



Crown of Glory Lutheran Church

# CROWNICLE

Winter 2020/2021

*Do Not Be Afraid*

“How Long, O Lord? Our Candles are Lit for You.”

“Are we there yet? How about now?” “Now?!?” These incessant questions are likely familiar to most of us, either having spoken them ourselves as children or having had to listen to them over and over from our own children.

I remember asking my parents these same questions on our annual road trip to the cabin every summer. The trip from our home in North Dakota to the North Shore of Minnesota was eight hours on a good day. Our destination was so exciting that my longing to arrive grew with every hour that passed. It almost always became too much for me to contain and by the time we reached Duluth, the question pushed past my lips, “How much longer?!?”

I cannot help but be reminded of that longing this year, as we look to another Advent season, one that will be unlike any other we have experienced. It is an understatement to say that the year 2020 has been difficult. If you are anything like me, you have thought on more than one occasion, “How much longer until this year is over?”

It is in this same spirit of longing, of slogging through the darkness searching for the light, that I wrote some poetry. Our brilliant Director of Worship and Music, Tom Paulson, put these words to music and I am thrilled to announce that we have composed yet another hymn entitled, “How Long, O Lord?”

When you first hear it, you might be confused. You might think that, based on the melody and the darkness of the words, this hymn belongs in Lent. But in fact, it needs to be sung now, for it is an echo of the longing that almost every human being has felt at one point or another in 2020. As Christians, our longing is directed to the One who has promised to walk this winding road with us. Our longing in Advent is directed to the stable, to the rough manger edges, to the star that shone for the shepherds, to the declaration from the angels on high that God has indeed come to live among us. Our longing begs for the hope of our Savior. And that is what Advent is all about.

We wait for our Savior. We wait to greet him with the shepherds, we wait to hear the strength of his newborn cry, we wait for our hearts to once again be renewed with the hope that God does not and will not abandon us.

Each Sunday in Advent, we will sing this new hymn together as we light a candle on the Advent wreath. May these words and their accompanying melody ring true for you this Advent season and may your heart find courage as we wait together for the birth of our Savior once more.

In Christ,

*Pastor Laura Laughlin*  
Pastor of Faith Formation

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*How Long, O Lord?*

*The land upon which we build our lives,  
groans with the betrayal of turning a blind eye.  
The glances chanced from behind our walls of difference  
fail to see an equal.  
How long, O Lord?  
Our souls long for you.*

*Color erupts from the jails of hushed traditions,  
claiming its dignity, spilling in the streets.  
Disease and despair flood and burn  
the hills and valleys of our lives.  
How long, O Lord?  
Our hearts yearn for you.*

*The eyes of the young and old look to the stable  
with a doubt often stronger than faith.  
The promise proclaiming that you will enter in  
to this world is where our hope is found.  
How long, O Lord?  
Our eyes look to you.*

*The rough manger edges mirror  
the surface of our hearts. O Lord, break in.  
Birth in us a light that blinds the darkness,  
and a heart as strong as a newborn's cry.  
How long, O Lord?  
Our candles are lit for you.*

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## Stewardship in a Different Age

This November, we journeyed through our Stewardship Campaign with the theme of *“Sustaining, Building, and Strengthening.”* This year’s campaign put a trust in our congregation to meet the challenges of our financial future head-on during a pandemic. Our staff strive to provide an enriching worship experience through our livestream and continue to offer ministry opportunities to help our community grow in faith, despite obstacles that have kept us at a distance.

Moving forward has become part of our mission for 2021. Our hope is to continue to be united as the church, *Sustain* our partnerships, *Build* for our future, and *Strengthen* our faith. In this way, our ministries for children, youth and adults continue virtually each week. As a church and as the Body of Christ, we will move forward together.

We give thanks for all who have supported our Stewardship Campaign, *“Sustaining, Building, and Strengthening”* with a financial commitment for 2021. If you have not already considered your family’s financial commitment, please do so. All are invited to return their commitment card by mail or complete the online form on our website at [www.crownofglory.org/2021-pledge](http://www.crownofglory.org/2021-pledge). Your partnership is important to our future, our ministries, and our mission. We are sincerely grateful for your commitment and partnership.

