



# Spirit of Life Lutheran Church

Jacksonville, FL  
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November 2020

We spread the gospel through love, acceptance,  
and giving of ourselves for Jesus.



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Web Site:  
<http://spiritoflifejacksonville.org/>



Find Us on Facebook!

Dear Faith Family,

Time is a strange thing...I had hoped that, before I wrote my newsletter article for November, we'd have some kind of resolution for the things that have made 2020 such an "interesting" year. Perhaps we'd have a vaccine for corona virus. Or there might be some real news about our Presidential election process. Or—who knows—there might suddenly be some really bright lights on the horizon for all the folks who are so uncertain about their present and future financial status.

But no such luck. Things are still confusing, rather scary, and pretty uncertain. Then I realized—it's always been this way in the world for God's people. We have always struggled to see what needs to be seen, do what needs to be done, and just all-around navigate through the messes that sin and me-first living have made in our world. And the resolution for all those things is the same as it ever was—submitting ourselves to God's will and moving forward as God calls us to move.

One thing I know for certain is that our place in all this upheaval is secure. We are God's children, moving forward and trying not to be pushed backward. We have a wonderful church building and a history together that God has built among us. Yes, we are struggling a bit financially—but when have the people of God ever been perfect in their handling of worldly goods? Never, if we are to believe what we read in the Bible. Yes, we sometimes move when we should have stayed still, or remained at rest when the times called for action, but God loves us and understands our hearts so much better than we do ourselves.

Our lives and our Christian testimony will NOT be summed up by what has happened in 2020—the Year of Seeing Almost Nothing Clearly. God is faithful and gracious and is always ready to supply what we need when we still our clamorous souls and listen for God's Word to come among us. We have plans for a new type of Advent and holiday gatherings that we haven't tried before, and we have some really smart folks working to find ways to pay our bills and do our mission work the way it's supposed to be done. That is SO MUCH MORE than many others have. We have each other, and we have Jesus among us, and we are amazed at what that security can bring. Now we need to overcome our fears of viruses and violence, and begin to gather again in the place that we call our faith home—Spirit of Life. More than ever we need to recover the sense of being united together in worship to overcome the world.

Blessings!!  
Pastor Karen

## President's Corner

Leadership Team Member: Al Speicher - [speial@comcast.net](mailto:speial@comcast.net) or (904-707-6702)

Well another year where I see Christmas decorations and product sales out on display before Halloween! I can't imagine having the Christmas season start until 'Black Friday', originally the Friday after Thanksgiving. Now I see 'Black Friday' deals since the first of November. When you remove **Christ** from **Christmas**, I guess it doesn't really matter when you start the Christmas season. As Christians, our focus is on **Christ** during the remembrance of Christ's birth, God's gift to mankind. It saddens me to see what we have done with the season. I make it a point to say *Merry Christmas* when I greet others. I hope you do as well. Perhaps it will remind people of why there is a **Christmas** in the first place. Perhaps we should begin saying Merry Christmas before Halloween. What do you think?

Property continues to make progress on getting water and electric to the modular building. The Food Pantry Team and Property continue with their design for sidewalks and covered patio areas. We have **temporarily** installed a ramp leading off of the existing church sidewalk. This will help load food and the church chairs into the building.

Our Sunday service attendance continues to grow. We will continue to provide a clean and safe environment to worship. Members will continue to use masks, gloves and take temperatures when entering. Each Sunday our service is recorded and posted on our SOL FaceBook page.

Please remember to continue your tithing as you are able. Our monthly bills are approximately \$9,400. If unable to attend Sunday, consider electronic or postal service for your weekly / monthly giving. Your Leadership Team is regularly evaluating opportunities to save on monthly expenses.

Blessings,  
Al Speicher  
Leadership Team President

## Community Food Pantry and Garden

**Leadership Team Member: Gary Strynick**

*Matthew 25:35. "For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me"*

Our client numbers are around 1900 for the month of October. We took the week of elections off to give everyone a break. We'll be back on the 9th helping those in need.

