

Minutes
Congregational Council
St. John's Lutheran Church
Tuesday, March 25th, 2025

Members: Pastor Pam Fickenscher, Pastor Jonathan Davis, President Michelle Kramer-Prevost, President Elect Paul Beck, Treasurer Judd Lohmann, Secretary Steve Reece, Council Members Cheryl Buck, Jill Enestvedt, Dan Hanson, Andrea Hoff, Eric Johnsrud, Susan Lohmann, Maggie Odell

Present: Pastor Pam Fickenscher, Pastor Jonathan Davis, President Michelle Kramer-Prevost, President Elect Paul Beck, Secretary Steve Reece, Council Members Cheryl Buck, Jill Enestvedt, Dan Hanson, Andrea Hoff, Eric Johnsrud, Susan Lohmann, Maggie Odell, Adam Loy (representing Children's Ministry and Education Board), Kristin Partlo (Director of Ministry with Youth and Families)

Absent: Judd Lohmann

President Michelle Kramer-Prevost called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Pastor Pam Fickenscher offered a devotional based Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Strength to Love*, a collection of sermons on the topic of nonviolence.

Eric Johnsrud made a motion, seconded by Cheryl Buck, for approval of the February Council Minutes (with one minor correction regarding a date). Motion passed.

1. Financial Report

An update from Treasurer Judd Lohman was presented in written form [see addendum #1]

2. Discussion Items

a. The Worship and Arts Board and the Property and Grounds Board offered suggestions for the disposition of the Maakestad eagle sculpture, which currently resides in the entranceway. This discussion item was moved to an action item (see below).

b. The Property and Grounds Board brought two items to the Council for consideration. 1) Vern Koester would like to have St. John's furniture (pews, tables, chairs, etc.) removed from storage in his barn. Council suggested several possibilities and prevailed upon Dan Hanson to explore them. 2) Barberry bushes on the west side of church were planted as a deterrent for activity near the grates. This has not worked. Property and Grounds has been considering removal since gardeners complain about their thorns. Council concurred that the bushes should be removed.

c. The Adult Ministry and Education Board sought some clarification of its fundamental role and purpose vis-à-vis the by-laws: is this board primarily charged with developing opportunities for fellowship or for adult education? Pastor Pam Fickenscher offered the historical perspective that this board is a combination of what were once two distinct boards – Adult Education and Adult Fellowship – so the current board is indeed charged with both. In this respect, the Children’s Ministry and Education Board and the Youth Ministry and Education Board are analogous (i.e., they are charged with both).

Maggie Odell reported that the Adult Ministry and Education Board did not see its activities as falling in line with all the items listed in the bylaws, some of which have either been taken on by staff, or another board, or no longer exist. Council members suggested that these same issues were arising among other boards and that they should be taken up in a general revision of the bylaws. It was agreed that the descriptions of board responsibilities in the bylaws should be shorter and less specific. Cheryl Buck offered a possible template in the form of the following revision to the Evangelism and Communication Board Charter:

The Evangelism and Communications Board is responsible for outreach and communication efforts that share the Gospel with the wider community and inform both members and the public about congregational programs and services. The board works to ensure that the congregation is actively engaged in evangelism, member support, and effective communication.

Key Focus Areas:

*Evangelism & Outreach
Member Engagement
Communication & Public Relations*

Since changes in bylaws require a congregational vote, it was agreed that final revisions to the bylaws be completed at least sixty days before the congregational meeting in January of 2026. Board chairs agreed to devise drafts of guidelines for their boards by September of 2025. Cheryl Buck volunteered to create a spreadsheet that all boards could use.

d. Business Management Board proposed to discuss the processes for filling in for absent staff members (not just financial considerations). This item was not addressed at this meeting.

e. The Evangelism and Communication Board Charter wished to brainstorm about items for Foundation Funding: St. John’s Hall revamp to make it more welcoming (lighting, sound, and AV); donation to the KYMN Radio Tower; a Community Evangelism/Outreach Event. It was observed that the LED lighting in Boe Chapel might provide a model for the lighting in St. John’s Hall. It was suggested that both Foundation funds and Sustaining Grace funds for capital improvements might be used for these project. This brought up the question of how to access Foundation funds, about \$40,000 of which is currently available and undesignated. It was agreed

that clearer guidelines for accessing Foundation funds needed to be crafted and that this should be a topic of discussion at the next Council meeting.

f. The church's mortgage is about to be retired. Council brainstormed about ways to celebrate this, probably between services on Sunday, May 18th. Suggestions included: a slide show of photos from before and after the renovations; honoring leaders of the Building Committee and of the Debt Retirement Campaign; burning the mortgage papers; baking and consuming a cake shaped like a mortgage document. An *ad hoc* planning committee was formed: Andrea Hoff agreed to spearhead the efforts, and Cheryl Buck and Susan Lohmann agreed to assist.

