



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP
ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

All around us, we see signs of God's love and goodness. A person who has stepped away from church for many years steps back into a congregation, feeling the call of the Holy Spirit. Young adults feeling isolated in a digital-first world start gathering in person in a small group, enjoying the warmth of a hug and a new friend asking about their week. A mother plants a garden, and it yields fruits and vegetables, giving her nutritious food for her kids and extra produce to sell at the local market. Everywhere we look, we see signs of Christ's love. In Psalm 93, we read: "More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore" (4-5).

God's love is a majestic thing, and it moves us to share it in word and deed. The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, across our country and around the world.

I am so grateful for you, dear church. Your generosity to each of these three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has bolstered the church's ability to share the message of God's love to people who are longing for it. Through your

“More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.”

—Psalm 93:4-5

financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices, you've helped carry this message of God's majestic love. Thank you, dear church. As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to stand steadfast in God's promises, sure of God's love and goodness.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

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

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, LAKEVILLE, MN ANNUAL REPORT

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ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 26, 2025, 11:45 AM

AGENDA

1. Welcome – Jim Buckley
2. Devotions – Pastor Kim Kylo
3. Approval of the minutes of the January 28, 2024 Annual Congregational meeting – Jim Buckley
4. Presentations and approval of staff reports – Jim Buckley
 - a. Pastors' reports
 - b. Director of Music report
 - c. Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry report
6. Approval of council and team reports
 - a. Council President's report – Jim Buckley
 - b. Team reports
 - c. Elections
7. Approval of Audit report
8. Approval of Treasurer's report – Barry Fick
9. Presentation and approval of 2025 proposed budget
10. Other congregational concerns – Jim Buckley
11. Closing Prayer – Pastor Nathan Lyke
12. Adjournment

Leadership Team

Council President: Jim Buckley

Vice President: Lisa Horn

Treasurer: Barry Fick

Campus Properties: Tony Gleason

Christian Education: Kristin Covert

Ministry Finance: Brad Paulson

Human Resources & Administration: Anna Olson

Gratitude & Generosity: Bob Rustvold

Youth & Family Ministry: Jolene Johnson-Brick

Compassion: Elisa Brown

Membership and Outreach Team: Jennifer Milbradt

Worship Arts Ministry: Lowell Grimm

Memorial Garden Team: Lisa Horn

Global Missions: Kathy Ziller

Caring, Calls and Communion Ministry: Lynn Coldren

Staff Team

Senior Pastor: Kim Kylo

Associate Pastor: Nathan Lyke

Children, Youth, & Family Director: Amanda Boe

Interim Director of Music: Roxanne Litchfield

Financial Analyst: Tyra Wiemann

Office Manager: Candy Nordine

Vacation Bible School Coordinator: Elisa Brown

Facility Care: Butch Oswald

Director of Children's Music: Malynda Davis

Organists Under Contract: Dr. Karen Olson,
Priscilla Thoreen

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

January 28, 2024, 11:45 am

Sandra L. Johnson.....Recorder

Quorum 95 members in-person and on zoom.

1. **Welcome** – President Jim Buckley called the meeting to order at 11:45am.
2. **Devotions** – Pastor Kim Kylo: Have a Beautiful Terrible Day. Psalm 46:10. Be still and know that I am God. Blessing for good pause.
3. **Approval of the minutes** of the January 22, 2023 Annual Congregational meeting – Jim Buckley
A motion was made by Lisa Horn, seconded Roger Moller to approve the January 22, 2023 Congregational minutes. The minutes were approved as presented.
4. **Presentations and approval of staff reports** Jim Buckley introduced all staff who were in attendance and shared a big thank you for their dedication, hard work and professionalism.
 - a. Pastors’ reports
 - b. Director of Music report
 - c. Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry report.

A motion was made by Lisa Horn and seconded by Roger Moller to approve the staff reports and they were approved as written.

5. **Approval of council and team reports:** Thank you to the council from Don Alberts.
 - a. Council President’s report – Jim Buckley
 - b. Team reports
 - c. Elections: List of council positions and approval: The following team members were elected to serve on the church council: Education Team: Kristin Covert, Worship and Music Team: Lowell Grimm, and Human resources and Administration Team will be chosen after the Congregational Meeting.
6. Approval of Audit Report

President Buckley called on Barry Fick, Treasurer, to review the results of the Financial Review of 2023 Operations.

Fick reported that a team examined the 2023 financial records of St. John’s Church to review the records for accuracy and completeness. The reviewers had complete access to all books and records. Based on the review, the examiners determined that there were no misstatements in the financial records and the representation of the financial performance of St. John’s Church for 2023 appears reasonable.

The examiners had one recommendation. They noted that the Church credit card has accumulated a large number of usage points. It was recommended that staff contact the bank to determine how to redeem the points for a credit to the account.

Mr. Fick concluded the presentation and asked if there were any questions. There were no questions from the congregation.

President Buckley asked for a motion to accept and approve the Audit report. A motion was made by Lisa Horn and seconded by Roger Moller. President Buckley conducted a voice vote on the motion and the motion to accept and approve the Audit report was approved unanimously.

7. Approval of the 2023 Treasurer's Report

President Buckley called on Barry Fick, Treasurer, to present the St. John's Lutheran Church 2023 Financial Performance.

Fick reported that for 2023, the General Fund realized a net income of \$82. This result is substantially better than the adopted 2023 Budget. While giving was below budget by \$39,000, expenses were below budget by \$54,500. This allowed the congregation to retain over \$18,000 of funds that otherwise would have been used to fund expenses.

Mr. Fick reported that the Building fund performed very well in 2023. Receipts were \$121,000 and investment earnings were \$4,900. Mortgage payments were \$121,000, which includes over \$11,300 prepayment of principal.

Mr. Fick reported the Benevolence fund generated revenues that exceeded budget. All benevolence funds are distributed to fund projects as recommended by Council.

Mr. Fick concluded the 2023 financial review and asked if there were questions. There were no questions from the congregation.

President Buckley asked for a motion to accept and approve the 2023 Financial report. A motion was made by Larry Blakeborough and seconded by Lisa Horn. President Buckley conducted a voice vote on the motion and the motion to accept and approve the 2023 Financial Report was approved unanimously.

8. Presentation and approval of 2024 proposed budget

President Buckley called on Treasurer Barry Fick to present the 2024 Budget. Treasurer Fick noted that the proposed 2024 General Fund budget shows a deficit of \$33,000. This deficit will be funded with a transfer of \$20,000 from Land Sale Proceeds and a \$13,000 drawdown of accumulated general fund balance.

The projected 2024 Revenue is based on actual pledges and other income projected based on actual prior results. Projected 2024 expenses, excluding compensation, are based on budget requests submitted by Ministry Teams. The Teams were asked to keep budgets for 2024 to 90% of 2023 levels. All teams were able to comply with this request, without adversely affecting delivery of services to the congregation.

Mr. Fick reported that the proposed 2024 Mortgage Fund budget is balanced and will include a principal prepayment exceeding \$11,300.

Mr. Fick reported that the proposed 2024 Benevolence Fund continues with an 8% allocation of offerings allocated to Benevolence and Other Benevolence income based on prior year results. All Benevolence funds received are distributed during the year of receipt to organizations as directed by Ministry Teams with staff guidance.

Mr. Fick concluded his presentation of the proposed 2024 Budget and asked if there were any questions. A question was asked about compensation for staff and Clergy.

Mr. Fick responded that the General Fund proposed 2024 budget includes a compensation increase for staff of 4% and fully funds the increase in benefit costs through Portico, the ELCA Benefits provider.

An unknown for the 2024 compensation budget is Clergy compensation. This is due to the call process currently underway. The amount budgeted for Clergy compensation in 2024 is "conservative" in the sense that it is based on ELCA Compensation guidelines and uses the high end of the compensation range for the projected Clergy staffing in 2024.

There were no other questions.

President Buckley asked for a motion to accept and approve the 2024 Proposed Budget. A motion was made and seconded. President Buckley conducted a voice vote on the motion by Roger Moller and the seconded

by Lisa Horn to accept and approve the 2024 Budget. The motion was approved unanimously.

9. Other congregational concerns

Jim Buckley. No concerns came forward.

Dan Brown thanked the leadership staff and team members for their great work with all members involved.

10. Closing Prayer – Pastor Eric Leshner

11. Adjournment at 12:40 pm

STAFF REPORTS

SENIOR PASTOR REPORT

2024 was a year of newness at St. John's: continuing vibrant ministries, deepening our expression of faith and life together, and welcoming new faces and families into our community. When we can uphold and celebrate the best of who we are and embrace the next right thing, we live into what it means to be "Beloved Community" in Christ, as our annual theme invited us to do together.

We have moved through a lot together this year. In addition to calling me to serve in the Senior Pastor role, we welcomed three new staff members. Roxanne Litchfield became our Director of Music, Interim Associate Pastor Nate Toso served with us for the summer months, and in October we called Pastor Nathan Lyke as our new, settled Associate Pastor. For the first time since May 2023, St. John's is at full staff! This alone is something to celebrate, but working with these talented folks and observing them in their roles with the congregation and community, I am humbled and thrilled to affirm what you already know: St. John's has a great staff with a lot of giftedness and talent! After these months of staffing transition, what a joy it is to be living into our congregation's next chapter with a healthy, compassionate staff, along with an engaged, spirited, intentional community.

