

## **2020 Congregational Report Green Lake Lutheran Ministries**

It's hard to avoid cliches such as, "a year like no other" and/or using the word "unprecedented" when asked to describe anything about 2020. But they are also accurate expressions when we at Green Lake Lutheran Ministries look back on a year that pushed us in productive and inspiring, but also painful and exhausting ways.

The bottom line: We feel absolutely blessed to have been given the opportunity to serve God and others amidst a year that stretched our understanding of call and vocation – while also naming that we mourn the loss that comes with the cancellation of traditional programming and significant financial hardship.

### **Program Ministry**

"How can we be helpful to congregations and families?" That simple question, asked by Mandy Severtson, our Associate Director back in March, directed the program team's work this entire year. And although traditional summer camp ministry was cancelled, numerous program options were offered to families and congregations at no cost. Below I have provided just a small sampling of what our program year looked like. It was a fantastic year!

One example of nontraditional programming was, "We are the Church – Together and Apart", a virtual VBS curriculum, used by dozens of congregations across the entire country! This full curriculum provided interactive worship services, crafts, outdoor activities, games, devotions, and so much more - in a package specifically designed for kids, at home!

Another impactful opportunity to serve was found in the creation of free downloadable "pulpit supply worships." The worships are a blend of traditional and camp settings, made available for use by any congregation in need. Whether used to stay connected with outdoor ministry traditions or used on a Sunday that additional worship coverage was needed, it is fun to have such a direct connection with so many people in a world where face to face connections are difficult.

And lastly, our Dinner Theater was pushed virtual in 2020. When it became apparent that an in-person event was unlikely, staff and volunteers sprang into action to keep the show's tradition alive. A script was written, we purchased a green screen and other video equipment, the show was filmed safely in small parts, and editing commenced! And as a final nod to the tradition of *dinner* theater, a to-go meal was offered. All said, over 300 meals were served, 110 dozen of homemade bars sold, and 200 show links were purchased. With donations included, approximately \$30,000 was raised! Or best year ever!

### **Financial Position**

Overall, we are projecting revenue to be down \$1.1 million or 65% versus our budget in 2020. To overcome the deficit, operational expenses were cut, staffing cuts were made, a small amount of reserve funds were disbursed, we received a PPP Grant, and a special emphasis on fundraising was made.

As of the writing of this report, our year end financials are not yet finalized, but it is safe to report that we will finish this financial year in a strong position given the circumstances. We are so thankful for the

gifts we have received from incredibly generous and supportive donors and congregations. We absolutely wouldn't be in the position we are, without the generosity of this wonderful world!

### **Water's Edge Campaign**

We continue keeping our long-term goals on the forefront of our minds and work plans amidst a year full of distractions. Pre-campaign work continues! Master site plans for all three camps are being honed and we are eager to take designs to the next phase of detail. The process is taking a bit longer given the circumstances of 2020 and also based on our interest in polish and precision of idea and concept. We expect to bring our next phase of the campaign to larger audiences in the Spring of 2021 with hopes that the campaign is formally launched soon after.

### **2021 Outlook**

I authentically believe that Green Lake Lutheran Ministries will be needed like never before in the year ahead. When we turn the calendar, will we all of a sudden have a full schedule of retreats? Will summer camp numbers rebound to the 10-year high mark reached in 2019? No and no. The year ahead isn't going to be easy! But as this world comes out of isolation, as we reconnect with those things that make us physically and spiritually healthy, and as we purposefully seek out community, the brand of faith formation, exploration, and celebration that happens at summer camp or as part of a retreat at one of our three camps, will be just the thing that this exhausted and hurt world needs.

### **Closing**

The format of this report doesn't allow near the space needed to process the entire year nor thank all that contributed to its success. I have found myself overcome with emotions over a dozen times this year in response to the kind gestures, profound support, and incredible generosity of this network. So many congregations shared incredible gifts this year. So many individuals went above and beyond with their support.

I couldn't be more confident with the trajectory of this organization and sincerely thank you for partnering with us this year and far into the future!

Gratefully,



Travis Aufderheide  
Executive Director  
Green Lake Lutheran Ministries

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