## A Step Toward Reopening Our Building

This past October, Crown of Glory opened its doors for the first time during the pandemic to welcome limited use of our building to several Worship Teams and Outreach Ministries. Our commitment to continuing ministry with our partners and our neighbors has been a driving factor in this step. In mid-November, we reevaluated this plan and out of an abundance of caution, decided to close our doors once again. We will continue to monitor the situation and keep the congregation informed of building use moving forward.

## What Does Christmas Look Like?

The colder temperatures seemed to have only exacerbated the number of COVID-19 cases. Thus, we look to the future and wonder, “What does Christmas look like?” In all honesty, from the standpoint of our faith, it looks the same as it always has. We will celebrate the birth of our Savior, the coming of the Christ child into our lives, once again this Christmas Eve.

But, like so many things throughout this pandemic, our celebrations will be different than what we are normally used to. Our worship services will focus on the message that God is with us during these times. We will offer two wonderful worship opportunities on Christmas Eve: the release of our virtual children’s narrative, “Do Not Be Afraid,” at 3:00 p.m. and a full-liturgy livestream Christmas worship service at 3:30 p.m. As we move closer to our unique and exciting Christmas Eve celebrations, be sure to check the weekly announcements for video access. Join us for this year’s welcoming of the Christ child into our lives once again, for not even a pandemic can keep the manger empty!



## Nursery News

Hi Nursery Buddies and Parents!

I hope you have had fun with the lessons and activities, and that they have given you a bit more to do these days. For the month of November, we looked into being a good steward and what that means to us and Jesus. With Thanksgiving, it is always a great reminder to take care of the things we are thankful for. Thankful for your parents? Me, too. So we can be good stewards and show them we are by helping when needed.

For the month of December, we will take a peak at some of the stories that teach us gentleness. We get to celebrate Jesus' birthday with a gentle heart, as we will hopefully see God in the gentleness of the falling snow! For now, we will keep to our lessons in the weekly newsletter and hope to see each other soon when it is safe.

Keep well and have fun!

*Jenni Payne*  
Nursery Coordinator



## SPARK News

This year has required us all to dive deep into our ability to be flexible and open to new opportunities. I cannot say enough about how our families have done just that! In August 2020, we said farewell to Gretchen Pierskalla, the Director of Children's Ministry for the last four years. We then entered a time of virtual ministry, focusing on learning and growing in faith together as families in our own homes.

SPARK lessons have been sent out via email each week for families to utilize. At the beginning of every month, SPARK bags have been available for pick-up, containing interactive crafts and activities for the entire family to participate in and enjoy. Due to increased precautions, SPARK bags for the month of December have been cancelled.

*Pastor Laura Laughlin*  
Pastor of Faith Formation



## "Do Not Be Afraid: A Virtual Christmas Pageant"

This year, our SPARK and Connect kids are working to put together a completely virtual Christmas Narrative, something that Crown of Glory has never seen before! This is incredibly exciting! We purchased the script, all scene materials, and documents from the company Illustrated Ministry, the same company that we used for our Lent posters earlier this year. With over twenty kids, this narrative is bursting with energy and is bound to be an incredible re-telling of the hope-filled Christmas story!

The entire narrative will be recorded over Zoom. We also look forward to making this an intergenerational event, with various Chancel Choir and Servant Song members recording verses of Christmas carols to be included throughout the narrative.

There is no time like the present to look to the manger as a constant reminder of the Savior who came among us and the hope that never leaves us. I am so grateful to our kids, their parents, the CoG musicians, and AV volunteers who are all working to make this Christmas Narrative one to remember!

Be sure to visit our YouTube page at 3:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve day to view this special production.



## Winter

### Looking Ahead to Christmas Time: Connect and Confirmation

As schools are moving to distance learning in our district and COVID-19 cases are on the rise, we are still moving into the Christmas season, a season of giving. Our Connect and Confirmation youth are invited to take part in a tradition that has been upheld at Crown of Glory for the past thirteen years: our Annual Christmas Gift Night! Each year our youth go shopping at a local department store in search of gifts that will support charities for local families who normally would not be able to afford Christmas gifts. Students are asked to bring five dollars that will be matched by Crown of Glory. Students will use ten dollars to purchase a gift for a child in our community. Connect and Confirmation students can be dropped off at the Target Shopping Center in Chaska where they will be met by their adult small group leaders and shop for the evening! All gifts will be collected, paid for, and offered at a local charity. Please see the times listed below for Connect and Confirmation students.



