



## SUMMARY REPORT – OPEN FORUM Saturday, Jan. 11, 2020

### Faith's Mission and Vision

Mission: Faithfully and JOYFULLY living every relationship in God's way.

Vision: Being reminded by the "Thumbs Up" illustration, in everything we do, the Faith family is JOYFULLY connecting disciples to JESUS, to family, to the church family, and to pre-believers in the world.

### Summary Reports from the Board of Directors

Senior Pastor – Pastor Biermann

#### Highs:

- Hiring Alicen Dub as our new Office Administrator and calling Joel Zander as our new Director of Education and Youth.
- Transitioning Sue Hooper into the position of part-time Worship Arts Director and Emily Crow into the position of Music Director.
- Taking some sabbatical time in May and June that included awesome mission work in South Africa.
- Spending a week in Ethiopia in August to train 40 leaders of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesu in God's way for marriage and all relationships.
- There is new interest and enthusiasm in our youth ministry program for all ages as Joel Zander and a team of committed adults are continuing what's good and adding more.
- That so many of our Faith family members are taking their role as a 24/7 disciple of Jesus very seriously and it's breeding a sense of excitement in our Faith family as we're living for Jesus.
- That the mission and ministry opportunities before us are endless and God will surely provide all we need to accomplish His will for us as we step out in bold faith...and our JOY will be FULL!

#### Lows:

- Having Brooke Caldwell and Jason von der Lage leave Faith in the spring to move on to new endeavors.
- Having so many who consider regular attendance in worship to be attending only once or twice a month rather than weekly.
- That we too often give in to the temptation to leave Jesus in the church building when we head out into the world.
- That we are not allowing God to bless us more abundantly in our ministry because we are not showing a greater commitment in our financial gifts for His work...being reflected in a shortfall of about \$100,000 in giving vs. our budget as of the end of Oct.
- That we are in a country where fewer and fewer will ever come to the church and our challenges for mission and ministry will continue to grow.

#### Goals:

- To better educate our Faith family on the responsibility and blessing of first-fruit stewardship with our time, talents and money.
- To model and equip daily witnessing of our faith in Jesus in ALL of our relationships each day, starting in our homes and moving out from there.
- To build our Faith family in living out our relationship with Jesus full-time and experiencing His JOY to the FULL!

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH AND PRESCHOOL 

12534 HOLLY ROAD - GRAND BLANC, MI 48439 - 810-694-9351 - CHURCHOFFICE@FAITHGB.ORG - WWW.FAITHGB.ORG

## Office Administrator – Alicen Dub

### **Highs:**

- Helped to implement a new voucher policy for a more accurate checks and balance system
- Started to build and grow relationships with congregation members working in this position
- Researched and found a way to enable the online payment method through ACS for youth events happening at Faith

### **Lows:**

- Did not create a substantial presence on Facebook with posts about activities taking place at Faith

### **Goals:**

- To gain knowledge of the church Treasurer job so that I can help to create a backup for this position and other positions in the office
- Post at least 1 time per week on Facebook about activities happening at the church to help stir up more interest in them
- Work to revamp the website to make it more cohesive and appealing

## Outreach & Missions – Suzanne Perreault, Chair with Pastor Bob Scott, Staff Support

We thank God for another year to serve world missions and outreach to the Grand Blanc community and beyond!

### **Highs:**

- Faith continues to support the families from World's Redeemer Church in Santiago Zamora, Guatemala by providing financial support for the purchase of corn and beans. Following the June 2018 volcano eruption, members of our congregation traveled to Santiago Zamora on a planned mission trip and witnessed the devastation to the region's farms. Our Faith Family raised money through a special offering and that support continues to provide for the purchase and distribution of food to families at World's Redeemer.
- Faith Happenings events took place over the summer and brought together members of our congregation to share God's love with the Grand Blanc community through random acts of kindness. This included handing out gas cards, buying ice cream at Ziggy's, and purchasing groceries.

