

Following faithfully where Jesus and the Spirit lead.



Giving unselfishly for the sake of God's work.



Caring for each other as Christ cares for us.



Serving compassionately in response to our neighbors in need.



## St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Sharing Christ's abundant love with each other and the world.

Engaging with the community to enhance wellbeing.



Welcoming and accepting all people into fellowship

Living out our mission

# 2017

# '17

## A year of milestones

In 2017, we launched two key new ministries — Emmanuel House and McCleery School mentoring — while we continued to support and expand our other programs and ministries that share Christ's love in the community and the world. At the same time, we moved forward with two other initiatives that by the end of the year would change our life

together. First, by the end of the first full year of our capital campaign, we finally saw our building debt reduced to less than \$2 million — a milestone on our financial journey. And as a result of the second and more important initiative, we are awaiting the arrival of Pastor Patrick Fish, our new associate pastor. What a year 2017 was!

Our three-year capital campaign, **Sharing Our Faith — Securing Our Future**, begins. By mid-January, we have already contributed **\$130,400**.

The Congregational Council and Pastor Patricia Geiseman **endorse** the pastor presented by the Call Committee and **recommend** him to the congregation.

Building debt is **reduced** to less than **\$2 million** as the first full year of the capital campaign brings in over **\$225,000**.

January | February | March | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November | December

At the Annual Meeting, we elect a **Call Committee**.

The Call Committee presents a pastoral candidate to the Council with **enthusiastic approval** for the position of Associate Pastor at St. Mark's.

On Commitment weekend, we support the vision for our ministry, which includes calling a second full-time pastor, by increasing our **financial commitments**.

We vote to **call** Pastor Patrick Fish.



Communicate effectively in ways that inform and engage members of the congregation and the surrounding community in faith formation and in the life and ministry of the church.

Priority

1

### What we accomplished in 2017

- Our Sanctuary video system was installed, and we used it for Vacation Bible School, the October congregational meetings, our celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Wednesday night FDL monthly worship services, the December Congregational meeting and several funerals.
- We established a St Mark's members Facebook group where we share photos, announcements, volunteer requests, and last minute updates. We also had daily posts of a picture and a word related to Advent as part of a Picture Advent project. Members responded with thoughts and comments as well as their own pictures representing the word of the day.
- We purchased new hymnals: *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW) hymnals are in each pew, many of them dedicated to individuals or events.
- A new St. Mark's web site went live in April.

### Ideas and plans for 2018

- Purchase and use a worship software program that could be used for special worship services or the contemporary worship (10:30 Sunday) service.
- Continue to update and refresh the website.
- Webcast our worship service

13

Number of baptisms at St. Mark's in 2017

8,702

Number of miles we walked to reach Jerusalem (from Aurora)

256

Number of blood pressure screenings in 2017

140

Number of children and youth in our programs

228

Number of light bulbs replaced in the sanctuary

39

Number of St. Mark's volunteers at Feed the Need who helped pack over one million meals for Feed My Starving Children.



## Priority

# 2

**Strengthen relationships and build community so that people feel cared for, supported and nurtured as disciples and followers of Jesus.**

### **What we accomplished in 2017**

- Our Health and Wellness ministry developed and posted Emergency Action Plans in key areas of the building.
- Our BeFriender leaders trained four new BeFrienders.
- Our Child Development Center's school age kids spent their day off from school at Elmwood Nursing Home, making the residents cards for Halloween and spending time playing games and doing other activities.
- Our CDC held its first annual "Trunk or Treat" — a safe and friendly family event in which trick or treaters visit creatively decorated trunks to trick or treat. This event was open to the public, and over 150 families from the center and community attended.
- Our Music ministry continued to support its participants through music training sessions, monthly birthday celebrations, get well cards, and devotions and prayers before rehearsals.
- Our Care Team continued to care for the members of St. Mark's who are homebound, sending cards to 15 to 20 shut-ins twice monthly. Deacons continued to make visits as ambassadors of the church, offering a listening ear, prayers, Communion and company.

