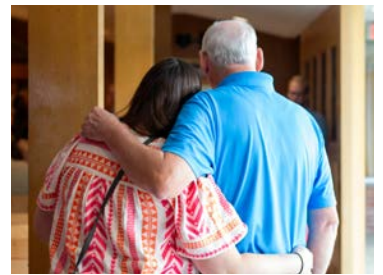


2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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Agenda

Call to Order	Dave Shay
Opening Prayer.....	Pastor Karl Jacobson
Approval of 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes	
Report of Pastor	Pastor Karl Jacobson
Meeting of the Good Shepherd Foundation.....	Nancy Rystrom
Report of the Church Council President	Dave Shay
Report of the Treasurer.....	Dave Senness
Report of the Nominating Committee.....	Sasha Jensen
Elections	Dave Shay
New Council President's Comments.....	Susan Kratz
Adoption of 2024 Budget.....	Susan Kratz/Joy Roellinger
New Business.....	Susan Kratz
Closing Prayer.....	Pastor Jeff Barrow

Minutes of 2023

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd Church Council

February 5, 2023 | 11:30 am

Please review the annual report, which is cited frequently in the minutes below. This is available via hardcopy at the church, or electronically via the website:

https://www.goodshepherdmpls.org/s/2022_AnnualReport-gn7c.pdf

Motions are in blue font

Call to Order and Opening Prayer

- President Andrea Brandt called the meeting to order.
- Pastor Elise Pokel opened the meeting in prayer.
- President Brandt outlined the guidelines for the hybrid meeting (some attended in person, some attended via LiveStream).

Approval of the Minutes

Motion passed to approve the minutes of the January 2022 annual meeting.

Senior Pastor Report

In lieu of a presentation, refer to the written reports in the annual meeting document.

President Brandt paused the Annual Meeting, and Nancy Rystrom convened the Foundation meeting.

Meeting of the Good Shepherd Foundation

- Nancy Rystrom called the Foundation meeting to order.
- There is no old or new business to address.
- Refer to Foundation report in the 2022 annual meeting pdf, for details.

President Brandt reconvened the annual meeting.

Council President Report

- President Brandt spoke about the challenges and accomplishments of 2022, both planned and unplanned.
- Highlights included staffing, security system enhancements, capital campaign, 100th anniversary celebration, and post-covid plans.

Strategic Planning Task Force

- Walt Polley reviewed the work of the task force, and offered a proposed mission statement
- Please find details here: https://www.goodshepherdmpls.org/s/LCOGS_Mission-and-Values.pdf

Treasurer's Report

- Amanda Sykora provided highlights from the financial report
- Motion passed to accept the financial report, and forward it to the audit committee.

Nancy Rystrom thanked Pastor Pokel, Pastor Bergstrand, Amanda Sykora, and Andrea Brandt for their energy, passion, and contributions to the church in 2022.

Cathy Davenport shared statistics and anecdotes about how the church community has been able to do more with less over the years. She hopes we may continue to be blessed, in case we are asked to do more. There are many opportunities to give our time and our talents to the church.

Nominating Committee Report

- Joe Hagen reviewed the nominations, for positions within committees et al governing bodies of the church, which are listed in the annual report.
- Motion passed to elect the full slate of candidates to the respective positions.

New President's Comments

- Incoming President Dave Shay spoke about his experience on the Council in 2022, thanked the outgoing Council members, and welcomed the incoming Council members.

Annual Meeting

- President Shay provided updates about preparing for the return of Pastor Jacobson and the departure of Pastor Pokel.
- The Strategic Task Force and Transition Team will shape the work of the council and of the church overall in 2023.

2023 Budget

- Incoming Treasurer Dave Senness provided highlights from the proposed budget, including similarities with and differences from the 2022 numbers.
- Question: from where is the mortgage paid? Sykora and Senness explained that ultimately the unrestricted equity balance is used for this purpose, when needed.
- Senness also thanked Sykora for her work.
- Motion was presented to adopt the 2023 budget, as presented in the annual report.
- Proposal was made by Jim Erickson to amend the motion, to increase benevolence budget (and therefore the overall budget) by \$2500 and to put in to the pastor's discretionary fund. Amendment passed (Amendment was not unanimous; there were a handful of nays).
- A vote was then taken on the original motion. The motion passed.
- In summary, the motion passed to adopt the budget, as presented within the annual report but with the amendment that the benevolence budget will increase by \$2500.

Sharon Etemad expressed her appreciation of the past statistics about members and their contributions over the past 10 years, and encouraged the church and its leadership team to maintain awareness of trends and future challenges.

New Business

Transition Team

- Beth Helgen spoke about the Transition Team's work.
- Feb 12 will be Pastor Pokel's final worship service.
- On Feb 2, the council voted unanimously to call Pastor Jeffrey Barrow at Transition Pastor. Pastor Barrow will work closely with Pastor Jacobson during his transition back to the church.
- Helgen shared Pastor Barrow's experience and current work.
- Pastor Jeff will join worship on March 5, and will start work on March 6.

Comments and Questions

- Herb Morgenthaler requested that congregation read the council minutes, and the council post minutes promptly and also remind the membership where to find the minutes.
- Lida Etemad further challenged members to read the minutes.
- Amy Caron requested that confidentiality and data integrity be considered when meeting minutes are posted.

Adjournment and Closing Prayer

Minutes prepared by Joe Hagen, Secretary

Congregational President

This past year has been a year of transitions. Last year we had hoped to welcome Pastor Karl back full time, but an unpredictable recovery has delayed that. Covid also was supposed to be gone, but we have seen its lingering effects, with thankfully somewhat less serious effects to most folks, still affecting many. The economy has faced many serious problems with inflation and other Covid-related problems but seems to be doing fairly well at year end. Wars are still a problem, with no end in sight. We hope for good outcomes to all these issues.

At Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd there have been signs of progress in these transitions. The Transition Team has been hard at work all year and have given their recommendations to the Council. The Council has moved forward with some of these recommendations and will be working on the rest. These recommendations include relaunching the Ministry team, staffing overview with enhancements to certain job positions and clarifying decision making authority. The Transition Team also has made recommendations on certain financial procedures that will hopefully ensure transparency and efficiency. Finally they have been working with Pastor Karl on understanding his health status and his return to full Senior Pastor duties. I want to thank them for their diligent and hard work.

I also want to thank Pastors Deb and Jeff for their work over the last year, helping us to work on the transition to Pastor Karl's return to full time status. Their work after Pastor Elise's departure has insured continuing progress forward and from issues of the lingering effects of the Covid shutdown. Pastor Jeff's work with the staff and the Ministry Board and Pastor Deb's work with the women of Good Shepherd and new members among many other things have been a blessing in our transition.

Mark and Tor have also been critical to maintaining our forward progress in Sunday School, Youth work, and behind-the-scenes work with our physical building. Roger also has worked hard with custodial work as well as welcoming groups using our facilities. We also will miss Karen Walhof, but are thankful for her legacy and work with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekeane Yesus and as Director of Outreach.