- Grand Blanc Area Faith Community Outreach is continuing to build momentum as a centralized resource to serve those in need in the greater Grand Blanc community. We're thankful to have Marcy Montez represent Faith as part of that organization's leadership. Pastor Biermann serves as President of GBAFCO.
- The next international mission trip to Guatemala is in the planning phase for a 2020 trip. Past mission work has included construction related projects at World's Redeemer Church in Santiago Zamora, Guatemala as well as providing vacation Bible school and Project JOEL lessons to students. We're excited to see how God's plans for this team unfold over the next 6 months. The team is also welcoming additional members!
- Our cross-hemisphere pulpit exchange on Pentecost Sunday. It was exciting to have Pastor Mandla Khumalo at Faith while Pastor Biermann preached to his congregation at St. Peter's Confessional Lutheran Church in Middleburg, South Africa. We pray to continue that relationship.

### **Lows:**

- We have opportunities to support additional outreach project ideas through WAVE grants. Would love to see more participation in this opportunity.

### **Goals:**

- Engage with additional Faith Members who may be interested in serving as part of the 2020 mission team. If you have a heart for service, this is a wonderful opportunity to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus, be a witness to an underserved population, and to build relationships through Christ with other Faith members.

Further connect with Grand Blanc Community events with additional events or outreach!

Franklin Ave. Mission – Under Board of Outreach & Missions; primarily coordinated by Kelly Credit with Pastor Scott, Staff Support

The year 2019 saw some major changes at the Franklin Ave. Mission – very *positive* change that underscores the fact that our success on Flint's East side is the work of the Holy Spirit dispensing God's

grace to His people. This does not mean, however, that we should be content with our current accomplishments. On the contrary, our many blessings are an indication that we should work all the harder as we continue to act as the hands, feet, and voice of Jesus to a people who are in great physical and spiritual need.

**Highs:**

- The installation of Pastor Christian Jones as the spiritual director of FAM, replacing Pastor Brad Yops, as he prepares to move on to other things.
- The installation of Rachel (Gehm) Siemen as Mission Coordinator, replacing Sue Aussen, who has retired.
- The opening of Mercy House. Managed by Wellspring Lutheran Services, that ministry is able to help women and children have a new start in life.
- Kelly Cradit volunteering as Faith's FAM coordinator and now serving on the FAM Board of Directors.
- Adult Bible Study is now offered twice a week: Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.
- The beginning of regular Sunday evening worship.
- Another successful VBS program
- Congregations from the Greater Flint Tri-Circuit continue to serve together as we feed and clothe some 200+ people each Tuesday and Thursday.
- Flint police are present at least one day a week to provide security and develop a relationship with the community.
- FAM was able to purchase and furnish a new home for Les and Clara Skinner – two beloved members of FAM, who have suffered severe health issues due to living in an uninhabitable house for so long.
- The success of the FAM golf outing at the Fortress in Frankenmuth, raising much needed cash and greater awareness for the mission.

**Lows:**

- Pastor Brad Yops, who has been the face of FAM since its inception, now operates behind the scenes as he moves toward retirement. His leadership will be missed.
- Retirement of Sue Aussen. Her joyful face and service will likewise be missed.

- Marcy Montez stepping down from her role as Faith's mission coordinator. She set the tone for all who follow.
- "The Cop Shop", a police mini-station next to FAM, still has not opened, due largely to some changes in Flint's Police force. Pastor Jones is working with Flint's interim police chief to work toward that goal.
- Need for a new coordinator for Clean & Green.

**Goals:**

- Complete "The Cop Shop" so that there will be a continual police presence on campus.
- Explore possibility of purchasing and remodeling area homes for those graduating from the women's shelter.

Publicity & Communications – Laura Mulligan, Chair

**Highs:**

- Being able to do most everything digitally
- Being able to get Faith spirit wear ordered for many in the congregation

**Low:**

- Not having other committees and boards utilize PR and Communication

**Goals:**

- For all groups, committees and boards to better utilize PR and Communication

Social Ministry – Stephany Hall, Chair

Social Ministry encompasses several Faith ministries including: the Food Pantry, Holiday Food Baskets, Christmas Angel Tree, Mitten Basket, KOOL ministry (Knit Out Of Love), Nursing Home Sunday Service, Home-bound member visitation, Stephen Ministry, and the Parish Nursing Program (SEE separate report for this below).

All who work with Social Ministry thank and praise our Lord for raising up Faith members who generously give of their time, talents, energy, and resources, to enable Faith LC to touch the lives of so many within and outside our worship family. We are thankful to those who support Social Ministry, listening and learning about our needs, and getting involved and giving back in so many ways.

