Vital Signs
of Lombard Mennonite Church

Dwelling In the Shelter of God

By Deborah Wetherill

When my kids have bad dreams in the middle of the night, they are just down the hall and I can go to them to help calm their fears. With all that is going on in the world and in our country, I just want a parent to come running to me when I am scared: to sit on the edge of my bed and rub my back...let me see I am not alone...calm me with a touch...be there to whisper reassurances.

Scary images and worst case scenarios can easily fill my mind with all the information that assails us in the media. This is one of those times that I wish God would just hand me step-by-step directions to know how to handle situations that feel too big.

Psalm 91: 1-2 says, “Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’”

The two words used to describe God here are refuge and fortress. A refuge is a quick place you duck into to find shelter. A fortress is a place built intentionally for the purposes of exceptional security. God is not just a quick refuge from the storm, but is also the place where fear no longer has access to me.

It’s not that bad things won’t happen. We live in a broken world where broken things happen every day. But as children of God, we don’t have to live with fear taunting and terrorizing us.

We can feel afraid, but we don’t have to live afraid. We can say out loud, “Dear God, you are my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

Signs of Our Vitality

By Barbara Krehbiel Gehring

In this time of fear and uncertainty, I am struck by the name of this newsletter. I don’t know the history. I do know that when I think of the term vital signs, I think of checking on the difference between health and disease, life and death.

We long to be a vital, healthy, alive church. We want this newsletter to point to signs of our vitality. And I see many such signs.

Groups like Pastoral Care, Ministry Team, and others continue to meet using various virtual platforms. The work of the Pastoral Search Team and the Office Renovation Team continue.

Creativity—We’ve had to get creative about lots of things, including how we worship together, how we continue to conduct business through commissions and other teams in the church, and how we care for each other. I’ve heard some great creative ideas. Creativity now may open doors to the future we have not imagined so far.

Kindness—We’ve seen offers by people to help each other out. An LMCer who has a bit of disposable income may feel inspired to share it through the church (via a donation to the Agape Fund), to help someone whose

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**LMC’s Financial Outlook**

**By Jeremy Steelberg**

The COVID-19 crisis will likely impact our congregational giving over the next few months and perhaps beyond that. We currently have about $33,000 in net income. We also have $30,000 set aside for use in an emergency situation such as this. We believe that this will help see us through the financial impact of the virus.

While we are not able to gather at church on Sundays, there are several ways to keep up with your giving to LMC. One is to join the First Fruits Giving program, which allows you to contribute via a regular Electronic Fund Transfer from your personal checking or savings account. Contact Katharine to sign up.

Another option is to mail a check to the church office, or utilize your bank’s online bill pay system to send one. You can also make a donation via PayPal on the church website [here](#). (LMC incurs a small fee for these donations.)

As of March 27, 2020:

General Fund  
Giving $98,657  
Other Income 565

Total Revenues 99,222  
Total Expenses 66,152  
Net Income $33,070

Please keep LMC’s finances in your prayers.

**April 5 Fundraiser**

We’ve had to cancel this due to COVID-19, but stay tuned for other ways you can support Peace and Hope’s Deaf Children’s Program in Peru.

**Office Wing Renovation in the Time of Coronavirus**

**By Rebecca Kuhlmann Taylor, Lay Minister of Administration**

So much has changed in the past few weeks and each day continues to bring a new normal—one that was hard to imagine even a few days ago.

This makes planning for the future difficult, but, as it relates to our planned renovation, the Office Wing Renovation (OWR) Committee, OWR Fundraising Committee, Administration Commission, and Ministry Team continue to attempt to do so in the midst of the uncertainty.

Reflecting on our progress, as of a few weeks ago and before the COVID-19 crisis arrived in our community, here was our OWR status:

- The congregation was about to consider and hopefully approve a higher project maximum of $250,000. And pending that...
- Administration Commission was ready to conduct a final interview with a stellar lead contractor before signing the contract.
- The OWR Fundraising Committee was ready to officially launch the fundraising campaign after confirmation from the congregation of the new project maximum.

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Office Wing Renovation  
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- The OWR Committee was completing the final few steps to obtain building permits from the Village of Lombard.
- Administration Commission had a temporary relocation plan for the pastors’ and Katharine’s offices and was ready to implement it.
- The lead contractor was ready to begin work.

With the cancellation of our in-person congregational meeting on March 15, we pushed “pause” to consider how and when to proceed with this important work. The OWR Committee, OWR Fundraising Committee, and Administration Commission met virtually on March 18 and March 25. We talked at length about the good work we have done to get to this point, the unknowns that we now face, and the possible ways forward to recommend to Ministry Team.

We considered various issues, such as:

- Prioritizing between the valuable renovation work we have planned and the new needs that are emerging in our community as a result of COVID-19.
- Supporting the construction industry during this difficult time.
- The difficulty of social distancing while trying to temporarily relocate the office staff during volunteer work days.
- The effect on fundraising of individuals’ changing financial situations because of COVID-19.
- Alternate ways to fund a portion of the renovation, such as a long-term loan from Everence.
- Potential loss of the current lead contractor if we wait too long to start the project.
- The impact of possible additional restrictions (e.g., Stay at Home orders, which are now a reality), on construction and LM Cer travel. This includes the logistics of obtaining supplies, the contractor’s ability to come to work, and LM Cers’ ability to supervise work.
- Taking advantage of reduced traffic in the church building to complete the renovation.
- Moving forward in faith with hope for the future.

On March 18 and 25, the group shared varying perspectives on how and when to proceed. Because the public health situation is still changing so rapidly every day, we agreed to not make any firm decisions yet, but to reconvene on April 8 for further discussion.

Please pray for wisdom for church leaders and the congregation as we discern what should come next with the renovation. If you have a perspective you would like to share on the Office Wing Renovation and the above issues, please email owr@lombardmennonite.org or Rebecca.

Looking Ahead at LMC

**May** (tentative)
1 Mission matching grant applications due
2 PCRC meeting
3 Congregational meeting; potluck (TBD)
24 PADS
31 Pentecost Sunday

**June**
7 Summer schedule begins; worship starts at 9:30 AM

**September**
6 Resume regular Sunday schedule; worship at 10 AM
12-13 Church retreat at Menno Haven

Stay Connected
Life may not be business as usual, but we can still connect in our weekly events. All are welcome!

- **Tuesday:** Lunch Bunch Gathering at noon, via conference call
- **Wednesday:** Women of the Word at 9:30 AM, via Zoom
- **Thursday:** Menno Men (new!), at 9:30 AM, via Zoom

Join us for s’mores at the church retreat! Scene from the 2019 retreat.