

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



Bethany Lutheran Church

We **INVITE** all; We **GROW** in faith;
We **GO** to share God's love and grace.

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



35 W. Messenger Street, Rice Lake, WI 54868, 715-234-9028

Website: www.bethanyricelake.org

Facebook: Bethany Lutheran—Rice Lake, WI



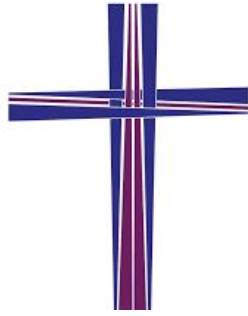


Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Table of Contents	
Message from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson	
Agenda	1
Minutes of January 29, 2023 Annual Meeting	2-3
Minutes of December 17, 2023 Special Meeting	3
Council President's Report	4
Ministry Team Reports	
Lead Pastor—Rev. Dr. Arthur C. Bergren	5
Visitation Pastor—Rev. Sue Eidahl	6
Director of Worship, Music & Member Engagement—Amy Brekke	7
Director of Education, Youth & Congregational Ministries—Angie Buchli	8
Business Coordinator—Jenny Landes	9
Committee Reports	
Altar Guild	10
Caring Community	10
Invite & Welcome	11
Stewardship	11
Mission Outreach	12
Personnel	13
Property Management	14
Reaching Out	15
WELCA—Women of Bethany	15
Worship & Music	15
Financial Reports	
Balance Sheet	16
Designated Funds	17
Budgeted Financial Statement	18-19
Financial Secretary's Report	20
Good Samaritan Fund	21
Trust Fund	22
Membership Statistics & Pastoral Acts	23



A Simpler, Humbler, and Bolder Church¹

Dear Members and Friends of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

It is time for your congregation's annual meeting! This is a great opportunity to reflect on the past year of faithful ministry. Now is the time to ask the BIG questions! How were we faithful in ministry? How were we faithful in participating in God's simple mission to love our neighbor? Now is the time to celebrate how God's Spirit has inspired your ministry! Give thanks to God and celebrate for the good that your congregation has accomplished!

Now is also the time to tell the truth about your ministry. How has your congregation fallen short and not been faithful to God's will? Lacked energy, a sense of purpose or mission? Now is the time to humbly tell the truth if your congregation has lost its focus or has little energy for God's work.

We all need to take an honest look in the rear view mirror of the last year and ask how have we been faithful and how have we failed to be faithful to our baptismal promises. Then we can boldly move into the New Year 2024 asking how we can with God's help do better.

The Church of England took a long look into the rear view mirror and with much prayer has discerned that moving forward they will strive to be a Simpler, Humbler and Bolder Church in the future. The Church of England described their vision for the future in this way:

Simpler, humbler, bolder are virtues we believe God is calling from us at this point in our history. They run through the vision and shape all we do and all that we are.

- **Simpler** because we are not as big a church as we used to be
- **Humbler** because we are facing our failures, and this is not easy.
- **Bolder** because the love of Christ compels us. We have a gospel to proclaim, and we live and minister in a world of much pain and confusion.

I believe these three virtues could also help us in the coming year. I invite your councils and leaders to lean into these questions in 2024:

1. **Simpler:** How can we simplify our structure so more time and energy can be spent on loving our neighbors and joining in God's mission in our community? How can we focus on what is really important and let go of the trivial or unnecessary?
2. **Humbler:** What isn't working? How have we fallen short? We can't do everything we use to do so what ONE thing can we do for Jesus? How can we work with other churches, denominations in our community?
3. **Bolder:** How can your congregation be braver and bolder in sharing the good news about Jesus in a hurting world? In prophetic witness to justice issues in our world? In working for right relationships with our neighbors and all of creation?

I thank my God for every remembrance of you, always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete^[sc] it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:3-6

Friends, I am truly grateful for your partnership in the gospel and all the ways you are faithful in ministry. I invite you to move joyfully, simply, humbly and boldly into God's future in 2024.
Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

¹ [Jesus Christ Centred and Shaped | The Church of England](#) (accessed December 22, 2023)

Bethany Lutheran Church

We **INVITE** all; We **GROW** in faith;
We **GO** to share God's love and grace.