**Highs:**

- Having provided 34 holiday food baskets

(Thanksgiving and Easter), we currently are adding to our Christmas List. We're grateful for help from great volunteers! The Christmas Angel Tree requests were filled with gifts for those in need.

- Food Pantry – The Longnecker family has graciously taken over the food pantry. Our Faith family's generous donations have kept our pantry well stocked—we were especially blessed with donations from the "Trunk or Treat" event in October.
- The wonderful work being done by Christie Hansard, our Parish Nurse
- Healthy options in lieu of donuts at coffee hour
- KOOL – Many items were donated to our community including baby hats to Genesys Hospital; lap robes to Genesys Convalescent Center; scarves, hats and mittens that were donated to Franklin Avenue Mission, FISH, Heartbeat, and Faith Fundraisers. They are also making mats for kittens.
- Delivery of Mother's Day baskets to the home-bound, filled with personal care items that were greatly appreciated.
- Parish Nursing/Safety Ministry: conducted blood pressure checks, flu clinics, emergency response training for church leaders, Parish nurse support for VBS, maintained first-aid supplies, updated legal paperwork and provided fruit/snack baskets for Faith home-bound members at Christmas and Easter.

**Lows:**

- The inability to always help with the increased number of requests that continues from outside of our congregation.

**Grow:**

- Continued commitment to provide services and reach out to our Faith family, our community, and county agencies.
- Cooperate with the Grand Blanc Area Faith Community Outreach to find a location and provide volunteers to staff a central location for assistance to anyone in our greater Grand Blanc community.

- Add members to Social Ministry Board.

Parish Nurse – Christie Hansard

**Highs:**

- The Congregational Health Ministry Team had a great year serving in so many areas, some of those areas are: Blood Drives, Flu and Pneumonia Clinic, Blood Pressure Sundays with added time to answer any health related questions, Monthly Health Topics and education; Human Trafficking & Domestic Abuse Awareness, Smoking & Vaping Dangers, and other resources. VBS First Aid, CPR and AED training.
- Christie Hansard was accepted into the Deaconess Program and is currently taking distance learning classes at Concordia Theological Seminary - Fort Wayne.
- Christie is working with Pastor Biermann, Joel Zander and the Grand Blanc School District with teen health resources in our community. We are planning to do some joint activities this coming year.

**Lows:**

- It saddens our hearts that there is so much suffering in this world with our brothers and sisters in Christ, but we are called to serve them and the world through Jesus Christ. We ask that you pray for those we are privileged to serve.
- Due to low interest and time conflicts, we discontinued "Come Walk with Me" for the time being.

**Goals:**

- We are looking forward to the New Year with Christie's education and training as a Deaconess, along with other health professionals in our congregation, to enhance and expand the ability to provide Christ-centered health programs with a mind, body, and spirit perspective.

Board of Worship – Laurie Crawford, Chair

- Altar Guild ministry is growing in competence and morale. We thank Linda Robinson for her gracious and diligent leadership.
- Easter flowers this year were beautiful and we had 50 poinsettias that were displayed for Advent/Christmas.

- Thank you, Jim Putnam, for your lengthy and faithful service as Faith's Head Usher

**Low:**

- We need more men, women and youth to volunteer as ushers. It is a needed ministry of welcome and good order

**Goals:**

- To be a gracious listener to anyone's concerns, approvals, dreams and suggestions. Please let me know your feedback concerning worship at Faith. Phone 810-694-9087 or put in my mailbox in Heins Hall.

Director of Music & Vocal Choirs- Emily Crow

**High:**

- I am excited to be on staff as Director of Music since May 1.
- There is an increase in the number of choir members
- I was very blessed to help facilitate a beautiful youth Advent service on Dec. 4

**Low:**

- We have been dealing with increasing screen & technical difficulties

**Goals:**

- Continue to explore blended worship styles
- I would like to continue to include the youth in different worship opportunities.