Transition times reveal a lot about the character and identity of people, including in a church community. Through all of this transition, I have been delighted to witness the people of St. John's are steady, hopeful in God's work, collaborative and creative, warm and welcoming, and intentionally supportive of one another. This, my friends, is a beautiful demonstration of how we - as this particular community of people of faith in this place and time - are living into our identity as beloved community in Christ. Thank you, people of St. John's for the ways you show up for this church and for each other.

As we now turn to 2025, I implore you to hold those faith-driven values and carry them with you, both here at St. John's and out into the world, even more. We know that we continue to live in a complex and often divisive country and world, where these particular values are not only important, but treasured. We will embark on intentional listening and discernment work, to explore ways to deepen our commitment to our values as a church, not only for our sake but also for the sake of the Lakeville community and beyond. How is God calling us to live with bold compassion, welcoming all people in the name of Jesus Christ? How might we continue to live out our particular mission in 2025, given who we are and who God empowers us to be?

In the words of Acts 2:17, "God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Let us dream and envision the next chapter of St. John's together, where each and every one among us belongs, serves and is nurtured together.

Grateful to be your partner in the gospel,

Pastor Kim Kyllö

ASSOCIATE PASTOR REPORT

It's only been two months since I was ordained and installed as your Associate Pastor at St. John's, but my reflections of this community and year go even further back.

A favorite memory from the time I was preparing to begin at St. John's was during one of my many book drop offs to my office where I had the chance to have an impromptu visit with staff to hear the story of what had been happening here recently. Wednesday night meals had grown from serving about 20 people to now around 80. Innovations from the COVID era five years ago have stuck where helpful or have been adapted into new approaches where needed. New families and individuals continue to find a church home at St. John's. I couldn't help but feel even more grateful and excited to begin my pastoral journey here.

Since starting, I've had the chance to meet many of you and hear some of your stories. The shared community and mission of this congregation is hard to miss and unlike anything I've seen in 20+ years of vocational ministry. I noticed it in the groups I had the chance to visit, the conversations over Wednesday dinner or Sunday coffee in the narthex, and as I watched how you support and pitch-in to make this worshipping community a place where all are truly welcome.

Our Compassion ministry continues to make a difference with partner organizations. Our Global team is preparing to send two of us from the congregation to Tanzania in the new year. ACE (Adult Christian Education) has provided opportunities to learn about important topics and provide tools to our parishioners. Groups both new and established provide a place for relational, spiritual, and communal growth. And our Children, Youth, and Family ministry is poised to grow even more in the near future.

My hope for 2025 is that we would continue to lean into the areas God is already at work, and also be on the lookout for where God might be calling us to grow in discipleship next. Please continue to share your hopes, dreams, and ideas for how we can do this together in the new year. I can't wait to see what God has in store for us next.

Thank you for the warm welcome you've given to me and may God continue to bless and guide us into the future,

Pastor Nathan Lyke

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC REPORT

When gathering thoughts about this past year, my first thought is gratitude.

I am grateful for the opportunity to partner with all the talented music servants here at St. John's! Willingness to regularly lead worship and contribute to our worship is typical. Our musicians are deeply faithful to the ministry as we have navigated the flow of this year.

It's a gift to watch musicians engage in our ministry and offer ideas as we collaborate and work as a team. I am impressed by their willingness to give of self for the sake of the whole. I frequently see them reach out and take initiative to welcome visitors. So grateful!

Some of the highlights of the year have been the acquisition of a wonderful, new piano. Through the expertise of Mark Knutson, our organ bench is now adjustable and in better shape for our amazing Organists, Karen Olson and Priscilla Thoreen. Throughout the summer months, so many folks came forward to offer music during our worship! This fall, we hosted Tom Keesecker, Veritas and David Cherwien as they all shared their enormous gifts with our community. So grateful!

This report marks one full year as Director of Music and I am so grateful to work with the incredible staff of St. John's. It is a delight to collaborate and to use our imagination as to how our music could enhance our worship experience as a congregation! I look forward to what God has in store for us all in 2025!

Roxanne Litchfield

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY REPORT

The Children, Youth, and Family Ministry team at St. John's Lutheran Church is dedicated to walking alongside families in their faith journey. Our mission is to inspire students with a heart for Jesus and faith-filled love, fostering an environment where children and youth grow spiritually and feel supported by the church community. We are overjoyed and humbled to continue to welcome new families each month to our programs.

The Children Youth and Family staff consists of: Amanda Boe, Children Youth and Family Director, along with our VBS Coordinator Elisa Brown, Children's Music Director, Malynda Davis and an awesome volunteer staff of teachers try to combine our unique gifts of ministry to come together to accomplish that goal. Pastor Nathan Lyke advises on Children, Youth and Family programs as well as leads our Affirm program.

Throughout the year, we have focused on building meaningful relationships with families and providing opportunities for children and teens to deepen their understanding of God's word and God's love. This has been reflected in our weekly faith education programs, special events, and summer programs, camps and mission trips. Our team is committed to nurturing faith in the next generation and ensuring that they feel loved, valued, and equipped to live out their faith in the world.

Children Youth and Family Programs include:

- **Sunday School:** Sunday School on Sundays during the education hour, has engaging lessons that teach bible stories in a fun and interactive way to pre-k-4th graders. Sunday School Highlights meets on Wednesday nights to highlight our Sunday lessons.
- **Affirm, Ablaze and Youth Group:** Weekly meetings that create lasting connections and foster spiritual growth for our 5th grade-12th grade students. .
- **Special Events:** Events that encourage all families to grow together in their faith community: Rally Sunday, Trunk and Treat, Christmas Program, Sledding Day and end of year celebrations
- **Children and Youth Music Ministry:** Sunday School music, Jesus and Me (JAM) elementary choir and FLY choir our middle school choir.
- **Summer Programs:** Vacation Bible School, Summer Stretch, Mission Trips and Luther Crest Bible Camp provide opportunities for preschoolers through 12th grade.

As we move into the coming year, we look forward to expanding our programs and continuing to support the spiritual growth of our youth and their families

A summary of our primary programs for 2024.

Sunday School Ministry

Our Sunday School program began this year with a fun Rally Day event with carnival games outside, baby goats and special services that highlighted our summer programs. We have 88 students registered for fall of 2024 Sunday School programs.

On Wednesdays, we "highlight" the lesson that was taught the previous Sunday and have a shorter version of the lesson. We have averaged 12-20 students each Wednesday and have received positive feedback from families. This is our second year of Highlights Sunday School, continuing to provide a Wednesday option that complements and supports our Sunday School program.

On Sundays, we meet in a large group where the students hear the Bible Theme, learn a new song or get a special visit from Abel & Zabel, our puppet friends. After a large group, they have 30 minutes of class time in small grade specific groups. On Sundays, we continue to have great attendance in our classes and often see students attend both Wednesdays and Sunday classes.

We are thankful for our Sunday School teachers, leaders and assistants that lend their many gifts to create a wonderful faith-filled experience for our students each week.

Children's Music Ministry

We have two children's choirs that meet on Wednesday evenings. The JAM choir for children up to grade four and the FLY choir for children grade 5 and up led by Malynda Riehle, Children's Music director. Malynda also leads the Sunday School music as part of the opening session for Sunday School each week.

Preteen and Youth Ministry

Ablaze a confirmation prep, 5th grade ministry

Ablaze, our confirmation prep program strives to prepare our students for their confirmation program, Affirm. Our Fifth grade Ablaze group uses the Action Bible to read through the sequence of the Bible from Old Testament to New Testament. In spring of 2024, our class celebrated their First Holy Communion. We had three special classes that family members attended to prepare for this faith milestone. We made clay communion cups with the help of Rollie and Phil Brandt and we prepared bread for the congregation to use for Palm Sunday Communion.

Affirm, Confirmation ministry

All are welcome to a place where we encourage, lead and accompany youth to claim their faith.

Affirm operates on a four-year model in which 6-9th graders are all divided up into grade-level small groups, accompanied by an adult leader(s), as they grow in faith, learn more about the Bible and how to read it with curiosity and confidence, ask deep questions, serve God and our neighbors, and claim faith for themselves. After their first three years of Affirm in 6-8th grade, 9th graders grow into a capstone year called Affirm Plus, which will concentrate on building leadership skills in faith, including a growing awareness of their unique spiritual gifts and an ability to articulate what faith means to them, through reflection, creativity, and prayer.

Our Affirm program continues to grow and we are thankful for the smooth transition of leadership from Pastor Kim Kylo to Pastor Nathan Lyke. We are thankful for the many volunteer staff that assist with the program. In the fall of 2024, we had 92, 6th-9th grade students and many volunteer leaders that led our 13 small groups for the Affirm program. This fall, we began in outdoor classrooms centered around a bonfire, reading the Bible and focusing on building relationships with our small group members. Fellowship activities and service projects continue to be important and valued pieces of our program. Blanket making, Feed My Starving Children, Christmas party and caroling to local senior homes have been wonderful experiences to build community and strengthen relationships.

HS Youth Group

Our High School Youth Group continues to show strong leadership at church and continues to plan for various community service events and are important faith mentors to our younger students. In 2024 this group traveled to Duluth for a mission trip adventure in partnership with Service Learning Camps. They meet each week from 8:00pm-8:45pm with Amanda Boe and Pastor Nathan Lyke. The group continues to grow and their excitement for growing and strengthening their faith is inspiring.