### **Ideas and plans for 2018**

- We will train four additional BeFrienders (the next training will take place in April, 2018.)
- We will develop more faith formation ministries for young adults.



**Be a community leader to help churches and other organizations work together effectively and efficiently to make a difference in issues facing our community.**

**Priority**

**3**

### **What we accomplished in 2017**

- Our McCleery School mentoring ministry team met with school administrators and developed plans, and 14 volunteer mentors completed District 129 background checks and DCFS training.
- Our Emmanuel House ministry assisted our partner family by preparing their new apartment and moving their furniture, replacing the building's front stairs, conducting an in-person tour of a local home improvement center to identify important tools, products and supplies essential to home ownership, and replacing landscaping.
- We joined with Lutherans worldwide to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.
- Our youth group attended a "glow in the dark" dodgeball tournament hosted by St. Paul's Lutheran Church (Aurora).
- Our Adult Fellowship members organized another well-attended race relations seminar and were sensitized by a visit to the Holocaust Museum in Skokie.
- We helped CDC school age kids whose families were unable to afford the additional fees go on summer field trips.
- Our St. Mark's Festival Choir participated in a 280-voice choir at the Berlin Cathedral (Berliner Dom) to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.
- With our CDC Christmas program, "Jesus Is My Christmas Gift," children ministered to their families and friends.

### **Ideas and plans for 2018**

- Beginning in January, McCleery School mentors will meet weekly with students and their teachers, building relationships with teachers, students, and parents.
- The CDC will reach out to area hospitals to find ways we can connect with children hospitalized during holidays such as Easter, Halloween and Christmas with cards and caring.
- The Adult Fellowship will continue volunteering with an Aurora social service agency, promoting our members' volunteering efforts and educating members on senior citizens' concerns.
- The CDC will develop a program to offer tuition assistance to at least two families that endure some type of uncontrollable financial hardship, helping them until they are able to get back on their feet.
- Our Emmanuel House ministry hopes to double volunteer support, triple monthly financial contributions and consider partnering with a second family.
- Our Youth Group plans a mission trip to the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina, and will be putting together duffle bags filled with necessities for foster children with the help of Thrivent.

**7**

Number of weekly music classes provided weekly by the Music ministry for 80 kids, from age 3 to school age, at the CDC

**90**

Yards of mulch spread by 33 volunteers at the church and CDC

**463**

Meals served at 2017 BBQ fundraiser for Music Ministry

**19**

Number of flu shots administered at the Flu Shot Clinic

**12**

Number of young people confirmed at St. Mark's in 2017

**More than  
100**

Number of hours of volunteer support we gave to Emmanuel House

## Priority

# 4

**Engage youth and their families (in the church and in the community) in ways that strengthen relationships and promote stability in family life.**

### **What we accomplished in 2017**

- Our summer garden project taught 40 CDC school age children how to plant, grow, and harvest garden vegetables.
- Our youth group hosted our annual Easter breakfast to help raise funds for their mission trip, then went to Red Lake Reservation in Minnesota to run a children's day camp and help with work projects throughout the town.
- Our Music ministry helped the CDC school age youth put on their own summer faith musical "It's Cool in the Furnace," the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace.
- We added an inter-generational Lenten study on Wednesday nights. Adults joined the children and youth already at church on Wednesdays to color giant Lenten posters displayed in the narthex, share a meal, break into small groups for study and come back together for worship.
- We increased attendance at our weeklong Vacation Bible School program to about 100 kids with the help of more than 50 volunteers, ranging from junior high students all the way to loving grandparents. Our new screens and video technology added excitement and fun to our opening and closing sessions.
- We started transforming the church basement into a destination for our youth and family ministry. Fifteen high school students and six adults painted the entire lower level Fellowship hall, back hallway and youth group room (Luther Room). We acquired new chairs for the Fellowship hall, used for Wednesday night dinners as well as special events, and rearranged the room to maximize the space and make room for a game and fellowship area.
- We held an inter-generational celebration for Rally Day, including a butterfly release, indoor and outdoor games, crafts, bounce house and lunch. Over 10 different ministries participated by providing a game or activity.
- The CDC's Thanksgiving lunch was an opportunity for families to come and enjoy a meal with their child's classmates and their families.
- We held our first Confirmation lock-in at church, with almost 20 kids and many chaperones.
- We held our first "Parents Night" at FDL: Many parents joined their kids for a shared meal, classroom learning and even a bells lesson!
- Kari Reiseck completed her year-long Vibrant Faith course and is now certified in the Vibrant Faith Youth and Family Ministry program.