#### Connect Christmas Gift Night December 9

- Drop Off Time at Target: 6:00 p.m.
  - \* Shop for Christmas gifts for local families.
- Pick Up Time at Target: 6:45 p.m.



#### Confirmation Christmas Gift Night December 9

- Drop Off Time at Target: 7:00 p.m.
  - \* Shop for Christmas gifts for local families.
- Pick Up Time at Target: 7:45 p.m.



## Youth Ministry



“HOW LONG, O LORD?” (Psalm 12:1)  
Or Singing Songs of Anticipation in the Time of COVID

In these times of COVID, when I no longer feel safe going to the gym, my routine has been a morning walk. Generally, I open the MPR app on my phone, put in my headphones, walk the Luce Line Trails, and listen as Morning Edition gives me the news. But for the last week or so, even MPR has been too much. Thus, I found The Best of Bach on YouTube.

I listened to Bach this morning. Bach...Johann Sebastian Bach. (R.I.P. Sean Connery.) It is amazing to me that 270 years after his death, his music still inspires us and not just in the West. Some of the most beautiful interpretations of this Baroque German musician are coming out of Japan and South Korea! I find it inspiring to know that Johann wrote much of his music in the face of great adversity. Although he was heralded in his own time as the greatest organist in Europe, he was considered by his contemporaries to be a second-rate composer. His employers called him “mediocre” when offering him a job, his first wife died in childbirth, and only six of his twenty known children survived to adulthood.

Life may have been harder in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the 21<sup>st</sup> certainly presents its own challenges. If the Psalmist can cry out “How long, O Lord!” centuries before the birth of Jesus, so can we.

We will begin Advent on Sunday, November 29. It is a time that should resonate with us. Advent is a time of waiting, and we have been doing a lot of that lately. Vaccine yet? Since we know what we are waiting for, and that Advent culminates with the birth of life, light, peace, hope, truth, joy, etc., it is also a time of now but not yet, anticipation and excitement, and a certain amount of disappointment.

Pastor Laura Laughlin and I have written a new hymn for Advent and responding especially to life in 2020.

The land upon which we build our lives, groans with betrayal of turning a blind eye.

The glances chanced from behind our walls of difference, fail to see an equal.

“How long, O Lord?” “How long, O Lord?”

Our souls long for you! Our souls long for you!

This is the first of four verses, one for each of the Sundays in Advent. In each verse, the words of the first two lines come tumbling out so fast that they are almost out of control. They reflect urgency, anxiety, and fear. The last two lines, which are the same in all four verses, turn our attention to God and that which is eternal. They slow us down, like a mantra or taking a couple of deep breaths. They give us time to pause and think. “Be still and know that I am God.” They express our longing to see and know God, in ourselves, in our communities, and in our world.

I wrote music to reflect Pastor Laura’s words. There are lots of short notes in the first two lines, not only to accommodate the many words but to express our anxieties. They almost stumble over each other as they tumble out of our mouths. There are more long notes in the last two lines, and they are the melody that will become an ear worm for you. They are similar and repetitious, but most importantly they turn our attention away from ourselves, toward the eternal.

I am grateful today for Johann Sebastian Bach. Listening to his music daily these last few weeks reminded me of the big picture, the eternal, the evermore. He turned my attention to God. In this unique Advent 2020, I suggest we all take the time to cry out, then pause, listen, and wait patiently. Our faith tells us God did not let down the psalmist. History tells us God did not let down Herr Bach. So let us turn our attention to that which is eternal, toward God made known to us in Jesus. Love will be born again in each of us, in our communities, and in our world.

