

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As a pastor, I need to keep up on continuing education. This year, I am taking a class called, "Rural Ministry and Suicide Prevention". Every Thursday afternoon for six weeks I will meet with my cohort group and our teacher online to listen to lectures and share ideas. Each week, I will have a couple of hours of work to do so I am ready for the next class.

On our first day of class, they introduced some shocking statistics. Farmers and those who work around them are 2 to 3.5 times more likely to commit suicide than other professions. 14.5% of all farmers in America will die of suicide. That comes to over 50,000 suicides a year. 75% of those suicides are men but of the women farmers there is the highest suicide attempts in the nation. The suicide rate for farmers has increased by 30% since the year 2000.

As a community that revolves around rural life, we need to be aware that these statistics are talking about our neighbors, our relatives, our friends and us.

My rural ministry and suicide prevention class tries to find a Biblical basis for our treatment of people struggling with mental health. One of my favorite examples they have given was Elijah. Elijah had felt the power of his God and used it to defeat God's enemies, so one would think he would always know who he could count on and take strength from. But there is one point in his story that Elijah runs from his enemy in fear and sits so depressed, alone, hopeless and afraid that he wants to die. God sends an angel to Elijah to feed him and help him rest. To quote my instructor, "God knew the healing power of a caring touch, a snack and a good nap."

When dealing with people who are suffering from depression, suicidal thoughts, and many other things that plague us, things can seem really overwhelming and like there is nothing we can do. You can not cure someone. You are not called to do that. But, sometimes, providing the touch of another human who cares can really help. You cannot make the weariness go away, but providing a safe place and the permission to lay their burdens down and rest is huge. You cannot make a person want to eat, but sometimes providing a healthy meal they didn't have to make or a tempting sweet snack can help.

You can only do small things for the people suffering around you. But, your small thing and God's big presence can be the reason they make it through one more day...and sometimes one more day is what is needed to find a reason to hope. Bring God's Hope to those around you today!

Pastor Janet Miller

Hopes Happening

Note from the treasurer

Thank you to everyone for your continued generosity and support of Hope Lutheran Church.

I don't know if you noticed in the offering statement that while "traditional" offerings make up a large portion of the gifts we receive each month, Venmo, direct transfers, and gifts of grain are options.

If you have questions about ways to minimize taxes and make your offerings "go further", please contact me, Annelies Seffrood, at annelies.seffrood@gmail.com. I can assist in finding the best offering method for you.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: If you are using Tnics for your email, you will need to let the church know your new email address before December 2024. Tnics will no longer be supported. Let me know ASAP so I can update it, so you don't miss the monthly newsletter or any other important announcements. 😊

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WORSHIP TIME CHANGE-Beginning on May 5, worship will begin at 10:30 am. Sunday school will start at 9:30 am that day. It's also the last day of Sunday school. It will be a family fun day so make plans to attend!! 😊

Sarah Holt is looking for any confirmation group pictures from the years 2006-2024. She has offered to update the board hanging in the back of the church. If you have one to donate, please bring it to the church. Also, if you can, list the names of the confirmands as well. 😊 Thank you!!



Council minutes

April 24, 2024

P: Nicole Ebsen, Billi Whempner, Ben Graf, Vicky Gleason, Dustin Holt, Tamijo Bronson, Maddie Hinkelman, Pastor Janet.

A: Traci Maag, Kevin Christofferson, Cooper Ebsen

O: Anne Seffrood, Dawn Wright

Pastor opened with a prayer.

Secretary report-M-Tamijo, 2nd-Vicky. Passed

Treasurers report-M-Ben, 2nd-Maddie. Passed

Pastor's Report

I did 1 baptism and 1 funeral this month

I worship and communion at Edgewood memory care and Cederview nursing homes each month- Summit and Florence have people in these facilities.

Confirmation students – older class had their last day today- confirmation will happen April 27th

Lenten services were well attended

I will be gone May 19th

I am taking a continuing ed class called rural ministry suicide prevention

I am on the companion synod committee and the support to ministries committee because I am the conference dean for 1 more year and Helping Kids Round 1st board

I have a support to ministry committee meeting in Sioux Falls May 16th

I am leading worship at NeSoDak July 7th- do we want to do like we did last year with this and have our people come out to NeSoDak?

Synod assembly is May 31-June 1

Old Business

*Siding-Dustin reported on the siding project. Council discussed doors for the front. M-Billi, 2nd-Tamijo to install 6' front doors.

*Website-Traci gave an update on how the website is coming. She will send a link for council to preview before it's ready to launch.