Mara Halvorson also has been also been an outstanding recent addition to the staff. She has revamped the website and been working on communicating and marketing of the church.

The Sunday worship experience has been moving forward as well. Karl's, Jeff's and Deb's sermons have been inspirational. The addition of Seth Hartwell, director of Worship and Music, has invigorated Sunday with music and choirs. Sharon Vicic also has added tremendously to worship with her organ and piano work. Lots of people stay seated for her organ postlude after church! The audio/video team has also been hard at work adding features to enhance the experience of folks unable to attend. Our new members also have added much to our experience.

There have been some exciting things happening outside of Sunday. The corn roast was a big success with the proceeds going to our outstanding art team. The Pastor Wheeler event, put on by the Anti-Racism group, was well attended and thought provoking. The Stewardish event and the presentation by the Uruguay travelers were very interesting. The Property Committee has had a lot of success with their work night events and made our grounds even more beautiful. There are many other things going on that seem to me to be making things vibrant and create a sense of moving forward.

As we move forward with another year of transitions, I think we can look forward with excitement and renewed hope as Pastor Karl's health and strength improve and lingering effects of Covid recede. We have been blessed with a dedicated staff and lots of energetic volunteers which will make our transition from where we are to an even better place.

Peace

Dave Shay
Council President



Senior Pastor

*You have turned my mourning into dancing;
you have taken off my sackcloth
and clothed me with joy,
so that my soul may praise you
and not be silent. (Psalm 30:11-12)*

It goes without saying that since last I “penned” a report for this congregation’s annual meeting, we’ve come a long and complicated way. In that report I wrote that 2022 would be a year unlike any year this congregation had seen. I had no idea how true that would be.

It has been a challenging two years, and at the same time it has been better, far better than it might have been. As I have come back to work, starting last Easter, I have been present most Sundays, and in the office in a limited basis. The hope had been to gradually increase my time, which has been the case, but less quickly and steadily than expected. It has been my joy to return, however slowly, to work, in reconnecting with our staff and our congregation, to participating in leading worship and preaching, and more.

Thank you once again for all you have done for me and my family. I thank my God for you.



Looking forward in 2024

As we look forward to the year ahead, it remains my goal to return to fulltime work, assuming that my physical strength continues to grow and improve. I have outlined a plan with the church council to work towards that goal. This will happen in three stages. Starting in January, I will increase my time in the office during the week. As Lent begins in February, my hours will again increase. And, by the time Easter arrives, I expect to have a clear sense of what I will be capable of



moving forward, whether I am able to be fulltime, or if it will be time for me to reevaluate. All along the way I will be in conversation with both the staff and the church council about how these stages seem to be working, both for me and for the congregation.

In the meantime, the life and work of this congregation continues, with a focus on the ways in which we are fed in worship and education at all levels, and how we in turn feed those around us—our friends and neighbors, the people we work and learn with, the people in our community and indeed in the world who hunger, both literally and figuratively. In 2024, we will be focusing intently on the feeding ministries of this congregation, from Camden Promise, to Community Emergency Services, Feed My Starving Children, Loaves & Fishes, Meals on Wheels, to Simpson Shelter, and more. More on this to come.

Lastly, a final word of thanks. Thank you to my colleagues, both old and new, for your good, hard, faithful work this past year (and more). I am grateful, as always, for Mark, Tor, Karen, Roger, and Sharon, and in new ways for Pastor Bergstrand, Pastor Barrow, Seth, and Mara. I am looking forward, with gratitude and hope, to the year ahead.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Karl N. Jacobson
Senior Pastor

Transition Pastor

Let me begin this report by saying what a wonderful and timely blessing to my life has been my experience at Good Shepherd so far. I arrived in the middle of Lent, called to a unique situation in a congregation in the midst of many changes, called as the Senior Pastor was beginning to return after a long absence due to illness, called to a place with another Bridge Pastor here, called just as Seth Hartwell came on the scene, called to a staff already hard at work. Amid all those moving pieces, something here has felt right. Whatever words of grace I have brought to the mix, I have received more.

For those of you who share my insipid love for baseball analogies, I don't think I was invited here to be Harmon Killebrew. After all, he is in the Hall of Fame and has a root beer named after him. I think I was invited here to be Cesar Tovar — the guy who was asked to play every position as needed.

Many of the areas of ministry in which I have been most involved are in the Ministry Board report, so I will not elaborate too much.



I have been involved in pastoral care, primarily in hospital visits and taking communion to those at home. There are still some with whom I have not been able to connect, so I am always hoping to expand that list. Leading worship and preaching are always center stage in the life of the congregation, and it has been a privilege to be involved with that.

I have been involved with the newly formed Anti-Racism group under the energy and leadership of Linda Shay. I have worked with a revitalized stewardship committee and helped coordinate the stewardship emphasis in



October and at the end of the year. I have enjoyed tremendously working with the other pastors and have been the one in the office most frequently to hopefully support the other staff and volunteers.

At the same time, I think that for a Transition Pastor what one observes is almost more important than what one does. So here are some of the things I have witnessed in my short time here.

First, I think there is a commitment to excellence in worship which is now part of the fabric of life at Good Shepherd. People expect thoughtful preaching and great music. I am amazed by the talented musicians not only on staff and in the choir, but also the variety of others who participate. I thoroughly enjoy coming to worship and am pleased that children often play an important role in the services.

Second, I think we like many other congregations are still emerging from the isolation of the pandemic and that people are still starved for community. The corn roast this past summer, the Women of Good Shepherd events and the Steward-Dish event in October were simply examples of people longing to be in community together. The invitation going forward is to embrace the Gospel, to pray fervently, and to have as much fun as possible along the way.

Third, I don't think anyone should underestimate the importance of art as part of the DNA of Good Shepherd. It may begin with Paul Granlund sculptures, but the importance of drama in the summer arts camps and

Parochial Statistics

the seasonal productions are also part of that story. Of course what I have affectionately described as “the crazy art ladies,” those who punctuate the liturgical seasons with incredible creativity and involve the whole congregation in their projects—that is such a unique gift to have as part of a congregation.

Fourth, when I arrived I was told that the latest Kairos report noted what might be described as a lack of clear vision going forward. By the way that was in a report which also had some strong words of affirmation for this congregation. I for one do not believe the visions are imposed from the outside. I believe that the best visions are the ones which are unearthed from within an organization. If I were allowed to name what I see in this place, I would say that Good Shepherd should aspire to be a place to which people want to be a part because of the art and music, not as entities unto themselves, but as vehicles to enhance faith and equip us for lives of service to others.



Finally, one of the events that struck me over the past year was when Good Shepherd was invited to have a booth at the festival at Pershing Park. I was impressed with the dynamic character of the neighborhood. There are a ton of young families living all around us. Many, I suspect, do not have a church home. Some would be very blessed by being a part of what goes on in this place. And of course, blessings are often a two-way street.

