



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

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.



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

Annual Report
For the year 2023
St. John's Lutheran Church
500 Third Street West Northfield, MN 55057
Telephone: (507) 645-4429

Table of Contents

Statistical Report	page 4
Agenda for the Annual Meeting	page 5
St. John's Lutheran Church Mission Statement	page 6
Report of the President of the Congregation	page 6
Report of the Senior Pastor	page 7
Report of the Associate Pastor	page 9
Report of the Shared Ministry Coordinator	page 11
Report of the Adult Ministry & Education Board	page 13
Report of the Benevolence & Social Concerns Board	page 14
Report of the Business Management Board	page 15
Report of the Children's Ministry & Education Board	page 15
Report of the Evangelism & Communications Board	page 16
Report of the Faith & Health Board	page 17
Report of the Property & Grounds Board	page 18
Report of the Stewardship Board	page 20
Report of the Worship & Arts Board	page 20
Report of the Youth Ministry & Education Board	page 21
Report of the Treasurer	page 23
Financial Reports	page 26
Report of the Audit Committee	page 28
Report of the Budget Committee	page 29
Minutes from 153 rd Annual Meeting of St. John's Lutheran Church	page 30
Minutes from Special Meeting of St. John's Lutheran Church	page 32
Resolutions 2024-01, 2024-02	page 37
Minutes / Report of St. John's Lutheran Church of Northfield Foundation, Inc.	page 37
Report of the St. John's Women of the ELCA	page 41
2023 Ministry Report of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA	page 44
2023 Northfield Retirement Community Annual Report	page 45

Church Staff:

Senior Pastor: Pam Fickenscher Associate Pastor: Jonathan Davis Parish Nurse: Sally Lindell
Office Manager / Finance Manager: Leah H. Garlie Facility Manager: Steve Harner
Director of Children's Ministry: Julie Brehmer Director of Ministry with Youth & Families: Kristin Partlo
Organist and Director of Worship, Music & Arts: Nathan Proctor
Children's Music Director and Early Childhood Specialist: Arielle Loy
Directors of Rejoice Ringers: David Sims and Will Fecko
Director of Jubilate Choir: Green Bouzard
Shared Ministry Coordinator: Angie Gehring

Statistical Report

December 31, 2023

I. Membership (<i>statistical adjustments ongoing from database project</i>)	
Baptized Membership	1706
Confirmed Membership	1401
Baptisms	1
Confirmations	7
Transferred In	24
Transferred Out/Released	7
Deceased	24
Number of Households	709
II. Church School Enrollment	
Three-year-olds through grade five	75
Sixth through eighth grades	39
Ninth through twelfth grades	47
Church School teachers and helpers	12
III. Worship Opportunities During 2023	
Sunday Worship	86
Non-Sunday Worship	13
Average Sunday Attendance	228
Note: Worship services are available live on KYMN radio and livestream. Recordings are available to view on cable TV and the church website.	
IV. Pastoral Acts	
Baptisms	1
Confirmations	7
Marriages	1
Funerals/Burials	22

In Memoriam

The following members of St. John's congregation died in 2023:

Steve Nelson, Katie Creighton, Gloria Porter, Gerhard Knutson, Bill Talen, Jennifer Bothun, Tom Fjelde, Ronald Detlie, Jaron Johnson, Gary Hagen, Jean Schrader, Max Williams, Ann Ness, Evelyn Estenson, Rev. David Hurtt, James Bronson, Rev. John Quam, John Barber, Betty Stromseth, Lester Gunderson, Lyla Arneson Paulson, Andrew Nelson, Judith Stoutland, Rev. Van Miller

Blessed be their memory; God hold them in love until the day of Jesus Christ.

Agenda

Annual Meeting of the St. John's Lutheran Church Foundation
Sunday, January 28, 2024 / 12:30 p.m., St. John's Hall and via Zoom
Brent Bash, presiding

- a. Report of the Foundation
- b. Election of Board Members



Agenda

154th Annual Meeting of St. John's Lutheran Church
Sunday, January 28, 2024 / 12:30 p.m., St. John's Hall and via Zoom
Kathy Shea, presiding

- 1. Scripture and Prayer
- 2. Adoption of Rules
- 3. Adoption of Agenda
- 4. Minutes
 - a. Annual Meeting: January 29, 2023
 - b. Special Congregational Meeting: August 27, 2023
- 5. Annual Reports of President, Pastors, Staff, Boards, and Committees
- 6. Report of Treasurer, Jane Rizzo
- 7. Report of the Audit Committee, Mark Ulmer
- 8. Resolution (2024-01) Regarding Action of the Congregation Council in 2023
- 9. Presentation of the Proposed Budget for 2024, Dan Franklin
- 10. Report of the Nominating Committee
- 11. Elections
 - a. Officers, Congregation Council, Board Members, Audit, and Nominating Committees
 - b. Representatives to Lutheran Home of Cannon Valley Corporation (NRC): Sunday, April 7, 2024, 1:00 p.m.
 - c. Delegates to SE MN Synod Assembly: Saturday, May 11, 2024, Mankato (4 voting members plus an additional youth/young adult)
 - d. Delegates to Cannon River Assembly: Sunday, February 11, 2024, 2:00 p.m., Urland Lutheran Church, Cannon Falls (up to twelve voting members)
 - e. Delegates to Gustavus Adolphus College Association of Congregations: Saturday, April 27, 2024, 12:00-3:00 p.m.
- 12. Resolution (2024-02) of Gratitude for all Volunteers, Staff, and Pastors
- 13. In Memorium
- 14. Presentation
- 15. Adjournment

Installation of Officers, Council, and Board Members will take place
on Sunday, February 4, 2024.

*St. John's Lutheran Church stands on the ancestral homelands of the Wahpekute band of the Dakota nation.
We respect and are grateful for the generations of native people who have cared for this land.*

St. John's Mission Statement
Created, renewed, and empowered by God's grace,
St. John's Lutheran Church

- is a welcoming community in Christ whose mission is to
- celebrate in **Word and Sacrament** God's gracious actions for the world,
 - cultivate growth in faith,
 - encourage service and witness, and
 - proclaim Christ as the hope of the world.

Report of Kathy Shea, *2023 President of the Congregation*

It has been a privilege to serve as president of the congregation in 2023. I appreciate this wonderful opportunity to learn more about the activities and people in this congregation. The willingness of people to serve and contribute in many ways has enabled us to move forward on a number of projects, detailed in the reports to follow.

2023 was a year of returning to "normal", almost, after three years of changes due to the pandemic. We were able to have in-person meetings and regular church services and other activities. While COVID is still with us, we dismantled the Safe Operating Committee and no longer have to check numbers of COVID infections each week. A blessing of the pandemic was to encourage us to define after pandemic goals. We started doing this as a congregation with the "Planning Our Future Together" sessions in fall 2022.

We used the Council Retreat on February 4, 2023, to learn to know each other better and examine comments from the "Planning Our Future" discussions as we developed plans / activities for the coming year. We have worked on three main areas of emphasis in 2023: 1) fellowship, 2) social/climate justice, and 3) facility sustainability, as explained below.

For fellowship we encouraged more opportunities for people to interact in different ways. We encouraged people to come back to worship in-person, but also recognize the continued importance of video streaming services for people not able to attend in person. This technology and a dedicated team to keep it running are benefits from the pandemic. Church

Boards and WECLA (Women of St. John's) have provided educational opportunities, from speakers to book discussions, and shared projects. Wednesday Night Meals, along with associated activities, returned on a regular basis, encouraging interactions among different groups of people.

As we discussed social justice issues, we examined suggestions from a Race Dialogues class at St. John's in 2022. We agreed that there is a need for more education, and awareness of equity, diversity and inclusion issues. We encouraged boards and local churches to work together on shared projects in this area. The three ELCA churches in Northfield are finding ways to combine youth programming, especially in the summer. The Faith & Health Board took on the task of writing a Land Acknowledgement Statement that is now printed in the Sunday bulletin. Land Acknowledgement signs were placed near the parking lot entrances to the church. Other boards have worked to provide more inclusive music, artwork, and photographs.

More sustainable maintenance of our church facility has been the focus of many discussions throughout the year. In August, the congregation gave overwhelming approval to a capital campaign to improve facilities sustainability, starting in 2024. A primary component of the campaign is to improve energy efficiency of the church using solar panels, along with more efficient and better lighting, and more efficient heating and cooling. As with our homes, our church home needs regular maintenance. More pressing needs include repaving the south parking lot and upgrading to more energy efficient kitchen appliances. We are grateful for

your generosity as we implement projects that will improve our facility over the coming years. More efficient energy use will result in reduced carbon output and reduced effects on climate change. These projects also provide financial savings over the long-term, resulting in more funds to support our goal of helping those in need.

I want to thank members of the Church Council for their faithful work all year long. Your input and discussions helped us all to better understand issues and different points of view. I especially thank members of the Executive Committee, Pastors Pam and Jonathan, Jane, Trish, and Dan, for their leadership. Pastors Pam and Jonathan were patient, helpful, and wise in helping us understand and move forward with issues. It was a pleasure to see how well our pastors work together and support each other.

The church could not function without our wonderful staff, and I thank them for always being pleasant and helpful.

As we end this year, I am optimistic and hopeful about the future of St. John's. We continue to have new members join our church, as we mourn members who have passed away this year. We are ending the year in good financial shape, with income meeting expenses. There is optimism as people gather and we each work to determine how we can best serve each other and members of the larger community. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as congregational president and I look forward to a bright future for our church.

Peace be with you,
Kathy Shea, 2023 President of the Congregation

Report of Pastor Pam Fickenscher, *Senior Pastor*

2023 has been quite a year, but before I reflect on this one year, I am mindful that this year marks my tenth annual meeting at St. John's!

In January 2014, I was brand-new to this congregation, still learning the culture and traditions of this place, adapting to my role as a lead pastor in a large congregation in a small city. Ten years on, I could never have predicted what these years – especially the last four years – have been like. But I could not be more grateful to be serving a community that shows tremendous care both inside and well beyond our walls.

I'm grateful especially for the way this place shares leadership. Whether you are staff, a board member, or someone who is simply doing your part without an official role this year, you have all contributed to the witness to Jesus' love and grace. We end this year in a healthy financial place thanks to your stewardship of treasure; we begin 2024 with dozens of new people stepping into new roles on boards, Church Council, Stephen Ministry, confirmation ministry, WELCA, and much more. The pace of change is accelerating in our world, and sometimes it feels that we are about to fall off the treadmill, but I've learned over the past decade that God faithfully provides what we need.

For the first time since March of 2020, 2023 has felt like a year when we can truly look ahead. As we do so, we are especially conscious of the climate crisis. Heeding God's call to ease the burden on the planet (as well as our future budgets), we are excited to embark on projects that will reduce our carbon footprint, starting with solar panels and other energy sustainability measures in 2024! There is much still to be done, but I'm confident we can make changes that take advantage of the incentives available to us now in order to save both carbon and dollars in the future.

Pastorally, this has felt like an especially challenging year – many funerals, many transitions, stresses in families, and many continued shifts in our culture in ways that make steady discipleship and humble leadership challenging. I am grateful that you are a congregation that takes the truth of God's grace seriously, and makes every effort to share that grace with the world, as well as offer that grace to each other.

We were grateful to have only one staff departure in 2023: **Emmanuel Kaghondi** took a position teaching at the University of South Florida this summer, after four eventful years as our Director of Ministry with Youth & Families. We rejoice with

him that he gets to explore his teaching vocation in that place.

We were so grateful that **Kristin Partlo** was here at the right time and place to step into youth ministry leadership this fall. St. John's benefits from her thoughtfulness, compassion, and broad relationships in the congregation, and she can add this practical experience in ministry to her coursework at Luther Seminary as she moves down the path to ordained ministry.

I am grateful for nearly nine years working with **Pastor Jonathan Davis**. A burden shared is a burden eased, and there isn't a week that goes by when a conversation, a class shared, or a sermon heard doesn't strengthen me for the work to be done.

I'm so grateful that most of my ten years at St. John's have been shared with **Nathan Proctor**. He pays attention to every detail of our worship life – from how the congregational parts read in the bulletin to a choir anthem chosen specifically to match the lesson for the day. These details aren't always obvious to every person in the pews – but that care is evident to me week in, and week out. Thank you to St. John's leadership for supporting the first installment of Nathan's sabbatical this summer. That break from the weekly grind is an important investment in his continued creativity.

Thank you to **Julie Brehmer**, our most veteran staff member, who led her 20th children's program this December! Children's ministry brings new challenges every year, and Julie's gentle spirit has been welcoming little ones faithfully through all the changes of these past two decades.

Thank you to **Leah Garlie**, who seems to take every new ball we throw at her – whether technological, financial, or in communications – and juggle it with ease. Combining the roles of Office Manager and Finance Manager, she saves us many dollars and lots of headaches.

Thank you to **Angie Gehring**, who has continued to step deeper into shared ministry coordination at $\frac{3}{4}$ time. Her cheerful presence brightens the kitchen, the Commons, and the Sacristy; she has welcomed families grieving loved ones, organized

hospitality on Sundays, and welcomed dozens of new members in Accompany.

We were grateful to welcome **Steve Harner** onto our staff this year as a $\frac{3}{4}$ time Facility Manager. Steve earned his boiler's license, learned endless details about our facility's quirks, and has been a great resource as we prepare to make our facility more sustainable for the future.

Thank you to **Sally Lindell**, Parish Nurse, who has served as a helpful resource and emissary to our members navigating health challenges and end-of-life care. Sally knows the challenges of every stage of life and can respond compassionately to a host of situations.

Thank you to **Arielle Loy**, leading our littlest and loudest Lutherans on Sunday mornings and with our Alleluia Choir. This year's Christmas program was a wonderful culmination of her time building relationships and making music with our smallest children.

Green Bouzard has steadily built relationships as well as musical skill with our 3-5 grade choir. And we are grateful for the bonus of Michael Morris' gifts with this age group, offering his own songwriting and the occasional substitute duties in rehearsal.

