



# FAMILY FOCUS

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## Thank You!

Dear Members,

I want to express my heartfelt thanks for the gifts and cards that my family and I received during Christmas. It truly meant a lot to us, and we want to say thank you. We pray that you and your families had a wonderful Christmas, and that God will bless you in the new year.

Thank you, Pastor Chad Czischke

## Update on Tree & Wreath Sale

This year's Tree and Wreath Sale was another success! While not intended to be a major fundraiser but more of a community outreach project, this year's tree sale netted a profit of \$506, and we were still able to donate six trees to families in the St. Croix Valley.

Our tree sale is quite small, but it is "BIG IN FAITH" in that we have an unattended lot, and the sale must rely on trusting our customers. This year's loss of six trees prior to our lot setup was surely disheartening, but we should keep the faith and hope we can continue this Family of Christ tradition for years to come.

Our wreath sale which raises funds for the Youth and Sunday School also was a success, with a net profit of \$276.70.

Thanks to all who purchased a tree and/or wreath, and a special thanks to Larry, Russ, Pr Chad and Jan for helping setup and take down the lot.

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*"We always look forward to getting our Christmas tree at Family of Christ. It's easy to choose a tree, and it's good to know our purchase helps donate other trees to area families."*

*-Anonymous*

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## New Altar Flower Calendar Posted

The 2023 calendar for altar flower donations is up (in the hallway leading to the fellowship hall) and ready for signing up. If you have not given flowers before there is a "how to" information pamphlet next to the sign up poster. Please consider helping us beautify our altar in the new year.

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FROM  
THE  
PASTOR



## Focus on Where God is Leading Us

Dear Members,

We have entered a New Year, and now is the time to truly focus on where God is leading us. Over the past month, we have spent a great deal of time reading through the prophetic texts of Isaiah chapters 7, 9, and 11. Through those chapters we learned once again about God's plan for our salvation. It truly is a wonderful reminder every year, and it is especially wonderful to hear about our loving God who provides all that we need. Yet now that the prophecy is complete and we celebrated the fulfillment of the prophecy through the birth of our Savior, it is time to move forward in our walk of faith.

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*Set comfort aside and realize the opportunity that God has for your life and this church; realize God's true excitement!*

*May God truly bless you in this New Year, and may you find true peace in Him.*

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Proverbs 3:5-6, is a great reminder of how to turn to our Savior and put our full trust in God.

There we read, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Sometimes it is hard to move from the prophecy to fulfillment, and then to living it out in our lives. However, as we live according to Proverbs 3, we begin to realize how God truly works it all out. As we put our full trust in Him, then He works the rest out. That is honestly what it means to trust the Lord and not yourself.

Many times, in life, we hold ourselves back because we are either afraid or have gotten too comfortable. Yet, what would have happened if the shepherds said, "nope, we are not going it is nice here, and that sounds like some trouble." Instead, after hearing the angelic message, they put comfort aside and ran to see what they were

told. There they found the Savior of all creation lying in a manger, and the excitement they must have felt. Today, I pray that you would do the same. Put comfort aside and realize the opportunity that God has for your life and this church; realize God's true excitement! For many if you were in church on Sunday, January 1, you heard that life at Family of Christ will change. However, with the decision to accept the Call to Shepherd of the Coast, my prayers instantly went up for Family of Christ, because I know the change that comes with this type of decision. It is a change for you and for me. Yet, we can make certain choices during this time. We can put our full trust in God that He has this situation in His hands and will work it out to His glory. Knowing that as we walk in Him, He will guide us in the way that He wants us to go. As we put our full trust in Him, remember God has us and will keep us in His care.

Proverbs 3, encourages us over and over to put our full trust in God, and lean on His understanding. I know God will provide for this congregation and will lead you into His planned future. However, I want to

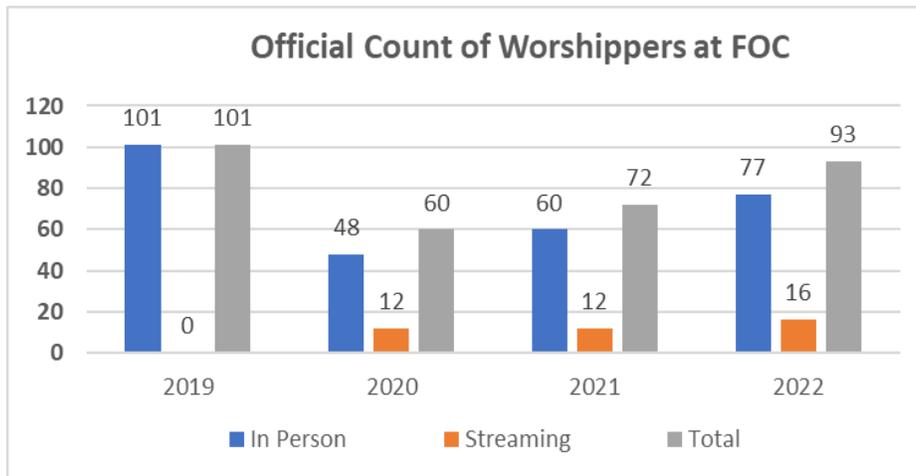
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## Elders' Corner

Greetings in the Name of the Lord,

As we enter 2023, the staff will be changing, and I will no longer be the Chairman of the Elders. It has been an honor to serve the Lord and this congregation. Thank you to everyone that has been part of the 2022 elder staff. Al Neuendorf has also finished his term as elder, and we both will move on to other ways to serve the congregation. Your new chairman will be Steve Vannatta.