Special Events

Rally Sunday, Trunk and Treat, Advent Festival, and our Christmas Program are just some of our special events we were able to enjoy this year. Our Children, Youth and Family team does a wonderful job planning and preparing for these events. Many have become successful outreach events that help us extend a special welcome to community members. The Trunk and Treat event had another year of more than 500 people in attendance. We are excited at the possibility of expanding these events in the future to continue to welcome people to our faith community.

Summer Stretch

Summer Stretch is a program for upper elementary and middle school students (students entering Grades 4,5, 6, 7 and 8 in Fall) to put their faith in action and be the light of Christ. They participate in service projects

for the greater community followed by afternoon adventures with friends. High School Students serve as group guides along with adult chaperones.

60 total youth were involved with this program. We averaged 30 participants each week.

Service Projects completed:

We served:

- Arc Value Village, sorting donated items and working in the store.
- Feed My Starving Children, making many meals to feed communities all over the world.
- Lakeville Community at the Pan-o-Prog ice cream social, our youth proudly represented St. John's hosting carnival games and craft tables.
- Living Well, preparing 72 freezer meals for the many group homes that they serve. Then, we played yard games and had ice cream with some of the residents.
- Highview Hills, helping seniors with technology and playing board games.

Fun Destinations: Sea Life at MOA, Cascade Bay in Eagan, Como Park and Zoo and Lebanon Hills

Luther Crest Bible Camp

We had 44 campers attending Luther Crest Bible Camp in the summer of 2024. Our first group attended in mid- July and our second group the first week of August.

The Bible Verse our campers learned this summer was: Psalm 139:14, "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well."

We are so thankful to our St. John's congregation for your support to make this opportunity possible! Camp continues to be an amazing faith milestone event where campers are learning, growing in faith and community.

Mission Trip to Duluth

Our group included 20 youth and 4 adult chaperones that joined me, Amanda Boe on this amazing and inspiring adventure. We worked with Service Learning Camps, an organization that partners with local service agencies and community members to identify the needs of the community that can be best met by church groups that come each week through the summer.

Each day we had new service experiences, we worked at a food distribution center, painted a homeless men's shelter, built a stone landscaping wall for a safe and sober home, we packed 405 backpacks with weekend meals, worked at a community garden, spent time with seniors helping them with technology questions and we packed food boxes for people in need. Our High School Seniors served one evening at Union Gospel Mission, feeding 45 people a tasty dinner and sorted out clothing donations.

Each night we went on a fun adventure and spent time together as a group. A few highlights were white water rafting and evening bonfires.

We are forever changed by our time in Duluth. We could feel the love of Jesus at work through all those who we had the honor to humbly serve. All of our youth want to go on another mission trip as soon as possible! Our chaperones; Kristi Winkels, Mike Stuber, Jason Kesti, and Alison Wohlhuter, were absolutely amazing and worked so hard to support our youth!

Our youth are thankful for the congregation's support to help make this memorable and life changing experience possible.

We are looking forward to another mission trip in 2025 to Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Vacation Bible School, submitted by Elisa Lande Brown

VBS is a program offered here at St. John's that helps kids, both at St. John's and in the surrounding community, learn about Jesus in a fun and engaging environment. Our program this year featured the theme SCUBA which had our 125 campers (up from 94 last year) and our 53 volunteers (up from 40 last year) exploring a fascinating underwater world all while learning truths about God's love! We learned God is a friend who is real, who loves, whom we can trust and who is a friend for everyone. We did all sorts of fun ocean activities, experiments and crafts. We played lots of fun games, sang and danced to great music and ate yummy snacks. We made lots of new friends and had fun learning about the Bible, God and even some fun facts about the ocean and the creatures that live there. And at the end of the week, all our campers were treated to a fun treat and some outdoor water activities including a giant octopus sprinkler. Campers also took home some fun bible buddies, a t-shirt and activities to do with their families.

We also added and modified a few things for the program:

- The congregation helped create some wonderful decorations which really helped us feel like we were underwater
- We had some wonderful donations for snacks and activities that really helped make our week fun
- The kids always have snack all together but this year while they waited they got to answer a fun "would you rather..." question and do a fun "brain break" activity while they waited for their crew leaders and our snack team to hand out the trays of snacks
- We again partnered with churches around the metro to share decorating supplies and enhance our VBS curriculum and experience

I'm really looking forward to our next VBS week, June 16-19, 2025!! Elisa Lande Brown

Conclusion

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the unwavering support and dedication of our community. Together, we have witnessed the transformative power of love, kindness, and commitment in the lives of children, youth, and families. Your contributions, whether through time, resources, or prayers, have made a lasting impact on the hearts and futures of so many.

In closing, we are reminded of the profound truth found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8:

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

May this message inspire us to continue to serve one another with love, compassion, and faithfulness in the coming year. Together, let us strive to make a difference, remembering that when we act in love, we reflect the heart of God and bring His light into the world.

With heartfelt thanks and submitted in hope-filled faith, Amanda Boe

COUNCIL AND TEAM REPORTS

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Jim Buckley Council President

“My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever I have to try to make a difference.”

Former President Jimmy Carter

I currently find no better example of outward expression and connecting in one’s faith as the above quote of the late President Jimmy Carter. God is calling, are you answering?

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

However, this brings up an interesting question for me. Does God’s call have anything to do with a call to action or is it an invitation to receive His grace and love? Is there a better example of unconditional love? Perhaps answering the call fills our lives with the Holy Spirit and allows us to live according to His purpose. Perhaps Jimmy Carter, having received the call, had purpose and gave all glory to God.

As I reflect on 2024 and the time we shared together at St. John’s, I am reminded of God’s call and His presence. I am grateful for all of you and what we have accomplished. We had not one, not two, but three congregational meetings. We called Pastor Kim Kylo as Lead Pastor and Pastor Nathan Lyke as Associate Pastor. We also hired Roxanne Litchfield as our Director of Music. Additionally, we experienced a strong year financially, Wednesday night service participation continued to grow, small group ministries impacted many people, and approximately 50 new members joined our church community. Our Sunday morning children’s sermons have become an integral part of our services and demonstrate the health of our Children, Youth, and Family ministry – and I know the adults enjoy them too!

Looking ahead to 2025, we must recognize that things in motion will not automatically stay in motion. Living “according to His purpose” demands “for as long as I can.” We have received His call, will we answer? All glory to God!

Peace in Christ, Jim Buckley

WORSHIP AND MUSIC (WAM) TEAM

Council Representative.....Lowell Grimm

Staff Representatives.....Director of Music Roxanne Litchfield and Senior Pastor Kim Kylo

Team Members.....Lowell Grimm, Nikki Walsh, Tom Lardy and Kay Halvorson

The WAM team meets monthly, via Zoom, on the first Monday of the month. The WAM team is responsible for, but not limited to:

- All aspects of worship music and musical events.
- Monthly evaluation of worship services and making recommendations for changes.
- Organ, piano and instrument maintenance and repair.
- Oversight of the sound system technicians, their equipment needs etc. to ensure quality visual and sound elements to services.
- Visual enhancements for the church seasons, indoors and outdoors.

- Special supplies (communion, baptism, palms for Palm Sunday, etc).
- Conducting a flower/plant fundraiser at least three times a year for seasonal décor.

The WAM team would like to extend numerous thank you's to a variety of individuals and the congregation itself for their time and efforts. These members include:

- The St. John's congregation for their response to the piano appeal campaign held in early 2024.
- Thank you to Roxanne Litchfield for her leadership in coordinating the appeal program, piano research and selection. A series of musical events were held this past fall that highlighted the new piano, varying from national hymnal composers to students of all levels that were able to experience the new piano.
- Don Cross for his annual donation of live Christmas trees for the Advent season. Don's generosity is greatly appreciated.
- Jeanne Hartwig for her attention to the altar, paraments and assistance with seasonal decorations.
- Chad Jacobson in addition to WAM team members Tom Lardy and Lowell Grimm for the outdoor tree decorations during the Christmas holiday season. The lit trees provide a warm ambience to the entrance of the church, in addition highlighting our welcome approach to everyone as they approach St. John's Lutheran Church.
- Dave Coldren for his assistance with the seasonal decorations.

We are happy to have added Kay Halvorson as a new member to the WAM team this year.

For 2025, St. John's is planning on holding sacraments on a weekly basis. Sacraments include baptism and communion.

As a reminder, the WAM team is always looking for new members to join us. If you are unable to make a long-term commitment, feel free to express interest in seasonal decoration needs for the church. If you are interested, please speak to a team member or a pastor.

Respectively submitted, Lowell Grimm

CAMPUS PROPERTIES TEAM

Tony Gleason Council Representative

Hello St John's congregation. Here is the 2024 annual report for the campus property team. Our team members include Mark Knutson, Jon McLaen, Eric Tange, Brian Murphy, Paul Johnson, and Tony Gleason. We had a relatively quiet year for church projects this year but a couple things we were able to get done was having all the exterior door locks replaced. It was becoming very difficult to know exactly who and where all the keys were and who had access to the church after hours. The lock replacement allows the church to better monitor who all has new keys for access. The church also went under a huge improvement this summer when the entire shingled portion of roof on the church and the garage were replaced. This improvement was deemed necessary as an insurance claim was filed due to a ceiling leak in one of the offices and it was determined that we had ample hail damage to justify an entire replacement. The team was also forced to make some emergency repairs on our automated handicap accessible doors when the doors no longer opened when the buttons were pressed. We worked with our door contractor to get the proper replacement parts ordered and needed to hire an electrician to wire in the new motor. This fall we also had some of the outdoor electrical outlet GFI's upgraded to help accommodate the wonderful Christmas lights that the WAM team puts up on the outdoor trees. Looking ahead to 2025, there's not much scheduled for upcoming projects for the next year but we will be hiring an electrician again this year to change out the burned-out light bulbs in the narthex and sanctuary. It is a task that requires an aerial lift to be able to reach most of those heights which makes it difficult. Otherwise, we will just continue to fix issues as they arise and hopefully have a quiet year as far as needed repairs. Hopefully you all have a great 2025 and see you at church!

