

Deacon Lindsay Stertzbach, *Director of Youth and Family Ministries*

Congregation Council Report - October 21, 2025

Last month I wrote about feeling a bit “out of balance” when it came to being mom, wife, and deacon, with work receiving more of my attention than my family. While I had hoped that things would level out a bit, the balance hasn’t returned quite yet. It’s been another month where ministry has demanded a larger share of my time and focus. It’s been a continued season of full plates and full days, which has included:

Monthly Ministry Meetings – Worship Team, LGL Samaritan Fund, Finance Team (I don’t typically attend finance anymore, but with it being budget season, it felt more necessary. Ellie also attended the finance meeting, since Austin is a member of that team. Life of a clergy kid, even at 11 months old.)

Pastoral Support + One-on-Ones – This month was heavy in the “pastoral care” department. I’ve had the opportunity to offer pastoral support and care for those who’ve expressed a need for it, including a few of our youth. I’ve also had the privilege of meeting with Natalie Cirincione and Caleb Gruenbaum for their second premarital conversation. I will be officiating their wedding (outside of Columbus) on Saturday, December 6. I also attended Medina High School’s “Ace for Grace” volleyball event at the end of September. It was a joy to support one of our volleyball youth and her team, as well as a worthy cause. I am grateful that my job includes opportunities, like this one, where my husband and daughter can join me.

Confirmation Conversations – In preparation for affirming their baptisms on October 26, I have met with our 8 confirmands for their required “confirmation conversation.” As always, these conversations bring great joy as I observe their growth and hear their (often profound) reflections of their confirmation journeys.

The following youth will be affirming their baptism on Reformation Sunday: Brooke Haycook, Emma Kotick, Reagan Stuchal, Faith Taraschke, Aubrey Terihay, James Walker, and Addison Wierzchowski. Trace Thompson will also affirm his baptism on another date due to a previous commitment preventing him from being present on Sunday. As a reminder, there will be a reception in the Fellowship Hall at 9:45 AM on October 26 to recognize and celebrate our confirmands.

Transitions and Staff/Personnel Support – On two occasions, I met with Mary Dunham and Carla Maas to sort through the children’s book in the library. Together we discerned what books ought to be kept, which should be donated, and what to recycle. It was a worthwhile process as many books were outdated theologically and/or in rough condition.

Behind the scenes, I’ve also been supporting the (very busy) personnel committee with the Parish Nurse Survey and running background checks for new staff.

On October 19, we celebrated and bid farewell to LaVonne Debois, our assistant pianist for the last year. Although her final Sunday was a bit expedited, I was able to throw together a reception for her with the help of Joyce Davis, Rachel Knaggs, and Deb Musil, and also

recognized her during both worship services.. In a few hours time, we had everything taken care of and LaVonne was sincerely grateful.

Synodical + Greater Church Service – As Pastor Steve shared around the time he attended Churchwide, our call as rostered leaders is not only to the congregation, but to the greater Church. As a part of this, I recently participated in approval panels for the Northeast Ohio Candidacy Committee (the committee responsible for vetting, supporting, and approving candidates seeking ordination), and was nominated and endorsed by Bishop Laura Barbins to participate in an ELCA Task Force that has been given the charge to review and propose edits to the ELCA's purpose statements. Being nominated does not automatically put me on the task force, but I did complete the required forms to officially have my name in the running. I have not yet heard back about this task force and will report back when I do.

Thank You! – I would be remiss if I didn't include a word of thanks for celebrating me as a part of Clergy Appreciation Day. You all did a great job keeping it a surprise – I had no clue! It is a gift to serve in ministry alongside the people of St. Matthew. Thank you for all you do to support me and my family!

As I'm sure you can see from the sheer volume of ministry commitments and "extras," it has been a busy, work-heavy season. And, at the same time, life doesn't slow down on the "mom front." We will be celebrating Ellie's first birthday this Saturday, as she turns one year old (HOW?!) and are in the process of scheduling a surgery for her "lucky fin" (crooked toe that she was born with), hopefully to take place by the end of the year.

And, because the mother-daughter bond is so strong, I am also having a procedure for my left hip on November 14. While this procedure is *not* a surgery, I have been warned that I will be sore and will need to take it easy for 1-2 weeks following. This may mean working remotely for a few extra days to elevate and tend to my hip. I will provide an update to that end once I've had the procedure. It may or may not be needed. After having an emergency c-section and walking the same day, I'm thinking I'll be able to handle whatever discomfort follows the procedure rather well.

Finally, I will be taking some (much needed) vacation days: October 22-23, and October 27-November 6. I am looking forward to quality time with Ellie and Austin, a trip with my parents, and time at home for various projects, and am hopeful that it will give me some breathing space as I continue to navigate what it means to give appropriate and balanced attention to ministry and family.

Peace be with you,



Deacon Lindsay