The Rejoice Ringers are now officially under the leadership of **David Sims** – but we get to benefit from his many gifts whether or not the bells are playing on a given Sunday. We were especially blessed this year with his new composition for choir and trumpet, commissioned in memory of Helene Anglin.

A special thank you to our **Personnel Committee** this year: Ruth Aaseng, Paul Beck, Greg Colby, Dan Franklin, Elaine Nesbit, Rob Quanbeck, and Solveig Zempel. Good policy helps us be prepared and assures that we are stewardship the gifts of our employees well.

Thank you to the team that shepherded our **facility planning** this summer as we pondered adding solar panels and prepared for the congregational meeting in August: Gary Engstrom, Jeff McLaughlin, Dave Neuger, Dean Schoeb, Kathy Shea, and Steve Taggart. In this group a special

thank you belongs to Jeff McLaughlin, who as chair of the Foundation Board, served a vital role and catalyst in helping us think strategically for the future. We would not be where we are today without Jeff's research, questions, and advocacy over the past many months.

Thank you to those **Council members** who have served this year and are completing their service as board chairs: Gerry Ugland (Benevolence), Merliyn Calcutt (Adult Ministry), Candace Godfrey (Children's Ministry), Dennis Rinehart (Faith & Health), Steve Taggart (Property & Grounds), Kristy Harms (Stewardship), and Dave Neuger (Worship & Arts). You have been a wonderful, thoughtful Council to share leadership with this year.

The last three years have been especially unusual years financially, and having a **Treasurer** with **Jane Rizzo's** skill and experience has been invaluable in setting us up for a more stable future.

The responsibilities of leading have been especially weighty in these volatile times, and Jane has brought good cheer and calm forward-thinking to every meeting.

Finally, thank you to **Trish Goodrich**, completing service as our **Secretary**, and **Kathy Shea**, finishing out her term as **President**. In the midst of many other responsibilities and calls in life, you have been the wise and trustworthy leaders this congregation needed for this year.

Ten years ago I don't think I could have guessed what this decade has brought, but looking back, I am grateful, and looking forward, I am hopeful. The future is never known to us, but we know that the One who was, who is, and who is to come will be with us. Thank you for being witness to God's faithful promise to be WITH us always.

Thanks be to God,
Pastor Pam Fickenscher

Report of Pastor Jonathan Davis, Associate Pastor

"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Isaiah 43:19

While much of this past year feels like a return to the familiar and how life was "pre-COVID" (as if we can ever really return to those days), this year also stands out as yet another year of change. Or, perhaps put more faithfully, a year of God doing a new thing – many new things.

The biggest new thing of this past year was saying goodbye to **Emmanuel Kaghondi**, who served as our Director of Ministry with Youth & Families since July 2019. This summer, Emmanuel fulfilled a long-awaited dream of accepting a teaching position at the University of South Florida in Tampa, and we said farewell to him in August. Emmanuel joined us nearly 4 years ago, stepping into a ministry that we hoped would center around the values of *belonging* and *integration*. Emmanuel held those values closely and was quite a gift to us at just the right time. We will miss him.

When this unexpected changing in staffing arose, and with little time before the start of fall

programming, we were not quite sure what to do or where to turn. Taking a chance on what felt like a long-shot of an idea, we approached **Kristin Partlo** – who has been a longtime and very active member at St. John's, as well as student at Luther Seminary. We were overjoyed when Kristin said yes to stepping into this new role of Director of Ministry with Youth & Families, while she continues in seminary. Kristin joined us in September and has been such a wonderful and welcomed addition to our staff, bringing a fresh energy and bright joy to our ministry at St. John's.

Prior to this new change, Kristin was the point person on a new project this past year called PEEL. PEEL is a weekend experience that involved learning about poetry and photography, and getting to know someone well enough to take their portrait and write a poem about them. We hosted 5 of these experiences, with more than 40 people connected to St. John's participating. This was a new (and sometimes uncomfortable!) time of encountering ourselves and each other in a deeper way than we might typically do – which has led to new friendships and connections at St.

John's, along with a beautiful art display of portraits and poems.

Among other new things, we continued to grow our connections and ministry with multiple churches this year. This spring, we invited youth and parents from First United Church of Christ to join us on interfaith outings for Confirmation-aged and high school youth. Together, we attended a Wednesday night worship service at Shir Tikvah Synagogue and a "Taking Heart Ramadan Iftar Dinner" at South Metro Islamic Center. Interestingly, it was these two interfaith outings that led to two hesitant youth from First UCC choosing to confirm their faith this spring.

St. John's also partnered with First UCC and St. Peter's Lutheran Church for one big youth mission trip to Nashville through the organization City Service Mission (CSM). In June, 29 middle and high school youth and 8 adults drove to Nashville to serve at ministry sites throughout the week. We met incredible people along the way and deepened our connections with each other. Many thanks to **Mia Becker, Jaida Gehring, and Seth Hanson** (all former youth at St. John's) for coming along as chaperones this year.

Here are some other brief highlights of new and returning things from this past year:

- In the spring of 2023, we hosted two St. John's Forums on youth mental health, led by **Andy Dimick**.
- The St. John's Seraphs Softball team had a great second season of gameplay and community building! Many thanks to **Steve Taggart** for being our manager.
- St. John's Forum had a strong and meaningful start to the year, thanks to **Maggie Odell** and the Adult Ministry Board. They planned and hosted a timely 3 forum series on interfaith dialogue, with a focus on antisemitism in the bible and in our Lutheran heritage.
- St. John's Stephen Ministry is growing – **Sally Lindell** and **Ruth Anglin** have been trained as Stephen Leaders and have joined our leadership team, along with **Jennifer Edwins, Jo Franklin, and Barbara Wilson**. This fall, 10 people began training in Stephen Ministry, which will be completed in spring 2024.

Change is always hard. When God does a new thing, God does not promise that it will be easy. But God promises to be faithful and with us through the change. I have felt God's abiding presence through my colleagues on staff at St. John's.

Through **Pam Fickenschner**, who brings laughter, compassion, and insight into my life at just the right time.

Through **Nathan Proctor**, who shapes and steadies my faith through his own thoughtful and deep faith on display in each worship service.

Through **Sally Lindell**, who reassures and encourages me and our staff in our ministry together.

Through **Julie Brehmer**, who regularly speaks LOVE to the child inside each of us, returning us to a tender and clear faith that buoys us up.

Through **Angie Gehring**, who graciously offers support, patience, and an encouraging word during busy and challenging moments – and who always has a good book to recommend.

Through **Leah Garlie**, who tolerates my many interruptions during the day with grace and understanding, and who offers a listening ear when needed.

Through **Steve Harner**, who brings a faithful, non-anxious, and reliable presence to our staff. He has been a wonderful addition to our staff this year!

One more change this year has been the death of many of our beloved people. This occurs every year, of course, but this year in particular has brought a lot of loss in a short amount of time. In the midst of that grief that piles up, I am overwhelmed and grateful for each one of you, people of St. John's. You show up and you walk alongside each other in grief and love, even when it all feels like too much and too hard. You bring bars for luncheons, you volunteer to usher or serve coffee or set up tables. You write cards and make phone calls. You offer hugs and check in on each other. It may feel like an old thing, but I believe that in each one of these acts of faith, God

is doing a new thing through each one of you. Through you, God is comforting those who are grieving, finding those who are lost, and loving those who thought themselves unlovable.

Thank you for being you, St. John's. I love you and I love being one of your pastors.

Pastor Jonathan Davis

Report of Angie Gehring, *Shared Ministry Coordinator*

A big heart-felt THANK YOU to ALL of St. John's members and friends who have generously volunteered their time and gifts during 2023!

Wednesday Night Meals: THANK YOU to our delightful, energetic team of people who helped make the Wednesday meals run so smoothly this past year: Martha Erickson, our meal planner extraordinaire and excellent cook; Gerri Licke, also a fantastic cook and server; Doug Johnson, Karen Schuette, and Marilyn Calcutt, who regularly help prepare the dining hall and serving tables, as well as cheerfully assist with the serving line; our expert dishwasher operators Bob & Pat Tabery; Craig Schultz and Chris Erickson, who cleaned our big pots and pans so meticulously; Fran Wood who tirelessly cleans our dining tables and floors after nearly every single meal; monthly dedicated clean-up helpers Don Sahling and Jill Enestvedt, and others who've jumped in to help when they can! Many thanks to Peggy Dell and Kristy Harms who have volunteered to prepare meals for special events such as Lenten Soup Suppers, Night to Unite, and the Advent Fair. You are ALL such fun to work with, and these meals would not be a success without your awesome gifts of time, skill, and good humor! It has been wonderful to watch the number of meals we serve grow from 100 to nearly 150!

Funeral Reception Hospitality: THANK YOU to our dedicated funeral reception helpers who gave their time to assist with as many as 18 receptions this past year! Special thanks to Judy Karlson for setting the dining hall tables for nearly all of the receptions! Also a special thanks to Jim Cederberg and Ted Peterson for volunteering to run the dishwasher for the lion share of receptions. Many thanks to our very frequent helpers Marilyn Calcutt, Fran Wood, Karen Schuette, Leif Knecht, Judy Smith, Erik Holleque, Karl Hella, and newcomer Maureen Dewar for all

of your help with serving food and reception clean-up! I would also name every occasional volunteer here if I had the space! Please know that everyone who has lent a helping hand is so appreciated! I encourage more people to join our funeral hospitality email list!

Treats: THANK YOU to all those who've donated treats for Sunday mornings, Wednesday Night Meals, funeral receptions, and other events in need of refreshments! I want to give a special shout-out to those who have donated especially often, including Judy Cederberg, Cora Scholz, Deb Christensen, Ann Albert, Gerri Licke, Patrice Nordstrand, Doug Johnson, Nancy Kluver, Carol Benson, Debby Becker, Marie Benson, Tricia Peterson, Suzanne Pfau, Cindy Clauson, Mary Hoff, Sue Brockman, Bev Johnson, Debby Nitz, Jo Franklin, Pat Tabery, Lois Bakko, Jennifer Edwins, and Arielle Loy. Thank you to ALL who have donated when able! So many of you eagerly sign up as soon as the need is sent out, and I am truly grateful beyond words!

Table Centerpieces in St. John's Hall: THANK YOU to Judy Karlson for her time spent creating the gorgeous seasonal centerpieces that beautify our hall year-round! Judy is always cheerfully willing to set the tables and turn on the candles for so many events, and I am so grateful for her eagerness to assist!

Sunday Hospitality Volunteers (Coffee Hour Helpers, Communion Prep and Clean-up Helpers, and Greeters): THANK YOU to all of those who've been willing to assist with our Sunday coffee hour service and clean-up, and especially to those who jumped in at a moment's notice so regularly, happily helping out when no one else signed up, including Ted Peterson, Doug Johnson, and Karen & Dale Schuette. Also thanks to others who stepped up

to serve coffee when I was out of town (besides the aforementioned) including Pat & Herb Fick, Bob & Pat Tabery, Bill & Jill Malecha, and Pam Groves-Gaggioli. **THANK YOU** to those who are new and decided to give it a try! I hope you enjoyed it, and will volunteer again soon! **THANK YOU** to Judy Smith, Georgene Johnson, Craig Schultz, and Jill Enestvedt who volunteered to prep and clean-up communion so regularly; also thanks to David & Debby Nitz and Monica Holicky who were so willing to help when asked. I'm hoping to introduce more people to this special task in 2024. **THANK YOU** to those who have so eagerly and so often signed up to greet on Sunday mornings as soon as they spot the need in the E-Voice, including Cindy Clauson, Mary Cisar & David Sudermann, Marie Benson, Pam Groves-Gaggioli, and Kibby Errington. Greeters make such a difference by creating an inviting environment that people look forward to returning to!

Ushers: THANK YOU to ALL 35 of our wonderful ushers serving on 8 different teams, who create a welcoming and orderly flow to our Sunday worship services and evening vespers! I'd list you each by name if I had the room! Thank you for your willingness to commit to serving throughout the entire year on a monthly basis, in addition to a few special services. Your work is so important and I'm very grateful to have all of you here! Thank you to those who stepped up to serve when there was a shortage!

Kitchen Maintenance: THANK YOU to Ted Peterson for making sure our church kitchen is always well maintained, in good working order, and stocked with a hearty supply of coffee and clean air pots! Ted, for yet another year you consistently go above and beyond!

Kitchen Laundry: THANK YOU to Doneen Viall, Ted & Tricia Peterson, Marilyn Calcutt, and others who have taken turns graciously laundering the table cloths, towels, and rags so that we always have a clean supply, ready to use!

Accompany: THANK YOU to Sandra Nyvall, Jane Rinehart, and Jo Franklin for your assistance with our running our Accompany program! I feel so blessed to be working with the three of you in our mission to help build connection among our

newest members during our Sunday sessions and events!

Community Christmas Dinner Planning Team: THANK YOU to Kirsten Gunn, Jane Rinehart, and Jean Wakely for all of the time you gave to our planning meetings, to distributing so many posters all over town, spreading the word of our event to various media sources, and for assisting with the sign-up table. Thank you, Jane, for shopping for the turkeys, and thank you, Kirsten, for your generous donation of the delicious meatballs and gravy! **THANK YOU** to Mary Hoff for applying for a \$250 Thrivent gift card that covered the entire cost of the turkey we served! We are so grateful!

Community Christmas Dinner Volunteers and Food Donators: THANK YOU to each of the 64 hands-on volunteers energetically working in the kitchen, the dining hall, and in the Commons on Christmas Day! It was a delight to see you all serving together! **THANK YOU** Bill & Char Carlson, along with Jane & Dennis Rinehart and Pat & Herb Fick for your hard work in the kitchen on Christmas morning roasting and carving all of those turkeys to perfection! Thank you Jane and Kirsten for your energetic assistance with directing our volunteers throughout the dinner as needed! **THANK YOU** to Sandra & Bob Nyvall and Judy Karlson who decorated the dining room for the dinner so festively! **THANK YOU** to the over 60 people/families who donated delicious hash brown bakes, pies, cookies/bars, salads, cranberry sauce, corn, carrots, lefse, juice, and pop to complete the meal! **THANK YOU** to Marcia Yernberg and Julie Zdenek who performed beautiful piano music during the dinner for all to enjoy. This dinner could not have happened without all of you, and its success demonstrates the wonderful things we can accomplish and the love we spread as the body of Christ serving together!