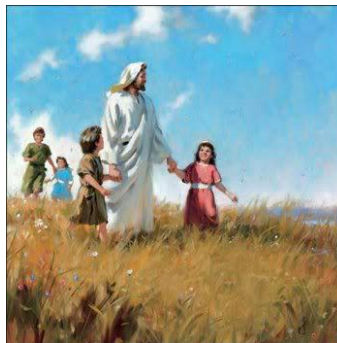
We can use the following items: canned vegetables, pasta sauce, and tuna. Food Pantry could also use a few cases of water for our workers.

Thank you to all who have helped to make this ministry a huge success.

Yours in Christ  
Gary

## Education / Youth

**Leadership Team Member: Vacant**



We are looking for a new person to lead this area since Anita has moved. Please contact Pastor Karen with your thoughts and ideas.

## eCommunication

**Leadership Team Member: Kristina Aldred – [kaldred@bellsouth.net](mailto:kaldred@bellsouth.net) 678-761-6387**

Do you know about Spirit of Life's new Craft Fair on FaceBook? It's a great place to find things for those on your Christmas list and also support our church. 100% of the proceeds go to SOL.

You can find the group by searching on "Spirit of Life Online Craft Fair" and then ask to join the group. It's easy. Then go shopping. Please contact me or Debby Speicher if you have any questions.

## Fellowship and Outreach Ministries

**Outreach Leadership Team Member: Vacant**

**Fellowship Team Member: JoAnn Strysick – [jstrysick@yahoo.com](mailto:jstrysick@yahoo.com)**

We are having a little get together for Edith when she comes back and before she leaves again. It will be on the Friday after Thanksgiving from 1 until 3. Please contact JoAnn if you would like to contribute to snacks etc.

We have more to come as plans are made. Hint: please go through your Christmas decorations to donate to our “Ornament Give Away” in December. Also be on the lookout as you clean of new things that you might have in your house like coloring books and crayons for “Grab Bags” to be sold during an upcoming even.

We are also planning a Garage Sale in February so be watching for items to be sold.

Thank you all for your patience during this difficult time.

God's love and Blessings  
JoAnn



My plan is to have the Angels available this Sunday. Gifts will need to be back by 12/13. Directions will be available when you select your angel. - *Cathy Barnes*



## 2020

The Patch told us several locations decided not to have their usual deliveries. We decided to continue with the pumpkin delivery since the Patch had been faithful to us we wanted to return the favor. As you know the pumpkins were supposed to be delivered October 10<sup>th</sup>, but we received them on October 19<sup>th</sup>. The driver arrived at 8 am for us to begin unloading at noon. Our unloading team of 10 was mighty and consisted of Pastor K, Dawn Martin, Vonda Miller, Bob Schneck, Debby & Al Speicher, Mike & Maggie Spruill, David & Peggy Williams. It was a balmy 80+ degrees, by 3 pm we had only unloaded 1/2 of the truckload and were exhausted. But God always provides! Debby shouted out to her new neighbors and 3 young bloods arrived along with some gentlemen that Debby picked up from Saved by the Sea. We all completed the unloading process within an hour.

This was our 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of operating the Pumpkin Patch and we had our most successful one to date. Every year our neighbors tell us how they have come to the Patch every year and even shared pictures they have taken every year. What a blessing to be able to bring joy into the heart of someone.

But hard work does pay off and our final sales were \$13,052. Since we sold over 9K, we got to keep 33.3% of the profits. We received \$448.55 in donations and sticker sales, which we retain 100% of this money. Since the offerings have not returned to prior COVID standards we decided the profits this year would be used towards paying the expenses needed operate the church. Every year the Patch is hard work, but the memories and rewards are priceless. it gave us all an opportunity to fellowship with our community.

We look forward to an even bigger and better Pumpkin Patch set up next year. Once again we couldn't have done it without you!