*Tom Paulson*

Director of Music and Worship



## 2020 Council

### President

Mary Leopold

### Vice President

Susan Gray

### Secretary

Steve Clay

### Members

Julie Brown

Chris Gray

Steve Manger

Grant Taylor

Steve Tinker

Patty Viajar

Pastor Reggie Klindworth

Pastor Laura Laughlin



## Moving Forward

When I was elected, I was happy to be able to bring my youth perspective into the council to help grow our church by bringing in the next generation of members. As we all know this year has been full of surprises and unexpected events, making that a little bit more challenging. While the year has continued to pass by, I realized my point of view is beneficial during these times by bringing up new ideas and helping the church support our community. While on council, I hope to continue to help grow our community outreach, ministry and financial stability. As a church standing with God, we are able to stand as one holding each other up while times may be difficult.

*Chris Gray*  
Council Member

## Crown of Glory Financial Update

As we approach the end of the year, our Finance Team and the Council are looking ahead to 2021, as we develop a budget for Crown of Glory's new year. But before that, we need to be sure that we end 2020 on a high note.

This Year has been extraordinary, needless to say. Too many unknowns have made our daily life and church life much more stressful. From a financial view, we continue to struggle. As of the end of October, we are behind budget in our general fund by nearly \$34,500. Giving numbers are over \$50,000 behind budget. However, the staff has done an excellent job of controlling expenses, through October our overall expenses are about \$33,000 under budget. In addition, we have benefited from the federal government's CARES act and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) with a \$63,000 loan. Our preliminary analysis shows we expect that loan to be entirely forgiven by the Small Business Administration, sometime in the next 90 days. All that will help, but we still will need a strong December to end the year in the black.

On another note, we reported in the last issue that the Pulte Land Swap deal had closed; the Council has designated those funds for completion of the parking lot. Work is now being completed on Phase 1 of the parking lot project. About \$70,000 of the Pulte funds will be used for this phase. We are retaining the remaining funds from the Pulte deal in reserve for additional parking lot work that could be completed in 2021.

As I reported in our last Financial Update, we received a generous gift of \$20,000 designated for personal loan repayment. That gift was used last month to pay down our loan debt. That repayment leaves \$166,000 in personal loans due in the next 12 months. The Council and the Finance Team are working out a plan to address this. We have designated nearly \$100,000 in our reserve fund for debt repayment. But we will need your help to get us through the next phase of loan repayment. Last year, when we refinanced our loan with Bank Vista, we agreed to a stipulation that requires CoG to have a positive annual income statement, or Bank Vista will restrict access to reserve funds for repayment of the various member personal loans that are outstanding. So, the first step is to make sure that we end up the year on a positive side of the ledger.

As I look back on the last several years, I am very impressed with the Crown of Glory Congregation. With your help we have completed a major expansion of the church and we have improved our financial position tremendously. We still have a way to go, but I have faith that you will help us achieve our goals so we can continue to serve our congregation and our community in these uncertain times. Please consider giving an extra gift during the Christmas season to help Crown of Glory end the year with a positive boost into the new year.

*Steve Tinker*

Council & Finance Team Member

### SUSTAINING FUND SUMMARY

October 31, 2020

YTD Payments: \$617,199

YTD Revenues: \$582,718



## Outreach Ministries

Crown of Glory's Outreach Ministries have been resilient this year, finding ways to adapt in ever-changing circumstances.

### Fare For All

FFA staff and volunteers quickly realized that they needed to develop a new and safe way to support the community this year and beyond. In May, Crown of Glory hosted its first drive-through event, and we are excited to continue our partnership as we prepare for the winter months.