Those are some of the things I see. As I used to tell people when they came to my office for counseling, “It never hurts to get a second opinion.”

Thank you again for the word of grace you have been to me.

Pastor Jeff Barrow
Transition Pastor

Total number of households	402
Total number of members	854

2023 Changes

Members removed by death	6
Members added by baptism	1
New members received	26
Received by Affirmation of Baptism	4

**Numbers from the 2021 and 2022 reports were inaccurate, these numbers accurately represent our congregation.*



Bridge Pastor



Peace on Earth. Goodwill to All.

As I write this report, I am savoring the beautiful memories of Advent and Christmas in a sanctuary full of candles, light, and memorable music at Good Shepherd. Thank you for this opportunity to serve in ministry, enjoy meaningful worship, and celebrate the joy of being together in community as the Body of Christ. There has been significant staff transition and change for Good Shepherd in 2023. In February, there was a wonderful farewell for Pastor Elise Pokel as she left for a new call. In March, Pastor Jeff Barrow and Seth Hartwell came on board. In April, Pastor Karl Jacobson returned part time from medical leave. And in December we gave thanks for the ministry of Karen Walhof. As your Bridge Pastor in this, I am grateful for good leadership, and the patient, gracious spirit of the congregation in adjusting to these changes.

Here are some highlights of the year from my perspective:

March 2023: Welcoming Pastor Jeff Barrow as Transition Pastor. Pastor Barrow has provided a comforting pastoral presence and been a great colleague with the staff.

Lent 2023: Welcoming Seth Hartwell as Director of Worship and Music. Seth stepped into this position just before Holy Week. He created amazing worship and music in a short amount of time. Seth has done a spectacular job and is well loved for his musicality and humor. Another highlight in Lent was the amazing sanctuary art created by the Art Team. They transformed a tree into a Good Friday cross which then became the Easter celebration cross. There was rich meaning and a deepening of faith in these worship experiences.

April 2023: Welcoming Pastor Jacobson back from medical leave. Pastor Karl's preaching, teaching, and presence have enriched the life of the congregation.

The staff is very grateful for his return to weekly staff meetings.

Spring/Summer/Fall 2023: Gathering dozens of women together as the Women of Good Shepherd for two retreats and four evening events. Forty women came to hear our guest speaker for the retreat in November. Twenty-five or more came to listen to podcasts, share faith, and support one another at the Pizza and Podcast events. The Gift of Years group meets weekly and has grown to 10 active participants each week.

October 2023: Welcoming new members through a new series of three Sunday classes, and in worship on Reformation Sunday. Creating a First Communion class for four young people and their families.

All year 2023: Working with the amazing staff each week who are so dedicated to their work and to Good Shepherd. Thank you especially to Mark Halvorson, Mara Halvorson, Tor Johnson, Roger Krafve, Sharon Vivic, Karen Walhof, and for the wonderful teamwork.

Our world will continue to face many challenges in 2024. May we continue to pray for peace in Gaza and in Ukraine. Let us continue to work together in love to spread good will and the Good News of Jesus Christ to our neighbors, family, and friends. May the work and spirit of Christmas continue in the days ahead. I leave you with the words of Howard Thurman.

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.*

Pastor Deb Bergstrand
Bridge Pastor

Worship & Music

In the not-too-distant past, I was asked to serve as Interim Director of Worship and Music while Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd underwent a challenging staffing transition. As surprised as you must have felt, I was equally surprised to accept a new position with Easter around the corner. We began life together on Palm Sunday, and now, less than a year later, we have come to know each other and have become dear friends, siblings in Christ. It has been a great joy of mine to get to know your many and varied personalities, your gifts and talents, your devotion to your neighbors, your love of community, and your love for God. I am honored that Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd asked me to serve as Director of Worship and Music after only several months of an interim period.



During my first year of service to Good Shepherd, I have sought to share music with the congregation which complement the scripture lessons and to make use of the members' musical gifts wherever possible. I have also endeavored to share some music which enliven and enrich the congregation -- be it a contemplative Taizé responsorial or a thumping conga. Robert Ray's Gospel Mass added joy and spirit to our All Saints worship.

From Easter through Christmas, I have received much feedback from in-person and online worshipers offering words of encouragement, and feel that we are abuzz with excitement. I feel incredibly blessed to have the support of choir members, instrumentalists, our support staff, and my incredible colleagues Sharon Vicic and Tor Johnson. Sharon diligently prepares demanding organ preludes, postludes, hymns, anthems, and rehearses with two choirs during the week. Tor prepares anthems for the Choristers and rehearses the bells and sings bass in the Good Shepherd choir, among many other duties. I sometimes step back and marvel at all the goings on and the team mentality that our staff has

and I feel happy and confident as we prepare our next offerings of music.



This year I have worked diligently to procure materials needed for quality worship: new anthems, familiar songs, organ music, children's songs, etc. There are other needs which have yet to be addressed; as the choir expands, new robes and liturgical colors should be considered. We should also add new musical instruments such as hand drums, percussion, and a shruti box.

I thank Mark Halvorson for his work in updating the technology in my office including a new computer and monitors, as well as internet access for the choir room. I also thank Good Shepherd for improvements made to the choir room lighting. Future improvements such as a sound system for the choir room should be considered in the future.

And, I am grateful for the support of our dear friend, Ralph Johnson. Ralph's continued support of the music ministry at Good Shepherd is a testament to his spirit of kindness and I hope to be him when I grow up.

Seth Hartwell
Director of Worship and Music



Children's Ministries & Performing Arts



Children's Ministries

I'm well into my fifth year now of being Director of Children's Ministries at Good Shepherd. It's hard to believe how fast life is flying by. It feels like yesterday it was Rally Sunday, and here we are into the new year, with Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas fading in our rearview mirrors.

Every calendar year for the church, I like to come up with my own curriculum for Sunday School. Our theme for our Sunday School year, September through mid-May, has been The B-I-B-L-E, Yes! That's the Book for Me! We've been looking at all kinds of interesting and diverse stories from the Old and New Testaments. Our tradition of having many of the parents stay and participate with their kids in Sunday School has been stronger than ever. We had fun putting together our annual Advent Program, which we performed on December 17. I'm grateful to all the families who find the time each Sunday to bring their kids to Sunday School, where we always have a blast singing with Seth and Sharon, hearing the stories, playing games, and creating crafts that reflect our Christian faith. A special thank you, of course, to the parents and special thank you to Seth, Sharon Vicic and my volunteers, Amy Caron and Sasha Jensen!