Submitted in faith by Tony Gleason

HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Council Representative and Committee member: Anna Olson

Human Resources & Administration Team

This committee is responsible for providing managerial assistance to the church staff and congregational council for all St. John's property and policies and shall maintain adequate insurance for all church property.

New Staff Members

Roxanne Litchfield joined St. John's Lutheran Church as Director of Music in March of 2024.

Pastoral Changes

Pastor Kim Kylo by process of Call Committee and Congregational Vote was called to lead St. John's Lutheran Church as Senior Pastor in April of 2024.

Pastor Nathan Lyke by process of Call Committee and Congregational Vote joined St John's Lutheran Church as Associate Pastor in October of 2024.

Insurance

In the fall of 2024, the Human Resources and Administration Team and Congregational Council reviewed the renewal policy from Church Mutual finding an increase in both premium and deductible for hail/wind damage. The team then compiled multiple quotes from various insurance companies and found that an increase in premium and wind/hail deductible was commonplace in today's market, due to the increase in storm damage in the area. After thoughtful review, the team decided to move forward with a policy from Brotherhood Mutual Insurance that will increase St. John's annual premium while providing the lowest deductible for wind/hail damage.

Associate Policy Handbook

The Human Resources and Administration Team, in addition to Council President, Senior Pastor, and Staff have been in process of reviewing and revising the Associate Policy Handbook to ensure the Handbook remains consistent and up to date.

Budget Discipline

Human Resources and Administration continues to be fiscally responsible and remains within the team's budget.

COMPASSION TEAM

Council Representative: Elisa Brown

Members: Currently looking for new members

Dear St. John's Family,

We have had a wonderful year serving our neighbors in the name of Christ. As we move forward into the new year of 2025, I am so very thankful to our St. John's community for all their generous donations in the past year that have made this ministry possible. Because of these donations we have been able to provide support to our ministry partners in the community and in the church. The programs that benefited from your support this year include:

Saint Paul Area Synod
World Hunger
Lutangilo Secondary School
Muhanga Partnership
Lenten Bank Project
Campus Faith Club
LSS-Lutheran Social Services

360 Communities
The Open Door Food Shelf
Current Local Initiatives
College Scholarships for St. John's Seniors
Global Mission Project
Loaves and Fishes
CATCH Transitional Housing

Some highlights of the year include

- Providing 2 - \$500 scholarships for each of our St. John's High School seniors who wrote an essay called "God in my Life"
- Making contributions to the food shelf at Messiah Lutheran, a 360 communities outreach program, representing about 1000 pounds of food to our community
- partnered with the Sunday School Students and congregation to bring soup and other items to the food shelf for our Soup-er Bowl Sunday event.
- participating in March is Food Share Month
- collecting jackets and winter gear for people in our community
- sponsoring a family through the CATCH program

Our new year of 2025 will bring more care and compassion with some new partners in ministry and continued support for others. Thank you so much to this wonderful congregation for their faithful service and support for our neighbors in need.

Respectfully submitted, Elisa Brown

GLOBAL MISSIONS TEAM

Kathy Ziller Chairperson

Team Members: Don Cross, Gabby Hasselmann, Selma Holm, Pastor Nathan Lyke, John Mickelson, Kathy Ziller.

This year we said goodbye to Ginger Gustafson as one of our members. Thank you for your contribution to our committee. We then welcomed Gabby Hasselman as a new member. We look forward to Gabby's insights into the committee.

St John's continues to support 17 students with scholarships in secondary school. We thank all who have continued to give support to these young people.

We're excited for Pastor Nathan and Gabby Hasselmann, who will be going to Tanzania in June, to reporting back on how things are progressing on the dispensary and the well-being of the people in Muhanga. We continue to use What's App to reach out to Muhanga to share pictures of special events and ask for updates.

Thank you to the congregation for your continued support of our Raise Right Cards, Lenten Banks, and Pink Envelopes. Contributions are as follows.

- Raise Right Cards \$1233.75
- Lenten Banks \$1637.96
- Pink Envelopes \$350.00

Submitted by Kathy Ziller

GRATITUDE AND GENEROSITY TEAM

The Gratitude and Generosity Team is tasked with the opportunity to create a pledge appeal every year, in order to project anticipated funding available for the numerous programs and worship opportunities at St. John's. Our congregation is thriving; as we constantly add new programs, we incur additional costs accordingly. Thus, it is an ongoing process both to educate our congregation about our financial responsibilities to steward these growing ministries, and to obtain the appropriate funding to ensure their success and sustainability. As we are all well-aware in our personal lives, expenses have increased in recent years. So too, the church experiences a commensurate increase in expenses for the same ministries. We thank our members for continued support and encourage everyone to maximize the opportunities St. John's has to offer! Remember, if you have yet to submit your 2025 pledge, it's never too late.

In 2025, here are two key areas to pay attention to:

We will be rolling out the new St. John's Lutheran Mission Endowment, a legacy giving opportunity for those ready to make a more substantial gift with a multi-generational impact. We aim to bring this Mission Endowment to the congregation in late winter 2025, so stay tuned.

Additionally, as we consider the multi-dimensional impact and opportunity of online worship: for members who worship online, as well as for prospective visitors researching St. John's online prior to an in-person visit, we may be entertaining an upgrade to our audio/visual technology for a more robust, more interactive online worship experience. You may anticipate news about this potential update in the spring.

Finally, a word of encouragement: if you are fortunate enough to have a year-end bonus or other windfall, please think of St. John's as you decide how you might designate the funds. Our hope is for a prosperous, joyful, happy and Blessed 2025 for all!!

Respectfully submitted: Bob Rustvold on behalf of the Gratitude and Generosity Team.

Team members: Pastor Kim: Dan Brown, Christie Wright, Roger Moller
Wendy Welsch, Scott Vial, Bob Rustvold

MINISTRY FINANCE TEAM

Mark Gelle — Chairperson

Brad Paulson — Council Representative

Team Members: Lisa Drogemuller, Barry Fick (Treasurer), Mark Gelle (Chair), Chris Olson, Brad Paulson (Council Representative), Mark Renze, Andy Schultz, Mike Sobota (Recorder), Joe Stoddard, Tyra Wiemann (Financial Analyst)

The responsibilities of the Ministry Finance Team (MFT) involve the ongoing review, monitoring, and reporting of the Church's financial activities. Meeting monthly, MFT also works to recommend financial strategies, options, and considerations to the Church Council and the congregation as a whole. The overarching goal of the MFT is to provide responsible stewardship of Church funds in a transparent manner, balancing the needs and desires of the Church with member contributions, as well as other revenue sources.

The MFT is also involved with building and recommending an annual budget to Church Council and the congregation for final approval. This process involves Church Staff and Ministry Teams performing careful review of their expected expenditures and revenues (where applicable) before submission to the MFT and the Financial Analyst, Tyra Wiemann. The MFT is tasked with aggregating all Teams' needs into a comprehensive annual budget.

The MFT compiles a monthly Financial Performance Report for inclusion in the St. John's Journal. This report provides a monthly recap of revenues and expenditures, allowing congregational members the opportunity to have an ongoing clear understanding of the financial health of the Church.

Each service, members of the MFT count and record offerings to ensure accuracy and proper allocation of funds received. Congregational volunteers often assist MFT members in these processes. Special thanks to those volunteers: Michelle Colbert, Claudia Miller Gelle, John Hartwig, Deborah Johnson, Bob Rustad, and Gary Stinar. This multi-person approach provides security, transparency, and a checks/balances approach to offer congregational members and guests confidence that their generous offerings are allocated as desired.

The MFT was pleased to add Chris Olson and Joe Stoddard to the Team in 2024. Finally, special thanks to Brad Paulson, who has so ably served as the MFT Council Representative for several years and to Mark Renze who has agreed to serve as Council Representative on a going forward basis.

In a continued effort to provide transparency in the Church's finances, we encourage any member of the congregation to seek out members of the MFT with any questions, comments, or concerns.

MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH TEAM

2024 team members: Jennifer Milbradt, Naomi Casper, Kaya Latzke and Pastor Kim Kylo.

Our community has been enriched by each new member joining the St. John's Lutheran Church family!! New members shared and continue to share gifts of energy, experience, hope, a volunteering spirit and more!!

We met and celebrated with well over 250 of our Lakeville area neighbors during the International Living Together in Peace celebration in May. It was an amazing day to meet and celebrate community and culture!! Dancing, music, and an opportunity to share offerings at St. John's Lutheran Church

We held two new member Sundays this past year. A lunch/brunch preceded their official welcome to St. John's. The meal provided time for fellowship, introductions to our ministry, our church, and how new members can be involved in the life of St. John's Lutheran Church.

We look forward to 2025. We anticipate new growth for St. John's Lutheran Church as we continue to open our doors for all people.