May you all be blessed with peace and joy in 2024. I feel extremely thankful to know and serve with all of you!

Respectfully submitted,
Angie Gehring

Report of the Adult Ministry & Education Board

Board Members: Marilyn Calcutt (chair), Carrie Dauner, Andy Nelson, Maggie Odell, Rob Quanbeck, Robert Rendahl, and Pastor Jonathan Davis (staff).

The Adult Ministry & Education Board is tasked with fostering, supporting, and overseeing the ministries of small groups at St. John's including St. John's Forum, the church library, and various other events and groups. Most of these are somewhat or fully self-sustaining and require little guidance from the Board unless budgetary or other issues arise.

We welcomed new board member Maggie Odell after the 2023 Annual Meeting.

In an effort to reach out to the St. John's Congregation, the Board continued with the sending of both Easter and Christmas cards during 2023. This year's cards were designed by Julie Zdenek. At Easter cards were sent to both adults and children with 175 cards being sent to St. John's members and 70 sent to Sunday School students. Christmas cards were sent to 175 St. John's members. The Board would like to thank members of the congregation who wrote personal notes in the cards and placed them in the mail. A special thanks to Julie Zdenek for her help in the card design and layout.

Church Softball returned to St. John's in 2023 with play beginning in May. Our thanks to Steve Taggart for helping with the organizing of the team again this year and we look forward to another year of Sunday night softball in 2024.

Out'n About: Conversations with Minnesotans continued through 2023. This is a morning with two speakers, an extended coffee break, and lunch. It is Adult Ministry's hope that these sessions will continue to bring people together for an opportunity not only to learn but to have time to just come together and socialize. These sessions are held in January, April, July, and October.

The 2023 Ice Cream Social was held at Vang Church on June 21, Summer Solstice, with an approximate attendance of 65 members from St. John's and Vang Church. Together the group enjoyed hearing the history of Vang Lutheran Church as well as joining together in the singing of

a couple hymns and hearing the beautiful sound of the Vang Lutheran Church organ. Conversations were abundant as ice cream sundaes and root beer floats were served in the church basement. It was a beautiful summer evening to gather and spend together.

Board Member Maggie Odell was instrumental in organizing three Fall Adult Forums with the emphasis on exploring the Bible with Interfaith Sensitivity. In October, Dr. Deanna Thompson spoke on Martin Luther's Anti Judaism and Our Contemporary Response and Earl Schwartz spoke on "Who is like your people Israel, a singular nation? Jason Ripley closed the Fall Forums in November speaking on Anti-Judaism and the New Testament. All forums were well attended and there are plans to continue conversations in the Spring.

The Lenten Book Read this year was the book *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. Three different discussion times were held; Sunday morning, Wednesday afternoon, and Zoom. This book provided the opportunity to much discussion. Adult Ministry offered an Advent Book Read: *Light of the World: A Beginners Guide to Advent* by Amy Jill Levine. Twenty people bought books and joined in lively discussions between services in December.

The library at St. John's continues to grow with the donations of books as well as purchases made in response to requests received. Use of the library has increased over the year with more books being checked out.

As I leave my position as Chair, I would like to thank the current board for their hard work in bringing forth opportunities for St. John's members to learn together and spend time together. My thanks also to the members of St. John's for the great suggestions that have been put forth for discussions and for your attendance at the various opportunities. I know that the Adult Ministry & Education Board will continue to work on programming you will find interesting and informative.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Calcutt, Chair

Report of the Benevolence & Social Concerns Board

Board Members: Jerry Ugland (chair), Jo Franklin, Andrea Hoff, Kari Johnsrud, Cynthia Neubecker, Peter Skoglund, and Pastor Pam Fickenscher (staff).

The Benevolence & Social Concerns Board is responsible for making recommendations regarding the congregation's response to the needs and injustices of society, and for recommending distribution and allocation of the congregation's resources into the life of the community and the world through church-related and community organizations.

Global Mission Partnerships

In 2022, we began a new covenant commitment with Kaitlynne Larson, currently serving with IELCO, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Columbia. Kaitlynne works with congregations providing support in peace-building, community organizing, and leadership development. In 2023 funding was provided for 2022 and 2023, since funding was inadequate in 2022 to fulfill our obligation to this mission. We also contributed to general missions.

Other Benevolence

Disaster Relief

This year disaster relief funding came from contributions by parishioners for designated purposes. They covered:

- ELCA World Hunger
- Lutheran Mideast Development
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
- Lutheran Disaster Response
- Lutheran World Relief
- Bright Stars of Bethlehem

ELCA

The recipient of the largest congregational benevolence was the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. We also sent funds to the Cannon River Conference, supported Southeastern Minnesota Synod small congregations, and contributed to Lutheran Social Services.

Local and Regional Organizations

St. John's made donations to the following:

- Community Action Center

- Greenvale Elementary School for Healthful Treats for Low Income Students
- Habitat for Humanity
- Laura Baker Services Association
- Northfield Retirement Center
- Northfield Union of Youth
- Three Links Care Center

Sustainability Campaign

As part of the Sustainability Campaign that the Council approved, 10% of what is contributed will be used for benevolence. The Benevolence & Social Concerns Board requested proposals of twelve charities for sustainability grants. After interviews the Board approved proposals of five local agencies. Additional agencies can be considered when funding is available.

Discretionary Funds

Funds directed by individual donors:

- CAC Food Shelf
- ELCA World Hunger
- Habitat for Humanity
- Lutheran World Relief
- Mission Support
- College Scholarships

Special Offerings

Four times each year, our congregation is asked to make donations for special benevolence giving. Every year, generous responses have enabled us to offer financial support to Global Missions, Lutheran World Relief, Northfield Community Action Center Food Shelf, and ELCA World Hunger.

Meals on Wheels

St. John's members again stepped up to deliver meals during four weeks of service from mid-September to mid-October. Thank you to all of our faithful volunteers, and to Cynthia Neubecker and Peter Skoglund, who organized the drive with the help of Angie Gehring. Even when benevolence funds were short for other purposes, congregation members readily volunteered for Meals on Wheels.

Respectfully submitted,
Jerry Ugland, Chair

Report of the Business Management Board

Board Members: Jane Rizzo (chair), Gary Engstrom, Michelle Kramer-Prevost, Jim Loe, Greg Norman, Pippa Younger-Simpson, and Leah Garlie (staff).

Please see the Report of the Treasurer on page 24.

Report of the Children's Ministry & Education Board

Board Members: Candace Godfrey (chair), Stephanie Bennett, Nick Erickson, Adam Loy, Katherine Norrie, Alli Skoglund, and Julie Brehmer (staff).

As I reflect on the pass year, I am deeply grateful for the people who volunteer their time and energy at St. John's. I am grateful for your support of children's ministry and the opportunity to serve alongside you for our youngest members.

Sunday Mornings

We are using two Sunday school lectionary-based curriculums this year, integrating worship and Sunday school. We hope it will encourage family conversations when lessons focus on the lectionary scripture passages and Bible stories.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers teaching and leading our Sunday morning program this year: Stephanie Bennett, Sue Brockman, Brian Evenson, Candace Godfrey, Arielle Loy, Edy McLaughlin, Jenny Nystrom, Jennifer Paulson, Melissa Pellinen, and Suzy Taggart.

St. John's Nursery is open during Sunday morning worship services for children ages 12 weeks to 5 years. Thank you to Giada Parigi, a St. Olaf student who returned this fall and continues to give loving care to our littlest ones.

Toddler Time, a once a month Sunday morning educational offering, invites children who are 2-years-old to join our PreK-K Sunday school class. Thank you, Jenny Nystrom, for leading this program. Children's worship bulletins and activity bags are available every Sunday to engage young children during worship.

St. John's Sunday School continues to support the "Blessing Box" with monetary gifts and food

donations. Just for fun, we started a monthly donation theme to encourage kids to donate items to the box! The Blessing Box, located on the north side of St. John's, provides basic essentials of hygiene and food items to anyone in need. Thank you to the congregation for your help in sustaining this ministry.

Sunday school classes and Children's Choirs participated in our Sunday school Christmas program, "Christmas Gift" in December. The children did such a great job! Thank you to the teachers and assistants, to Arielle Loy for leading music and Green Bouzard for directing the Jubilate Choir, Marcia Yernberg and Emmett Norrie for accompanying music, Kristy Harms for helping with the speaking roles, and to Brian Evenson and Judy Swanson for the nativity design. And, thank you to the children who shared their musical gifts during the offering, Aaliyah Emanuelson, Anders Loy, Aksel Loy, Isaac Loy, Iris Pellinen, and Madeline Rudser.

Wednesday Programming

ROCK, *Reaching Out to Christ's Kids*, is our Wednesday after school programs for children in grades K- 5. We are grateful for the Wednesday after school bus that transports children from Northfield's elementary schools to St. John's for Recreation and Snack, Catechism (grades 3-5), Choir (K-5), and Kid's Club (K-2). Thank you to our Wednesday volunteers, Jonah Brownlee and Eleanor Godfrey, our choir directors, Arielle Loy and Green Bouzard, plus pastors, Jonathan and Pam, and Youth Director, Kristin for leading Catechism. Thank you to our Bus Angels, Jenn Paulson, Melissa Pellinen, Terrence Hassanally, and Amy Tachney for being at the school bus stops every Wednesday to make sure everyone is on board!

During Lent, our fourth and fifth grade CAT kids pair up with an adult member from our congregation to be their Prayer Buddy. Prayer Buddies pray for their child starting on Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday. Thank you to our Prayer Buddies and families for participating. We love the relationships that it builds.

Summer

This past June, we offered summer VBS as an evening event for families. St. John's along with Bethel, Emmaus, and St. Peter churches hosted the event. Our theme was "Hero Hotline", Called Together to Serve God!

Summer Camp opportunities for children in grades 2-5 were offered at Good Earth Village in Spring Valley, MN. What a wonderful adventure for kids!

Fellowship/Events

Thank you to the Wednesday Night Meal Team for the delicious midweek meals and fellowship opportunities for all to enjoy. Special thanks to

Advent Fair volunteers, Katherine Norrie and Jill Enestvedt, to Kristy Harms and Peggy Dell for the delicious food, and many of the returning volunteers who help with the crafts and food demos.

Other events this year include Kid's Night Out, Trunk or Treat, Valentines Party, the Easter Egg Hunt, and "No School" events. Thank you to the many volunteers who help make these happen, especially the Children's Board members: Candace Godfrey (Chair), Stephanie Bennett, Adam Loy, Katherine Norrie, Lynette & Nick Erickson, Alli Skoglund.

I look forward to the year ahead as we continue to work together to nurture children's faith. And, thank you for allowing me to be a part of your children's lives – the very best part of my job! Children are a gift and I am blessed to share God's love with them.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Brehmer, Director of Children's Ministry

Report of the Evangelism & Communications Board

Board Members: Eric Sponheim (chair), Jill Enestvedt, Sandi Gerdes, Evelyn Hoover, Jon Kavanaugh, Chris Tacheny, and Leah Garlie (staff).

The Evangelism & Communication Board welcomes the opportunity to help St. John's share the Good News both within and outside of the congregation in a media environment undergoing profound change in a pandemic-altered world.

In 2023 ECB focused work in a few main areas:

1. Live-Streaming of Worship

ECB works closely with the all-volunteer Audio-Visual Team to provide support for live-streaming and recording of St. John's services and other events such as funerals and adult forums. We are grateful to the AV Team volunteers who provide video and audio services for worship and programs: Dave Zdenek, Jenny Carlson, Rob Nutt, Jon Kavanaugh, and Mark Gleason. We made some efforts to recruit more volunteers and are pleased that Micah Hassanally is being trained in. ECB will

continue to be in touch with the AV team about capacity and take action as needed.

2. Other Live-Streaming Events

In the last couple of years, ECB has assisted in the development of church policy regarding live-streaming of non-worship events and services, such as funerals and adult forums. The policy states that the church may provide streaming of member-related services, including weddings and funerals. Funerals can be streamed at the request of the family and when a volunteer is available. St. John's can also provide streaming and recording of adult forums and other program events, depending on AV volunteer availability. To more fully enable St. John's to share its deep resources in music, arts, and education, we will need to increase of pull of AV volunteers, and ECB will have that as an agenda item for 2024.

3. Audio and Video Upgrades

- Equipment. ECB, using its 2023 equipment budget, has assisted in purchasing items that

include the new large-screen TV monitor. This monitor will be used for adult forums and other meetings. It was purchased for \$1,600 after receiving input from former ECB member Daniel Edwins. It replaces the damaged one that is stored in St. John's Hall.

- AV team collaboration: ECB also purchased several smaller necessary equipment items needed to maintain the streaming ministry. Supporting that ministry is an important part of ECB's role.

4. Oral Histories

Former ECB chair Mark Gleason continues to add audio files to the church website of oral history interviews conducted in connection with St. John's 150th anniversary celebration. These interviews become especially poignant as the participants pass away.

5. Website Review

ECB devoted a substantial part of their work in 2023 to reviewing the church website and arranging for new photography. At ECB's invitation, St. John's member Stephanie Bennett, a professional photographer, took a gallery of

pictures on a Sunday morning in October. An ECB subcommittee is currently developing a plan for using this treasure-trove of pictures to make updates to the website.

6. Wednesday Night Meals

Sandi Gerdes helped increase awareness in the community of the availability of Wednesday Night Meals at St. John's. She connected with Don Sahling about this, with encouraging results. The pastors have reported to council that Wednesday nights at St. John's are thriving, bringing in many people who aren't members of St. John's.