Performing Arts

I'm in my 14th year as Director of Performing Arts, a role that was created back in 2010. Our first musical way back then was "Scrooge," the musical version of *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens. I thought an appropriate amount of time had elapsed for us to do it again. I coerced our former Director of Worship and Music, Ralph Johnson, into playing the role of Scrooge. It almost did him in, but I think he had a good time! Ralph has been essential to many of my productions over the years; playing Mr. Bumble in "Oliver," twice; playing Grandpa Joe in "Willy Wonka;" playing Daddy Warbucks in "Annie" and King Triton in "Little Mermaid." Our current Director of Worship and Music, Seth Hartwell, is picking up where Ralph left off by playing the role of the Ghost of Christmas Present. Needless to say, I'll be asking Seth to do more roles in the future!



The annual holiday musical is mostly populated by kids from all over the Twin Cities. But I was very proud of how many Good Shepherd members participated. Aside from Ralph and Seth, we also had Roger, Ingrid, and Ella Krafve, Gus Johnson, Janet Fystrom, Elsie West, Samantha Jensen, Lily Klabo, Natalie Etemad-Stahl, Achilles Boe, Marlin Klabo, Demetri Edgeworth, Joy Shimmin-Olson, and Yvonne Grover was our awesome accompanist! Special shout outs to Cathy Davenport, who was the glue that held everything together, along with Ingrid Krafve, to Colton and Jason Davenport for their technical contributions, to Joe Marchese for set construction, to Mara Halvorson for her artistic excellence, and to Mark Halvorson for constant support and help.

Tor Johnson

Director of Children's Ministries, Performing Arts

Youth & Family Ministries

When this report surfaces in mid-January, we are all in a state of looking ahead. We have hopes and goals for the new year and maybe a resolution or two as well. It's a time to look at the arc of congregational ministries ahead of us and that's important. That said, it is equally important to look backwards, to see where we have been over the past year, name the successes and struggles and challenges, the highlights and pieces that have created this firm foundation from which we launch into 2024.

“Youth and Family Ministry” exists to create experiences and cultivate interactions that are more than an event or retreat. A goal is to set a tone of invitation and acceptance, create a place for kids of all ages to know that they are valued and respected and invited to be included throughout our congregation's life together.

This past year we gathered for over 60 worship services together, and students of all ages participated in multiple areas of those services. This past January we had over 75 individuals make the trip down to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church for the annual Feed My Starving Children mobile pack.

Throughout the spring, we gathered on Sundays and Wednesdays to talk about faith and life, and how much those need to overlap in our lives.

More than 100 of us kept the fire going between Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship services this past Lent.

We celebrated with four of our graduates, and shared smiles of pride as they launched into post-high-school life.



While we did not make the trip to the Appalachian mountains this summer, a group of us, veterans and newbies alike, traveled north and out into creation using Wilderness Canoe Base once again for a week of paddling and portaging, and one pirated backpack.

This fall we returned to weekly programming and learning and service experiences and pizza and fellowship and prayer and so much more. Thank you to Amanda Sykora and Ian Johnson and Emily Kratz for their leadership with high school youth group this past year.

At Reformation, we celebrated as four of our young adults affirmed the baptismal promises made on their behalf, and throughout the winter that hasn't started at the time of writing this families made a point to worship together, and as far as the congregational life we share, that sits at the top of the “what's important” list.

There were challenges, and we overcame them. There were moments of joy, and we celebrated them.

When you think of youth ministry and picture the faces of those students at this congregation, I hope that you will say that they are not only the future of the church, but they are the present of the church as well. We are wrapped up in all of this together.

Mark Halvorson
*Director of Youth and Family Ministries,
Office Operations*

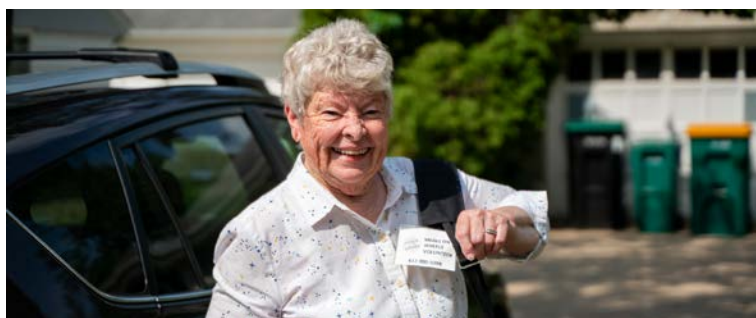
Outreach



During 2023, some Outreach ministries flourished, thanks to the work of many Good Shepherd members.

The Camden Promise Shop saw increased use on the part of our neighbors on the northside. Volunteers from Good Shepherd switched seasonal clothing at two times during the year, and many members donated clothing and housewares to the shop. Thanks to Pat Sykes who spearheaded this ministry during much of the year. She has decided to continue to serve, but leave the leadership to others, and we are so grateful for her commitment during the past few years, which got this ministry off the ground. Thanks to JoAnn Newland, who has taken the lead in recent months, and to Jay Berlin who is transporting donations from Good Shepherd to Camden Promise. The Camden Promise Food Shelf still serves the neighborhood, and Good Shepherd volunteers are key in restocking and setting up the first Saturday of every month.

Loaves and Fishes serves our brothers and sisters on the margins of society. Six times a year, faithful volunteers prepare the food and others serve it in the evening. When the location of that ministry moved from St. Stephen's School to the Peace House on Portland Avenue, the number of clients coming for dinner decreased to 100. But over the past couple years it has increased to 200, and then to 300. Certainly this is a reflection of our current economic situation and the needs of those we serve.



The relationship with our companion congregation, Nuestro Salvador, in Montevideo, Uruguay, received a real boost this year as four of our people traveled there, meeting our brothers and sisters and seeing their ministries. Pastor Angela Jacobson served as leader of the group, and we are grateful for her leadership. Stay tuned! There are ideas and plans to bring more attention to this wonderful partnership!



Also, on the global front, we published a book this year entitled *One in Christ*, which explores the development of our relationship with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, now an 18-year adventure! Some of our Ethiopian friends here encouraged us to “write it down” as we remembered the development of this relationship. They didn’t want the story or the commitment shown on both sides to be lost. I don’t know if we realized what a unique and precious relationship it is until we started “writing it down.” One of the back cover endorsements, by Dr. Samuel Yonas Deressa, professor of theology and the global south at Concordia University, tells us:

Throughout history partnerships between Western churches and African churches have often been marked by negativity and conflict. However, this book showcases a different story – a powerful and productive collaboration that transcends cultural differences and serves as a model for all who strive to be better partners in mission.

Copies have gone to key people in this country and others will be taken to our partners in Ethiopia.

Other Outreach ministries are going through re-evaluation and possibly renewal.

Families Moving Forward has been such a staple of our outreach program at Good Shepherd, inviting homeless families into our facility four times a year, feeding them, and welcoming them here. Covid meant that this needed to stop for a time, and currently families are being housed in hotels by Beacon Housing Collaborative, the non-profit that runs the program. They have lurched toward moving back to church buildings during the last couple years, but that finally has not happened. We wait for their decision.

Urban Homeworks has noted flagging enthusiasm on the part of their volunteers, and the last few months our involvement there has been cancelled. We wait, again, to see how this ministry may revive or end.