Submitted in hope-filled faith, Jennifer Milbradt

EDUCATION TEAM

Team Members: Kristin Covert, Becky Huss, Linda Nielsen, Pastor Kim Kylo

The Education Team focuses its work primarily on Sunday morning Adult Christian Education (ACE). These sessions are a blend of spiritual formation and church ministry education. ACE meets regularly on Sunday mornings during the program year (September – May), and pauses during the summer months.

ACE in 2024 included a variety of topics ranging from introduction sessions with new staff members to updates from faith community partners. All sessions were held live, between Sunday services, and also were live-streamed to those not attending in-person.

The first half of 2024 was coined 'Adult Confirmation' semester. Between January and May, the ACE sessions included guest presenters, panel discussions and wonderful sharing of faith stories. ACE welcomed Rev. Emmy Kegler in February for a four-part series of in-depth and thought-provoking commentary on

'Reading the Bible 101', 'Books of the Bible', 'Synoptic Gospels' and 'Non-Canonical Gospels and People of the Book: 3 Monotheisms'.

Spring 2024 included sessions on 'I am a Lutheran: Panel Conversation', '2 Sacraments', '10 Commandments', 'Apostles Creed and the Lords Prayer'. These sessions, led by Pastor Kim, wrapped up with a Faith Statement Workshop and Faith Stories panel discussions. Much like the youth in confirmation, ACE participants were encouraged to write a Faith Statement to cumulate the 'Adult Confirmation' session.

The Fall 2024 ACE calendar kicked off with a session led by our Director of Music, Roxanne Litchfield. Roxanne shared her journey to St. John's and the impact music has had on her life. The following week, Pastor Kim Kylo introduced the Stewardship Theme: Growing in Generosity. The group discussed ways to be generous that go beyond financial contributions. The session challenged participants to look for ways to use our time, talent and resources to support St. John's.

In early Fall we welcomed guest presenter Denise Kanfield who presented on the topic "Dignity for Our Daughters". The session explored women's health initiatives in Iringa, Tanzania. The final session in October was led by the Memorial Garden Team and included an update on the Memorial Garden and columbarium and ossuary. The Memorial Garden space continues to flourish and each new season brings opportunity for further growth and planning as the space matures. The team continues to make the Memorial Garden a thoughtful space for families and St John's members.

November kicked off with sessions on 'What is Hospice Care?' With Guest Chaplain Rev. Mollie Dvorak. Pastor Dvorak discussed hospice care: what it is, how it supports individuals and families in the decline toward the end of life and 'Braver Angels Minnesota'. Braver Angels shared how our nation's largest cross-partisan, volunteer-led movement is working to bridge the partisan divide. They discussed how Braver Angels is finding hopeful alternatives to toxic politics, and the critical need to come together across differences. 'Get to Know Pastor Nathan Lyke' was the final session of the 2024 calendar year and was a great opportunity to welcome Nathan to the St. John's community.

January 2025 started with a session led by Pastor Nathan where he explored "Why Jesus?". The session offered participants a behind the scenes conversation with Pastor Nathan as he shared his journey and defining moment in his early faith formation. Representatives from LutherCrest Bible Camp visited St John's the following week to share information about the camp – programming, safety, what to expect. The LutherCrest team also shared thoughts on the impact Bible Camp has on our youth and how experiences at camp build strong skills for the future. The final two sessions in January were reserved for the Budget Preview and Annual Meeting.

The ACE sessions create an opportunity for fellowship and connection in a casual and welcoming environment. The 2024 sessions provoked thoughtful discussion on topics relevant to all generations. As we begin 2025, the Education Team encourages everyone to attend ACE sessions, participate in Bible Studies and small groups, and to check out our Altar Echo podcasts and devotional resources provided by St. John's pastors and staff.

ST. JOHN'S 2025 STATISTICAL REPORT

Average Worship Attendance (includes views and in-person attendance) 388

In-person worship Sundays at 8:30 am and 10:30 am (Sept-May) and 8:30am and 10:00am (Jun-Aug) with Holy Communion served on the 2nd and 4th Sundays

Wednesdays at 6:30 pm (Sept—May) with Holy Communion served weekly

Special services:

Ash Wednesday and weekly on Wednesdays throughout Lent

Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship

Two services on Easter Sunday (regular times)

Three services offered on Christmas Eve (3pm, 5pm and 7pm)

One service on Christmas Day and the first Sunday of Christmas (10:00am)

Continued broadcasting to the parking lot

Livestreamed worship every Sunday

Continued Podcasting with Altar Echo Text Study and Altar Echo Family

	Baptized	Confirmed
Membership, end of 2023	1422	1403
Members received during 2024	54	43
By Baptism (15 yrs. and younger)	9	0
By Adult Baptism (16 yrs. and older)	0	0
By Affirmation of Faith	12	12
By Transfer from ELCA		
By Transfer from non-Lutheran		
Other sources		
Baptized youth confirmed in 2024	12	12
Adults confirmed in 2024	0	0
Totals	1497	1458

	Baptized	Confirmed
Members removed during 2024		
By death	3	3
By transfer to other ELCA	10	8
Inactive	11	11
Other sources		
Total members removed	20	18
Membership, end of 2024	1453	1418

Weddings: 2024 – 2 onsite

Funerals: 2024 - 3

CARING, CALLS AND COMMUNION - CCC MINISTRY

Our 2023 goal was to broaden our outreach to other care facilities and individuals with communion visits. To date we have been successful with that goal and continue to support Pr. Kim Kylo and Pr. Nathan Lyke in their monthly visit to local care centers.

At Kingsley Shores we continue to support Ret. Pastor Andy Smith in monthly worship service and distribution of communion with the aid of 2 volunteers and average attendance of 30 people.

In 2022 we established a monthly coffee, communion, and bible study conversation at Highview Hills. In 2024 our bible study, led by Pr. Kim Kylo, centered around studying other religions practiced around the world, with attendance numbers averaging 15 people. Additionally we added a Dementia Caregiver Support Group, hosted by Pr. Kim and Lola Amendt from Highview Hills. We have teamed up with their Chaplain Grace, Pastors from Christiania Lutheran Church, ELCA, and Hosanna Church to co-host a monthly Lutheran Communion Service. At Winsor Plaza we host a monthly worship service with communion and fellowship averaging about 10 participants.

As some of our church members' care needs have changed, the opportunity for new care facilities has come with it. I'm happy to say we are now bringing communion to both Beehive Memory Care locations in Lakeville, and continue to see attendance numbers grow.

Our team of eight volunteers make phone calls, in person visits, both in home and at local care facilities. They not only serve communion, they play card games, sip tea and volunteer to help arrange rides if necessary. All of this would not be possible without their help, dedication, and deep commitment to this ministry. They continue to show up, display love and compassion to our church family and friends; through their ongoing efforts.

Our 2025 goal will be to continue our outreach to our church family and friends, and hope to add additional volunteers to our group.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lynn Coldren, CCC Coordinator

MEMORIAL GARDEN TEAM

Members: Lisa Horn – Council representative, Perry Fuerniss, Cindy Gunnerson, Jeanne Hartwig, Lynn Coldren and Candy Nordine

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation. 2 Corinthians 1 vs. 3-5 & 7

Dear St. John's Family,

It was another busy year for the Memorial Garden Team. This year we very much appreciated all the rain on the new plantings to a point. We lost a few plants due to too much water, but we plan to replace those in the Spring. We also added some evergreen plants and another large tree. We worked with the family of Glenn and Darlene Klotz to finalize the purchase and placement of their memorial rock. Looking ahead to this

Spring we will finish planting the planned additions to the garden and replace any plants as needed. Currently we have a wonderful team of snow removal volunteers keeping the area accessible. In the Spring we will organize a team of volunteers to continue care and upkeep for the garden. We want to say Thank You! again to everyone who has contributed to the Memorial Garden in anyway. To date we have sold 26 units with 10 being occupied. Please contact any member of the team if you have questions or would like additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Horn

ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

2024 TREASURER'S REPORT

St. John's Lutheran Church Balance Sheet 12/31/2024

	December 31, 2024	11/30/2024	\$ Change
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Checking/Savings			
0100 · Cash			
0106 · Old National-Checking (#9262)	324,207	322,749	1,458
0109 · Old National Mortgage (# 0539)	107,768	105,938	1,829
0120 · Certificate of Deposit - LPL Fi	100,000	100,000	0
0199 · Petty cash	20	20	0
Total 0100 · Cash	531,995	528,708	3,287
Total Checking/Savings	531,995	528,708	3,287
Accounts Receivable			
1201 · Accounts Receivable	1,898		1,898
Total Accounts Receivable	1,898		1,898
Total Current Assets	533,893	528,708	5,185
Fixed Assets			
0600 · Fixed Asset			
0610 · Land	1,360,000	1,360,000	0
0622 · Church (New)	4,647,984	4,647,984	0
Total 0600 · Fixed Asset	6,007,984	6,007,984	0
Total Fixed Assets	6,007,984	6,007,984	0
TOTAL ASSETS	6,541,877	6,536,692	5,185
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable			
0522 · Construction Loan Payable	988,162	995,351	(7,188)
Total Accounts Payable	988,162	995,351	(7,188)
Total Other Current Liabilities			
Total Current Liabilities	988,165	994,542	(6,377)
Total Liabilities	988,165	994,542	(6,377)
Equity			
0900 · Equity in Working Capital	612,975	612,975	0
0920 · Equity in Net Fixed Assets	5,020,002	5,012,814	7,188
Net Income	(79,265)	(83,639)	4,374
Total Equity	5,553,712	5,542,150	11,562
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	6,541,877	6,536,692	5,185
Cert of Dep - Land Sales	100,000	100,000	
Cert of Dep - Ins Proceeds	-	-	
Certificat of Deposit - LPL Financial	100,000	100,000	
Working Capital Equity	612,975	612,975	
Net Income	(79,265)	(83,639)	
Total Fund Balance	533,710	529,336	