### **Ideas and plans for 2018**

- We will continue to develop an inter-generational culture for our congregation to connect and grow relationships.
- We will continue to transition our children and youth programs from a focus on education to intentional faith formation, including creating opportunities for youth and families to integrate faith formation into their home life with take-home activities, family friendly faith events, and parental involvement in classes.
- We will equip teachers and volunteers with more resources, discussion questions and lesson background information to make them more comfortable with open discussion.
- We will integrate additional media into Sunday School and Wednesday night programs to expose youth to examples of Christ's love and faith stories from throughout the world.
- Our Youth Group will work on finishing the basement with additional painting, adding technology like televisions and projectors, adding a prayer wall and prayer canvases, completing the games corner and more.

Care for the poor and marginalized in order to alleviate short-term struggles and also build capacity for long-term change.

Priority

5

### What we accomplished in 2017

- Sixteen older school age children from our CDC participated in Feed my Starving Children, packing meals for children in need around the world.
- Our CDC has enrolled 40 children whose families are using state child care assistance, and we charge only what the state has determined they can afford, based on family size and income.
- Twenty-two people assisted in the distribution of over 600 bags of food for the hungry at the Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry.
- We bought 41 goats, enough to change a whole village, in honor of Mother's Day, and 4.5 cows for our brothers and sisters in need in honor of Father's Day.
- Thirty-five people brought gifts of toys for homeless children at Hesed House to the Adult Fellowship Christmas party.
- Our 376 pillowcase dresses were delivered to Minnesota Indian Reservation, Haiti on Easter Sunday, Ukraine in October and Viet Nam at Christmas this year.
- We supported our Angel Tree with 146 gifts for the Visiting Nurses Association, 20 gift cards for Association for Individual Development (AID) and 30 gift cards for Constitution House.

### Ideas and plans for 2018

- We will send 40 volunteers to help pack 1.2 million meals for Feed My Starving Children at Feed the Need.
- We will participate in Rebuilding Together Aurora.
- We will find ways to deliver more of our pillowcase dresses to little girls, with a special focus on finding ways to send them to Puerto Rico.
- Our CDC will organize a food drive to collect canned goods and non-perishable items for a food pantry in the area, giving children and families the opportunity to actively help those in need in our community.





# 1 Purpose

To share Christ's abundant love with each other and the world.

## 5 Priorities

- Communicate effectively in ways that inform and engage members of the congregation and the surrounding community in faith formation and in the life and ministry of the church.
- Strengthen relationships and build community so that people feel cared for, supported and nurtured as disciples and followers of Jesus.
- Be a community leader to help churches and other organizations work together effectively and efficiently to make a difference in issues facing our community.
- Engage youth and their families (in the church and in the community) in ways that strengthen relationships and promote stability in family life.
- Care for the poor and marginalized in order to alleviate short-term struggles and build capacity for long-term change.

## 6 Principles

When we are at our best, you will see us:

- Following faithfully where Jesus and the Spirit lead.
- Giving unselfishly for the sake of God's work.
- Caring for each other as Christ cares for us.
- Serving compassionately in response to our neighbors in need.
- Welcoming and accepting all people into fellowship.
- Engaging with the community to enhance wellbeing.