But that's life, isn't it, as its rhythms and personal experiences and societal factors impact how we function and live together.

And in my life, too, there has been new rhythms developing as health problems make mobility a significant issue for me. Because of that, I decided to retire at the end of 2023 – feeling strongly that Good Shepherd needs a vigorous and active coordinator of these ministries – and so this is my final report as Director of Outreach Ministries. Working with so many people – at Good Shepherd and with our ministry partners – has been one of the greatest joys of my life. I hope to stay involved in those ministries as a volunteer where it is possible – especially our relationship with the church in Ethiopia.

On the Sunday my ministry at Good Shepherd was recognized, people who were involved in various



outreach ministries were asked to rise. By the time the list was completed, nearly everyone was standing. That is a testament to the intent of this congregation – to reach out in real ways in Christ's name to our neighbors. Never in my time on staff was this seen as the staff's responsibility. These ministries have been the work of the entire congregation. Thank you, people of God at Good Shepherd, for the honor of working and serving with you in our local area, throughout the country, and globally. Sometimes that work is difficult, sometimes messy, even confusing and uncertain at times. But it is always a blessing. And it is our calling as God's people. The noted theologian Frederick Buechner has written, "The place to which God calls you is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet" (*Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*). That is a perfect description of my time in this job and, I think, of many of you as you serve in God's name. And we have only begun!

Karen Walhof
Director of Outreach Ministries



Ministry Board



In a year which involved many transitions in leadership, the Ministry Board regathered in the spring thanks to the initiative of Laura Stein. Together with Linnea Benson, Laura Opsahl, and Erienne Nelson, they continued the work of oversight of the ministry teams. Two of the first items of business were to help revitalize the Hospitality Ministry and to approve the application by the Anti-Racism Team as a new ministry at Good Shepherd.

Hospitality Ministry, always important in the life of Good Shepherd, has reaffirmed its mission coming out of the pandemic. One emphasis is to have hospitality members be more intentional in identifying visitors at Good Shepherd and providing a welcoming presence at events involving the larger community. They were also very helpful in launching events like the Corn Roast this summer and the Steward-Dish gathering in October. Thanks to Linda Shay for helping establish the Anti-Racism group as a new ministry at Good Shepherd. In addition to sponsoring an online series sponsored by the Edina Collective, the Anti-Racism group has met regularly since the spring, been part of a Sacred Spaces event this fall, and sponsored an evening with Pastor Ken Wheeler at the end of October, thanks to a grant received from the Good Shepherd Foundation.

Lifelong Learning has been very active throughout the year, not only through LifeLines on Sunday mornings, but also through the Gift of Years plus other events involving the Women of Good Shepherd. Thanks to Pastor Deb for her leadership in those events. What should not be overlooked are the number of book groups who meet regularly at Good Shepherd.

New this fall was reestablishing Wednesday evening as another educational opportunity beyond what already exists. We heard from Pastor Karl Jacobson, Pastor Rolf Jacobson, and Pastor Mike Pancoast as they shared their experiences with cancer. We also heard a report from the group who visited Nuestro Salvador congregation in Uruguay.

Worship Ministry continues to be a centerpiece for life at Good Shepherd. Again a year of transition brought Seth Hartwell into the mix as Director of Worship and Music. Together with Pastor Deb, Nancy Rystrom, Linda Kerker, Linnea Benson, and Yvonne Grover as members of the Worship Team, not to mention a host of talented musicians, worship and music have flourished. Special things like the summer bandshell and the Tree of Life liturgy this fall have fit nicely into what has been a long history of excellence here at Good Shepherd.

This summer a new Stewardship Team was established which included Kathy Bench, Martha Gisselquist, Amy Caron, Bob Stein, Cathy Davenport, Sasha Jensen. Together they set direction for the October stewardship emphasis and the year end appeal.

Thanks especially to Cathy Davenport for organizing the Steward-Dish supper where Evan Moilan was our guest speaker.



Outreach Ministry happens in many places locally and globally under the faithful leadership of Karen Walhof. Karen's decision to retire at the end of 2023 was cause for a great celebration, not simply of her ministry, but also the many ministries which happen within and beyond the walls of Good Shepherd. When Mark Halvorson asked people in the congregation to stand up if they had worked with Karen in the many ministries which she has coordinated, it was a great witness to God's work through this congregation. Like Bach, I am sure Karen would sign off on her tremendous work with the initials SDG....*Soli Deo Gloria*....to God be the glory!!!!

May the Ministry Board continue to oversee and support these vital ministries in 2024 and beyond.

Pastor Jeff Barrow
Transition Pastor

Nominations

	Name	Year	Term
COUNCIL			
President	Susan Kratz	1 of 1	
President-Elect.....	Craig Brandt.....	1 of 1	
Treasurer.....	Joy Roellinger.....	1 of 1	
Treasurer-Elect.....	Kathy Bench.....	1 of 1	
Secretary	Sasha Jensen.....	1 of 2	
Member at large	Walt Polley.....	2 of 2	
Member at large	Trent Chaffe	1 of 2	

MINISTRY BOARD

.....	Denise Engen.....	1 of 2	
.....	Julie Omland.....	1 of 2	
.....	Erienne Nelson	2 of 2	
.....	Laura Moret.....	1 of 2	
.....	Laura Opsahl	1 of 2	

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

.....	Ron Johnson.....	2 of 2	
.....	Chris Hahn	1 of 2	
.....	Walt Polley.....	2 of 2	
.....	Allan Campbell.....	1 of 2	
.....	Louise Campbell.....	1 of 2	
.....	Joy Erickson.....	1 of 2	

AUDIT COMMITTEE

.....	Jim Erickson.....	1 of 3	
.....	Sten Taracks	1 of 3	
.....	Amy Caron	3 of 3	

SYNOD ASSEMBLY

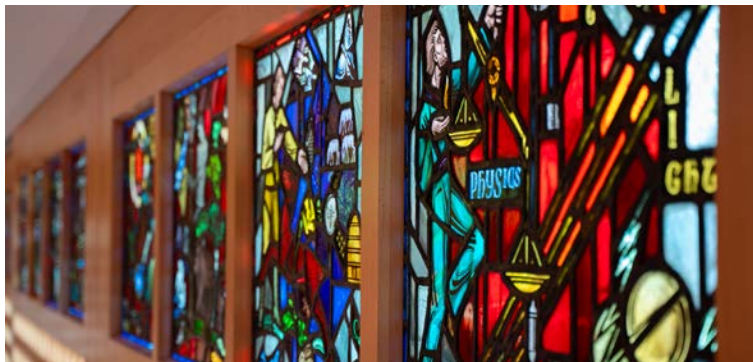
.....	Susan Kratz	1 of 1	
.....	Craig Brandt.....	1 of 1	
.....	TBD by Council	N/A	
.....	TBD by Council	N/A	

