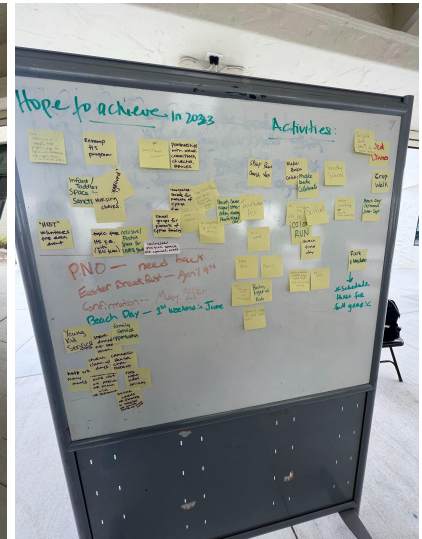


January 2023 - Council Report

Happy New Year! We started our Wednesday programs back on January 11th. In 2023, we will continue to have Fun With Faith, Rooted, Dinner and Confirmation. We did have to increase meal costs for adults to \$7 a meal. Kids 5 years old and younger are still \$5 a meal.

The Family Faith Formation Committee gathered on January 8th for our annual planning meeting. Joined by others from the congregation, we were able to set goals for the upcoming year. Focused on “Where is God calling us and how will we respond?”, we look forward to building upon the energy and commitment we received this past year into 2023.

January 20-22, our Middle and High School youth will be going to El Camino Pines for winter camp. The theme is Rooted, centered around Colossians 2: 6-7 “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”



February 2023 - Council Report

In January, we sent 5 kids to winter camp at El Camino Pines to join 60 other youth from around our Synod. Following the theme, our kids were able to connect with God learning different ways they are “Rooted” in faith, service, and the world. We are so thankful for camp being able to provide safe and brave spaces for our kids to question and explore.

Sunday February 12th is our second Serving Sunday - Family Edition where we will have members from 9 different households participating in worship. Whether it is acolyting, communion assisting, reading, etc. we are glad to have our kids and families serving. Afterwards, all are invited to participate in our B.Y.O.B.... Bring Your Own Barbeque at the church!

In February, we are looking at assembling a youth council. This is a small youth leadership group I will be looking to form with representation from all ages. The purpose of this youth council will be to develop their leadership skills. I look forward to reporting back my progress with this project.



March 2023 - Council Report

Thank you to all who supported our youth by purchasing a meal at Presto Pasta on March 6th. We were able to raise over \$230.00 towards our high school youth summer trip to the Western States Youth Gathering at Cal Lutheran. The continuous support from the congregation means so much to our youth and all involved in our programs.

On March 11th, our high school youth were invited to play Broomball with other youth groups from the area. We gathered at the Simi Valley Iceplex from 9:15pm - 10:45pm for great community time. We look forward to gathering with these same youth groups in June for Midnight Madness.

Looking ahead, we are excited to have our annual Easter Breakfast and Egg Hunt. Our high schoolers will be cooking pancakes and sausage served with fruit, coffee, juice, etc. We are collecting a free will offering where all the proceeds will go towards our high school summer trip.



April 2023 - Council Report

Thank you to all who attended and donated to our Easter Breakfast. We raised over \$1,000 towards our high school youth program. We are so thankful to our congregation who continues to support our youth. With 8 youth serving and 4 adults supervising, we had a joyous time.

The High School Youth Group will be meeting on April 23rd and will be cooking a meal. 3 ingredient pasta with salad.

April 30th we will be launching our playground! Located in the sanctuary, where the praise band used to play, we will be incorporating a welcoming space for families with little ones to be comfortable during worship. We look forward to how our pilot program goes throughout the summer.



May 2023 - Council Report

April 30th was the launch of our Playground Pilot. We have seen many families use the space and have positive feedback from congregants. We will be making adjustments as needed as we evaluate the space throughout the summer.