Elders – Matt Guinn, Chair & Pastor Biermann, Staff Support

**Highs:**

- Unwavering commitment to assist the pastors in shepherding the congregation by pointing them to Jesus and His love
- Successful completion of Heins Hall "Saints in Heaven" plaque
- Sunday-schoolers meet an elder program to start in Jan '20
- Smooth transition of leadership from Craig Hubert to myself
- Number of 1<sup>st</sup>-time elders showing great enthusiasm
- Engaging congregation for feedback on worship activities, e.g. robes, prayer
- Collective effort contacting members for member directory

**Lows:**

- Lack of knowledge & cross training of technology
- Insufficient emergency preparation readiness for emergency situations
- Inconsistency of prayers before services with worship leaders
- Struggle connecting with members in our ministry groups through calls/cards

**Goals:**

- Re-initiate acolyte program
- Encourage elders to make new connections outside the church
- Increase participation in birthday call / birthday card connections
- Seek out potential elders for next year's term
- Find new elders to relieve existing ones for Ministerial Health & Wellness committee

Salary & Personnel – Scott Hans, V.P. of Salary and Personnel

**Highs:**

- Improving the structure for job descriptions for all salaried jobs
- Successful calling and onboarding of Education & Youth Director, Joel Zander

**Lows:**

- Low levels of volunteering and volunteer leadership
- Lack of structure in decision records and strategic planning

**Goals:**

- Improve the "bench strength" or depth of volunteer resources
- Improve the structure for decision records and strategic planning

Property & Maintenance – Sam Siegel, V.P. of Property & Maintenance

**Highs:**

- New LED lights in FLC
- New people to work on maintenance
- Memorial Garden looking great

**Lows:**

- Parking Lot needs resurfacing
- Carpet needs replacement
- A-Team needs help on Tuesdays
- Outside doors are rusting

**Goals:**

- LED lights still needed for hallways

- Painting is needed in some areas
- Hope to have new projectors and screens in sanctuary soon
- Would like to upgrade the camera at the Baptismal font

Board of Congregational Ministry (BCM) Jennifer

Hocken, Chair & Joel Zander, Staff Support

We saw some new events that welcomed all ages and were well received.

**Highs:**

- Chili/Soup Cook-off in February
- Potluck in April to send off Pastor and Heather Biermann on their sabbatical
- Fall Kickoff in September including a cakewalk
- Annual, and always very successful, Trunk-or-Treat
- A big Thank You to Heather Biermann for giving the nursery a much-needed overhaul and extended new hours. Give the nursery a visit when you get the chance.

All these events wouldn't be possible without the talent and dedication of our board members that step up anytime help is needed.

**Lows:**

- Our ongoing low is maintaining coffee hour volunteers. We had to cancel several times this summer due to lack of volunteers. We maintain an ongoing online signup as well as a new signup sheet in Heins Hall. Training is offered to anyone that would like to help and is unfamiliar. Hopefully more will sign up to keep this ministry ongoing.

**Goals:**

- One of our goals is to create a series of life skill lessons, such as car maintenance 101, financial basics, sewing, cooking etc. These lessons will be offered to all ages. If anyone has a talent they'd like to share, they can contact any of the BCM members.
- A second goal is to produce a calendar of events and other important dates early in the year so everyone can plan ahead.

Preschool – Cindy LaFontaine, Director

**Highs:**

- We were voted the number 1 Preschool in Genesee County by the Michigan Moms' Blog
- Large enrollment again this year

- The four year olds went Trick or Treating at The American House Apartments and the residents and the children enjoyed it
- Continuing Open Gym nights for the families
- More families in childcare

**Lows:**

- More licensing changes are coming
- Lost some of our staff
- There are children with more learning issues which is a difficult situation for the staff and the children

**Goals:**

- Trying to find new ways to care for our Preschool families, esp. to share the love of our Lord and Savior with them and to connect them to our Faith family
- To continue to be a key ministry of Faith Lutheran Church
- Continue to build up our staff and unite them in serving our Lord

Youth – Andy Priestap, Chair & Joel Zander, Staff Support

**Highs:**

- Successful fundraising throughout the year allowed us to send 18 youth and 5 adult leaders to the LCMS National Youth Gathering in Minnesota.
- Youth are blessed to have had Joel Zander accept the call as the new Director of Christian Education and Youth. He has been a blessing and has stepped right in to further our youth towards a relationship with Christ.
- We have started "youth hangout nights" on Friday evenings periodically and these have been well received and well attended by middle school and high school youth.
- There was a parent-led "End of School Bash" hosted by the youth.
- Several youth were also involved in the "Faith Happenings" events while Pastor Biermann was on sabbatical.

**Lows:**

- Some trials with not having a Director of Christian Education and Youth for a good part of the year.
- Difficulty with involving all age groups in both service activities and fellowship activities, especially with kids in fifth grade and younger.