St. John's Lutheran Church
Detailed Fund Balances

	December 2024	December 2023	Change Year-to-Date
100 General	72,407	35,023	37,384
200 Benevolence	14,455	8,574	5,881
220 Benevolence - Designated	30	515	(485)
400 Youth	6,904	10,172	(3,268)
500 Mortgage	85,500	83,232	2,268
800 Special			-
8001 Funeral	5,016	5,925	(909)
8011 Piano Fund	3,636	3,830	(194)
8042 Prayer Shawl and Crafters	250	469	(219)
8051 WELCA Sp-Chall-Transpor	-	5,000	(5,000)
8066 Muhanga Sch'lship/Campbell	1,886	872	1,014
8134 Misc. Music Dept.	899	293	606
8140 Play Ground Fund	4,783	2,883	1,900
8146 Youth Assistance Fund	372	552	(180)
8152 Table/Chair Donation	237	237	-
8159 Youth Service Project	553	553	-
8165 ACE Program	2,089	2,790	(701)
8176 Sunday School Program	861	1,276	(416)
8177 Rustvold Family Memorial	1,006	3,406	(2,400)
8178 SS Curriculum Donation	764	1,000	(236)
8179 A. Christiansen Home Comm	366	455	(89)
8181Pete(Norton)Wallin Memorial	2,983	4,786	(1,803)
8182 Arch Matching Fund	50,490	26,190	24,300
8183 Hockey Cards Fund	20	20	-
8184 Fuerniss Fund	1,367	1,367	-
8185 Livestream / Projector	12,500	6,000	6,500
8187 JSM Fund	161	500	(339)
8188 LSS Fund	27,500	20,000	7,500
8190 Duane Petersen Memorial	0	631	(631)
8191 Florence Sandve Memorial	256	256	-
8319 2024 Prepaid Offering	0	41,087	(41,087)
8320 2025 Prepaid Offering	26,804		26,804
8324 Muhanga Outreach	11,869	11,380	489
8325 Africa Trip(2008-Pastor)	2,250	4,500	(2,250)
8327 Land Sale Proceeds	83,737	206,701	(122,964)
8328 Capital Improvements	71,337	39,238	32,099
8329 PPP	0	18,250	(18,250)
8330 Memorial Garden	4,425	9,276	(4,852)
8331 College Scholarships Funds	7,819	5,725	2,094
8332 Niches/Oss Perpetual Care	5,000	19,273	(14,273)
8333 Niche/Oss. Initial Fee	16,518	19,572	(3,053)
8350 Nursery Fund	0	788	(788)
8351 St. John's Foundation	0	5,000	(5,000)
8352 Tanzania Trip 2024	1,250	0	1,250
8999 Memorials - Undesignated	5,413	5,378	35
Total 800 Special	354,415	\$ 475,459	(121,044)
			-
TOTAL	533,710	\$ 612,975	(79,265)
Cap Imp / Major Repair Fund	\$71,337	\$39,238	
Land Sale Proceeds	\$83,737	\$206,701	
PPP Fund Balance	\$0	\$18,250	
Mem Garden (8330, 8332, 8333)	\$25,943	\$48,121	
Arch Matching Fund	\$50,490	\$26,190	
Arch Loans to Mem Garden	\$0	\$0	
Int Due on Loans	\$0	\$0	
	<u>\$50,490</u>	<u>\$26,190</u>	

St. John's Lutheran Church
Profit Loss Budget Performance: General Fund Summary

	Dec 24	Budget	\$ Over Budget	Jan - Dec 24	YTD Budget	\$ Over Budget	Annual Budget
Income							
1000 · Offerings	65,549	66,953	-1,404	573,613	574,760	-1,147	574,760
1027 · Thrivent Choice Allocation	148	200	-52	1,618	2,000	-382	2,000
1100 · Program income	533	362	171	8,033	4,000	4,033	4,000
1600 · Miscellaneous income	699	251	448	11,739	3,000	8,739	3,000
1910 · Special funds income	1,521	1,521	0	18,250	18,250	0	18,250
Total Income	68,450	69,287	-837	613,253	602,010	11,243	602,010
Expense							
3000 · Staffing	46,575	37,051	9,524	412,515	427,666	-15,151	427,666
4000 · Church Administration	9,878	3,329	6,549	54,900	53,056	1,844	53,056
4600 · Campus Properties	19,321	7,735	11,586	73,106	70,446	2,660	70,446
5100 · Education	1,461	650	811	7,584	12,500	-4,916	12,500
5300 · Communication & Membershi	470	537	-67	2,072	2,745	-673	2,745
5350 · Events and Hospitality	2,199	788	1,411	8,322	8,350	-28	8,350
5450 · Gratitude & Generosity	38	0	38	2,236	2,390	-154	2,390
5500 · Worship Arts Ministry	3,218	2,150	1,068	10,050	13,500	-3,450	13,500
5600 · Youth	248	137	111	5,084	6,164	-1,080	6,164
Total Expense	83,408	52,377	31,031	575,869	596,817	-20,948	596,817
Net Income	-14,958	16,910	-31,868	37,384	5,193	32,191	5,193

Actual / Budget - Offering	97.903%	Actual / Budget - YTD Offering	99.800%
Actual / Budget - Total Income	98.792%	Actual / Budget - YTD Income	101.868%
Actual / Budget - Staffing	125.705%	Actual / Budget - YTD Staffing	96.457%
Actual / Budget - Total Expense	159.245%	Actual / Budget - YTD Expense	96.490%
Actual / Budget - Net income / (loss)	-88.457%	Actual / Budget - Income / Los	719.892%
Monthly - Net income / (loss)	(\$14,958)	YTD - Net Income / Loss	\$37,384
PPP	(1,521)	YTD - PPP	(18,250)
Monthly - Cash flow	(\$16,479)	YTD - cash flow	\$19,134

St. John's Lutheran Church
Profit Loss Budget Performance: Benevolence

	Dec 24	Budget	\$ Over Budget	Jan - Dec 24	YTD Budget	\$ Over Budget	Annual Budget
Income							
1000 · Offerings							
1010 · Offering/pledges- General Fund	5,174	5,431	(257)	48,232	47,640	592	47,640
1011 · Plate	262	35	227	1,083	300	783	300
1080 · Holiday offerings	264	150	114	566	300	266	300
Total 1000 · Offerings	5,700	5,616	84	49,881	48,240	1,641	48,240
1700 · Benevolence income							
1712 · Lenten envelope	0	0	0	2,336	2,000	336	2,000
1714 · Lenten plate	0	0	0	714	1,000	(286)	1,000
1715 · Lenten Banks	0	0	0	1,654	1,000	654	1,000
1720 · Loaves and fishes	0	63	(63)	1,000	750	250	750
1731 · The Open Door/Food Shelf	45	63	(18)	2,020	750	1,270	750
1750 · Benevolence - other	25			916			
Total 1700 · Benevolence income	70	126	(56)	8,640	5,500	3,140	5,500
Total Income	5,770	5,742	28	58,521	53,740	4,781	53,740
Gross Profit	5,770	5,742	28	58,521	53,740	4,781	53,740
Expense							
7000 · Benevolence Fund							
7010 · Saint Paul Area Synod	4,000	4,000	0	16,000	16,000	0	16,000
7115 · Global Mission Outreach							
7120 · World hunger	0	0	0	3,000	3,000	0	3,000
7140 · Lutangilo Secondary School	0	0	0	1,250	1,250	0	1,250
7161 · Muhanga Partnership	0	0	0	1,250	1,250	0	1,250
7163 · Muhanga Scholarships	0	0	0	4,050	4,050	0	4,050
7169 · Africa Visits	750	750	0	750	750	0	750
7206 · Lenten Bank Project	0	0	0	1,800	1,800	0	1,800
7207 · Supplies & Expenses	0	8	(8)	48	100	(52)	100
Total 7115 · Global Mission Outreach	750	758	(8)	12,148	12,200	(52)	12,200
7200 · Compassion - Local Outreach							
7130 · Bible Camp Cong. Partnership	0	0	0	2,500	2,500	0	2,500
7131 · Campus Faith Club	0	0	0	500	500	0	500
7170 · LSS - Lutheran Social Services	0	0	0	3,000	3,000	0	3,000
7219 · Messiah Food Shelf/360 Communit	0	0	0	2,500	2,500	0	2,500
7220 · 360 Communities	0	0	0	1,500	1,500	0	1,500
7223 · The Open Door/Food Shelf	2,485	1,500	985	4,020	2,000	2,020	2,000
7250 · Current Local Initiatives	0	0	0	3,000	3,000	0	3,000
7292 · College Scholarship	0	0	0	2,500	2,500	0	2,500
7299 · Undesignated	3,130	230	2,900	4,971	2,300	2,671	2,300
Total 7200 · Compassion - Local Outreach	5,615	1,730	3,885	24,491	19,800	4,691	19,800
Total 7000 · Benevolence Fund	10,365	6,488	3,877	52,639	48,000	4,639	48,000
Total Expense	10,365	6,488	3,877	52,639	48,000	4,639	48,000
Net Income	(4,595)	(746)	(3,849)	5,882	5,740	142	5,740
Monthly Offerings to Budget	101.496%		YTD Off / Budget	103.402%			
Monthly Total Income to Budget	100.488%		YTD tot inc / bud	108.897%			
Monthly Distribution to Budget	159.756%		YTD dist / budget	109.665%			