3. Action Items

a. KYMN has raised \$32,500 of its \$35,000 campaign goal. Jill Enestvedt made a motion, seconded by Cheryl Buck, to "close the gap" by contributing \$2,500 from undesignated memorials. Motion carried.

b. Maggie Odell made a motion, seconded by Jill Enestvedt, to move the Maakestad eagle sculpture outside to the Columbarium, where it will be secured to a base. Motion passed.

4. Pastors' Reports

a. Pastor Fickenscher and Pastor Davis [see addendum #2]

5. Old Business

none

6. New Business

a. In response to a request by a political party to rent space at St. John's for a town hall meeting, the Council, after a spirited discussion, determined that it was not appropriate for the church to rent space to political parties. This does not, of course, preclude the church from hosting all manner of events that might be defined by some as being "political."

President Michelle Kramer-Prevost adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

7. Future Dates

Board Meetings: Tuesday, April 8th, 7 pm

Council Meeting: Tuesday, April 22nd, 7 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Reece
Secretary

Addendum #1: Treasurer's Report

NOTES: St. John's January and February 2025 Treasurers Financial Report

I've included the January Financial Report in this packet, but the focus of my comments will be on February and February YTD.

Total Operating Income is \$25k above budget for the month of February and \$7k above budget YTD.

- Offering:
 - o February offering was \$12k above budget.
 - o YTD offering is (\$18k) below budget.
 - o 2025 YTD offering actuals through February are virtually identical to 2024 offering through February.
- Other Income
 - o YTD "Other Income" is \$8k higher than budget. \$18k of interest from CDs was deposited in February. This amount was a bit higher than expected. (the principal amounts for these CDs were rolled over for another year). Also, due to the positive response of the Sustaining Grace Capital Campaign, funds have come in more heavily weighted in the first year. This has led to the checking account interest being higher than expected.
 - o Very few Designated and Foundation Funds have been released so for this year, these items are almost (\$12k) below budget.

Total Operating Expense is (\$11k) below budget for the month of February, and (\$29k) below budget YTD.

- Personnel is (\$19k) below budget YTD through February. There has been a lag in the reporting for 2025 salary increases. This is expected to be brought up to date, retroactively, in March.
- All other Board expense categories are close to budget as we are just two months into the year.

Net Income/(loss)

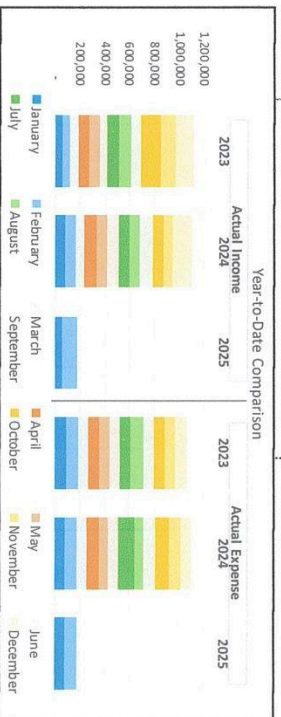
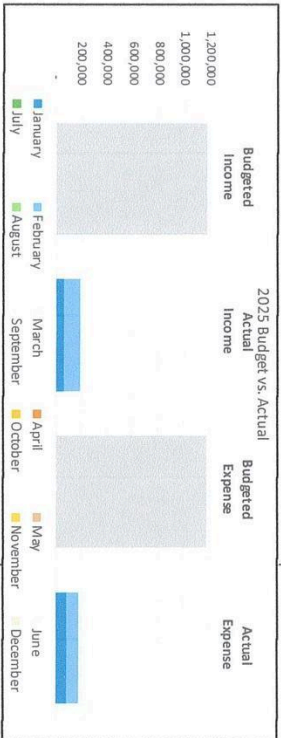
- The Net Income YTD through February is \$6K above budget.

There are no particular areas of concern through February. There has been great progress in getting the 2025 financial reporting up to date. There might be a few minor adjustments yet, but I expect March reporting to be ready by early on a timely basis.