*Mowing for the cemetery- We are still looking for someone to mow. Dustin will talk to the cemetery committee about finding someone.

New business

*The youth are planning a t-shirt fundraiser.

*The Sharf family was asking about something the church could use. They would like to give something in memory of their parents.

*Summer worship time change begins on May 5. Worship will begin at 10:30. Sunday school will start at 9:30. It is the last day of Sunday school.

Senior recognition-May 12.

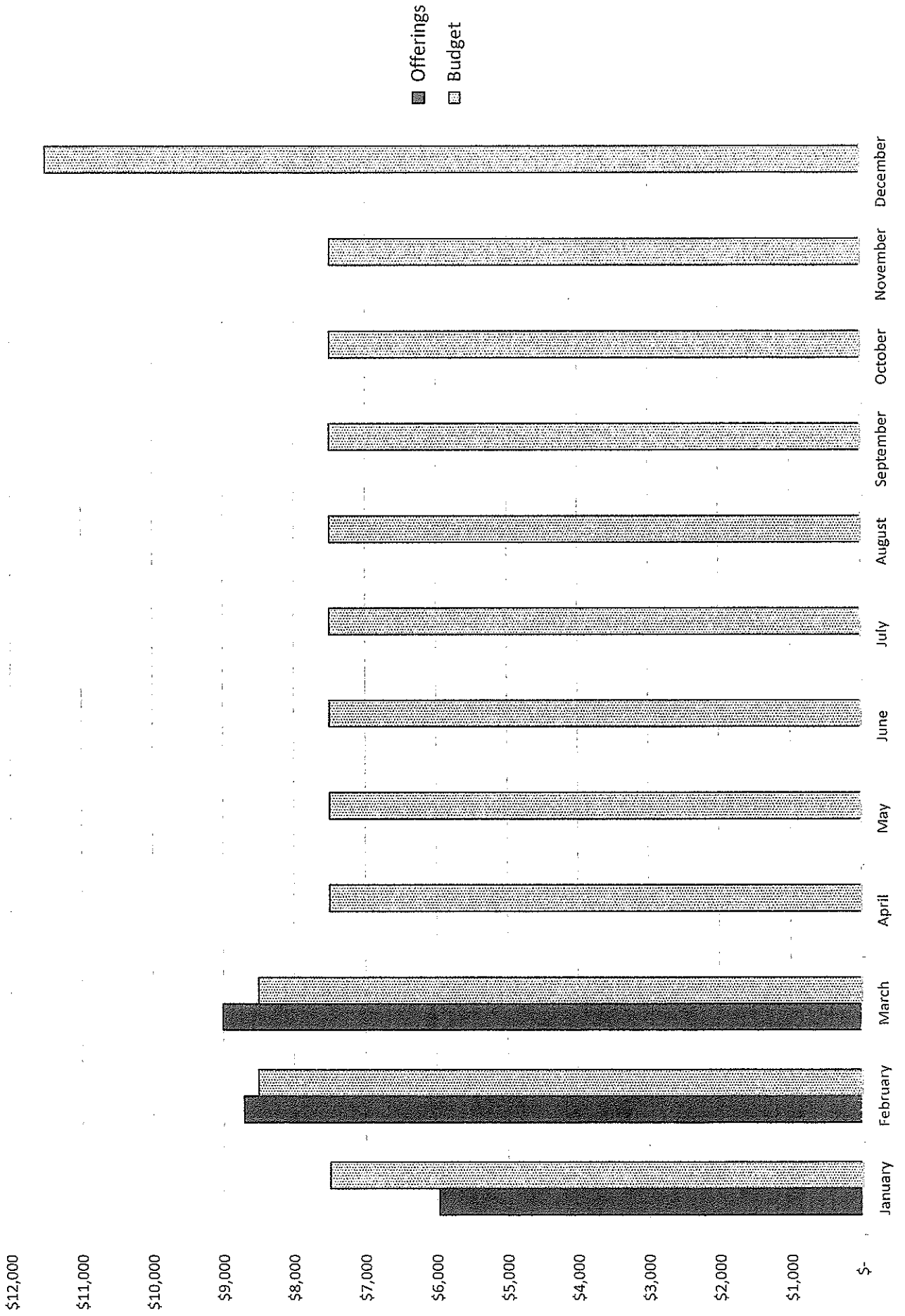
Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Next meeting will be on June 5 at 7:00.

2024 Monthly Offerings vs Budget

(does not include memorials, special gifts, other income. Does include Lent Services)

January - March YTD \$818 below budget





South Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Spring/Summer 2024 Newsletter Inserts

From the Bishop's Desk

Dear South Dakota Synod,

Grace and Peace to you in the name of the Risen One, Christ our Lord!