God's Blessing to you and yours!  
Vonda Miller and Debby Speicher

We also received the following letter from Pumpkin Patch USA:



Dear Partners,

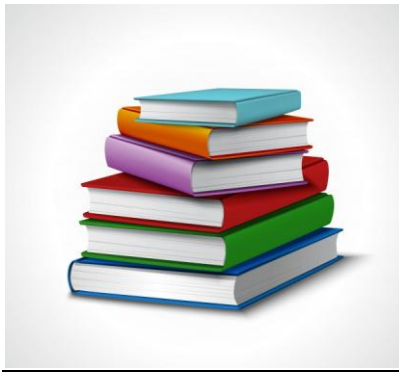
At the beginning of the shipping season it seemed that we would never be able to repay the line of credit we used for the 2020 Pumpkin growing season. So many of our partners passed on doing a patch in 2020 due to the virus.

A combination of a pumpkin shortage in most parts of the country and you, the remaining group of dedicated and patient partners, produced record sales at your individual locations. Many of you have experienced a significant increase in sales. We know some of your organizations are also struggling, we hope this helps.

So many small businesses, like ourselves, are in trouble. Some are even losing their businesses that took a lifetime to build. This has been a difficult year for all of us, we are extremely grateful to have survived. Please share this story and my Thanks to all Coordinators and volunteers.

Thanks,

Richard Hamby



**BOOKS NEEDED** – Adult & ESPECIALLY children's; they don't have to be new. They are needed for our community library. If you have any, please place in the box in front of the garden. THANK YOU!

# Financial Corner

Leadership Team Member: David Williams dwilliamsf@gmail.com

## ATTENDANCE

OCT 4	34
OCT 11	27
OCT 18	30
OCT 25	31

Notice that our expenses are larger than our income. Please don't forget your offering. You can mail it. You can drop it off. You can also make your offering electronically.

## FINANCIAL CORNER FOR OCTOBER 2020

<b><u>Envelope Offerings (TIAA)</u></b>	<b>\$ 6,872.65</b>	<b><u>Total Expenses</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 8,360.60</u></b>
Sams Club Member contribution	\$ 120.00		
10/31 interest		<b><u>Designated Fund Balances</u></b>	-
<b><u>TOTAL INCOME</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 6,992.65</u></b>	Pumpkin Patch	\$ 342.21
		VBS	\$ 200.00
		Youth (CF)	\$ 480.02
		Youth Gathering (CF)	\$ 394.64
Food Pantry Income	\$ 147.00	Spring Fling/Fall Fest	\$ 650.64
Food Pantry Expense	\$ 334.11	Fellowship Events	\$ 260.01
<b>Food Pantry Balance</b>	<b>\$ 7,749.16</b>	Misc. Memorials (CF)	\$ 5,702.82
		Property Projects (CF)	\$ 2,600.63
<b><u>BALANCES</u></b>			
Mission Investment (mortgage)	\$ 241,471.77		
Bldg Expansion (CF)	\$ 30,044.66	(CF) Community First Credit Union	

## COUNTERS NEEDED

***NO experience needed. Can you spare an hour or less after church or Monday morning? If you do, please text or call Vonda at 904-483-7948 or chur5900@bellsouth.net.***

## **STEWARDSHIP**

**What is stewardship?** Stewardship is the prayerful work of managing our time, talent and treasure to bring about God's kingdom on earth. In the Bible, stewardship is another way of talking about how you live your life. In the [New Testament books](#), the word "steward" is rooted in the Greek word "oikonomos," which means "the manager of a household".

Has someone ever asked you to watch their kids? Are you responsible for managing an office or people on behalf of an employer? Do you have a financial advisor overseeing your investments? If you answered yes to any of these three questions, then you are or have been a steward.

In general, to steward is to manage something on someone's behalf. Whether a family member, friend, or employer asks you to watch over something, then you're stewarding—managing—whatever they entrusted to your care.

If you were a steward in Ancient Greek culture, you were not the owner of the house. Instead you would have been the manager of the house and the household affairs. From making sure the home was clean to managing the finances and perhaps servants, you would have managed everything on behalf of the owner.

**Stewardship in the Bible** has to do with understanding that your life is not your own. Your life is on loan from God—regardless if you acknowledge this or not—and God calls you to steward everything about your life for his glory and the good of others.