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD FOUNDATION

.....	Adam Benson.....	3 of 3.....	Term 3*
.....	Nancy Rystrom.....	1 of 3.....	Term 3
.....	Rich Sykora	2 of 3.....	Term 1
.....	Mary Quello	1 of 3.....	Term 2
.....	Sharon Hammond.....	1 of 3.....	Term 2
.....	Tim Matyi	1 of 3.....	Term 1
.....	Michael Bosshardt	3 of 3.....	Term 1*
.....	Ken Horstman	3 of 3.....	Term 1*
.....	Laura Moret.....	3 of 3.....	Term 1*
.....	Susan Kratz		Ex-Officio/Congregation President
.....	Craig Brandt.....		Ex-Officio/Congregation President-Elect

Treasurer's Report

This year has seen for the second consecutive year envelope offerings exceeding budgeted amounts. As a result, we will end the year with an operating surplus before depreciation expenses (non-cash) on our fixed assets. We are ending the year with a strong cash balance benefitting from large envelope offering in November and December and a generous memorial gift. Thank you to everyone who helped us to finish the year with a position of financial strength. We did experience a tight cash position early this fall which forced us to dip in to investment accounts to meet operating obligations. But with the strong finish in offering toward the end of the year, we will begin the next year with a strong cash position.



The Council continues to discuss whether a capital campaign to significantly reduce or even retire the mortgage on our church building. The current balance of the mortgage is \$1,253,288. We can expect further discussions around plans for a capital campaign in the coming year. Key to these plans will be determining the timing of a campaign and the size, if any, of a mortgage the congregation should carry.



We were able to fulfill our benevolences this year which was a growth of 10% over 2022. Our contribution to Minneapolis Area Synod was \$5,000 greater than 2022. Additionally, thanks to our staff for maintaining budget discipline so that expenses fall within the annual budget.



We continue to engage All in One Accounting which has changed its name to Verocity Pros as our outsourced accounting team. Ryan Hendricks is the accountant who was assigned to us mid-year. He replaced Tiffany Schmidt who was previously the accountant assigned to us. Tiffany continues to be the account manager assigned to us and is Ryan's supervisor. They continue to provide valuable service to our financial management.

Thank you to members of the Council for their diligent attention to the congregation's financial matters. Your guidance and oversight provide the congregation with true stewardship of its financial assets. The deliberations and policy making of this council has served the congregation well, and it is an honor to have been part of it.

Finally, a warm thank you to our congregation for so generously supporting the ministries of our church. I am so thankful to be a member of this faith community.

David Senness
Council Treasurer

Balance Sheet

		12/31/23	12/31/22
ASSETS			
	Current Assets		
	Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 360,035	\$ 418,777
	Pledges Receivable - Foundation	-	30,000
	Other Current Assets	549,198	579,241
	Total Current Assets	909,233	1,028,018
	Fixed Assets		
	Church & Parking Lot Land	250,000	250,000
	Church Building & Courtyard	9,777,139	9,777,139
	Parking Lot, Garage & Sign	164,914	164,914
	Furniture & Equipment	793,263	793,263
	Organ	581,364	581,364
	Accumulated Depreciation	(6,624,836)	(6,273,934)
	Total Fixed Assets	4,941,843	5,292,746
TOTAL ASSETS		\$ 5,851,076	\$ 6,320,764
LIABILITIES			
	MIF Construction Loan	1,253,288	1,463,244
	Other Payables	19,606	4,908
	Prepaid Pledges	157,026	150,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,429,920	1,618,152
EQUITY			
	Endowments	111,179	113,875
	Other Restricted Gifts	75,000	40,498
	Property Fund	3,688,556	3,829,501
	Unrestricted Equity	296,422	468,737
	Contingency Reserve	250,000	250,000
TOTAL EQUITY		4,421,157	4,702,611
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY		\$ 5,851,076	\$ 6,320,763

2023 Financial Summary

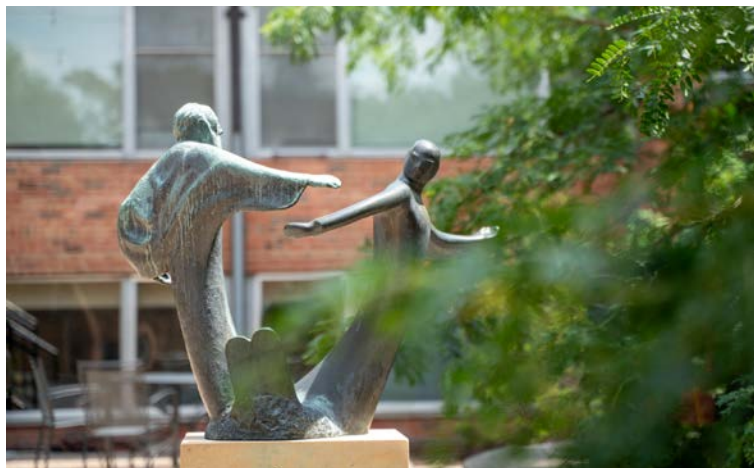
	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
INCOME				
Envelope Offering	\$ 957,338	\$ 954,416	\$ 954,138	\$ 979,000
Other Offerings	17,358	22,000	12,663	14,000
Designated Gifts	29,262	16,000	7,467	6,000
Income from activities & events	92,301	88,000	100,788	108,800
Investment Income	11,356	15,000	(790)	15,000
Endowment Income	10,250	10,000	109,032	10,000
Total Income	1,117,865	1,105,416	1,183,298	1,132,800
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 1,117,865	\$ 1,105,416	\$ 1,183,298	\$ 1,132,800
EXPENSES				
Welcome	23,017	22,300	14,943	19,000
Lifelong Learning				
Adult	965	2,100	605	5,700
Children	3,474	5,000	7,404	5,900
Youth & Family	20,903	20,250	15,346	13,500
Total Lifelong Learning	25,342	27,350	23,355	25,100
Benevolences	88,890	97,500	90,707	98,000
Stewardship	423	500	707	500
Worship, Music & Arts				
Worship	34,943	27,800	20,861	22,100
Music	16,804	15,000	13,059	13,500
Performing Arts	20,432	20,600	23,638	18,200
Total Worship, Music & Arts	72,179	63,400	57,558	53,800
Communications	11,522	13,050	6,877	9,600
Administration	83,569	91,200	109,369	103,800
Property & Utilities	184,275	176,000	199,859	203,000
Salaries & Benefits	528,841	614,116	623,828	568,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,018,058	\$ 1,105,416	\$ 1,127,203	\$ 1,080,800
OPERATING INCOME	\$ 99,807	\$ 0	\$ 56,095	\$ 52,000
OTHER EXPENSE				
Mortgage Interest	\$ 58,794	\$ 55,000	\$ 50,120	\$ 52,000
Depreciation Expense	352,847	352,847	350,902	323,000
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSE	\$ 411,641	\$ 407,847	\$ 401,022	\$ 375,000
NET INCOME	\$ (311,834)	\$ (407,847)	\$ (344,927)	\$ (323,000)