St John's Lutheran Church
Budget Report
February 2025

BUDGET SUMMARY

	This Month			Higher / Lower	Year-to-Date			Higher / Lower	Annual				Prior Years Comparison		
	Budget	Actual	(Lower)		Budget	Actual	(Lower)		Total Budget	YTD Actual	Budget Remaining	% Spent	2023	YTD Actual 2024	2025
Operating Income															
Offering	88,333	100,368	12,034		176,667	159,228	(18,439)		1,060,000	158,228	901,772	15%	111,671	158,328	158,228
Other Gifts	1,500	1,127	(373)		3,000	1,992	(1,008)		18,000	1,992	16,008	11%	1,325	2,427	1,992
Other Income	11,417	19,662	8,246		12,833	20,984	8,151		27,000	20,984	6,016	78%	1,430	1,507	20,984
Release from Designated Funds	5,129	665	(4,464)		10,259	665	(9,594)		61,553	665	60,888	1%	210	800	665
Release from Foundation	1,014	-	(1,014)		2,028	-	(2,028)		12,165	-	12,165	0%	-	-	-
Total Operating Income	107,393	121,822	14,429		204,786	181,868	(22,918)		1,178,718	181,868	996,850	15%	114,635	163,062	181,868
Operating Expense															
Personnel	68,451	57,938	(10,512)		134,086	114,885	(19,201)		790,442	114,885	675,557	15%	114,400	115,509	114,885
Boards:															
Adult Ministry & Education	567	775	208		1,133	775	(358)		6,800	775	6,025	11%	555	374	775
Benevolence & Social Concerns	8,275	7,000	(1,275)		16,550	12,000	(4,550)		99,300	12,000	87,300	12%	10,000	10,000	12,000
Children's Ministry & Education	804	313	(491)		1,608	993	(615)		9,650	993	8,657	10%	1,557	1,764	993
Evangelism & Communication	1,167	3,067	1,900		2,333	3,067	734		14,000	3,067	10,933	22%	3,118	4,198	3,067
Faith & Health	129	-	(129)		258	53	(205)		1,550	53	1,497	3%	81	149	53
Property & Grounds	7,458	9,474	2,016		14,917	15,446	529		89,500	15,446	74,054	17%	29,985	16,728	15,446
Stewardship	508	943	434		1,017	1,263	247		6,100	1,263	4,837	21%	919	912	1,263
Worship, Music & Arts	3,375	1,802	(573)		4,750	2,055	(2,695)		28,500	2,055	26,445	7%	1,252	2,151	2,055
Youth Ministry & Education	1,842	229	(1,613)		3,683	585	(3,098)		22,100	585	21,515	3%	455	803	585
Business Management	6,085	6,648	562		12,171	14,276	2,105		73,024	14,276	58,748	20%	10,106	10,809	14,276
Debt Service	5,950	5,800	(150)		11,900	11,600	(300)		24,000	11,600	12,400	48%	11,600	11,600	11,600
Other Expense	1,014	-	(1,014)		2,028	-	(2,028)		12,165	-	12,165	0%	-	835	-
Total Operating Expense	104,625	93,989	(10,636)		206,434	176,998	(29,436)		1,177,131	176,998	1,000,133	15%	184,086	175,832	176,998
Net income / (loss)	2,768	27,833	25,065		(1,648)	4,870	6,518		1,587	4,870			(69,451)	(12,770)	4,870

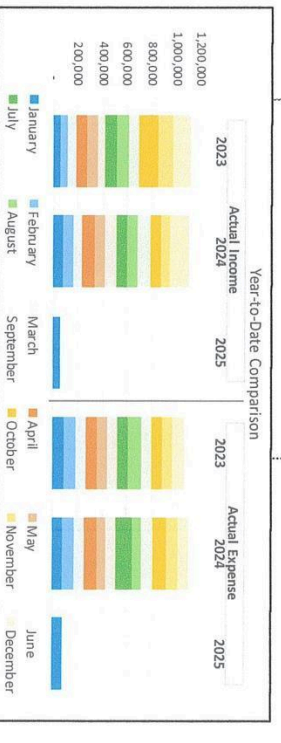
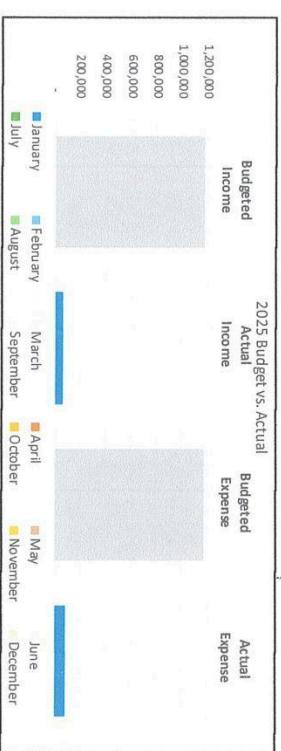