### Faithful Knitters

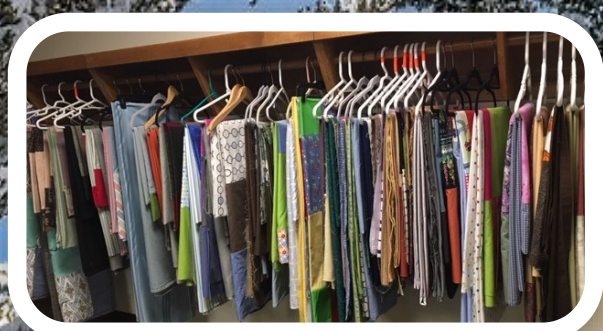
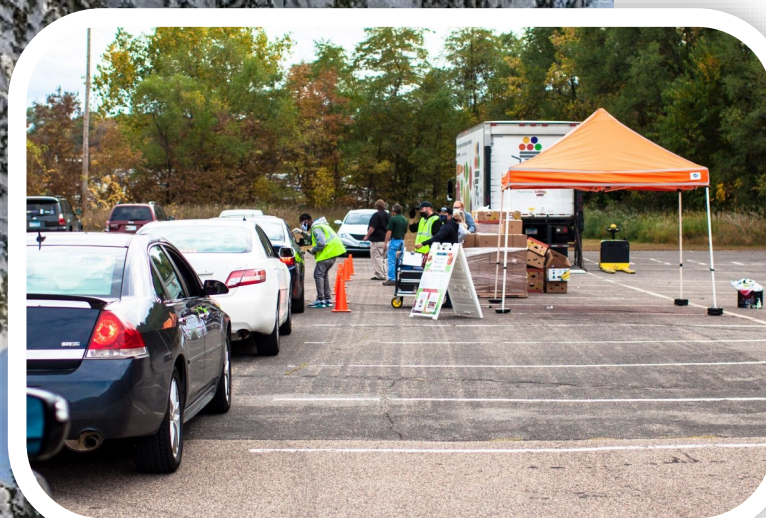
The Knitters currently meet via Zoom to stay connected and coordinate tasks. They work on needs that are addressed collectively and individually. "We are currently working on afghans for senior living, burn mitts for the HCMC Burn Unit, octopuses for preemie babies, scarves for the needy and eternity prayer scarves for anyone that needs to feel the love of Jesus," said Carol Hauck. If you have a need for an item listed above, please contact Carol.

### Loaves & Fishes

Jenni Payne, our volunteer Loaves & Fishes Coordinator, plans healthy meals that are now served to-go on the third Tuesday of the month at St. John's in Shakopee.

### Faithful Knotters

Quilts that have been started in the homes of the Faithful Knotters fill the coat closet at CoG. "Many of us have continued to design and sew together the quilt tops during the weeks we couldn't get together, so we have many ready to finish," said Barb Meyer. After guidelines were set, the Knotters were welcome to use the Sun Hall. The quilters were "back at it again" and "so happy to be safely distanced and doing what we love." With new guidelines in place, gatherings have been put on hold as of November 10. The Knotters are looking forward to when they can "once again get together and make quilts."





Winter



## Building Updates

Despite our church building seeing very little use since mid-March, there have been a number of changes and improvements made during this time. The long-awaited delivery of 300 new chairs for the sanctuary was received on November 3. When we can safely worship together again, we will have comfy chairs in which to sit. We were pleased to be able to sell the old chairs to a good home, a start-up church in St. Paul. Our outdoor shed now has a roof and flashing on the tops of the walls. Steel doors for the shed have been received and will be installed after they have been painted. Work on a couple of French drains has been completed in the planted area near the patio, to correct a rainwater drainage problem. A new water heater for the main church was installed due to leakage of the existing unit. The drive lane, used by the preschool parents on the west side of our building, has new concrete curbs and the first layer of asphalt paving. Patching of our existing main parking lot was also completed this month. One additional minor project, which is underway, is the expansion of our AV station in the sanctuary. Thanks to all those who have helped complete these projects.



To accommodate the new Pulte housing development, a major reconstruction of Cardinal Street is underway. Cardinal Street will be rerouted and the utilities currently on poles will be buried underground. This project is being managed and financed by Pulte Homes.

*Bob Chinnock*

Volunteer Building Manager



## [ NOVEMBER ]

- November 22 - Celebration Sunday
- November 26 & 27 – Office Closed: Thanksgiving Holiday



## [ DECEMBER ]

- December 24 – Children’s Christmas Narrative @ 3:00 p.m. & Livestream Christmas Eve Worship @ 3:30 p.m.
- December 25 – Office Closed; Christmas Day
- December 31 – Final day to postmark gifts for the 2020 calendar year



## [ JANUARY ]

- January 1 – Office Closed: New Year’s Day



## [ FEBRUARY ]

- February 17 – Ash Wednesday





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