Detail of Benevolences

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
Minneapolis Area Synod, ELCA	\$ 55,000	\$ 55,000	\$ 60,000
World Hunger	4000	4095	4000
Meals on Wheels	1000	1000	0
Pastor Discretionary	1000	1000	2000
LSS/Homeless Youth	2000	2000	2000
Lutheran Social Services	5000	5000	5000
Plymouth Christian Youth Center	2500	2500	2500
Luther Seminary Global Scholarships	4000	4000	4000
Ethiopia Ministries	6000	536	6000
Uruguay Ministries	1500	0	1500
Urban Homeworks	2000	2000	0
R.E.A.L.	1000	1000	1000
Bread for the World	750	750	500
Quilters	1000	309	1000
Camden Promise	3000	3192	3000
Other Local Benevolence	2500	0	1500
Families Moving Forward	2000	0	2000
Loaves & Fishes	3250	5075	2000
TOTAL	\$ 97,500	\$ 87,457	\$ 98,000

Foundation

The mission of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd Foundation is to develop and manage an endowment that enhances and extends the congregation's worship, educational programs, and ministry. By encouraging stewardship of financial assets and serving as a channel for gifts that will keep on giving, the Foundation enables members and friends of Good Shepherd to build on a legacy of support for the congregation and its outreach.



The Foundation Board focuses on grants that are either (1) requests for seed money for a new or expanding initiative that will become self-supporting or (2) one-time capital expenditures not covered by a budget. We also consider if Good Shepherd is currently involved in some way with the initiative or will be because of the grant.

This year the Foundation Board paid \$45,500 in grants. The largest grant of \$30,000 was made to Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. This grant was in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Good Shepherd and designated to pay down the principal of the church's mortgage. It was approved at the end of 2022 and paid in early 2023.

The remaining four grants totaled \$15,500. They included funds to refurbish the Good Shepherd bells used by the Bell Choir, seed money for the Women of Good Shepherd to renew that ministry, and expenses associated with the Rev. Kenneth Wheeler presentation sponsored by the Anti-Racism Group. We also approved a grant for Tapestry, a growing bilingual ministry of the Minneapolis Synod, to be used for new activities to support faith formation for youth and families.

This year the Board completed its review of the Foundation Giving Guidelines and approved the updates. The Giving Guidelines were last revised approximately ten years ago. The Board also created a new Foundation brochure that provides information to both those who give gifts to the Foundation and to those who make grant requests. The brochure is available online on the Foundation webpage and in the brochure rack across from the Welcome Desk at church. We introduced the new brochure to the congregation this fall when the Foundation was the featured spotlight announcement, and the Board hosted a table in the narthex to respond to questions.

The Board is grateful for everyone who gave gifts to the Foundation this year. Celebration, memorial, and legacy gifts enable the Foundation to continue to approve grants that support its mission. We appreciate the support of the congregation, and are thankful for every gift.

Directors of the Foundation Board are: Mike Bosshardt, Craig Brandt, Ken Horstman, Laura Moret, Rich Sykora, Nancy Rystrom (president), Mary Quello (vice president), Adam Benson (treasurer), Sharon Hammond (secretary), David Shay (ex officio), and Susan Kratz (ex officio). Craig is completing his service on the Foundation Board and we are very grateful for his contributions.

Nancy Rystrom

President, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd Foundation Board



Foundation Treasurer's Report

BALANCE SHEET

Assets	<u>12/31/2022</u>	<u>12/31/2023</u>
Ken Barry Golden Shepherds Fund	\$68,001	\$77,801
Cash Allocation/Money Market Mutual Fund*	\$32,059	\$46,310
Fixed Income Investments **	\$373,621	\$398,997
Equity Investments	\$561,515	\$618,400
Total Assets	\$1,035,196	\$1,141,508
	<u>12/31/2022</u>	<u>12/31/2023</u>
Unrestricted Funds	\$949,313	\$1,045,377
Designated Funds	\$85,883	\$96,131
Ken Barry Golden Shepherds Fund	\$68,001	\$77,801
Thompson Library/ Kitchen Fund	\$17,882	\$18,330
* Money Marked Mutual Fund and petty cash have been combined.		
** Includes accrued interest except CDs		
Receipts	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Memorials and Other Gifts	\$3,420	\$2,680
Investment Performance	-\$197,581	\$150,206
TOTAL	-\$194,161	\$152,886
Expenses	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$98	\$1,074
TOTAL	\$98	\$1,074
Grants Paid	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Hope Avenue Food Truck	\$10,000	
Lutheran Social Services - Freedom School	\$10,000	
Minneapolis Area Synod - Racial Justice	\$4,000	
Tree of Life Worship Songs	\$4,500	
NEON	\$4,000	
Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Book Publishing	\$4,000	
St. Andrew/Church Anew	\$3,000	
LCOGS Anniversary Gift - Mortgage Paydown		\$30,000
Tapestry		\$5,000
LCOGS Women's Ministry		\$2,000
LCOGS Bell Refurbishment		\$5,500
LCOGS Anti-Racism Group		\$3,000
TOTAL GRANTS	\$39,500	\$45,500
Prior year end balance	\$1,268,955	\$1,035,196
Inflows	\$3,420	\$2,680
Outflows	\$39,598	\$46,574
End of year balance	\$1,035,196	\$1,141,508
Investment Performance	-\$197,581	\$150,206

Christian Service Circle Financial Statement

2023 Christian Service Circle Financial Statement

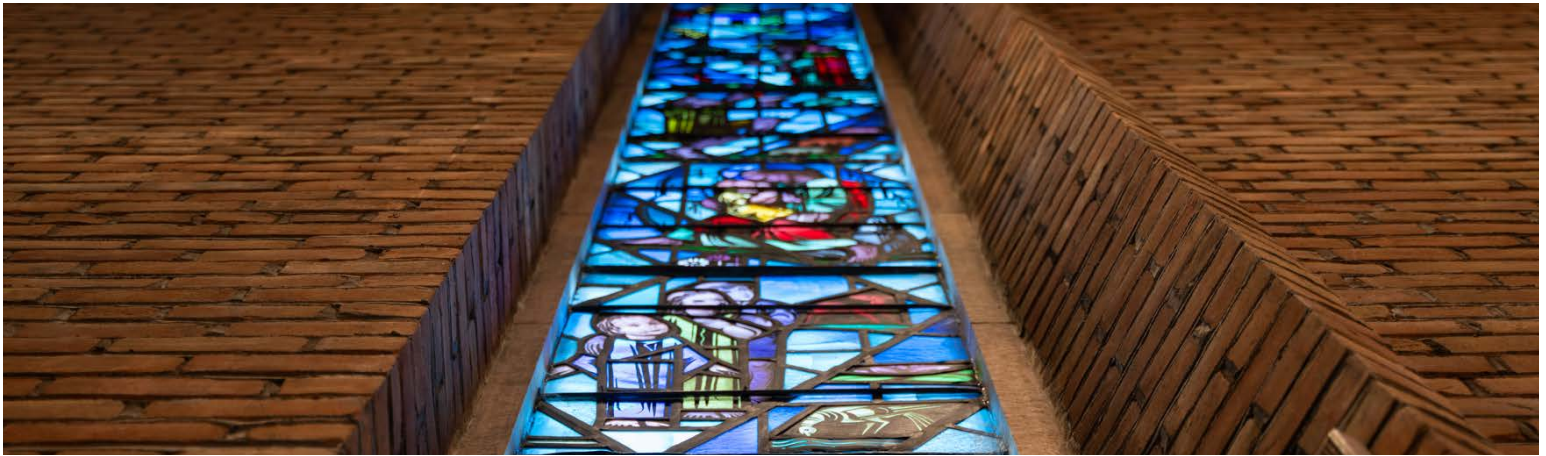
Balance on hand as of 1/01/2023:.....	\$1,057.18
Income.....	3,055.00
(2 December 2022 lunches).....	1,400.00
(3 Luncheons & 3 Receptions in 2023).....	1,655.00
Memorial Gifts	1,000.00
Expenses	(2,423.84)
Benevolences:	
R.E.A.L. Scholarship.....	(360.00)
Balance on hand 12/31/2023:.....	\$2,328.34