Confirmation for 2023 is this Sunday, May 21st at 9:30AM. We are excited to be confirming Daphne Lewis and Miera Stouch. We hope that you are able to join us for a great day! All are invited for a cake celebration under the pavilion after worship.

Summer Updates

This Summer is going to be a summer of experimenting. I know we say that a lot, but we will be trying out a few new things:

- Midweek Wind Up - Wednesday Night Program Continuation
- High School Youth Group - Activity Based Model
- Playground Development
- Youth Leadership Team

Report Continued

As many of you know, I started the conversation regarding salary increase and benefits in October of 2022. I am grateful that the church was able to offer a health benefits package. That conversation continues here as I am curious if the church would be willing to expand upon the current benefits package beyond just health care in 2024?

Would retirement be a possibility? Would an increase in Paid Time Off (PTO) be available? Would an increase in the health insurance allowance be offered to help cover dental and vision?

I look forward to continuing this conversation.

June 2023 - Council Report

As we continue to pilot the Playground area throughout the summer, we wanted to share with you the recent configuration changes we have made to the area. A picture and notes of the changes made are on the next page.

Venmo has been a great tool and has been meeting families needs. We have seen our account become very active! When we created the account, Venmo created a personal account and a business account for us. We have been using the personal account since the beginning, but can't seem to find out why we have the business account. With a few donations going through the business account, it has made recording a little difficult for the Financial Secretary as the only access to said account is through the app. With that said, VANCO (our long-time church giving platform) has released an updated digital giving platform. Many features were not offered in our initial conversations of Venmo vs. VANCO. In hopes that Make Bake Celebrate explores the effectiveness of VANCO's new service being offered for their event, we hope they will provide adequate feedback in which we can take into consideration how we might use it in our programs. What this means is that we want to properly align our giving to meet the needs of families, streamlining the recording process, and meeting the needs of the financial secretary and if that means VANCO is easier to record than Venmo, we will need to greatly consider the utilization of both programs.

**This came up as we are looking at transitioning the Venmo account to be a Venmo Charity account.*

Summer Updates

This Summer is going to be a summer of experimenting. I know we say that a lot, but we will be trying out a few new things:

- Midweek Wind Up - Wednesday Night Program Continuation
 - We have had a great response to this program. Families have had a great time connecting with one another and with the church staff. We
- High School Youth Group - Activity Based Model
 - Hoping to take a tour at Cal Lutheran next Wednesday, June 28th.
- Playground Development
 - We have configured the playground into a new configuration. Feedback after almost 2 months of this project has been positive from families and congregants that sit nearby.
- Youth Leadership Team
 - Will be sending out invitation letters this week to those who I hope to serve on the team.

Prayground Configuration 6/20/23

Changes Made:

- The pew was moved to the side wall.
- We added another chair to the space that provides extra cushion for parents with their children.
- The storage organizer was moved to other wall, where the pew previously was.



July 2023 - Council Report

On June 26th, I took two of our high schoolers on a tour at Cal Lutheran. We were there for a few hours and even had their parents attend too. It is so important that our kids know about our Lutheran colleges, especially if they happen to be twenty minutes away.

I was away at the Western States Youth Gathering from July 3-9 serving as the Night Life & Community Life Coordinator. On July 6, our two high schoolers arrived, as well as our chaperone for the weekend. I can say that our kids left feeling Revived, Reunited, and Rejoiced. Did I mention we had a foam party too?

On July 24th, our middle and high school youth have been invited to join Holy Trinity Lutheran Church for a day at Six Flags!

Our first Sunday selling Lemonade was a success! We raised \$289 towards Children's Hospital Los Angeles. We will continue raising money by selling Lemonade for two more Sundays. Jennifer Moraga talked to our kids explaining what the money could go towards at the hospital. For perspective, we raised enough money to feed over 50 people at the hospital.

July Council Report

**Please Do Not Post To Website*



August 2023 - Council Report

On July 24th, our middle and high school youth were invited to join Holy Trinity Lutheran Church for a day at Six Flags! Because of their hard work fundraising at Easter Breakfast, they were rewarded with a free trip. We had 2 adults and 4 youth attend from Mount Cross.