7. The Church and Social Change

Looking ahead to 2024, ECB will seek to understand and respond to the radically different communication landscape created by the pandemic and large forces of social change. This will include diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and awareness of the ecumenical dynamics facing churches in an increasingly secular society.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Sponheim, Chair

Report of the Faith & Health Board

Board Members: Dennis Rinehart (chair), Ellen Ellickson, Pam Groves-Gaggioli, Deb Loe, Debby Nitz, Sue Sharrow, and Sally Lindell (staff).

At the beginning of the year, the boards were asked to discuss issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Members of the Faith & Health Board believed that St. John's should have a land acknowledgement statement. We were then asked to create one. This became a significant focus of our time and energy for the year. We reviewed many different statements used by others. We drafted many possible statements ourselves. Our consensus statement is brief, because we hope that our members will read it repeatedly and that it will encourage ongoing learning and reflection. The council accepted our statement, which is:

St. John's Lutheran Church stands on the ancestral homelands of the Wahpekute band

of the Dakota nation. We respect and are grateful for the generations of native people who have cared for this land.

Recently, at Pastor Pam's suggestion, we obtained land acknowledgement signs from the First United Church of Christ, which have been placed at the doors near our parking lot.

Our other main interest related to diversity was in reaching out to our Hispanic neighbors. We helped to publicize the Hispanic Heritage Celebration in September and several of our members attended.

We have again been blessed by the support of Sally Lindell, our Parish Nurse. Besides meeting individually with our congregational members, she also organizes short term volunteers for meals and rides to medical appointments. She monitors our first aid equipment and coordinates blood drives.

Members of the Faith & Health Board have also helped to staff the blood drives. This year St. John's hosted 4 drives, with a total of 162 units of blood donated.

The Stephen Ministry team continues to care for those who are hurting. There are 15 active Stephen Ministers, and each of them are meeting with at least one person. Ten additional ministers are being trained this year. Ruth Smestad Anglin and Sally Lindell have recently been trained as Stephen Leaders. The leadership team also includes Jennifer Edwins, Jo Frankllin, Barbara Wilson, and Pastor Jonathan. If you or someone you know is having a difficult time, a relationship with a Stephen Minister could be helpful. Please feel welcome to speak with Pastor Jonathan.

We are grateful for the leadership of Kristin Partlo in coordinating our monthly prayers for healing.

Sue Sharrow continues to lead the Prayer Shawl Ministry. The Trinity Sunday display of shawls was beautiful, and we are thankful that so many of our members have been comforted by these warm, soft expressions of prayer.

Since the national suicide and crisis lifeline, **988**, was established, Minnesota has seen a surge in mental crisis calls. We have worked to raise awareness of this number at St. John's.

In April, we sponsored a forum on Health Care Directives led by Kerry Hjelmgren, the Executive Director of FiftyNorth, Northfield's senior center. She has worked on end-of-life issues for many years in southern Minnesota. This session was quite interesting and well attended.

In November, Pastor Pam led an All Saints gathering for those who had lost loved ones. We provided hospitality and participated as well.

Many thanks to the St. John's Foundation for funding a second automated external defibrillator (AED). An AED is a portable electronic device used to help those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. The current AED is located outside of Pastor Jonathan's office. The second AED has been ordered. We plan to place it at the base of the stairs between the Fellowship Hall and the Sunday school classes so it is easy to see and easily available to both. It will also be available for offsite use, for example on youth trips or at softball games.

I am grateful for the hard work, interesting discussions, and good cheer of the Faith & Health Board. Besides myself, Debby Nitz and Sue Sharrow will be leaving the board. I thank them for their service.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Rinehart, Chair

Report of the Property & Grounds Board

Board Members: Steve Taggart (chair), Sue Brockman, Dan Hanson, Rusty Kluver, Jo Ann Polley, Mark Rydberg, Terry Rydberg, and Steve Harner (staff).

2023 was the year of the Facility Manager! After a long search we welcomed our new Facility Manager Steve Harner to the team. Steve has proven to be a very valuable asset to St. John's. He comes to us with extensive experience in carpentry, home maintenance, and general mechanical wizardry. Steve jumped in right away and fixed the snowblower and snow broom the church owned and helped clear sidewalks last winter when plowing costs were on the rise. Steve has also played a vital role in the other projects

completed at St. John's this year. We appreciate his hard work and willingness to dive in to solve a problem. Steve is one of the most kind and genuine people I know and we are lucky to have him looking after St. John's. Thank you Steve Harner!

We also said goodbye to Tim Byers at the end of 2022. Tim retired after many great years of service to St. John's. Thank you Tim for all that you've done to keep this building in beautiful shape. Tim has continued to be a resource for Steve Harner throughout the transition. Tim's knowledge of the building is priceless. Thank you Tim!

List of Projects Completed and Major Decisions made in 2023:

- Found a new home for the old white dishes that were being stored in the Fellowship Hall kitchen. The dishes were donated to St. Vincent de Paul in Faribault who will make sets and get them to people who need quality dishware.
- Our 100 gallon water heater stopped working. We replaced it with two tankless units that supply hot water on demand. This has proven to be a good decision as we have saved about \$500 a month on our gas bill.
- Repaired the church owned snowblower and motorized snowbroom.
- Revitalized the Adopt-A-Garden program. Jo Ann Polley took control of the program and made a point to reach out to each volunteer throughout the summer. She regularly gave reports on how each garden was doing and had a pulse on the help of our beautiful grounds. Thank you Jo Ann for your work and leadership with this program.
- Sponsored both the Spring Clean-Up Day and Fall Clean-Up Day. Both days were a huge success. We want to thank all the volunteers who came out to help keep the grounds looking amazing from year to year. With almost a city block of property, there is a lot of work to do raking leaves, picking up sticks, mulching, pruning bushes, and all the other miscellaneous tasks that were completed during those two days. We laid 120 yards of mulch this past spring. There's nothing better than a freshly mulched garden bed! It's a great time to spend outdoors with members of the congregation. I've personally met so many new people participating on those days and am truly thankful for those experiences. Looking forward to many more to come.
- Filed an insurance claim for some hail damage on the roof of St. John's Hall. Thank you to Blesener's Quality Exteriors for their excellent work and professionalism in replacing the shingles on St. John's Hall.
- Temporary repaired a sinkhole that was developing in the North Parking Lot by the drain.
- Purchased a battery powered leaf blower with mulching kit and a hedge trimmer.
- Purchased new light fixtures for the Narthex area. We are currently waiting on delivery of the fixtures so that we can schedule an install date. We have fielded many complaints about the lack of light in that area and hope that the

new LED fixtures will solve that problem. The fixtures were selected to stay with the aesthetic of the church. Thank you to Andrew Edwins for his professional help in selecting the fixtures.

- Helped lay the groundwork for the new capital campaign. Thank you to the members of the Sustainability Committee for their work researching how to improve our mechanical systems to become more sustainable for years to come. We have worked with and continue to work with organizations that are helping us make informed decisions about the future of our building.
- Completed wall repair and painting of St. John's Hall after the installation of the acoustical tiles. Steve Harner patched and painted the walls that were damaged while taking down the old acoustical tiles.
- All the light bulbs were changed to the same LED in the fixtures that are located in the beams in St. John's Hall.

St. John's is a historic building that is near and dear to the hearts of our congregation as well as the many outside groups that use the church on a weekly basis. It takes all of us to keep in the beautiful shape that it's in today. Thank you to the congregation for doing your part in cleaning up after events and caring for the place we all come together to worship each week.

Thank you to the members of the 2023 Property & Grounds Board for their work and leadership. You all are a joy to work with. Thanks for your dedication to the physical health of St. John's. Members are Jo Ann Polley, Terry Rydberg, Mark Rydberg, Sue Brockman, Rusty Kluver, and Dan Hanson.

Thank you to all the volunteers of the Adopt-A-Garden program. The grounds have never looked so good. We couldn't do it without you!

Thank you to Leif Knecht. I can't tell you how much we appreciate your knowledge and guidance when it comes to the grounds. We are so lucky to have your expertise among us. Thank you for sharing that with us!

Thank you to Jeff McLaughlin for your leadership in the Solar Project. We appreciate your

innovative ideas and concern for the sustainability of our community.

I would also like to thank the countless people I have come in contact with over the last year and a half as the Chair of this committee. It has been an amazing experience and would encourage

everyone to get involved in a board at St. John's. St. John's is truly a great place filled with great people.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Taggart, Chair

Report of the Stewardship Board

Board Members: Kristy Harms (chair), Grant Aaseng, Alison Kavanaugh, Gordon Moore, Dean Schoeb, Dawn Tommerdahl (secretary) and Pastor Pam Fickenscher (staff).

Goals for 2023

- Encourage Engagement
- Develop Messaging for a Successful Stewardship Campaign
- Sponsor a Ministry Fair to Identify Opportunities for Member Engagement
- Acknowledge and Thank Individuals and Families for their Stewardship

Appreciation Sunday in January 2023 for calendar year 2022 coincided with the Congregational Annual meeting on January 29, 2023. Appreciation Sunday for 2023 is planned for Sunday, January 28, 2024.

A ministry fair on September 24, 2023, provided information about opportunities for members to engage in meaningful ways at St. John's.

The Artists of St. John's Exhibit initiated in 2022 was well-received. Future exhibit events may be planned by the Worship & Arts Board to feature the creative gifts of our members.

Stewardship messaging began in May 2023 to focus on ways that giving to St. John's results in an enriched experience for us all. Information about the St. Olaf music interns, hospitality ministries, and youth activities that offer opportunities for growth and development for our young people were a few of the stewardship opportunities highlighted in the E-Voice and Sunday bulletins.

Periodic updates on giving trends were provided beginning in August 2023 and continuing through calendar year 2023 to provide timely giving reports to the congregation.

Digital Stewardship materials were purchased to enhance the 2024 Stewardship Campaign. "A Future With Hope" was identified as the message that best reflected the values and intentions of our congregation.

Stewardship materials were finalized and mailed to members the first week of October 2023.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristy Harms, Chair

Report of the Worship & Arts Board

Board Members: Dave Neuger (chair), Jerry Appeldoorn, John Bade, Eric Johnsrud, Lori Skoglund, Anne Sovik, and Nathan Proctor (staff).

The Worship & Arts Board met monthly in 2023 with the exception of July. While the Board members were fully engaged and committed to

our purpose, it should be noted that St. John's Lutheran Church (and the Worship & Arts Board) are deeply blessed to have Nathan Proctor playing a vital role in our congregation and with the Worship & Arts Board. He is an amazing gift from God, so to Nathan and God we give great thanks.

Here are the most notable highlights of 2023 through the eyes of the Worship & Arts Board chair:

- Attendance is rising at St. John's, trending toward pre-pandemic levels. This includes Sunday worship services, choir participation, and Wednesday evening meals, among other activities. The choir numbers and quality have been exceptionally strong and widely appreciated.
- Nathan Proctor received a sabbatical in 2023 (actually a half-sabbatical). While well-deserved, it was noted that his shoes are difficult to fill because of the caliber of his music direction as well as his personhood. He will be completing the second half of his sabbatical in 2024.
- We discussed the value of encouraging people to return to in-person worshiping. The considerations revolved around the following: 1) the positive energy of worshiping in a common space; 2) the direct and instant feedback to pastors and lay people leading the service offers inspiration to our leaders; 3) the sense of creating a welcoming community for visitors and guests.
- Significant time was devoted to discussing how we can improve our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging initiatives through our worship space. It was noted that Nathan Proctor has done an excellent job of expanding our music repertoire to be more inclusive of cultural variations in music. Some of the bulletin covers have moved toward a more inclusive look. The Board is lobbying the congregation for additional funds to make more dramatic changes to the available art throughout the church to give a more inclusive feeling to our physical space. Some of these improvements will likely

be dependent upon the success of the upcoming congregation approved capital campaign.

- In 2023, we continued our effort to extend our commitment to musical reparations. As was explained in the 2022 annual report, this means we recognize that many of our hymns and songs sung in worship are from Black and Indigenous sources that were never acknowledged. Consequently, these sources were never paid for their contributions by the wider Church. One small way we can work to right this injustice is to make amends financially. This year the Board voted to send \$500 to TruArtSpeaks which provides opportunities for artists and art leaders through direct mentorship, workshops, residencies, public events, conference, and statewide initiatives, focusing especially on marginalized identities and artists ... particularly youth and young adults.

The number of people that participate in making our worship meaningful each Sunday and for special services is truly awe-inspiring. The good Lord is clearly at work in each of these children of God. The numbers are too many to name individually in this Board report, but include the Chancel Guild, our A/V team, our many wonderful choirs and directors, our music interns, assisting ministers, ushers, countless soloists and musicians, and the list goes on. Please know that each and every one of you make a real difference in our worship experience and your contributions are extraordinary and significant. Additionally, if you participated as a member of the congregation in 2023, we equally appreciate your presence and participation. Thanks be to God!

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Neuger, Chair

Report of the Youth Ministry & Education Board

Board Members: Tamara Jackman (chair), Beret Froehle, Betsy McLaughlin, Todd Menssen, Suzy Taggart, Emmanuel Kaghondi (staff), Kristin Partlo (staff), and Pastor Jonathan Davis (staff).

The Youth Ministry & Education Board (commonly referred to as Youth Board) works with partners

in the church to provide middle school and high school youth and their families opportunities for faith formation through fun, education, service, and creating a place of belonging. The work of the Board has primarily been to engage in thoughtful visioning, plan and execute enjoyable, faith-based events for youth and families and work to build

relationships between youth and the rest of the St. John's community.