Facebook and YouTube post of our Worship Service has been a key to FOC outreach. Our sound and video equipment continues to be upgraded. This year we added a second wireless channel for microphones and during December we have added a system to aid individuals that have difficulty hearing. If you have a hearing aid and want to be part of this program, let us know. We hope to have most people linked to the system in the next two weeks. I am particularly proud of many of our youth that have regularly served in the sound room to assure the services have the right slides/ broadcast output and hope to add more youth as we move forward.



Last month we looked at in-person church attendance for September and October. We want to provide you with a look at attendance for the last four years. We included 2019 as a baseline before COVID. In 2019 we did not have our video outreach and adjust the numbers to only include actual individual or group hits starting in 2020, mostly from Facebook. As you can see in the chart above, the numbers are moving in a positive direction from the initiation of the COVID threat. As we analyze 2022, the numbers may change slightly but what we can see, and project, Family of Christ should be back to normal and perhaps see added growth over 2019. We encourage all our members to return to in-person worship.

It was so great to see individuals at Christmas services that we have not seen in a while. For most it has been a very difficult three years, especially if we dealt with health issues. We mark this

## Youth & Education

The Sunday School kiddos did an amazing job on their Christmas Program! I am so proud of them and it was so fun seeing and hearing them share the story of our Savior's Birth!

Sunday School will be up and running again on Sunday, January 8. We will continue to learn more about the famous stories of the Bible and also start learning Bible verses from the heart.

Youth Group will be back up and running on Wednesday, January 4. Confirmation from 5:30-6:30pm Dinner and Youth Group from 6:30-7:30pm. We will be taking on some great Service and Community Building activities. Planning is in the works!



*Annie McConaughey*

### From the Pastor, *cont'd from p1*

encourage you to grow closer in God's Word and together during this time. Make God's Word and teamwork your focus and make plans to gather together in word and prayer. In that you will truly find God's direction, peace, grace, and joy.

I recognize this announcement does come as a shock, but I truly believe and trust with all my heart that God already has the plan for all of us in the works. May God truly bless you in this New Year, and may you find true peace in Him.

*God's blessings, Pastor Chad Czischke*

### Elders' Corner, *cont'd from p4*

Christmas as a gift for more of our members to begin in-person worship. Ironically, it is only a short time before Ash Wednesday on February 22.

May the Lord bless you and may the Holy Spirit reach out to strengthen our faith. Wasn't it fitting that the message theme for December was the focus on our blessings (Gratitude vs. Grumbings). We have so much to be thankful for. Something to remember is that grumbling kills happiness, faith, and trust. Let us grow in our faith this year.

*Steve Heinecke*

## LWML Update

### LWML Bible Study & Fellowship Thursday, January 12 at 1pm

ALL women are invited to join the FOC LWML group on the **second Thursday** of each month, as your schedule allows, for Bible study and fellowship. Following this month's study, we will be having an open, round (or square) table discussion regarding future activities, events and mission projects. Please come prepared with some ideas and/or suggestions to consider as we look ahead to the future of our organization.

Newcomers are ALWAYS welcome! If you need a ride or have any questions regarding LWML, please call a member of our Governing Board: Joyce Banttari at 651-434-3261, Dorothy Markling at 320-260-5204 or Judy Patraw at 612-723-7839.

### LWML Winter Worship – Saturday, February 4 9-11:00am



The St. Paul Metro LWML Zone will host a Winter Christian Growth Gathering at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 655 Forest St. N., St. Paul, MN 55106. The presenter is Rev. Dr. Joshua Hollmann, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia University. The topic "For Such a Time as This: Lessons from Esther on Living as Christians in a Post-Christian Age." Suggested donation is \$5. Remember to bring your Bible. A sign-up will be posted next to the flyer on the LWML bulletin board corner and carpools will plan to leave FOC at 8:30am. Please RSVP or if you have any questions, call Joyce Banttari at 651-434-3261.

### FOC LWML Ongoing Pill Bottle Mission Project

Just a reminder that **ONLY PRESCRIPTION pill bottles** are needed for shipping to Matthew25Ministries to assist with medical care. Thanks to the support of FOC members, our group has shipped just over 1,200 bottles so far in 2022 and nearly 6,000 bottles since we began this project in 2018! Plus a huge thank you to all our volunteers for the many hours spent cleaning, sorting, packaging and shipping! Bottles may be left in the designated box in the Narthex area any time.



## Family Mission Statement

### Our Mission Statement

We are Christ's family, joined to him and to one another.  
(*Ephesians 2:19-22, 4:16; 1 Corinthians 12:27; John 15:5-8*)

In following the direction of our Lord Jesus Christ and sharing his love with others (*Matthew 28:18-20*):

### We are committed to ...

- learning, living and teaching the Word.
- seeking the need for God in each other.
- celebrating His presence in our lives.
- reaching out to touch the lives of others with God's love.

## Worship



Sunday ~ 9:30 am - Worship with Communion on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month

10:45am - Education Hour for All Ages

### September - May

Sunday School (age 3 - Grade 5)

Youth Group (Grades 6 - 12)

Adult Bible Class

Wednesday ~ 5:30 pm Confirmation Class (Grades 6-7-8)

~ 6:45 pm Youth Programming