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Building Fund**

	"Dec. 2024	Jan-Dec. 2024
Income		
1000 · Offerings		
1017 · Mortgage	19,238	123,359
Total 1000 · Offerings	19,238	123,359
1680 · Investment income(interest inc)		
1692 · Interest income	4	38
1680 · Investment income(interest inc) - Other	0	0
Total 1680 · Investment income(interest inc)	4	38
Total Income	19,242	123,397
Gross Profit	19,242	123,397
Expense		
4600 · Campus Properties		
4990 · Church Acquisition-Construction		
4998 · Mortgage - Principal	7,188	85,476
4999 · Mortgage - interest	2,906	35,652
Total 4990 · Church Acquisition-Construction	10,094	121,128
Total 4600 · Campus Properties	10,094	121,128
Total Expense	10,094	121,128
Net Income	9,147	2,268

Construction loan payable December 31, 2023	1,073,638
Principal paid Year-to-date	85,476
QB	988,162
Old National Bank Loan Statement	988,162
Difference	(0)

Monthly Income to Budget	190.623%
Annual Income to Budget	101.873%
Principal as % of monthly payment	71.215%
Principal paid YTD	7.961%

Monthly payment is fixed through April 15, 2026

ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

2025 PROPOSED BUDGET

St. John's Lutheran Church
Budget Proposal for 2025

Fund Balance, Sources of Funds, and Uses of Funds, by Category

General, Benevolence & Mortgage Fund Balances				
	<u>Gen & Ben</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Benev</u>	<u>Mortgage</u>
1-Jan-25	\$86,892	\$72,407	\$14,485	\$85,500
Inflows	695,500	636,000	59,500	121,200
Outflows	(702,715)	(652,215)	(50,500)	(121,200)
Other	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
31-Dec-25	<u>\$79,677</u>	<u>\$56,192</u>	<u>\$23,485</u>	<u>\$85,500</u>

General Fund	2025
Projected Revenue	\$636,000
Projected Expenses	<u>(\$652,215)</u>
<i>Subtotal Rev-Exp:</i>	<i>(\$16,215)</i>
<i>Adjustments</i>	
Gen. Fund Cash Draw	\$16,215
Transfer to Cap. Imp.	0
PPP used	<u>0</u>
<i>Subtotal - Adjustments</i>	<i>\$16,215</i>
<i>Net</i>	<u><i>\$0</i></u>

Proposed 2025 Budget for St. John's Lutheran - Lakeville

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Budget Proposal for 2025**

Fund Balance, Sources of Funds, and Uses of Funds, by Category

Benevolence	2025
Offering Allocation of 8%	\$54,000
Other contributions	<u>\$5,500</u>
Total Funds Received	\$59,500
Distributions	<u>(\$50,500)</u>
<i>Net</i>	<u><i>\$9,000</i></u>

Mortgage Fund	2025
Offerings	\$121,200
Expenditures	<u>(\$121,200)</u>
<i>Net</i>	<u><i>\$0</i></u>

Proposed 2025 Budget for St. John's Lutheran - Lakeville

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Budget Proposal for 2025**

General Fund Operations		
Gifts / Contrib	\$636,000	
Expenses	<u>(652,215)</u>	
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)		(\$16,215)
Adjustments		
PPP used	\$0	
Cap. Investment	0	
Cash on Hand	16,215	
Ministry Team Adj	0	
Other	<u>0</u>	
Adjustments		<u>\$16,215</u>
Net Cash Flow		<u>\$0</u>

Council Action Requested:

Approve the Proposed Budget for 2025.

The Draft 2025 Budget has been adjusted to actual 12/31/2024 numbers.

The 2025 Budget Prelim DRAFT as approved by Council goes to the Congregation for approval at Jan. 26, 2025 annual meeting.

Proposed 2025 Budget for St. John's Lutheran - Lakeville

St John's Lutheran Church
Revenue Budget for: 2025 Budget

Total Receipts for General Fund and Benevolence Fund	2025 Budget	2024 Actual	2024 Budget	2023 Actual
<i>Total Receipts</i>	\$695,500	<u>\$666,003</u>	<u>\$655,750</u>	<u>\$642,103</u>
Allocated between:				
General Fund	\$636,000	\$613,253	\$602,010	\$588,056
Benevolence Fund *	\$59,500	<u>\$52,750</u>	<u>\$53,740</u>	<u>\$54,047</u>
	\$695,500	<u>\$666,003</u>	<u>\$655,750</u>	<u>\$642,103</u>

General Fund Revenue Component Detail	2025 Budget	2024 Actual	2024 Budget	2023 Actual
Offerings - Gen. Pledged	\$370,000	\$370,967	\$370,967	\$327,718
Offerings - Gen. Unpledged	251,000	<u>202,646</u>	<u>203,793</u>	<u>196,886</u>
Offerings - Total	\$621,000	\$573,613	\$574,760	\$524,604
Thrivent Choice	2,000	1,618	2,000	1,739
Program Revenue	7,000	8,033	4,000	5,605
Miscellaneous Revenue	6,000	11,739	3,000	7,908
Sp Funds & Inv Revenue	0	0	0	0
<i>General Fund Revenue</i>	\$636,000	<i>\$595,003</i>	<i>\$583,760</i>	<i>\$539,856</i>
Transfer - Land to Cap. Imp.	0	0	0	0
Transfers - Other One Time	0	0	0	0
Transfers / PPP-2021-2024	0	<u>18,250</u>	<u>18,250</u>	<u>48,200</u>
<i>Transfers & Fund Bal Alloc.</i>	\$0	<i>\$18,250</i>	<i>\$18,250</i>	<i>\$48,200</i>
Total General Fund Rev	\$636,000	<u>\$613,253</u>	<u>\$602,010</u>	<u>\$588,056</u>

Benevolence Fund * Revenue Component Detail	2025 Budget	2024 Actual	2024 Budget	2023 Actual
Offerings - Benevolence *	\$54,000	<u>\$49,881</u>	<u>\$48,240</u>	<u>\$45,615</u>
Benevolence Allocation	\$54,000	\$49,881	\$48,240	\$45,615
Benevolence - Other Sources				
Lenten envelope	\$2,500	\$2,336	\$2,000	\$1,832
Lenten plate	500	714	1,000	1,570
Lenten banks	1,000	1,654	1,000	1,860
Loaves and Fishes	0	1,000	750	0
Open Door / Food Shelf	1,500	2,020	750	3,170
Other	0	<u>916</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Other Benevolence Funds	\$5,500	\$8,640	\$5,500	\$8,432
Total Benevolence Receipts	\$59,500	<u>\$58,521</u>	<u>\$53,740</u>	<u>\$54,047</u>

* Represents 8% of "Offerings -Total"

Proposed 2025 Budget for St. John's Lutheran - Lakeville

**St John's Lutheran Church
Expenditure Budget for: 2025**

Expense

		2025 Budget	2024 <u>Actual</u>	2024 <u>Budget</u>	2023 <u>Actual</u>
General Fund					
Staffing	Increase 2.00%	\$451,939	\$412,515	\$427,667	\$427,965
Human Resources & Admin		60,438	54,900	53,056	54,845
Campus Property		73,010	58,106	70,446	65,556
Capital Improvements		20,000	15,000	0	0
Education		13,300	7,584	12,500	10,041
Communication/Membership		2,745	2,072	2,745	1,973
Events & Hospitality		8,215	8,322	8,350	8,270
Gratitude & Generosity		2,560	2,236	2,390	2,036
Worship Arts Ministry		13,500	10,050	13,500	11,342
Youth & Family Ministry		6,508	<u>5,084</u>	<u>6,164</u>	<u>5,946</u>
<i>General Fund Expenses</i>		<u>\$652,215</u>	<u>\$575,869</u>	<u>\$596,818</u>	<u>\$587,974</u>
Benevolence					
Benevolence		\$45,000	\$52,639	\$48,000	\$45,615
Benevolence - Other		5,500	0	5,500	8,432
<i>Benevolence Distributions</i>		<u>\$50,500</u>	<u>\$52,639</u>	<u>\$53,500</u>	<u>\$54,047</u>
Total Expenditures for General and Benevolence					
General Fund Expenses		\$652,215	\$575,869	\$596,818	\$587,974
Benevolence Distributions		<u>\$50,500</u>	<u>\$52,639</u>	<u>\$53,500</u>	<u>\$54,047</u>
<i>Gen & Benevolence Expenses</i>		<u>\$702,715</u>	<u>\$628,508</u>	<u>\$650,318</u>	<u>\$642,021</u>