In 2023 Youth programming included:

- January - We partnered again with Bethel and St. Peter's to provide J-Term programming for middle school youth, providing an opportunity to engage with peers from other congregations and explore different aspects of their faith life through their choice of themed workshops facilitated by congregation members. We had fun night sledding at Carleton.
- February - We welcomed new board members and discussed ideas for the upcoming year and how to best support youth and families. A group of youth went tubing at Buck Hill.
- March - The Youth Board began sending out birthday cards to St. John's youth each month with gift cards to Cake Walk for a cupcake. Thanks to Betsy McLaughlin and Beret Froehle for their leadership on this project.
- April - We celebrated the return of spring with the return of the Easter breakfast, which served 150 people. As part of interfaith education, a group of youth and families attended an Iftar meal during Ramadan at the South Metro Islamic Center, and another evening youth participated in a service at Shir Tikvah synagogue.
- May - Senior recognition Sunday with gifts of quilts made by members of the congregation and a brunch from the Quarterback Club. We celebrated the end of the program year with a party at Rockin' Jump Trampoline Park.
- June - For our summer trip, youth traveled to Nashville for a service learning experience with City Service Mission. Youth from St. John's and St. Peter's participated, with 28 youth and 8 adult chaperones – some of whom were "graduated" youth returning as adults.
- July - Hosted youth from several congregations for a game of Romans & Christians at St. John's.
- August - Youth from St. John's, Bethel, St. Peter's, and First UCC packed meals for Feed My Starving Children in Eagan. We said goodbye to the outgoing Director of Ministry with Youth & Families, Emmanuel Kaghondi, with a blessing in worship, cake reception, and a book of memories and photos of his time with St. John's.

We are grateful for the many gifts he shared with our congregation.

- September - Youth and Children's boards co-hosted the Welcome Breakfast to kick off the start of the programming year. We were blessed to share breakfast with 150 people. We welcomed the new Director of Ministry with Youth & Families Kristin Partlo.
- October - As it is each year, Confirmation was a big focus in October, with a Confirmation retreat on 10/15, breakfast with families and mentors on 10/28, and affirmation on 10/29. The 9th grade mentor program started with 9 pairs of mentors/mentees. The lunch kickoff on 11/5 was a success and there will be additional group gatherings mid-year and year end. A Northfield psychologist, Andy Dimick visited on 10/11 to discuss forgiveness and mental health. Youth volunteers helped facilitate Trunk or Treat the Sunday before Halloween sponsored by the Children's Board.
- November - The Northfield All-ELCA Gathering featured a talk from Louis Epstein on embracing faith identity and diversity and music from Louis & Dan and the Invisible Band. Twelve youth had a fun afternoon of bowling on a teacher workday.
- December - We hosted a Christmas party for youth, which was well attended and enjoyed by many youth, with hot chocolate, cookie decorating, Shrinky Dinks, and a movie. Youth participated in two service projects during Advent: nine care packages prepared and sent to college students in the TORCH project and twenty Christmas stockings were filled and delivered to residents at the Northfield Retirement Community. As we do each year, youth also went caroling in the community and delivered 100 decorated cookies to residents.

We look forward to ongoing conversations about supporting the Key and Northfield youth beyond our congregation, considering ways to support the greater St. John's goals of welcoming diversity and inclusion.

Peace,
Tamara Jackman, Chair

Report of the Treasurer, *Jane Rizzo*

The church finances continue to be guided by thoughtful management from the council, pastors and staff, as well as thoughtful and generous donations. This culture of stewardship on both sides of the financial equation is so important in supporting the ongoing mission of the church. The details of the 2023 results and the proposed 2024 budget are given below and on the following pages.

2023 Budget Results

We ended 2023 with a surplus of \$57,759 (or 5.4% of budget), due to a combination of more offering than budgeted, and fewer expenses than budgeted. We're so appreciative of the congregation's responsiveness to our bi-monthly financial updates; especially as mid-year offering was lagging. Thanks to generous donations, offering received in 2023 was \$13k higher than budget (and a 7.5% increase over 2022 offering received)!

On the expense side, we had savings in our personnel budget due to the changing Youth Ministry position. After several years of increasing utilities costs, our new hot water heater and other energy-saving initiatives have started to pay off (a decrease in utilities expense from \$65k in 2022 to \$57k in 2023); we expect our new solar panels will help to reduce this cost further. We also had savings in our maintenance expenses which helped to cover an overage in snow removal costs. Worship, Music & Arts Board and the Youth Ministry Board both made good use of designated funds to reduce their operating budget spending.

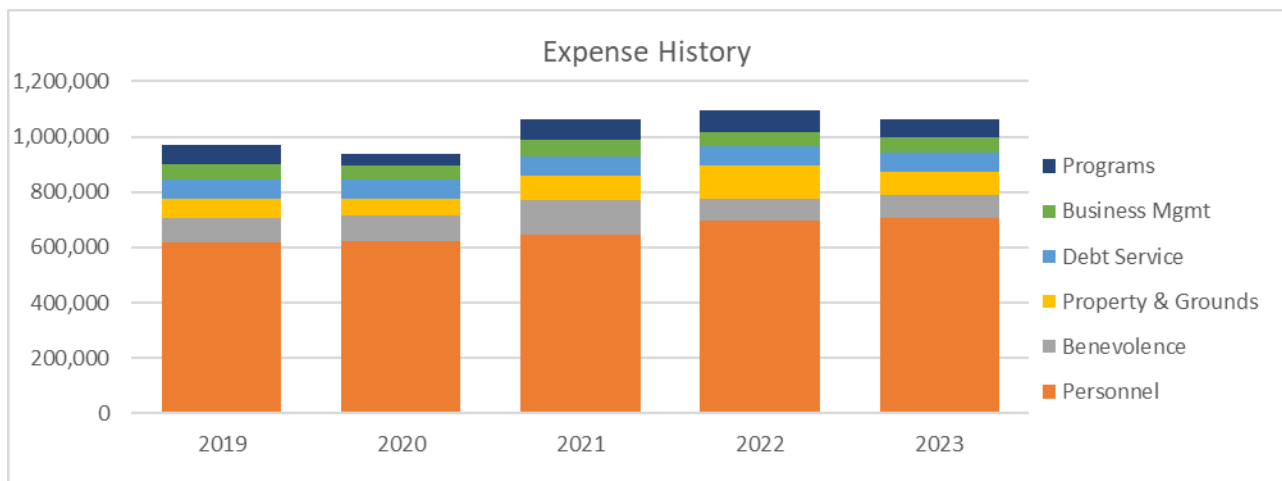
Benevolence remains a strong portion of our budget, and is supplemented by non-budgeted funds (see a total on the following pages).

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	Higher / (Lower)
Offering & Other Gifts	966,500	979,712	13,212
Other Income	136,290	142,581	6,291
Total Income	1,102,790	1,122,293	19,503
Personnel	717,943	706,919	(11,024)
Benevolence	83,420	80,759	(2,661)
Property & Grounds	105,500	86,723	(18,777)
Mortgage Servicing	69,600	69,600	-
Business Management	48,650	54,874	6,224
Programs	59,575	50,009	(9,566)
Total Operating Expense	1,101,038	1,064,534	(36,504)
Operating Income / (Loss)	1,752	57,759	

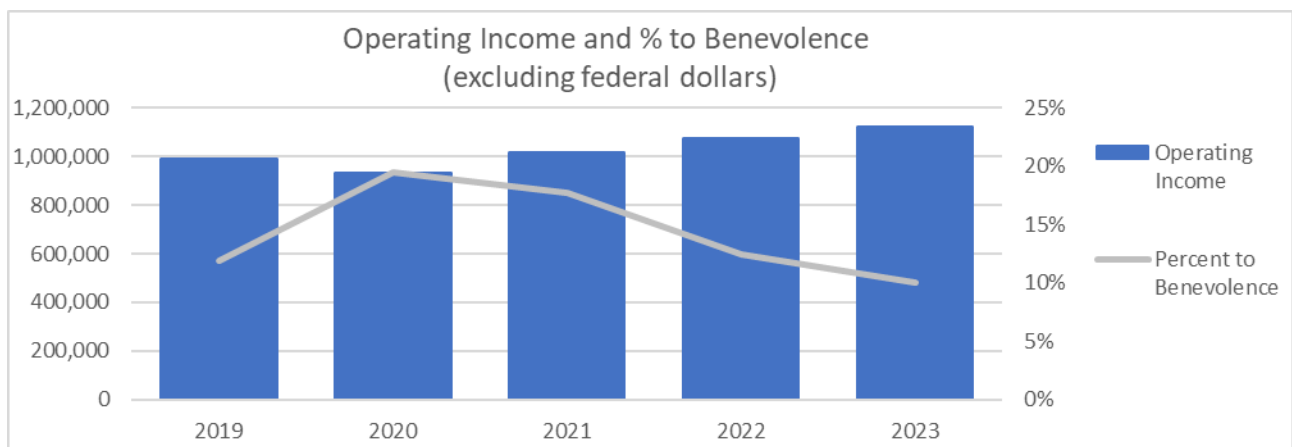
At their January 16, 2024 meeting, Council voted to allocate \$23,000 of the 2023 surplus to bolster the church's "rainy day" reserves. This replaces the \$20,000 we used to cover the 2022 operating budget deficit, and the \$3,000 we used from the insurance deductible reserve for the roof repairs. The balance of the surplus will be in a designated fund, to be allocated by Council for future needs.

2023 In Context

Consistent with prior years, Personnel continues to be our largest expense at 66% of actual expense in 2023. Total expenses have grown an average of 2.4% annually over the last five years, with 2023 representing a decrease in total expenses of \$31k vs. 2022.



Operating income has grown at an average of 3.4% annually over the last five years. Benevolence was higher than average in 2020 and 2021 due to Grace Overflowing gifts. Note that the percentage of benevolence (10% in 2023) includes donor-designated gifts that are not included in the operating budget.



Balance Sheet

Total cash assets at the end of the year were \$410,827 compared to \$459,465 at the end of 2022. Total designated and restricted funds total \$346,182 at year-end; this includes \$100,006 in funds restricted by the council for operating reserve, insurance reserve, and facilities and equipment. These restricted funds will be increased by the council's allocation of the 2023 surplus; the new reserves balance of \$123,006 totals 10.5% of our 2024 operating budget, on track with the general "rainy day" rule of thumb of 10%.

Grace Overflowing

The Grace Overflowing campaign officially ended in 2020, but Council continued to allocate funds from the campaign balance. Projects funded this year include: a contribution to Bright Stars of Bethlehem, and allocation to the Narthex lighting project originally included in the campaign. These final allocations will use the balance of the Grace Overflowing funds.

Mortgage Debt

The remaining mortgage balance is \$92,000 at a fixed rate of 3.875%. The mortgage is scheduled to be paid off in July of 2025.

Thank you to the Council for their prudent spending and management of funds throughout the year. And thank you to Leah for keeping track of the financial details and providing reporting for Council to make informed decisions.

Business Management Board Activities

This year the Business Management Board reviewed and made significant updates to the Facilities Use policy, which was approved by Council and will take effect this month (January 2024). The board reviewed the church's cash balance and made suggestions for management of the funds to increase interest income. Additional work included: bi-monthly financial updates to keep the congregation informed of the church's financial position compared to the budget, introduction of Venmo for Wednesday Night Meals, and oversight of the receptions designated fund.

It has been a pleasure to work with the Business Management Board, the church council, Leah, and our pastors in my three years as Treasurer. I appreciated the opportunity to help steward the resources of the church, and the trust placed in me by the congregation to do so.

Respectively submitted,
Jane Rizzo, Treasurer

St. John's Lutheran Church Comparative Financials

	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
Income	993,130	931,768	1,205,786	1,076,384	1,122,293	1,170,595
Expenses						
Personnel	617,839	623,688	644,821	696,996	706,919	724,319
Adult Ministry and Education	3,858	2,693	2,812	3,251	3,026	5,800
Benevolence and Social Concerns	88,528	91,473	128,372	77,321	80,759	99,250
Childrens Ministry and Education	6,765	4,227	4,923	7,179	6,842	7,800
Evangelism and Communication	10,475	12,450	12,112	12,115	11,571	14,300
Faith and Health	254	621	738	1,173	346	500
Property and Grounds	67,435	61,085	87,345	120,622	86,723	120,500
Stewardship	3,837	4,096	3,991	4,213	5,058	5,400
Worship, Arts & Music	22,066	12,869	11,644	19,606	15,943	18,250
Youth	17,108	3,917	13,257	21,538	7,223	11,000
Business Management	58,703	52,160	57,034	53,352	54,874	62,834
Other Expenses	6,160	510	26,839	9,125	15,650	31,042
Mortgage Servicing	69,600	69,600	69,600	69,600	69,600	69,600
Total Operating Expense	972,628	939,389	1,063,487	1,096,092	1,064,534	1,170,595
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	20,502	(7,621)	142,299	(19,708)	57,759	-
Donor-Designated Benevolence	33,613	111,809	104,075	63,458	34,364	35,000
Total Income + Designated Benevolence	1,026,743	1,043,577	1,309,861	1,139,842	1,156,657	1,205,595
Total Benevolence	122,141	203,282	232,447	140,779	115,123	134,250
Benevolence as a % of Income	11.9%	19.5%	17.7%	12.4%	10.0%	11.1%

St John's Lutheran Church
2024 Budget Proposal

	Prior Year Budgets			Prior Year Actuals			2024 Recommendation		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	Budget	vs. 2023 Budget \$	%
Operating Income									
Offering	878,600	956,500	966,500	913,816	912,308	979,712	1,040,000	73,500	8%
Other Gifts	19,000	20,500	18,000	18,447	20,681	21,439	18,000	-	0%
Other Income	92,500	6,000	4,500	191,415	14,875	6,517	5,500	1,000	22%
Release from Designated Funds	108,000	104,100	78,790	51,108	95,030	79,625	72,095	(6,695)	(8%)
Release from Foundation	32,900	31,000	35,000	31,000	33,490	35,000	35,000	-	0%
Total Operating Income	1,131,000	1,118,100	1,102,790	1,205,786	1,076,384	1,122,293	1,170,595	67,805	6%
Operating Expense									
Personnel	661,629	696,280	717,943	644,821	696,996	706,919	724,319	6,376	1%
Boards:									
Adult Ministry & Education	4,050	6,200	4,200	2,871	5,251	3,026	5,800	1,600	38%
Benevolence & Social Concerns	129,670	94,170	83,420	128,372	77,321	80,759	99,250	15,830	19%
Children's Ministry & Education	7,450	9,600	6,925	4,923	7,179	6,842	7,800	875	13%
Evangelism & Communication	13,000	12,400	12,400	12,112	12,115	11,571	14,300	1,900	15%
Faith & Health	950	1,050	500	738	1,173	346	500	-	0%
Property & Grounds	73,250	106,200	105,500	87,345	120,622	86,723	120,500	15,000	14%
Stewardship	3,900	3,900	4,100	3,991	4,213	5,058	5,400	1,300	32%
Worship, Music & Arts	17,000	19,000	15,750	11,644	19,606	15,943	18,250	2,500	16%
Youth Ministry & Education	16,400	20,500	15,700	13,257	21,538	7,223	11,000	(4,700)	(30%)
Business Management	56,336	55,500	48,650	56,975	51,352	54,874	62,834	14,184	29%
Debt Service	69,600	69,600	69,600	69,600	69,600	69,600	69,600	-	0%
Other Expense	23,600	8,700	16,350	26,839	9,125	15,650	31,042	14,692	90%
Total Operating Expense	1,076,835	1,103,100	1,101,038	1,063,487	1,096,092	1,064,534	1,170,595	69,557	6%
Net Income / (Loss)	54,165	15,000	1,752	142,299	(19,708)	57,759	-		

Report of the Audit Committee, *Julie Becker, Martha Erickson, and Mark Ulmer*

January 2024

St John's Lutheran Church
500 Third Street W
Northfield, MN 55057

Re: Financial Review

The Audit Committee consisting of Julie Becker, Martha Erickson, and Mark Ulmer has done periodic reviews of the financial records of St. John's Lutheran Church for the year ending December 31, 2023.