After three weeks of fundraising, we raised over \$500 towards Children's Hospital Los Angeles. The donation was written in honor of Celia Joy Moraga, our most recently baptized baby at Mount Cross.

Vacation Bible School was a wonderful time! We had 75 kids attend this year and over 25 volunteers. Our theme was Operation Restoration and our daily themes were Feed, Pray, Heal, Forgive, Rest. We partnered with St. Columba's and their food ministry raising over 700 canned food/non-perishable items which meant Joe and Pastor Julie were dunked in the dunk tank on Friday. Tuesday was our Zander's Game House night where we had 11 people attend. Wednesday was our Topper's Pizza fundraiser night where over 40 people gathered and raised \$320 for our youth programs. Thursday was our VBS Program where our kids highlighted what they had learned all week. Afterwards we enjoyed a cookie and ice cream social under the pavilion. Friday, we closed the week with water day. Some fun numbers to hear is that we had 16 kids from Mount Cross attend, 11 church members teach, 5 youth as teachers assistants, 2 young adults as helpers, and 1 youth lead snacks by the end of the week. Our kids learned more about God's creation and how we, the menders, can make a difference in our daily lives by following those five themes. We have already started designing what next year will look like!

On August 20th we will be hosting a Zoom information meeting regarding the ELCA National Youth Gathering. Our hope is to travel and attend with Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in hopes to attain group rates and build community with our neighboring Lutheran's. The estimated cost per person is \$1,500 which means there will be many fundraising opportunities in the coming months.

Community Time on Wednesday's has been a great opportunity to connect with each other. We have averaged 5-7 families most nights throughout the summer. We will be ending this program for the season the last week of August as we prepare for Fall Programs.

Our Fall Programming will restart September 13th following the schedule below:

- Rooted / 5:00PM-5:45PM
- Fun With Faith / 5:00PM-5:45PM
- Dinner / 5:45PM-6:30PM
- Confirmation / 6:30PM-8:00PM

August 15th (today), I would have attended an Employment Law 101 - for Non-Lawyers.

I have been selected to lead a Thriving Leadership Formation cohort this Fall focused on creative solutions for doing ministry differently. I will be equipping other ELCA youth leaders and those involved in youth ministry settings with the skills to build and adapt in a changing world. My responsibilities include 12 hours of training and 10 weeks of meetings that range from 1-1.5 hours. I have been part of this program before as an attendee and have benefited greatly from this experience and I look forward to giving others the opportunity to learn new skills and experience spiritual renewal. Here is a link to their website: <https://thrivingleadershipformation.org/>

VBS 2023 Photos





September 2023 - Council Report

Our Fall Programming resumed September 13th following the schedule below:

- Rooted / 5:00PM-5:45PM
- Fun With Faith / 5:00PM-5:45PM
- Dinner / 5:45PM-6:30PM
- Confirmation / 6:30PM-8:00PM

I have been selected to lead a Thriving Leadership Formation cohort this Fall focused on creating space for youth workers seeking community and spiritual renewal. I have attended over 10 hours of training and have a few more sessions to attend before our cohorts starts. My responsibilities include 12 hours of training and 10 weeks of meetings that range from 1-1.5 hours. I have been part of this program before as an attendee and have benefited greatly from this experience and I look forward to giving others the opportunity to learn new skills and experience spiritual renewal. Here is a link to their website: <https://thrivingleadershipformation.org/>

The Family Faith Formation Committee has designed some fun Fall activities for members of Mount Cross to participate in. These are open to ALL members, not just young people and families.

October

27th - Trunk or Treat - Sign Up <https://signup.com/go/rgzwxdi>.

29th - Pumpkin Painting Party after church.

November

19th - Serving Sunday during worship, Play Date Sunday after worship.

December

3rd - Advent Wreath Making Event with St. Columba's