**What is a pledge?** A pledge is your commitment to make a financial gift that supports the mission of Spirit of Life Lutheran Church. It is a response to God's call and abundance in our own lives; it is a statement of thanksgiving.

**Why do we need annual pledges?** How can I trust that the money I give will be spent wisely? Annual pledges support everything we do and are at Spirit of Life. Your gift is spent on all aspects of our worship, outreach, and community life, including our services held each year— including Lent and Advent.

In order to know what we can do each year; we need to receive pledge commitments to develop an annual budget. Don't the contributions made in the weekly offering cover our expenses? Weekly non-pledge offerings amount to approximately 3% of our annual budgeted revenue. The single most important source of funding for our ministries, however, comes from the payment of pledges made during our annual stewardship campaign. These gifts provide most of the church's income.

**How many pledges a year do we get?** Do people pledge large amounts? We are grateful for every pledge, large and small, that allows us to plan our commitments. In 2020, 29 households pledged regular support to Spirit of Life Church. The average pledge was \$202/month. Last year, we received \$97,240 in pledges and our proposed budget was \$147,105. All pledges of all amounts are critical to help support a 2021 budget.



**How much should I give with an annual pledge?** We believe strongly that our standard of giving should reflect our standard of living. We ask each member to consider making a pledge that is both responsible and significant based on his or her financial situation. A tithe (10% of your income) has long been held as the standard of Christian giving. For most it is a goal to be reached through incremental increases each year. At Spirit of Life, every pledge, no matter what amount, makes a valued contribution to our mission and ministry.

**PLEDGE CARDS – available to complete on the Narthex table; if you can submit one, we would be most grateful! The completion of your pledge helps us prepare the annual budget. Please place your completed pledge card in the offering tray by NOVEMBER 30<sup>th</sup>.**

Thank you,  
Your Finance Team

## Property

**Leadership Team Member: Debbie Speicher [yayasis@comcast.net](mailto:yayasis@comcast.net)**

Hello everyone,

We are in need of volunteer(s) with a wheelbarrow and shovel(s) to spread the chips in the church parking lot into the natural areas. This can be done anytime that is convenient to you.

Please contact Debbie Speicher 904-318-0964

Thank you!

## Ruth Circle (WELCA)

Women of the ELCA (WELCA)

**Dawn Martin (904)518-6903**

Ruth Circle will be on sabbatical for the rest of the year but we will be helping where we are needed. Enjoy your vacation that God has given you!

Dawn Martin

## Worship & Music

**Leadership Team Member: Vonda Miller [ontrey64@gmail.com](mailto:ontrey64@gmail.com)**

Since Advent this year is uncertain due to what might happen with Covid-19, we will not have the usual Wednesday evening suppers and studies. Instead, stay tuned for some special winter activities we are planning.

Sunday worship attendance is climbing. We look forward to seeing your smiling face on Sunday.

# Five Types of Church Members Who will or DID Not Return after the Quarantine

[Thom S. Rainer](#) blog

It is one of the most common questions we get from church leaders: When will all the church members return to in-person services?

Leaders do not like my response: Never.

It is a reality church leaders and members are hesitant to accept. For most churches, not all the church members who were attending before the pandemic will return. In fact, our anecdotal conversations with church members and church leaders indicate somewhere between 20 percent and 30 percent of the members will not return to your church.

From an attendance perspective, if 20 percent of a church with a pre-pandemic attendance of 200 do not return, the new reality attendance will be 160 in attendance after everyone feels safe to return. You can do the math for your own church.

So, who are these non-returning church members? Why are they not returning? Here are the five most common dropout groups. The groups are not mutually exclusive; there could be significant overlap.