In our opinion, we have found the financial reports and transactions in balance as disclosed in the Annual Report to the congregation.

We believe the procedures with the Sunday morning counters, two signatures on checks written of \$2,500 and over, as well as other transactions have been followed as prescribed.

Payroll is prepared through the Reese Winter accounting firm with all payments to staff and withholding transfers made electronically.

We extend our thanks to Leah Garlie for making all the financial records available for our review and all those who have served as counters throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Julie Becker
Martha Erickson
Mark Ulmer

Report of the Budget Committee, *Dan Franklin*

The Budget Committee has compiled the 2024 budget based on previous years' budgets and the actual spending, and based on stewardship pledge results. The St. John's Personnel Committee meets to consider salary and benefit information and comparative data, and makes a recommendation to the Budget Committee. The combination of income estimates, salary & benefits recommendation, and board requests are used to create an initial budget. As we get more information about pledges, or as we question different expenses, we refine the budget until it balances. The proposed budget was brought to the council on January 16, 2024 and the council voted to approve it.

We have strong resources and wish to thank the congregation for their generosity. Giving was strong in 2023 - we ended with more than a \$57K surplus. Some of this surplus will be used to replenish our reserve funds.

The total budget represents a 6% increase vs the 2023 budget. Total pledges for 2024 are up by 7.6% vs last year.

Personnel - our largest expenditure is about 62% of our budget. Included in this budget is a 4% raise for our terrific staff.

Benevolence is a major part of the mission of St. John's, and it is given in several ways. Many members donate funds that are passed on which are not part of the budget.

Summary

We have proposed a balanced budget for 2024. We look forward to this year, one which will launch a capital appeals campaign to address capital projects that were eliminated from the previous budget. In August, the congregation approved a capital campaign to meet a variety of needs including capitalizing on sustainability opportunities, ongoing physical needs such as parking lot upgrades, tuck-pointing, and enhancing our commitment to the community through benevolence beyond our church walls.

I wish to thank the Budget Committee members for their thoughtful input, insights and time working on the the 2024 budget!

Committee Members: Dan Franklin, Jane Rizzo, Kristy Harms, Dennis Rinehart, Eric Sponheim, Steve Taggart, Pastor Pam Fickenschier (staff), Leah Garlie (staff)

Minutes

153rd Annual Meeting of St. John's Lutheran Church, Northfield, MN

January 29, 2023

Rod Christensen called the meeting to order 12:42 p.m.

1. Pr. Pam Fickenscher led us in the devotions printed in the 2022 Annual Report.
2. Jane Rizzo made the motion to adopt the rules of order. Ruthie Neuger seconded the motion. The motion carried.
3. Paul Beck moved to adopt the proposed agenda. Kathleen Shea seconded the motion. The motion carried.
4. Barbara Eaves made the motion to approve the 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes. Pat Fick seconded the motion. The motion carried.
5. Rod Christensen thanked the congregation for participating in the Planning Our Future Together planning sessions. The information will be useful for the 2023 Council. Rod Christensen also made a special note of thanks to Mark Gleason and the Evangelism & Communications Board for the acoustic improvements in St. John's Hall, and he spoke to how the project was funded (primarily through special gifts). Julie Thorsheim made the motion to approve the Annual Reports of President, Pastors, Boards, and Committees. David Nitz seconded the motion. The motion carried.
6. Jane Rizzo presented the Treasurer's Report. The full report may be found on pages 24-29 of the Annual Report. David Neuger made the motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Jill Enestvedt seconded the motion. The motion carried.
7. Mark Ulmer presented the Report of the Audit Committee. The full report may be found on page 23 of the Annual Report. Terry Gilbertson made the motion to accept the Audit Report. Karl Hella seconded the motion. The motion carried.
8. Rod Christensen presented Resolution 2023-01 regarding action of the Congregational Council in 2022. The resolution can be found on page 35 of the Annual Report. Mark Ulmer made the motion to accept the proposed resolution. Jean Wakely seconded the motion. The motion carried.
9. Kathleen Shea presented the proposed budget for 2023. The main spending obligations noted by the Budget Committee were as follows: personnel, property and grounds, benevolence, and the mortgage. The key resources to cover expenses were noted as follows: offerings, a surplus from 2021, and reserve funds. A balanced budget has been proposed. More details can be found on pages 30-31. Jane Rinehart made the motion to accept the proposed budget for 2023. Terry Gilbertson seconded the motion. The motion carried.
10. Ruthie Neuger presented the Report of the Nominating Committee.
11. Ruthie Neuger presented opportunities for members of St. John's to represent the congregation at the following events:
 - a) Representation to NRC Annual Meeting: Sunday, April 16, 2023, 1:00 p.m.
 - b) Delegates to SE MN Synod Assembly: Saturday, May 6, 2023, Mankato
 - i. Michelle Provost
 - ii. Martin Thorsheim
 - c) Delegates to Cannon River Conference of the SE Minnesota Synod: Sunday, February 12, 2023.

d) Delegates to Gustavus Adolphus Association of Congregations: Saturday, April 29, 2023, 12:00-3:00 p.m. No additional delegates are needed for this event.

12. Elections. The ballot for Officers of the Congregation, Board Chairs, Board Members, Standing Committees, and Delegates was introduced and distributed. There is an option at the top of the ballot to accept the entire ballot. 79 people voted to approve the ballot as submitted.
13. Pr. Fickenscher: Appreciation for Tim Byers, retiring Facility Manager.
14. Rod Chrisensen presented Resolution 2023-02 regarding gratitude for all volunteers, staff, and pastors in 2022. The resolution can be found on page 38 of the Annual Report. Dave Neuger made the motion to accept the resolution. Brian Evenson seconded the motion. The motion carried.
15. In Memoriam. Pr. Fickenscher read aloud the names of members of the congregation who passed away in 2022. Pr. Fickenscher offered a memorial prayer.
16. Appreciation: Pr. Ficksenscher acknowledged council members' service, as well as 2022 President Rod Christensen's service this past year.
17. Ruthie Neuger made the motion to adjourn the Annual meeting. Jane Rizzo seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 1:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristy Harms

Minutes

Special Meeting of St. John's Lutheran Church, Northfield, MN

August 27, 2023

Treasurer Jane Rizzo called the meeting to order 10:49 a.m.

- Announced that a quorum of 50 members has been met.

Pr. Pam Fickenscher offered an opening prayer.

Meeting Agenda Presented to Congregation - Jane Rizzo

- Call to Order / Opening Prayer
- Purpose of the Meeting
- Presentation of Issues & Opportunities
- Motion on Resolutions / Discussion
- Vote
- Next Steps / Closing Prayer
- Adjournment

John Ferguson made the motion to approve the meeting agenda. Ruthie Neuger seconded the motion. Vote was taken by voice. Motion passed unanimously.

Purpose of the Meeting - Jane Rizzo

- Educate and inform the congregation about the issues and opportunities before us.
- Hear ideas and concerns from members of the St. John's Congregation.
- Vote on four interrelated resolutions.
- Seek out God's grace in our discernment.

Rules for Meeting - Jane Rizzo

- Karl Hella will serve as parliamentarian.
- Members should wait for microphone to speak, and state name before sharing questions or statement.

The Need - Pr. Pam Fickenscher

- We've taken the past few years to have both broad and specific conversations about how to move forward after a challenging few years. For example, we've heard about the desire to make our facility available to the larger community; we know this is an important place for members where relationships are strengthened; we want to be faithful stewards of our finances and our earth; the last few years have seen inflation and increasing energy costs. Making this space available to the larger community is a wonderful gift but it does have cost (utility costs in particular). We have new members, and now we have an opportunity to think together about how we want to be moving forward.
- These conversations have happened among many different fronts: congregational conversations in 2022, Church Council, St. John's Foundation, Property & Grounds Board, Business Management Board, and the Facility Sustainability Group.
- This is a unique moment where we have some opportunities to plan for the future.

A Commitment to Our World - Jeff McLaughlin, President of St. John's Foundation

- One of the things that has guided our thinking about St. John's is our call to be good stewards of the earth. This is an exciting time to assist our bottom line and take advantage of financial subsidies available.
- Introduction of Steve Taggart - Chair of Property & Grounds Board

- Solar Panels
 - Can be started almost immediately.
 - Federal Government subsidies are available through 2024.
 - With the Foundation bridge loan of \$100,000 we can get the project started more quickly; if we raise enough money early on, we might not even need the Foundation loan.

Presentation of Issues & Opportunities - Steve Taggart & Jeff McLaughlin

- Potential Areas of Investment
 - Solar Panels
 - Basement Refurbishing (e.g. carpeting/classroom updates)
 - Resurfacing Parking Lots
 - Air Handling Improvements (e.g. heat pumps/geothermal)
 - Tuckpointing
 - Overall Building Enhancements (e.g. kitchen/external stairs/security system)
 - Benevolence (10% of campaign total)
- A Focus on Sustainability: Solar
 - Solar panels on our flat roofs
 - Lower structural impact.
 - Easier maintenance.
 - Coordinated with roof repairs covered by insurance.
 - Why not a solar garden? Lose some energy in the transfer process, and also a 7-8 year waiting list.
 - Environmental Impact
 - Replaces 35% of ongoing electricity use.
 - Reduces our carbon emissions by 51 tons a year, or 1000+ tons over 20 years.
 - System is fully warranted for 25 years.
 - Financial Impact
 - Current annual savings of nearly \$12,000.
 - With 3% inflation, savings of nearly \$21,000 in 2044.
 - Federal Inflation Reduction Act provides 30% subsidy for installation.
 - Xcel subsidies for afternoon power generation will further reduce cost.
 - Evangelism Impact
 - Communicates our commitment to our neighbors and community.
- Why now? Pr. Pam Fickenscher
 - Much of the last campaign's focus was on the oldest part of our building; now, however, St. John's Hall and the rooms beneath are over 20 years old. Many things in that part of the building are now reaching the end of their lifetime. We don't want to be dealing with a lot of deferred maintenance, but we want to be proactive and plan ahead.
 - We've had a lot of experts in the building in the last month looking at our systems. EnerChange, a state-funded agency that works with nonprofits to be as energy efficient as possible, came out at no cost to us and spent time looking at our Xcel bills over the last 3 years and analyzing them. Some of the things we've already done are working for us (i.e. the replacement of our hot water heater garnered a 95% reduction in our gas bill). We know that investments like this do make a difference and that they are a gift to the future, if we can make changes now rather than wait too long and then replace something quickly when we could have done more research and found something more efficient.
 - This is the moment when we look forward, and while we don't have every budget item figured out for this appeal, we imagine it to be around the size of the last one, possibly smaller. One of the advantages of having a loan from the Foundation is we don't have to borrow outside of ourselves.

Resolutions / Discussion - Jane Rizzo

- Resolutions are read aloud (see Addendum A).
- Clarification by Karl Hella, Parliamentarian: Because the motion is coming from and has been voted on by the Church Council, it does not need a motion or a second by the congregation to move forward into the discussion phase.

Q&A

- Tracy Kochendorfer: Is there more information about the budget, line items, and benevolence? And a ballpark overall number for the campaign?
 - Jane Rizzo: No line item budget yet. Council will put together a Campaign Committee, and that committee will further detail a budget and a plan for 10% benevolence.
 - Pr. Pam: It will be similar to the last campaign. Our initial estimate for this campaign is \$800K.
 - Jeff McLaughlin - Solar is about \$200K. The federal government will give us approximately \$60K through subsidies. Out of pocket costs will probably be around \$140K.
 - Steve Taggart - Regarding the parking lot, asphalt companies will only give a 5 day quote because of fluctuating costs of materials.
- Tamara Jackman: Can you speak about the St. John's Foundation and the financial relationship between it and our operating budget for people who may not know?
 - Jeff McLaughlin - The Foundation was established almost 30 years ago with the intent of it being a source of funds that the congregation can use to extend its mission. We had a goal of getting to \$1M in assets, and thanks to two generous gifts this year, that goal has been met.
 - Jeff McLaughlin - The Foundation serves as an endowment; it is not money the congregation can tap into at will. It is an independent financial organization. We return about 4% of the proceeds back to the congregation for the Council to use at its discretion. The decision to offer a loan was unusual and was discussed for over a year, and passed with a unanimous vote by all members.
- Julie Thorsheim: Assuming the decision is to move forward if there is support today, and assuming solar panels can move forward, what are the seasonal restrictions in terms of when things can get underway?
 - Jeff McLaughlin - Next spring will be target date for solar panel installation and roof repair, which can happen simultaneously.
- Brian Evenson: Have we looked at maintenance costs of solar panels? What are the premiums for insurance after installation?
 - Jeff McLaughlin - Yes. Insurance is a surprisingly low increase, likely less than \$300/year. Regarding maintenance - we are currently proposing a system with no moving parts. In theory panels will last 25-30 years, and they are warrantied for 25 years. We've done budget models with cushions for repairs if necessary.
- Martin Thorsheim: Is the overall plan with the capital campaign still evolving as far as what might all be included for the church?
 - Pr Pam - Yes. Items on the list are best guesses on what might be top priorities. When considering items, what are the things that have the most impact for sustainability and energy savings?
 - Martin Thorsheim - Would like to put in a request that we consider modifications for accessibility in this space, specifically the Sanctuary, Not just physical accessibility but also generational accessibility for different socializing needs (i.e ... The Sanctuary pews are many decades old. Could we consider different configurations?)
- Olaf Hall-Holt: Regarding the 20 year timeline with solar: roughly speaking, how much money are we saving over that period of time and how much are we spending? And if the solar panels are about \$200K out of the \$800K projected goal, what is the other \$600K going towards?
 - Jeff McLaughlin - About \$320,000 in savings over the course of 20 years, assuming 3% inflation.
 - Steve Taggart - Regarding the other \$600K, parking lot will be \$100K, four air handlers about \$25K-\$30K each.
 - Pr. Pam - Initial estimate of \$800K is the high-end of our campaign, we might end up lower than that. We also want to make sure we include in the budget some items for the rest of the community. We are starting to have those conversations with our Benevolence Board: who can we partner with in the community, and

is there a way our sustainability can impact their sustainability efforts to make this community wide.