Proposed 2025 Budget for St. John's Lutheran - Lakeville

**St John's Lutheran Church
Expenditure Budget for: 2024
Benevolence Detail**

	2025 Budget	2024 <u>Actual</u>	2024 <u>Budget</u>	2023 <u>Actual</u>
Global Mission Outreach				
St Paul Area Synod	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
World Hunger	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Lutengilo Secondary School	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250
Muhanga Partnership	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250
Muhanga Scholarships	4,050	4,050	4,050	4,050
Africa Visits	750	750	750	750
Lenten Bank Project *	1,800	1,800	1,860	1,800
Supplies and Expenses	100	48	87	100
Other	0	0	0	0
Global Mission Outreach Total	<u>\$28,200</u>	<u>\$28,148</u>	<u>\$28,247</u>	<u>\$28,200</u>
Compassion Local Outreach				
Special Challenge Transit	\$0	\$0	\$6,156	\$4,000
Bible Camp	2,500	2,500	2,000	2,000
Campus Faith Club	500	500	1,000	1,000
Lutheran Social Services	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Messiah Food	2,500	2,500	1,000	1,000
Open Door / Food Shelf *	2,000	4,020	6,170	3,000
Current Local Initiatives	1,300	3,000	2,300	2,300
360 Communities	1,500	1,500	0	0
College Scholarships	2,500	2,500	1,000	1,000
Loaves and Fishes	2,000	2,000	0	0
Undesignated	<u>2,000</u>	<u>2,971</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2,500</u>
Compassion Local Outreach Total	\$19,800	\$24,491	\$22,626	\$19,800
* Offering Special Appeal	0			
<i>Benevolence General Funding</i>	<u>\$48,000</u>	<u>\$52,639</u>	<u>\$50,873</u>	<u>\$48,000</u>

Since 2021, Benevolence General Funding is 8% of General Fund Offerings.
For 2019 and prior, Benevolence General Funding was 6% of General Fund Offerings.

Proposed 2025 Budget for St. John's Lutheran - Lakeville

**St John's Lutheran Church
Mortgage Budget for 2025**

	2025 Budget	2024 <u>Actual</u>	2023 <u>Actual</u>	2022 <u>Actual</u>
Revenue				
Offerings - Pledges	\$104,000	\$123,359	\$121,733	\$128,619
Offerings - Other	17,150	0	0	0
Earnings - Other	<u>50</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>4,886</u>	<u>286</u>
	\$121,200	\$123,397	\$126,619	\$128,905
Expense				
Principal	\$88,600	\$85,476	\$82,684	\$79,859
Interest	32,600	35,652	38,438	41,269
Fees	0	0	0	0
Add'l Principal	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	\$121,200	\$121,128	\$121,122	\$121,128
Budgeted Surplus / (Deficit)	\$0	\$2,269	\$5,497	\$7,777
Adjust for additional principal paid	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Budgeted Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$2,269</u>	<u>\$5,497</u>	<u>\$7,777</u>
Mortgage Principal Reconciliation				
Principal outstanding at Jan. 1	\$988,162	\$1,073,638	\$1,156,289	\$1,236,188
Principal paid during the year (est.)	<u>88,560</u>	<u>85,476</u>	<u>82,651</u>	<u>79,899</u>
Principal outstanding at Dec. 31	<u>\$899,602</u>	<u>\$988,162</u>	<u>\$1,073,638</u>	<u>\$1,156,289</u>

Proposed 2025 Budget for St. John's Lutheran - Lakeville

St John's Lutheran Church 2025

Mortgage Budget for		3.39%				\$988,163
Monthly Amortization		3.39%		Add'l	Outstanding	
		Payment	Interest	Principal	Principal	Balance
2025	Jan	\$9,147	\$2,885	\$6,262	\$947	\$980,954
2025	Feb	9,147	2,586	6,561	947	973,446
2025	Mar	9,147	2,842	6,305	947	966,194
2025	Apr	9,147	2,729	6,418	947	958,829
2025	May	9,147	2,799	6,348	947	951,534
2025	Jun	9,147	2,688	6,459	947	944,128
2025	Jul	9,147	2,756	6,391	947	936,790
2025	Aug	9,147	2,735	6,412	947	929,431
2025	Sep	9,147	2,626	6,521	947	921,962
2025	Oct	9,147	2,691	6,456	947	914,560
2025	Nov	9,147	2,584	6,563	947	907,049
2025	Dec	9,147	<u>2,648</u>	<u>6,499</u>	<u>947</u>	899,602

2025	January - December	\$32,568	\$77,196	\$11,364
<i>Total Principal pd. 2025:</i>			\$88,560	

Monthly payment remains at pre-July 2021 Refinance level of \$10,094/month.
 The additional principal of \$947/month can be reduced if St. John's requests.
 The interest rate is fixed through April 15, 2026.

Proposed 2025 Budget for St. John's Lutheran - Lakeville



“Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you: I have said to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord, my good above all other.’ Psalm 16:1 (ELW translation)

As we come to the close of 2024, these are complicated days in our world. I think most congregations in this synod are faring better than many other organizations and institutions when it comes to focusing on a core mission, living out their values, and being financially stable. Yet, anxiety is widespread and lots of people are angry and disappointed, fearful and disenchanting. All these dynamics create a perfect context for witnessing to the good news from God. We have much work to do but we know that we work best when we act as church together in this synod.

This past year the synod staff and the Synod Council adopted this mission statement and core values:

As followers of Jesus, we are called to accompany faith communities and equip leaders for God’s mission in the world.

Our core values are – authenticity, connection, compassion, and curiosity.

This understanding of our mission allows us to focus staff time and budget dollars to create the most lasting impact in our common work. The core values thread through the way we interact as synod staff and the way we show up in conversations with congregations and the wider public.

In summer 2024, I hosted five Listening Sessions to hear directly from Lutherans like you where you find hope in your congregation and also the worries that weigh on you. Over 100 persons participated and 50 people joined a Zoom presentation to hear what I had learned.

Here are two strategic steps we are taking as a synod to respond to all that I heard: In 2025 we will inaugurate a year and a half emphasis on worship renewal in congregations. This will be funded in part by an ELCA Churchwide grant with an emphasis on inviting our neighbors to join us in worship experiences. Secondly, as a synod, we will encourage and support efforts to make respectful conversations a hallmark of congregational life. You’ll hear more about both initiatives in early 2025.

During 2024, the synod staff over saw call processes and transitions with more than 30 congregations. Several of those included the calling of multiple rostered ministers. This means that nearly a third of the congregations in the synod were in a time of transition this past year. I am grateful for all who have served on a call committee, for our interim pastors, and for faithful members who trust that we are always being called forward into God’s mission for us as the church.

I was privileged to ordain four persons in 2024, including Pastor Wesley Kimball, serving as associate pastor at All Saints in Cottage Grove; Pastor Pepe Demarest, serving as pastor for the Recovery Church in St. Paul with the United Methodist Church (a full communion partner); Pastor Ruthie Mhanga, serving as associate pastor at Gustavus Adolphus in St. Paul; and Pastor Nathan Lyke, serving as associate pastor at St. John’s in Lakeville.

Three of these candidates were from the Saint Paul Area Synod where we currently have 24 persons in the candidacy process to serve as pastors or deacons in the ELCA. I am grateful for those who serve on the Candidacy Committee, for those who mentor and encourage our candidates, for our seminaries and intern sites, and all who support persons as they discern how God is calling them to live out their vocation in the church and world. This is work we all share, knowing that for many the seeds of wondering about becoming a pastor or deacon begin during the elementary school years.

A highlight in 2024 was welcoming Eternal Flame Lutheran Church to recognized congregational status during the Synod Assembly in May. This vibrant congregation, rooted in the growing Hmong community in the East Metro, began as a mission start many years before. The financial support and prayers of many have accompanied this process, as well as our shared work with the ELCA, led by our Director of Evangelical Mission, Pastor Justin Grimm. Also in 2024, St. Mark Lutheran in St. Paul marked its holy closure as a congregation, after more than 100 years of witness on West 7th Street in St. Paul. There are now 106 congregations in the Saint Paul Area Synod with just over 100,000 baptized members.

The Planting Hope Campaign, a synod-wide initiative to support congregational vitality, youth development, and outreach efforts in the synod, continued to bear fruit. With our partners at Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, we celebrated the opening of the Early Learning Center-East Side in August, thanks to a \$1 million investment from the campaign. \$100,000 was shared with congregational vitality efforts this year; over \$50,000 was used to fund paid summer internship for nine young adults. To date over \$1.7 million dollars has been raised for The Planting Hope Campaign. I want to thank all who have donated to the campaign while continuing significant mission support, which allows us to do so much together.

God continues to bless our congregations with people and financial resources. The gifts of time, talent, and treasure enable us to live into God's mission in ways no one congregation could do in isolation. This includes support of our mission starts and redevelopment congregations. In 2024 these included Shobi's Table, Foundation of Life, Eternal Flame, Cristo Rey, St. Paul – Wyoming, Lutheran Church of Peace – Maplewood, and Christ the Servant – Vadnais Heights. An exploration of a possible mission start in Rosemount began in 2024.

Finally, I know you join me in thanking those who serve on the staff of this synod. They include Rachel Holsten, Mary Smith, David Roinas, Kirsten Levorson, Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer, Justin Grimm, Kirsta Lind, Leslie Ortiz and Patricia Lull. Together with Synod Council members, deans, committee members, congregational leaders, and all of you, we have been able to do much to share God's good news to a world, so eager for hope and direction.

I am grateful to serve as the bishop in this time and place, knowing that God alone is our hope and refuge, as the Psalmist proclaims. May we live out that deep truth with joy and confidence in the year to come.

Yours in God's Service,
Bishop Patricia Lull

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at [LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA](https://www.livinglutheran.org/SOFIA).

