

**DSC**  
**RECOMMENDATION:**  
**CONTINUE OUR 60**  
**YEAR LEGACY IN**  
**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

# WHAT HAS THE DSC BEEN UP TO?

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- Surveyed all the teachers
- Pastor has interviewed office and Friday staff
- Pastor met with Pr. Dinger when he was on site for conference
- Pastor has been meeting with David to take notes
- The DSC met for 5(!) hours on Friday the 12
- They acknowledge real challenges in Elementary Education, but think we have good reasons to continue and not withdraw to Early Childhood only. Please consider the following points put together by Pastor Pay...

# MISSION

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- Elementary Ed. offers a wider-range, longer-lasting, more in-depth opportunity to craft and form children
- More opportunities for theology to sink in on a level deeper than “Sunday school”
  - Mr. Northcutt’s class was learning about the Sacraments! Watersprings doesn’t teach that!
    - Nor do they take Mormons, we take ALL people and **show them Jesus!**
- Celebrates a continued legacy on which our congregation was founded
- An early childhood focus doesn’t neglect our mission, but it wouldn’t be nearly as robust

# MISSION (CONT'D)

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- Approx 10 Elementary students accepted Pastor's "Challenge" to memorize the Books of the Bible, and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm
- The last two families to participate in a Hope activity (Open Gym) or a service were Elementary Families.
- "I would also contend that I have seen a class that overall has increased their knowledge and desire for God. I saw great enthusiasm from the students when they had the opportunity to get you a gift for being the pastor." – Mr. Northcutt
- "She was also baptized this year and is very excited about religion and the things of God." – Mr. Northcutt



# CHALLENGES: SALARIES

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- Our teachers have a pay scale based on certification, colloquy, and experience
- We understand we offer less than the public schools
  - But we (and our teachers) recognize this school is about more than money
  - We recognize many other private schools don't meet the public-school minimum, either
    - E.g. Grace, Watersprings
  - We believe our pay scale is not unethical – our teachers with lots of experience, if certified, will make more than \$40k
  - We cap the students at a number lower than the public schools, so there is less of a burden on staff
  - Drawback: Our comparatively lower pay makes it harder to attract teachers
    - Which leads to...

# CHALLENGE:TEACHER SHORTAGE?

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- We have 3 returning elementary teachers to teach 1-2, 3-4, 5-6 grades!
- One of our Teachers will be colloquized this summer, therefore we will be GAINING a Called Teacher
  - This is a huge step forward for our Lutheran School!
- While we failed to call an additional Called Teacher, there are still other avenues in the community / Synod to explore if needed.

# CHALLENGE: QUALITY EDUCATION

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- It has been accused that our teachers are not committed
  - Pastor, who works on Saturday, has routinely seen them working on weekends
- It has been accused that our education provided is detrimental to our students
  - Test scores are down nationally
  - Mr. Northcutt offered me some numbers on his 11 students he has had:
    - Star reading levels: 10<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> (x2) 6.7<sup>th</sup> (x2), 4<sup>th</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> grader), 3.5<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> (was 2<sup>nd</sup> at beg. of year), 2 are well behind but have a C average in the class.
    - Our school doesn't hold back students who excel, but, like every school has students who struggle

# CHALLENGE:ADMINISTRATOR

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- Possibility: Hire another one. As we have done so many times in the past. OR...
- We put together an administrative team including Pastor, Shawnee M., and, if needed, an additional part time Admin.
  - This spreads out the job duties, allows for multiple people on the decision-making process
    - Benefit: Directives (or firings) are not seen as “one person” bossing us around
    - Challenge: We need to be clear who the parents’ contact person is
  - Why Shawnee? She has proven capable in admin for the early childhood & only teaches half day
  - This absorbs the salary of our previous admin and saves us money.
- Potential Weaknesses: Gaining familiarity with software / bookkeeping



# CHALLENGE: FINANCES

- Ed Reber: “We are in the best financial shape we’ve been in.”
  - See below: In Years ‘18, ‘19, and ‘20 the school, including donations, MADE money (2021 school numbers not available to me. Note: the 2021 budget has a 1x 25k expense for a Van.)
  - In 2021 the Congregation MADE 35.5k – in a COVID year!
  - We are literally gaining on both sides. So why close now?

20	Seventh Denial		\$ -		\$ -		\$ -
21	Total Income		\$ 288,572.02		\$ 380,167.42		\$ 409,072.87
66	Grants, Gift		\$ -		\$ 78.73		\$ 323.04
67	Total		\$ 243,123.09		\$ 296,751.87		\$ 250,038.93
68			\$ -		\$ -		\$ -
69	Net		\$ 45,448.93		\$ 83,415.55		\$ 142,749.08
70			\$ -		\$ -		\$ -

# CHALLENGES: FINANCES (CONT'D)

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- Is our business model sound?
- 3 classes of 20 students = 60 students
  - 30 students on 50% tuition, 30 on full (\$3.6k/year) = approx. 160k a year in tuition
  - Better numbers than we budget for – and that's not counting early childhood!
    - Tuition Income past years: '17 = 144k, '18 = 127k, '20 = 121k
    - Early Childhood Tuition is raising to offset our qualified teacher salaries.
  - Conclusion: **We have the room!** Wiggle room for the numbers, and space for the students.

# CHALLENGES: FINANCES (CONT'D)

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- Congregation needs to be committed to giving and support with prayers, time (service in school and on board), and money.
  - Admin needs to be intentional about updating congregation about the school.
- We reset and relaunch fundraising strategies.
  - We made 54k this year WITHOUT EVEN TRYING
  - We shoot for 100k this year
- We still have \$250k donated to the School by Sainted Phyllis B.

# CHALLENGES: ENROLLMENT

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- We've gained ICCP which will help grow our school (Govnt Assistance for Low-Income families)
- We are surrounded by residential housing
- We have done little advertising – more potential here
- Renovate playground / grounds to create buzz
- Future plans:
  - Building project?
  - Find the passions of our teachers and develop programs that can make us unique
    - Example: Languages, athletics, robotics, etc.
  - Consider a classical curriculum or block schedule (could make multi-grade teaching simpler)



# CONCLUSION

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- The School is at a relative high in regards to enrollment and finances
  - Based on this, **there is no measurable reason** to close the elementary program this particular year
- We could have a great early childhood program
  - But we can have one alongside an elementary program as well.
- But if we cut the elementary program, it seems highly unlikely we ever go back.
- We lose all momentum with our elementary program, including a Called Teacher

# CONCLUSIONS (CONT'D)

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- If we focus on Early Childhood, we are still doing mission, but not as richly
- We are the ones shutting down, or downsizing, a 60-year legacy
  - And making that decision in a matter of weeks(!) based on the loss of 1 staff member
  - And making that decision in spite of some encouraging measurables
  - And making that decision against the wishes of the current DSC

# NEXT STEPS

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- We contact parents with the new Admin changes
- We encourage them with another year and returning teachers
- We open enrollment
- We start advertising, we start fundraising
- Pastor immediately starts team-building, reconciliation, and setting deliverables for staff.
- We have Two months and a Summer for our Admin to familiarize themselves with parent interaction and software or to look for another Admin.