red & Green Ribbon ♥ Mini Marshmallows ♥ Mason Jars
- ♥ Old Jigsaw Puzzles (they do not have to be complete, using them for craft project) ♥ Clorox Wipes

Thank you for those that were able to help last month in donating items on the list. Thank you for your support and please keep us all in your prayers as we learn together! Blessings,

Sara Westrope-Atonement Lutheran Preschool Director