- Ron Quanbeck: The Grace Overflowing Campaign extended over a 3-year period; do you think this campaign will be similar?
 - Pr. Pam - Probably yes. Not every project will be completed in a year, and it allows donors to have flexibility with a longer campaign.
- Will Schroeder: Would like clarification on an earlier question regarding upfront costs for solar: after rebate it will cost us about \$160K for solar, with about \$300K in savings over the course of 20 years.
 - Jeff McLaughlin - Yes, that is correct.
- Pippa Younger: Shared an anecdote about working for a previous company where squirrels ate through a line and caused disruption and damage. What kind of systems or plans will be put in place for problems?
 - Jeff McLaughlin - With improvements in technology, panels are more efficient now than ever. Squirrels were an unknown risk when panels were first being installed. One of the things that the P&G board will be asked to do is monitor these types of things with newer technology, data, and intentionality.
- Andrea Hoff: In terms of other sustainability initiatives, would electric car charging stations be considered?
 - Steve Taggart - This hasn't been on the list, but it certainly can be.
- Brian Evenson: Cost for the roof before we put in panels? Also a question about the heat exchanger and freon.
 - Jane Rizzo - The roof replacement is covered by insurance because of hail damage.
 - Steve - Unclear about the freon that runs to the heat exchangers. They are over 20 years old.
- Gerri Lick, comment: Coming from California, solar energy was a huge cost savings.
- Scott Swanson, comment: Advocates that we use PVC which reflects heat and doesn't break down and come apart. There might be additional costs for PVC but one advantage would be that more people use that material now so more vendors to choose from.

Vote - Jane Rizzo

- Jane Rizzo asked that all those in favor of the Resolutions as they were read today, please signal by saying "aye", those opposed please signal by saying "nay".
- Vote was taken by voice. The "ayes" had a clear majority vote; one "nay"; no abstentions.
- Jane Rizzo declares that the Resolutions have been approved.

Next Steps - Jane Rizzo

- We will contact the solar company to get on the list to begin that process.
- The P&G board will start to get bids for some of the other capital improvements.
- We will collaborate with Stewardship Board on balancing our funding requests between the capital campaign and the ongoing needs of the church.
- The executive committee of the church council will be recruiting a capital campaign committee.
- We'll be identifying the approaches for determining the benevolence portion of the campaign

Motion to adjourn

- Kristy Harms made the motion to adjourn; Jeff McLaughlin seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Goodrich

Addendum A

RESOLUTIONS

WHEREAS, the St. John's congregation has a rich history of heeding the call for financial support in meeting the extraordinary financial needs of advancing our mission as a Christian congregation;

AND WHEREAS, the St. John's congregation has demonstrated a clear understanding of the need to maintain annual stewardship growth in the midst of a capital campaign to meet special needs;

AND WHEREAS, a part of the St. John's mission must include a commitment to safeguarding the sustainability of God's creation;

AND WHEREAS, the St. John's congregation has a unique opportunity with an indefinite, but likely narrow, window to capitalize on available federal funding to augment its own contributions to improving the church's environmental impact;

AND WHEREAS, St. John's has a grace-filled commitment to advancing its mission through congregational-directed benevolence which can be enhanced through a capital campaign;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the congregation authorize the Church Council to the invest in improving our physical space by installing solar panels on St. John's Hall, and pursue other sustainability initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint while at the same time positively impacting our long-term financial health;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council launch a capital campaign to address a number of physical needs of our church, with 10% of the appeal designated for benevolence to support needs in our larger community;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the congregation authorize the Council to accept a loan of up to \$100,000 from the St. John's Foundation, if needed to complete the projects in a timely manner;

AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the congregation affirm the decision of the Board of the St. John's Foundation to change its bylaws and investment criteria to allow for alternative investments, including the potential loan to the congregation.

Resolution 2024-01

Whereas, our congregation is aware that the Congregation Council acts as the custodian of our material assets, and
Whereas, the Council has conducted the affairs of the congregation in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of this congregation, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that St. John's Lutheran congregation, in annual meeting assembled, endorse the actions of the Council during the 2023 fiscal year and express thanks for the Council and officers for their leadership.

Resolution 2024-02

Whereas, the church is people called by our Lord to proclaim the Gospel in word and in deed, and to support one another and serve society in Christ's name, and,

Whereas, this congregation of God's people is led by particular persons in many positions of responsibility (congregation officers, board members, ministry team members, leaders of organizations, church school teachers, ushers, choir members, and many other people serving with their gifts in our ministry), and pastors, and staff; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, St. John's Lutheran Church, in annual meeting assembled, express our gratitude to these persons and to our entire church staff for their efforts in our behalf during this past year.

Minutes *Annual Meeting of St. John's Foundation* January 29, 2023

1. Jeff McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 12:36 p.m.
2. He referenced the written report included in the congregational packet, and asked that donors who have included the Foundation in their estate planning alert him or Leah Garlie so they can be included in upcoming thank-you events.
3. He thanked Mike Berthelsen for his three years of service.
4. Ruthie Neuger made a motion that Brent Bash, Dan Franklin, and John Ophaug be elected to serve a three-year term from 2023-2026. Greg Colby seconded the motion. The motion passed.
5. Jeff noted that the Foundation was exploring ways of further leveraging its resources for the congregation, specifically as a possible funding source for a congregational solar array.
6. Greg Colby made the motion to adjourn, Ruthie Neuger seconded it, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff McLaughlin

St. John's Lutheran Church of Northfield Foundation, Inc.

2023 Annual Report

The purpose of the Foundation is to support the ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church in perpetuity by providing funds to extend its ministry beyond its normal church budget, to support its initiatives in the local Northfield community, and to invest in leadership for the future of the Church. Since 1989, the St. John's Foundation has provided a legacy giving opportunity for those who want their gifts to provide both current and ongoing value.

In 2023, the Foundation board allocated \$35,000, an increase of \$1,510 over 2022, to help fund special projects at St. John's. This represented approximately 4% of the beginning asset balance in 2022 (one year off-set). Funding by the Foundation was designated to specific projects identified by the Church Council. Despite a lower year-end balance at the end of 2022, we feel it is prudent and appropriate to sustain that giving level, and approved an additional \$35,000 allocation for 2024.

After a year-long discussion the board also approved changes to our investment guidelines and by-laws to provide for a one-time loan to the congregation to support the installation of a solar array as part of the congregation's sustainability campaign. We do not anticipate making additional changes to our investment policies, nor do we foresee the need to make such loans with any regularity.

The Foundation's asset balance at year end was approximately \$1,398,000, up from a balance of \$791,000 at the end of 2022. We received two gifts large enough to establish new named funds, from John Ferguson and from the estate of Donald Nelson. The combination of those new gifts, a robust equity market, and prudent management resulted in significant asset growth.

The Foundation board continues to take a long-term view for asset growth and made relatively few changes to our investments during the year. We are assuming prudent levels of risk for the years ahead.

A year ago the Foundation's allocations to the congregation had nearly exceeded gifts to our capital base – which would have been a meaningful milestone. We are grateful that significant new gifts kept us from reaching that goal this year. Cumulative gifts to the Foundation now exceed \$965,000; the Foundation has returned \$480,000 to the congregation.

Our primary goal in 2024 will be working more closely with church council to help ensure alignment between the Foundation's funding directives and opportunities within and beyond our congregation's four walls. We are called to extend the mission of St. John's and look forward to enhancing that mission this year.

I would like to thank Jane Rizzo for her years of service on our board, including several years as president.

On behalf of the entire Board, thank you for your generous and continued support of the Foundation.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeff McLaughlin, President

Current Board Members: Grant Aaseng, Brent Bash, Julie Becker, Cheryl Buck, Dan Franklin, Jeff McLaughlin, John Ophaug, Jane Rizzo, Chris Weber, Jennifer Welbaum. Ex-Officio: Pastor Pam Fickenscher

ST. JOHNS CHURCH OF NORTHFIELD FOUNDATION, INC
TREASURER'S REPORT
December 31, 2023

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
PORTFOLIO BALANCE (Beginning)	\$ 850,800	\$ 970,102	\$ 791,616
Gifts Received	8,920	6,070	467,120
Income/Gains/Losses	143,339	(149,144)	177,116
Expenses	1,957	1,922	1,922
Disbursements	<u>31,000</u>	<u>33,490</u>	<u>35,000</u>
PORTFOLIO BALANCE (Year End)	\$ 970,102	\$ 791,616	\$ 1,398,930

DISBURSEMENTS TO ST. JOHNS COUNCIL

St. Johns Fund	\$ 21,471	\$ 23,577	\$ 24,410
World Mission Fund	212	-	250
Youth Fund	1,210	1,200	1,350
Music Fund	967	1,051	1,070
Building & Property Fund	1,777	1,800	1,980
Media Fund	1,079	1,172	1,190
Community & Social Ministry Fund	451	490	500
Soli Seminary Fund	1,171	1,280	1,300
ELCA College Scholarship Fund	<u>2,662</u>	<u>2,920</u>	<u>2,950</u>
TOTAL	\$ 31,000	\$ 33,490	\$ 35,000

INVESTMENTS:

Cash	1.23%	3.79%	9.48%
ELCA Investments	2.06%	2.53%	4.29%
Cash Value Life Insurance	5.66%	6.94%	4.66%
Mutual Funds	<u>91.05%</u>	<u>86.74%</u>	<u>81.57%</u>
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Julie Becker, Treasurer

St. John's Lutheran Church of Northfield Foundation Gifts 2023

We acknowledge all who have supported the St. John's Foundation with deepest gratitude.

IN MEMORY OF:

Ruth Hansen Wil Brosz, Phil & Barb Eaves

Gerhard Knutson Marilyn Jacobson, Les & Carol Svendsen, Julie Thorsheim

Bill Talen Wil Brosz, Les & Carol Svendsen

Gary Hagen Wil Brosz

Jean Schrader Wil Brosz

John Quam Wil Brosz, Duane Engstrom, Les & Carolyn Svendsen

Lester Gunderson Memorials

OTHER GIFTS: Charles & Shirley Anderson, Cindy Clauson, John Ferguson, Delores Gustafson, Patty Lindell, Char Nelson, Daniel Noreen, Robert & Joyce Rendahl, Joe Shaw, Dana Thompson

St. John's Women of the ELCA

Annual Report 2023

WELCA has had a busy year: 1) growing in activities offered and offering them at times more conducive to younger women who are still working 2) growing in attendance at those activities, and, 3) increasing dollars donated. Number of quilts made and distributed increased 38%, number of baby, personal care, hospice, fabric kits made and distributed increased by 23% and, number of cookie boxes delivered at Christmas increased by 44%. We started a new program Mission Morning (on a Saturday) to do all the kits at once and had 60 women of all ages at that event - it was so successful, we had another one in late summer! We decided to move our annual Christmas & Carols program from a Thursday to a Saturday morning and sign-ups have increased as well. A knitting group was started on Wednesday evenings for those who find it difficult to come on Thursday mornings. And a new Bible study/discussion group was planned and will start in January of 2024 for women younger than the baby boomer crowd. There were 8 at the initial meeting.

The 2023-2024 St. John's WELCA Board:

- President - Pamela Groves-Gaggioli
- Past President - Jean Wakely
- Vice President Alison Kavanaugh
- Secretary - Janet Lotegeluaki
- Treasurer - Jennifer Edwins
- Faith Development/Discipleship - Mary Hoff and Alison Kavanaugh
- Missions/Stewardship - Jane Rinehart and Sara Bright
- Education/Justice - Jo Franklin, Dawn Tommerdahl and Michelle Kramer-Prevost
- Publicity - Julie Zdenek
- Cannon River Conference Convener- Marilyn Calcutt
- SEMN WELCA board / Stewardship and Discipleship - Jane Rinehart

WELCA Education/Justice Committee

- Closed out '2022/'2023 "Courageous Conversations: Moving Forward Together" with 2 in-person and streamed programs. Recordings of most of the programs can be found on the St. John's Website.
 - 2/2/2023 - "Entertaining Angels Unawares" (37 in attendance)
 - 3/2/2023 - "Christian Nationalism: What it is, Why It Matters & How we can Respond" (66 in attendance)
- Hosted 3 programs in '2023/'2024 "Courageous Conversations: Hope is a Muscle" with 3 in-person and streamed programs. We are now offering books authored by the presenters at the programs and have worked with Content to order and display these titles to the general public in their store.
 - 9/14/2023 - "Finding Common Cause Across Religious Differences: A Voice for our Neighbors in Need at the State Capitol" (35 in attendance)
 - 10/5/2023 - "Sexual & Gender Minorities: Justice & the Importance of Family Support" (42 in attendance)
 - 11/2/2023 - "Stories of Hope & Resilience in Occupied Palestine: Students of Art & Culture" (103 in attendance)
- Hosted book discussion on 1619 Project winter/spring of '2023 with 16 in attendance and Power Worshippers in fall of '2023 with 18 in attendance.