1. **The decreasing attendance members.** These were your members who, at one time, attended church almost four times a month. Before the pandemic, their frequency of attendance declined to twice a month or even once a month. COVID accelerated their trends. They are now attending zero times a month.
2. **The disconnected church members.** If a church member is in a small group, his or her likelihood of returning is high. If they attend worship only, their likelihood of attendance is much lower. Please let this reality be a strong motivation to emphasize in-person small groups once everyone feels safe to return.
3. **The church-is-another-activity church members.** These church members see gathered attendance as yet another activity on par, or lower, than other activities. They were the church members who let inclement weather keep them from church but not their children's Sunday soccer games. Commitment to the church was a low priority before the pandemic. They have no commitment in the post-quarantine era.
4. **The constant-critic church members.** These church members always had some complaints for the pastor. In fact, your pastor may be dying a death by a thousand cuts. They are likely still complaining even though they have not returned to in-person services. Many of them will not return at all.

5. **The cultural Christian church members.** They were part of a declining group well before the pandemic. They were those church members who likely were not Christians but came to church to be accepted culturally. Today, there are few cultural expectations for people to attend church. These cultural Christians learned during the pandemic that it was no big deal to miss church. It will be no big deal for them never to return.

Church leaders and church members, however, should not fret about these losses. Your local church has the opportunity to write its future on a blank slate, and these church members really had no plans to be a part of that future anyway.

You may feel the pain of the losses; that is normal. But God has a plan for your church to embrace the new reality to which you are headed. Head into His future with confidence. God's got your church. And He's got you.

**From your friends at Spirit of Life Lutheran CHURCH...**


**Which type of church member are you? It's cliché, but the best days are likely just ahead.**



### **Keeping in touch**

We would love to know what's going on in your life that you would like to share, do you need someone prayed for, is there something Pastor should know? Sunday mornings Pastor is in the "sermon mode", sometimes when she is told something ... it doesn't stay with either of them the next day. Consequently, things fall thru the crack! We do not want this to happen, what is important to you is REALLY important to the life of this church. Please Let the Pastor know ... (health concerns, need to talk, etc), What's going on? .. (something great going on in your life, graduation, children doing well in school, etc) PLEASE call the church office 904-7575-9114, Pastor Karen directly at 231-343-4426, email her at [karen@biggerstaff.pro](mailto:karen@biggerstaff.pro), the church office [chur5900@bellsouth.net](mailto:chur5900@bellsouth.net) or [spriitoflifejacksonville@yahoo.com](mailto:spriitoflifejacksonville@yahoo.com).

Thank you,  
Vonda

<u>November Birthdays</u>	<u>November Anniversaries</u>
14 Terry Haugen	3 Richard & Diane Crawley
20 E.J. Roehrig	25 Carol & Tommy Payne
26 Anita Vance	29 Pete & Claudia Moreash
27 Richard Crawley	
27 Ronnie Barnes	
	

## Call to Care (Prayer List)

**Our Loved Ones:** Steve Eunice, Londa, Ruth Vega (Kassi Delarosa’s mother), Homer Masculine, Mary Elwood, Bri Polichnia, Tina, Lois Hand, & Zeak

**Our Military members:** Jeff, Nathan & Anthony

**Chronic Prayers:** June and John Hanson, Rita Hays, Ronald Barnes Sr., Betty Mallard, Amanda Bennett, Cathy Edwards, Dorothy Cook, Kara Wenk (Mike & Maggie Spruill’s DIL), Fred Covalt (Kristina Aldred’s father), Louis Reid, Mary Ellen Sanders (Brenda Murray’s Mom, Hood family grandmother & great), Larissa Hinman, Cathy, Donna Strysick, Cathy M, Jimmy & Faye Carter, Jackie Corderio (Maggie Spruill’s sister), Dan Fisher (Michele Hoyle’s father, Bob’s F-I-L), Terri Joiner, Barbara Kirkwood, & Sandra Mullins

**WE CAN’T PRAY FOR WHAT WE DON’T KNOW**  
PLEASE, PLEASE BELIEVE WE CARE AND WANT TO LIFT YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES UP  
IN PRAYER.  
You can share your requests on Sunday before the announcements, call, text or email the Pastor  
and/or the church office.

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This is Christ's Church.  
There is a place for you here.  
We are the church that shares a  
living, daring confidence in God's grace.  
Liberated by our faith, we embrace  
you as a whole person—  
questions, complexities and all.  
Join us as we do God's work in Christ's  
name for the life of the World!