

CLUSTER 8 -- MID-ARKANSAS

May 2018

All of our churches in Cluster 8 have been extremely busy with Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. So, I am submitting my report from the last Synod Council in February.

Peace Lutheran, Edgemont, Pastor Kara Shaw

Hope Lutheran, Heber Springs, Supply Pastors

Prince of Peace, Hot Springs, Supply Pastors

We still are using supply pastors and lay persons. We are blessed to be a retirement area and have 5-6 retired Lutheran pastors in the area. Along with our seminarian student to be able to fill the pulpit each week. This year we moved our sanctuary into Friendship hall for about 5 weeks while we renovated the sanctuary (painting, redesign of altar area, and new carpet). We are having Lent soup meals with devotions led by Mr. Phil Keller each Wednesday in Lent. On Maundy Thursday we will have our annual "Meal in the Upper Room" led by Pastor Warren Freiheit. He will also led us with a Good Friday worship service. Bishop Mike will dedicate the new sanctuary on March 25th. Each Friday afternoon we have our "School Bus Ministry" where we also with Community of Joy greet about 6-7 buses of children coming home from school with a smile and a granola bar.

Community of Joy, Hot Springs Village, Pastor Mary Beth Kovanen

** We shared in a three part education event with Christ Lutheran - Hot Springs Village called: "Planning Ahead... Preparing for Departure". Over 60 people attended as we heard from a funeral director, a lawyer, and a community leader about making final plans. We also contemplated what it means to leave a "spiritual legacy".

** We've started a "Sunday School"... which actually meets 2x/month on **Saturday** before our evening worship.

** We welcomed Pastor Liz to our congregation. She led a Council Retreat, provided a workshop on "Being Lutheran in the Buckle of the Bible Belt", and presided at the Ash Wednesday worship service.

** We just published a new congregational photo directory.

** We have formed an Emergency Response Team to focus on emergency preparedness @ CJoy (i.e. medical, weather, security, etc.).

** We provided training workshops during the month of January for all of our worship-related volunteers... each weekend focusing on one group of volunteers (i.e. ushers, greeters, communion care, communion assistants).

** We're working on updating our constitution and by-laws to align with changes made at ELCA Churchwide Assembly, as well as to reflect our local practice.

Emanuel Lutheran, Stuttgart, Licensed Minister Glenn Larson

Christ Lutheran, Hot Springs Village, Pastor Kurt Kovanen

In October, CLC was involved in a special Reformation 500 service in the village. It was an ecumenical effort with several local churches participating, especially through a community choir. Retired Pastor Warren Freiheit took a major leadership role in helping make this event happen. In November, CLC hosted their traditional Thanksgiving Day worship service followed by a delicious meal. In December, Advent services on Wednesday evening used the liturgy, "Holden Evening Prayer."

For the year 2017, the baptized membership declined by 42 individuals (18 deaths, 28 transfers out and/or inactive folks removed, with 4 new members being welcomed). Christ Lutheran Church's mission statement guides the congregation's ministry: "Looking up to God. Reaching Out to the World. Gathering in with Love."

Faith Lutheran, Little Rock, Pastor Josh & Deacon Shannon Johnson

Faith Lutheran had a great end to 2017! In 2017, we began having Servanthood Sundays. This is a Sunday morning worship and service combined into one mission experience. In this time, we gather for worship, sing, pray, and hear a message of the gospel shared through a local nonprofit that the Servanthood Sunday focuses on and then we leave the sanctuary and join in a project together, once it is completed, we bless the items and give them to the non-profit they support. In 2018, we will venture into *A Time to Renew*. *A Time to Renew* is an intentional renewal process which includes focus on reviewing (review all the ways we are and do church), discovering (discover the used & unused gifts God has given us), claiming (claim who we are and what it means to be Faith Lutheran Church in Little Rock, AR), and living (live renewed as a community of faith that lives its mission).

Shepherd of the Hills, North Little Rock, Interim Pastor Carlos Summers

Respectfully Submitted

Jackie Wilson, Cluster 8 Coordinator