WELCA Stewardship Committee

- 4/2/2023 - First Annual Mission Morning (60 in attendance)
- 8/26/2023 - "Back by Popular Demand "Mission Morning" (30 in attendance)
- Made and distributed
 - 282 Quilts to LWR, Global Health Ministries, Operation Joy, Habitat for Humanity, Three Links, Ethiopia Fields of Promise, gift to Emmanuel Kaghondi, 2 auctioned
 - 31 Prayer Shawls & 3 baby baptismal blankets
 - 22 baby blankets given to GHM
 - 38 children's sweaters, to Knit for Kids, World Vision
 - 7 children's hats - to Northfield Schools, collected at 50 North
 - 103 baby kits to LWR
 - 75 personal care kits to LWR
 - 60 Hospice kits to Global Health Ministries
 - 201 Back-to-school kits to LWR
 - 9 sheets and 28 pillowcases to Global Health Ministries
 - 15 fabric kits to LWR
- 12 volunteer hours at Global Health Ministries (6 people, from 10 - noon)
- \$2,685 donated to MN Synod, National WELCA, Bright Stars of Bethlehem, Migizi, JRLC, Lutheran Mideast Development, Growing Katie's Fund, International Women's Leadership Fund, Operation Joy
- Wednesday Evening knitting group was started

Discipleship

- Hosted 2 coffee chats for new women congregants (total of 12 in attendance)
- 9/24/2023 - Participated in St. John's Ministry Fair
- Hosted first Great Lutheran Cookie Bake-Off & packed & distributed 72 boxes of Christmas cookies to homebound & assisted-living congregants
- Met with IWL St. Olaf students on numerous occasions, invited them to attend church with us, supplied them with finals week goody bags
- Manned the registration desk at all Courageous Conversation programs and other WELCA activities
- Planning of the Wellspring Circle (by Jill Enesvedt) for those under Baby Boomer age

Other activities & programs:

- 1/5/2023 - Hosted Annual Christmas Luncheon & Carols at Ruth's on Stafford on 1/5/23 with 43 in attendance
- 3/16/2023 - Field Trip to Hocokato Ti Museum (17 in attendance)
- 4/15/2023 - 4 attended Cannon River WELCA Conference
- 3 in attendance at the Women's Day at Good Earth Village
- 9/21/2023 - 6 in attendance at WELCA Triennial in Phoenix AZ
- 9/30/2023 - 1 in attendance at the So Mn Synod Women's Convention
- 10/11/2023 Field Trip to "For the People" at the Guthrie (3 in attendance)

A huge thank you to all the women who made all this happen through the gifts of their time, talents, work, donations and prayers!

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Groves-Gaggioli
2023-2024 WELCA President

WELCA End of 2023 Report

Budget 2023

		Yr-to-Date	Year-to-Date	Available
Beginning Balance		\$10,741.71		
		Revenue	Expenditure	
Operating Funds				
Offerings: Circle Meetings	\$1,200.00	\$2,286.01		\$2,286.01
Offerings: General Meetings	\$600.00	\$2,319.52		\$2,319.52
Gifts	\$200.00	\$1,995.00		\$1,995.00
Subtotal: Offering Revenue	\$2,000.00	\$6,600.53		\$6,600.53
ELCA International Student Scholarship Fund	\$200.00			\$0.00
Synod Contributions (25% of Annual offering)	\$500.00		\$500.00	\$0.00
To be allocated or carryover to 2023	\$1,755.00		\$1,450.61	\$304.39
Triennial Convention	\$1,900.00		\$1,900.00	\$0.00
Community Support	\$500.00		\$500.00	\$0.00
Biennial Southeast M N Synod Conv.	\$100.00		\$100.00	\$0.00
Spring Conf. Assembly Offering	\$100.00		\$100.00	\$0.00
LWR Baby Care Kits	\$100.00		\$100.00	\$0.00
LWR Personal Care Kits	\$400.00		\$400.00	\$0.00
LWR School Kits	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	\$0.00
LWR Quilts	\$500.00		\$500.00	\$0.00
Hospice Kits—Global Health Ministries	\$100.00		\$100.00	\$0.00
Worldvision Sweater Postage	\$75.00		\$75.00	\$0.00
Gather Magazine for library	\$20.00		\$20.00	\$0.00
Tech Support	\$600.00		\$550.00	\$50.00
Honorariums	\$700.00	\$0.00	\$600.00	\$100.00
Miscellaneous	\$200.00		\$188.96	\$11.04
TORCH	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00
Subtotals: operating	\$8,950.00	\$6,600.53	\$8,284.57	-\$1,684.04
<i>Note: Operating revenue is itemized in lines 6-9, Operating expense in lines 11-28. Line 29 combines these, and the "Available" in line 30 includes the</i>				
Designated			Available:	\$5,370.11
Thrivent unspecified		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Quilts & Kits		\$350.00	\$0.00	\$350.00
Thrivent Choice Prayer Shawl		\$30.00	\$0.00	\$30.00
Coffee		\$1,279.00	\$1,291.16	\$395.26
Thistle Farms products		\$344.00	\$448.54	-\$42.12
Thank offering (November)		\$535.00	\$535.00	\$0.00
School Kits LWR		\$155.00	\$2.70	\$153.76
Baby Care Kits		\$515.00	\$658.10	\$115.07
Personal Care Kits		\$38.97	\$112.73	\$0.00
Quilting supplies and Postage		\$3,825.00	\$1,342.31	\$4,016.03
Events (St. Olaf Lunch, Red Wing trip)		\$1,565.65	\$900.00	\$665.64
Lydia Circle Library Fund		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Ruth Circle Augusta Victoria Hospital Jerusalem		\$22.00	\$0.00	\$34.00
Mary Circle Service Project Personal Care Kits		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Elizabeth Service Project		\$151.55	\$0.00	\$350.55
Carryover to Triennial Convention		\$0.00	\$1,200.00	\$40.00
Torch		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Subtotals: Designated		\$8,811.17	\$6,490.54	\$6,108.19
TOTAL = Carryover + Operating + Designated	\$2,000.00	\$15,411.70	\$14,975.11	\$11,278.30
Thrivent Action Team project account		\$250.00	\$250.00	\$0.00
Synodical contributions are 25% of circle and general meeting offerings				
We give \$300 to Triennial Convention every three years. (next 2024)				
We give \$200 to Synod Convention every two years. (next 2023)				
We give \$100 to Spring Conference Assembly every year				

Southeastern Minnesota Synod ELCA 2023 Ministry Report



As another year has drawn to a close, we give thanks for what has been and look forward with anticipation and hope.

In 2023, the ministry of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod continued in earnest. Sixty-two congregations engaged in the call process even as some continue their call process into the new year. We were delighted to welcome 21 new rostered ministers into various settings within the synod.

For the first time in several years, we hosted a visit from a global companion synod. Bishop Atahualpa Hernandez of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO) spent a week visiting our synod's leaders, members, and ministries. It was a joy to spend time with him and learn from IELCO's excellent diaconal ministry among the most vulnerable in Colombia.

Our 2023 Synod Assembly, held in May, welcomed Dr. Susan Brower as the keynote speaker. Dr. Brower helped us understand demographic trends across the state and our communities. In May of 2024, we will use this information as a springboard for the focus of our next Synod Assembly. We will welcome Dr. Matt Bloom to share as we consider how each of us can impact our congregations and communities.

As I consider the ministry of the synod in 2024, I am drawn to the phrase *every congregation connected*. In 2023, congregations took advantage of the connections we have with each other; this was especially evident in the continued increase of collaborations between individual congregations. Throughout the synod, congregations have strengthened ministry through partnering with neighboring congregations.

As we draw on the strength of our internal connections, we have an opportunity to engage afresh with the communities our congregations are already a part of. What opportunities are there to be the church for the community beyond our buildings? What is already happening that we can come alongside? What needs of our neighbors currently need to be met?

One of the gifts of being a congregation of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod is that no congregation must go it alone. We are part of a network with congregations and connections that strengthen us and multiply the impact we have in the communities to which we are called.

May the Spirit open our hearts and minds to all the ways God continues to invite us to participate in God's good work in the world!

In Christ,

Bishop Regina Hassanally

semnsynod.org



**Northfield
Retirement Community**
Innovation. Choice. Tradition.

Annual Report to Congregations

2024 Annual Meeting

**We look forward to welcoming the delegates from
your congregation on**

Sunday, April 7

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

900 Cannon Valley Drive ~ Northfield

Dear Friends,

We are grateful to all of you for your support and involvement with NRC. As of this writing, we're filling Christmas stockings with the gifts from so many of you to our residents. How fortunate we are!

We knew at this time last year that 2023 would be a transitional year for NRC, as indeed it has been. In this report, we share the major highlights of the year for our organization. But allow us first to mention the most important transition of all:

Our residents have moved from the isolation of the COVID years to once again freely and joyfully sharing in fellowship and in fun and interesting activities that brighten and lift spirits. To see people enjoying meals and activities together, worshipping and attending concerts in our chapel, participating in Bible study and hymn sings, spending time with family, sharing laughter and stories with children from local schools who come to visit, warms our hearts and brings smiles to our faces each day.

The return of shared experiences and life in this community means that we are living our mission:

Rooted in Christian values, supporting independence, dignity, and quality of life for the aging by providing innovative living options and services.

Innovative Living Options and Services

As we reported in the *NRC Outlook* in June and September, dealing with issues of staffing, funding, and finances occupied a great deal of 2023. As the Board of Directors analyzed our situation, it became increasingly apparent that the best decision for current and future residents and for the future of NRC was to delicense our Care Center (skilled nursing facility) and to transition the entire campus to assisted living. This significant change in operations went very smoothly thanks to excellent teamwork among staff and to the gracious reception of the changes by residents and family members alike. Fortunately, we were able to move all but two individuals to a new unit on campus and to find appropriate new homes for the individuals leaving NRC. All affected staff chose to remain at NRC.



Innovative Living Options and Services (continued)

NRC now offers a continuum of assisted living and services to residents: Parkview East and West are traditional assisted living apartments; Cannon Valley Suites-MC provides secure memory care and Cannon Valley Suites-EC provides enhanced care for residents in need of a higher level of care than that offered in traditional assisted living with onsite nurses approximately 16 hours/day. Evergreen Lodge remains a dedicated memory care residence. The Manor and Northwood Pines offer an independent option.

We were very pleased to welcome 48 new residents to NRC this year, and we are continuing to expand our outreach efforts to reach full occupancy in what we hope will be the near future. We are also planning to create a new unit in place of the Care Center and are currently determining how best to configure and staff it to meet the growing needs of the community.

Expanded Outreach: Church and Community Relations Committee

As was the case for the majority of organizations during COVID, NRC spent three years focusing inward—maintaining and adjusting our operations to serve our residents to the best of our ability. The time has now come when we can renew our long-standing partnerships with you, our member congregations, and other organizations in the broader community. The Church and Community Relations Committee of the Board is now back in full swing with monthly meetings. The primary goal of the committee is to ensure that, just as you assist us with financial contributions and volunteer projects, we provide you with ongoing communication and with a range of programs of interest to you, such as educational presentations concerning eldercare issues. In addition, in 2024 we would be glad to attend your annual meetings, just as you attend ours! To that end, we will contact you in the near future to determine whether you would like an NRC representative to join you. And of course, NRC welcomes your suggestions and ideas about how we can best serve you and the elders in your congregation.

Staffing and Financial Stability

NRC received the *Northfield News* 2023 Readers' Choice for Best Senior Living/Retirement setting. We credit this honor to our committed staff in all departments. As one resident commented, "We are so fortunate to have such a talented and friendly staff. They are so willing to help in many ways, as well as bending an ear to listen to our concerns. They make living here a pleasure!"

Since January, 62 new employees have joined NRC. Twenty of them have received training at NRC and have become certified nursing assistants. We are always recruiting new talent and offer a market-based competitive compensation and benefits package.

Our financial situation continues to improve as we make strides in occupancy and continue to manage our expenses effectively.

Your Contributions to NRC

Again, thank you for your involvement with NRC—for your many volunteer contributions and for your financial support which helps to strengthen our Spiritual Care department and employee and resident assistance funds. We look forward to our collaboration in 2024 and to welcoming you to our annual meeting in April.

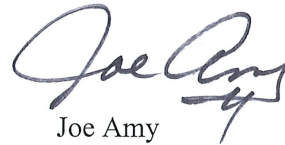
Wishing you a blessed Advent and Christmastide,



A William Nelson
Chair of the Board of Directors



Tom Nielsen
President & CEO



Joe Amy
Chair of the Church
and Community Relations Committee

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Son of God, Eternal Savior

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

1 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,
2 As you, Lord, have lived for oth - ers, so may we for oth - ers live.
3 Come, O Christ, and reign a - mong us, King of love and Prince of peace;
4 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,

Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race,
Free - ly have your gifts been grant - ed; free - ly may your ser - vants give.
hush the storm of strife and pas - sion, bid its cru - el dis - cords cease.
Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race:

you our head, who, throned in glo - ry, for your own will ev - er plead:
Yours the gold and yours the sil - ver, yours the wealth of land and sea;
By your pa - tient years of toil - ing, by your si - lent hours of pain,
by your pray - ing, by your will - ing that your peo - ple should be one,

fill us with your love and pit - y, heal our wrong, and help our need.
we but stew - ards of your boun - ty held in sol - emn trust will be.
quench our fe - vered thirst of plea - sure, stem our self - ish greed of gain.
grant, oh, grant our hope's fru - i - tion: here on earth your will be done.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 655

Text: Somerset C. Lowry

Music: IN BABILONE, Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse Boerenliedjes en Contradansen, 1710;

arr. Julius Röntgen

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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 [ELCA.org/SOFIA](https://elca.org/SOFIA).