St John's Lutheran Church
Budget Report
January 2025

BUDGET SUMMARY

	This Month			Higher / (Lower)	Year-to-Date			Higher / (Lower)	Annual				Prior Years Comparison		
	Budget	Actual	(Lower)		Budget	Actual	(Lower)		Total Budget	YTD Actual	Budget Remaining	% Spent	2023 YTD Actual	2024	2025
Operating Income															
Offering	88,333	57,860	(30,473)		88,333	57,860	(30,473)		1,060,000	57,860	1,002,140	5%	56,690	82,417	57,860
Other Gifts	1,500	865	(635)		1,500	865	(635)		18,000	865	17,135	5%	1,005	620	865
Other Income	1,417	1,321	(95)		1,417	1,321	(95)		27,000	25,679	1,321	5%	1,090	682	1,321
Release from Designated Funds	5,129	-	(5,129)		5,129	-	(5,129)		61,553	-	61,553	0%	-	-	-
Release from Foundation	1,014	-	(1,014)		1,014	-	(1,014)		12,165	-	12,165	0%	-	-	-
Total Operating Income	97,393	60,046	(37,347)		97,393	60,046	(37,347)		1,178,718	60,046	1,118,672	5%	58,725	83,719	60,046

Operating Expense															
Personnel	65,636	56,947	(8,688)		65,636	56,947	(8,688)		790,442	56,947	733,495	7%	55,416	54,092	56,947
Boards:															
Adult Ministry & Education	567	-	(567)		567	-	(567)		6,800	-	6,800	0%	313	-	-
Benevolence & Social Concerns	8,275	5,000	(3,275)		8,275	5,000	(3,275)		99,300	94,300	5,000	5%	5,000	5,000	5,000
Children's Ministry & Education	804	680	(124)		804	680	(124)		9,650	8,970	8,970	7%	1,302	639	680
Evangelism & Communication	1,167	-	(1,167)		1,167	-	(1,167)		14,000	-	14,000	0%	817	1,275	-
Faith & Health	129	53	(76)		129	53	(76)		1,550	53	1,497	3%	81	149	53
Property & Grounds	7,458	5,971	(1,487)		7,458	5,971	(1,487)		89,500	83,529	5,971	7%	16,835	9,404	5,971
Stewardship	508	321	(188)		508	321	(188)		6,100	5,779	5,779	5%	383	331	321
Worship Music & Arts	2,375	254	(2,121)		2,375	254	(2,121)		28,500	254	28,246	1%	645	433	254
Youth Ministry & Education	1,842	356	(1,485)		1,842	356	(1,485)		22,100	21,744	21,744	2%	225	283	356
Business Management	6,085	7,628	1,542		6,085	7,628	1,542		73,024	7,628	65,396	10%	6,035	6,109	7,628
Debt Service	5,950	5,800	(150)		5,950	5,800	(150)		24,000	5,800	18,200	24%	5,800	5,800	5,800
Other Expense	1,014	-	(1,014)		1,014	-	(1,014)		12,165	-	12,165	0%	-	586	-
Total Operating Expense	101,810	83,010	(18,800)		101,810	83,010	(18,800)		1,177,131	83,010	1,094,121	7%	92,850	84,080	83,010
Net Income / (Loss)	(4,417)	(22,963)	(18,547)		(4,417)	(22,963)	(18,547)		1,587	(22,963)			(34,125)	(362)	(22,963)



Addendum #2: Pastors' Report

Council report

March 25, 2025

Official Acts:

Funeral for Gloria Rust, March 8

Staff

Kristin has settled into her new schedule of 10 hours a week of Clinical Pastoral Education. Three afternoons a week she is at NRC, and on Wednesday mornings she receives the supervisory/ education portion of the program.

Leah has returned to full-time and we have successfully closed out 2024. There continue to be some corrections in 2025 for where offerings are allocated, but we are on the right path to on-time reporting again. Angie has been helpful in doing some additional database work to keep the office work on track while Leah eased back in.

Worship life

Lenten Wednesday attendance has been strong, even with one Ash Wednesday service canceled due to the blizzard on March 5. Because spring breaks all precede Holy Week this year by at least a week, we hope for robust Easter attendance this year.

Worship staff, especially Nathan, have been involved in the more-complicated-than-usual planning for John Ferguson's memorial on March 29 at St. Olaf.

2026 sabbatical

The grant proposal to the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program was submitted on March 12. We will hear back at the end of August. Thanks to Michelle Kramer-Prevost and Judd Lohmann for their parts in getting all the necessary numbers and endorsements.

Adult Education and Lenten Book Read

The Adult Education board hosted another series of forums that were well attended – two on difficult stories from the book of Genesis, and one on introducing the congregation to the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The Lenten Book Read – *Dietrich Bonhoeffer for Armchairs Theologians* - is quite popular this year, with three groups of 15+ plus people each gathering once a week to discuss the readings.

High School OWL

Every two years, St. John's hosts a comprehensive human sexuality program for high school youth, led by Pastor Jonathan and Tamara Jackman. This program started in early March and will go through April 13th. This year we have 14 youth participating in this program.