

AUGUST 7, 2020

FROM SUE COLE, CONGREGATION COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Subject: Mid-year Report to Congregation

Hello, fellow Emmaus members!

I would rather be giving you this report in person at our Semi-annual Congregational Meeting which is usually held the last Sunday in July. However, due to the restraints imposed by COVID-19, the Council voted to defer the Semi-annual Congregational Meeting to a time when it is safe to meet in a large group. Here is a summary of some of the things your Council and congregation has been doing since we met as a congregation in January. Also attached is a financial report from Joan Fisher, Finance Director, and a message from Pastor Mark. (This is going to be a very long email!)

- In February, the Council elected officers. They are Patrick Rhoads, Vice President, Denise Johnson, Secretary, Sheri Manning, Treasurer, and Sue Cole, President. We learned that Robin Panko, our Office Coordinator would be leaving in May, so we asked to have the job description updated and made plans to find a replacement. The roof on the entire building was replaced and we were able to keep our steeple!
- March brought the need to take action due to COVID-19. Council moved to close the church to in-person services and activities for the congregation as well as other organizations who use our facilities. The Council adopted as a continuing resolution the ELCA constitution provision to conduct congregational business remotely. Pastor started recording sermons for us to view on You Tube.
- In April, the Council called a special congregational meeting to present a motion to enable the Finance Director and Council to pursue financial relief from the CARES Act. Eighty members attended the conference call and approved the motion. We were not able to access a loan or grant due to the requirements of the CARES Act.
- On May 11, the Council met in a special meeting to develop a plan to reopen. June 7 was chosen as a start date, and cleaning, sanitizing, physical distancing, masks and other safety measures were discussed at length and a plan made. The Council met two more times in May and after looking at what other congregations were doing, the Synod recommendations and CDC guidelines, it was decided that the safest plan was to do parking lot services on Saturday evenings. (If you haven't attended one, please consider participating. It is fun and a blessing to worship together, even if we are separated by car windows! Hearing Joni or Tim play music for us is wonderful, too.)
- June brought all of us trying to make the best of a unique (read challenging) situation. Some of the ministries Emmaus carries out were able to adapt to the COVID-19 limitations. The Food Pantry continues to serve guests with just one volunteer putting together bags of food and delivering to the trunks of the guests' cars. The Interfaith Kitchen Emmaus crew has not missed a meal, although the procedure has changed. Our usual 12-14 crew members are now 4, and the guests must pick up their meals in a to-go box and eat off campus.
- The Council met in July to approve having the AC system inspected by an engineer since we continue to have problems, particularly in the Preschool. We also approved an updated job description for the Office Coordinator position and approved the hiring of an excellent candidate for that position. Karen Bourbonnaisse began on August 3. We are grateful to have found her! Due to Emmaus member's generous donations, 30 backpacks were packed with school supplies for children served by the Community Partnership for Children. When we are able to meet in person again, you will be able to see the great job a group of volunteers did to

spruce up our Fellowship Hall with a new color scheme and a lot of tidying up! Plans are underway to make use of this “down time” to do a deep clean and organization of the kitchen.

- So Emmaus is keeping on keeping on in the midst of the pandemic thanks to many generous givers – givers of time, talent and treasure! I am afraid I might leave someone out if I start naming names, but you know who you are, and your Council and Emmaus members thank you so much for all that you are doing to continue to demonstrate God’s love by reaching out to each other and to others in our community. We are children of God, God loves us, and God is using us to change the world.

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My prayer for you is for health and safety and His peace,
Sue Cole, Emmaus Congregation Council President