This year's Synod Assembly theme is "Connect(ed)". Every year post-assembly I talk to God's people one theme stands out; "I didn't know how connected we are as the ELCA." We took this discovery and made it our theme for this year's assembly.

The spotlight will be on our partners across the state, nation, and world. Instead of keynote speakers, we will offer thematic panel conversations. The sit-down dinner will give way to a Peter Mayer concert on the Augustana University campus, where simultaneously food trucks will offer culinary choices complete with SDSU ice cream. This open concept of gathering will allow visitors from the community, maybe even your community, to join in the fun and provide a relaxed atmosphere to connect with those partners you had heard in the panel conversations earlier that day. The planning team hopes you will leave the assembly with a deeper sense of connectedness across the church and inspire your community to seek out or strengthen an intentional partnership with those you have met.

Of course, we will have business to take care of and resolutions to vote on. This brings me to the last newsworthy item. We will change how we vote. Instead of renting voting devices, we will switch to electronic voting via phone, tablet, or laptop. This can cause anxiety amongst those attending the assembly as voting members. I assure you that before the assembly we will have online training sessions. Once we are in assembly we practice until everyone confidentially participates.

I look forward to welcoming you to the assembly as a visitor or guest. A registration link for those

attending will open shortly. Check on assembly-related news in your weekly e-news.

Journeying in Christ with you,
Rev. Constanze Hagmaier
Bishop of the SD Synod

Three Things I Have Learned as Associate to the Bishop

"...remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

-Jesus in Matthew 28.20b

The promise we can trust, no matter what, is the promise from Jesus to be with us always. Whether we experience a bountiful harvest or barren fields, a death or a birth, joy or sorrow, and anything in between, Christ is with you and with me.

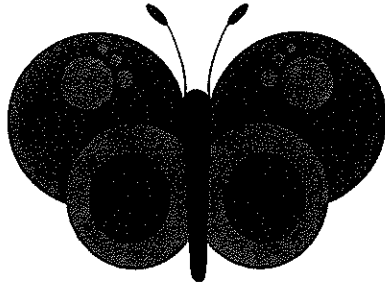
This Good News matters. It sustains us in times of uncertainty. We trust that Christ has died and risen from the grave for YOU! Christ has given you and your congregation the Holy Spirit of God, so that you may witness to Christ crucified and raised, so that you may be a dwelling place for God's love, mercy, forgiveness, and grace.

I have learned a great deal these last 4-5 years serving as an associate to the bishop in the SD Synod, especially when it comes to congregations in a time of transition. Here are 3 things I have learned without a doubt:

1. God is faithful.
2. God's Spirit leads the call process.
3. Times of transition are part of the normal life of every congregation.

When congregations don't know who their next pastor (or deacon!) will be, or how long the call process might take, or whether or not they can "afford" their own full-time pastor anymore, naturally, anxiety rises.

As people of faith, when we worry about what may or may not happen, we are called to turn back towards God, our source of life; and remember, Christ is with us always, to the end of the age.



May 2024

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
SUMMER WORSHIP TIME CHANGE BEGINNING MAY 5. WORSHIP WILL BEGIN AT 10:30 AM. THE LAST DAY OF SUNDAY SCHOOL IS MAY 5, WITH AN EARLY START TIME OF 9:30.				2 9-noon-Quilting 10:00-Conference Dean mtg. 12:30-1:30-rural ministry class	3	4
5red-Easter 9:30 Sunday Family Fun Day 10:30-Worship/SS teachers recognition/Children's church	6	7	8 3:30-Confirmation. Last day for the 1 st year group. 7:00-Youth group meeting	9 12:30-Suicide prevention class	10	11
12white-Easter Mother's Day/Senior Recognition during Worship	13	14	15 7:00 Baccalaureate	16 Support to ministries in Sioux Falls all day.	17 Quality of call. Ps. gone	18 2:00-Summit Graduation
19red-Pentecost	20	21 Cederview Worship	22	23	24 Newsletter items due	25
26white-Holy Trinity	27	28 Memory Care Worship	29	30 May 30-June 1-Synod Assembly in Sioux Falls.	31	

Notes

WORSHIP TIMES; (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)-10:30 AM, May 5-Last Day of Sunday school. Will begin at 9:30 am.

Worship helpers as of printing: 5-5-Whempners, 5-12-Open, 5-19-U-Anne & Laura, R-Seffrood, Com.-Laura & Anne, 5-26-open