

Dear Members and Friends of First Lutheran,

Last week I wrote to update you on changes in office staffing that will happen in the next few months. I'm writing today to update you on several other things. My apologies for the length of this letter, but I've got lots to share.

Financial Update: Our January Financial Summary is posted on our church website (www.flcsj.org Click on About Us and then on Newsletters/Council Reports). January income was in line with what we budgeted, but January expenses exceeded our income by \$6,000. This was due to one-time expenses related to Pastor Sami's move to St. Joseph and completing our financial obligation to Pastor Keith. Fortunately, we began the year with enough cash on hand carried over from 2021 to cover these expenses but our cushion was significantly reduced.

Pay Down the Debt: At its January meeting the Congregation Council began discussing a 2022 mortgage reduction campaign. The council voted to table further discussion until later in the year for these reasons:

- As reported above, we began the year with expenses significantly greater than our income.
- We begin our search for an office assistant in a job market with higher starting wages.
- We will be reviewing ministries that have been dormant while we were in transition between Pastor Roger and Pastor Sami and exploring new ministry opportunities. We don't know what financial costs might be associated with these.
- We will be exploring ways to enhance our worship streaming.
- We asked ourselves to dig deep last year in individual contributions to reduce our mortgage on top of our support of our operating budget.

With these unknowns at the start of the year, the council determined that it would not be prudent to launch a mortgage reduction campaign this spring. This remains as a tabled item on the council's agenda and will be revisited later in the year when we have a better handle on our operating expenses and income.

Even without a formal campaign, you are welcome to make contributions for reducing our loan principal. Contributions received with the notation "debt reduction" will be sent in as an additional principal payment. Reducing principal effectively shortens the number of payments remaining on our loan.

Office Assistant Job Posting: Last week I reported on the transition we are in as Nila actively pursues a job in her preferred field of education and we begin actively recruiting for a replacement in our office. Pastor Sami posted this position in a variety of places this morning.

The technical skills needed for this position include a solid working knowledge of Microsoft Office 365 apps and a working knowledge of website maintenance and of Facebook and other social media. Also needed is the ability to learn independently and to recruit and retain volunteers. This position requires excellent interpersonal skills, ability to maintain

confidentiality and appropriate professional boundaries in interacting with staff, congregation members and the public. The person in this position will not be required to become a member of First Lutheran. For the sake of preserving appropriate boundaries preference will be given to persons who are not members. If you know someone who possesses these qualifications and is in search of a job, encourage them to contact Pastor Sami and request the job description.

Microphone and Wiring Project: Lanham Music is waiting on the arrival of some of the components needed for the job. They anticipate receiving those in late March. In the meantime, contributions toward this project have slowed down. The Foundation donated \$2,500 and members contributed \$2,700 toward this project in 2021. We have received an additional \$500 so far this year, leaving us \$2,750 short of fully funding this project. We will draw on memorial funds to cover the balance not funded through further contributions.

Imagine Eleven: After a 2-year COVID hiatus, Imagine Eleven will return this summer, bringing eleven Sunday evenings of free entertainment to the Coleman Hawkins Square. First Lutheran members Roger Lenander, Jeff Langdon and Misty Coyle are the team planning this year's concert series, recruiting musical acts, and raising sponsorship funds. A combination of sponsorships and free-will offerings at each concert will cover concert expenses. Money raised beyond what is needed to cover expenses will be donated to The Crossing to help fund its ministries.

I close today by reminding us that at their heart all the things I have reported on here are in support of the ministry God calls us into in this time and place. Surrounding these things are our ongoing prayers that God will inspire us and lead us through this year and that we will be open to that leadership and inspiration.

God be with us all and bless others through our service.

Jim Pierce
President