- Inconsistent youth board and planning meetings.
- Unable to participate in Kenosha mission trip this year.

**Goals:**

- Continue to encourage and have active involvement for all age groups in a home-centered, church-supported model.
- Continue to develop the Board of Youth in a new format, with representatives for each age group meeting monthly, with open youth forums every quarter.
- Develop a predictable and consistent schedule of events and opportunities.
- Design a comprehensive program that includes recreation, service and spiritual growth opportunities.

Stewardship & Finance – John Crawford, V.P. of Stewardship & Finance

In 2019 our Faith Lutheran Family has practiced caring, sharing stewardship in many ways. Some examples of our congregation’s sharing and caring activities will be addressed in the annual Congregational Forum on Jan. 11, 2020 and in the annual congregational meeting on Jan. 26, 2020.

Regarding activities specifically assigned to the Vice-President for Stewardship & Finance, I am pleased to report the following:

- **Tellers and Contributions Recording** – We continue to be blessed with a very willing and capable group of Faith Family members who serve as Tellers, Teller Captains and Financial Contributions Record Keeper. Their work is crucial to the life of our congregation. Early in 2019 Rayna Bryant-Ott stepped in to fill the position of Teller Teams’ Coordinator. She has been doing a wonderful job. During 2019 and for 2020 we have also been blessed to have a number of great Faith Family members join our teller/record keeping group. Our teams are currently well staffed. Our congregation’s Treasurer, Marge Taylor, is currently working to help bring additional efficiency and time savings to our teller team efforts through the addition of some technology updates that will streamline bank deposit tasks.
- **Nominating Committee** – A caring group of our members came together again in early 2019 to serve on a nominating committee

and recruit a slate of qualified candidates to run for various elected positions in the congregation. They did their job well. Since this is an annual activity, we will be conducting the nominating committee activities again in 2020 from mid-February through early April. Please consider service to our Faith Family by becoming a 2020 nominating committee member. If you’re interested in contributing to this important area of the Faith Family life, contact me by early February.

- **Budget Activity** – Each member of the Faith Lutheran Board of Directors takes the Annual Budget (Spending Plan) development and follow-up activity seriously. I am pleased with the attention to detail exhibited by the current board. As in past years, in 2019 our boards have made concerted efforts to not spend more than budget allowances and/or contributions. **That type of responsible effort has been especially meaningful during 2019 because we have been experiencing a significant, unplanned shortfall of approximately \$10,000 per month in anticipated General Fund Revenue. The fact of reduced contributions is something that we will have to deal with together as a Faith Family.** The Faith Board of Directors is currently building the 2020 Budget and will make it available for your review in advance of the upcoming Annual Congregational Meeting. It is important for you, as a member of the Faith Family, to be present for the family’s financial discussion at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- **Endowment Fund Management** – A small group of Faith Family members serve on our Endowment Fund Committee. This group of financial professionals advises the Faith Board of Directors concerning investment options for the monies in our Endowment Fund account. The fund level now exceeds \$140,000.

If you would like to volunteer or have questions or concerns related to any Faith Lutheran stewardship or financial matters not addressed above, please contact me:

Phone: 810-694-9087

Email: [jo.la.crawford@comcast.net](mailto:jo.la.crawford@comcast.net)

Congregational President – Bruce Trevithick

It has been a blessing and an honor to have been elected this year to serve our Faith Family in the position of Congregational President. In my short time in this role I can already see both many opportunities and some challenges. Being able to work with an incredibly dedicated and faithful staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers is the greatest gift the Lord has given us. In addition, we have a wonderful facility and property to assist us in fulfilling God's purposes. But these things can only be maintained through the ongoing, focused, and unwavering commitment of EVERY person who calls Faith their church home.

To that end, we have some arduous work ahead of us as we face a shortfall in funds for the current budget year, uncertainty about contributions in the future, infrastructure needs that must be met, and long-term debt that weighs us down. The Executive Committee and Board have already begun discussing these issues and have started to develop some preliminary plans to address them. In order for these hurdles to be overcome we will need the input and support from the full congregation. I welcome the insights of those willing to share them and strongly encourage all members of Faith to find any way they can and that is most appropriate for their lives to help as we move forward.

We, as a church body (both here and throughout the world), have faced difficulties before, but we have kept our faith in Christ alone and persevered. We will do so again – together.

God's Blessings – Bruce.