Altar Guild Financial Statement

2023 Altar Guild Financial Statement

Balance on hand 1/1/2023.....	\$6,563.14
Receipts	150.00
Memorials.....	1,055.00
Benevolences:	
R.E.A.L. Scholarship.....	(360.00)
Disbursements:	
Expenses.....	(451.35)
Memorial Table	(4,985.00)
Balance on hand 12/31/2023.....	\$1,971.79



Minneapolis Area Synod



Minneapolis Area Synod
of the ELCA

Grace, peace, and hope through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Day by day ... they ate their food
with glad and generous hearts,
praising God and having the good
will of all the people. – Acts 2:46-47*

In May, we meet for our 2024 Synod Assembly under the theme “With Glad and Generous Hearts.” The phrase describes the early church as they gathered on Pentecost. It is also an appropriate description of the past year of our life and ministry together.

In 2023, our hearts were gladdened by:

- Your congregation, along with the other 136 congregations in our synod, faithfully proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament, nurturing community, and loving neighbors and neighborhoods.
- The privilege of accompanying congregations in 72 Call Processes; presiding at 14 Ordinations and 30 Installations; and walking with 34 people preparing to become pastors or deacons.
- 142 lay leaders and 28 clergy from 31 congregations learning to be church in the 21st century through our Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices intensive learning communities.
- 6,500 people receiving our weekly enews. (Sign up at mpls-synod.org/sign-up to feel more connected.)
- 100s of rostered and lay leaders involved in synod sponsored peer groups, conferences, and retreats.
- 100s of leaders from synod congregations helping pass the state’s “100% Clean Energy By 2040” and “Restore The Vote” legislation that advance both climate justice and racial justice.
- 100s of leaders faithfully serving as Deans, on Synod Council, and Candidacy, Audit, Program Committees.
- 15 gifted and devoted synod staff members: 10 funded by Mission Support from you and other congregations, and 5 funded by Lilly Endowment and other external grants.

We praise God for the congregational generosity that makes all this happen. At the same time, we recognize that mission support from congregations has declined 16% over the past 10 years, resulting in a reduction in synod staff hours. Especially as we prepare to elect a new bishop this spring, we invite you to consider strengthening your support for the future of the synod’s work.

Conference Assemblies are just around the corner: Saturday, February 10, 9:30 a.m. – Noon. Of particular importance will be conference nominations for bishop as well as for voting members to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, July 28 - August 2, 2025. We encourage congregations to send the same voting members to both the Conference and Synod Assemblies.

As we look at declining mission support or grieve the closing of a congregation, we can become discouraged. In such moments, I encourage you to listen to a remarkable conversation from our 2023 Synod Assembly. Our keynote speaker, the Rev. Otis Moss III, was asked: “what do you say to those who think the church is dying?” Filled with courage and hope, Moss responded, “the church is not dying, it is being born, refashioned, and remade. The early church was an alternative community. Today we use the metrics of the market to evaluate the church – buildings, budgets, numbers. But, the early church looked at **impact**: were people hearing the good news of Jesus who lived and died for our salvation? Was suffering being relieved? Were people being welcomed and healed?” (mpls-synod.org/our-synod/synod-assembly-2/2023-synod-assembly-archives 4:57:27 of the second day)

Rev. Moss reminds us that we are called to be alternative communities. What might it take to measure our churches by **impact**? The work of synod leadership is to support the 137 communities and the thousands of leaders who are making an **impactful** difference in the 21st century: sharing the good news of Jesus, extending radical welcome into beloved community, engaging their neighborhoods in love with justice.

I am filled with both gratitude and sadness as I write this, my final annual report to congregations. I have loved serving as your bishop and am profoundly grateful for this calling. We pray for the year ahead, trusting in the goodness and faithfulness of our God, made known in Jesus Christ.

Bishop Ann Svennungsen

ELCA Presiding Bishop

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

Over the past year we have continued to experience changes in the world around us. Even as our church finds ways to adapt to this changing world, we find hope in the unchanging and always present promise of God's love through Jesus Christ. We change and adapt not to conform to the world but because we believe that the gift of God's Son is for the world, and that our congregations and worshiping communities are places to gather and be sent into the world, where we will tell the story of God's love in word and deed.

The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the churchwide organization provide ways for the church to move beyond the boundaries of structures and geography and to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, our cities, our country and beyond. We engage in this ministry knowing that our church walks by faith, trusting in God's promise in the gospel, and that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word. In John 15:5, Jesus reminds us, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." We are connected by the promise that we do all through Christ and can do nothing apart from him.

God gives the Holy Spirit, who uses gospel proclamation — in preaching and sacraments, in forgiveness and in healing conversations — to create and sustain this faith. Just as we rely on God to sustain our faith, we rely on each other to sustain the ministries that offer God's love to the world. Through your generosity to each expression

of this church — your congregation, your synod and your churchwide organization — you add to our collective voice proclaiming God's love for all.

I am grateful for your generosity over this last year. My gratitude spreads far beyond your generous financial gifts. You've shared your gifts of time through countless hours of volunteering, serving and accompanying. You've shared the gifts of your voices as we've tried to discover and learn how God is calling us to be the church now and into the future. And, finally, dear church, you have shared the gift of the realness of God's love with the world around you. Be well, dear church, and stand steadfast in the promise of God's love and grace as you take that promise with you into the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” —John 15:5



CONTRIBUTORS

Karen Walhof.....Proofreader
 Joyce JanssenProofreader
 Mara HalvorsonPhotos & Layout
 Colton Davenport..... Photos