Agenda

Sunday, January 28, 2024, 9:00 am

Welcome

Opening Prayer

Agenda Approval

Approval of Minutes of January 30, 2022 Annual Meeting

Approval of Minutes of December 17, 2023 Special Meeting

Report of the Lead Pastor

Committee Reports

Trust Fund Report

Financial Reports

Election of Council Members

Election of Trust Fund Members

Election of Nominating Committee

Election of Synod Assembly Representatives

June 7 & 8, 2024 – UW -Eau Claire Davies Center

3 Delegates

Election of Luther Park Representatives for 2025

Luther Park 2024 Annual Meeting – TBD

3 Delegates

Approval of the 2024 Budget

Other Business

Annual Meeting Date & Time – January 26, 2025 – 9:00 a.m.

Closing Comments

Adjournment

Closing Prayer

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Bethany Lutheran Church

January 29, 2023 - 9:00 a.m.

Meeting was held in the sanctuary as well as via ZOOM.

Andy Dennison began the meeting shortly after 9:00 a.m. with some housekeeping notes. Specifically reminding all of our protocol for hybrid meetings (Sanctuary and ZOOM).

Quorum has been reached. We needed a minimum of 90 people. (94 in person, 19 on ZOOM)

Pastor Arthur shared an opening prayer.

Agenda Approval- Hearing no additions, agenda passes by unanimous consent.

Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes from January 30, 2022- Discussion-none. Hearing no additions, minutes approved by unanimous consent.

Committee Reports-No discussion on reports.

Trust Fund Report-Roxie Olsen, chair of the Trust Fund summarized this past year, 2022. The Trust Fund distributed 10 grants totaling \$29,029. The market was down this year and at one point the fund was down almost \$100,000. It has come back some, gaining about \$28,000 in January. In November, the Trust Fund received an anonymous donation of \$100,000. Thanks expressed for this donation. The fund is currently around \$678,000. We will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Trust Fund during 2023. Since its inception, the fund has provided approximately \$1,100,000 to worthy causes.

Financial Report-Andy asked for questions. None heard.

Election of Council Members-Sonja Wilson, chair of the nominating committee announced the members running for Council. They are Jack Berkseth, Mike Diercks, and Jodi Babineau. Three calls for nominations from the floor. Hearing none from the floor, voting began. Paper ballots were collected from members in attendance and Zoom members voted by poll.

Election of Nominating Committee-We need five members on the nominating committee. Either Jennifer Nelson and Andy Dennison will be on the committee as outgoing council members. Four nominations from the floor. Adam Bever nominates Julie Bever. Pastor Arthur nominates Dave Wilson. Julie Bever nominates Ric Brekke. Dave Myre nominates Mike Bock. All nominees accept their nomination. Call for any additional nominations. Hearing none, nominations closed. Voice vote, motion carries.

Election of Synod Assembly Representatives-Meeting to be held hybrid on April 23, 2023 with the in person site being here at Bethany. We need three delegates. Sue Zahrbock and Peg Martin are each nominated. Joan Gerland nominates herself. Discussion. Should we have a male delegate? We have always tried to have gender equity. This is true but it is not in the constitution as a requirement. Eldon Vrieze moves to accept the three delegates. Julie Bever seconded. Discussion-none. Voice vote, motion carries.

Election of Luther Park Representatives for February 2024 Luther Park annual meeting-We need three representatives. Call for nominations. Audrey Kusilek nominates herself. Bill Evans nominates himself and his wife, Bea Evans. Dave Wilson motions to accept the slate. Amy Pelle seconded. Discussion-none. Voice vote, motion passes.

Minutes of the Jan. 29, 2023 Annual Meeting (continued)

Approval of Budget– Ric Brekke motions to approve the 2023 budget. Bill Evans seconded. Discussion-Jim Kusilek asks Pastor Arthur to speak. Pastor Arthur agrees to speak and notes that our congregation has come together, stepped up its giving and the budget looks much better going into this year. He and the council are looking ahead and will be working on strategic planning. Another good sign is we are attracting new members. He also thanked the staff for all of their work and accomplishments. Any more discussion? Kevin Jacobson remarked that there are many positive things happening right now. Voice vote for the 2023 budget, motion carries.

Council Election Results-Jack Berkseth, Mike Diercks and Jodi Babineau.

Other Business-Deberra Slagstad recognized and thanked the three council members who served on the council and have fulfilled their terms. Andy Dennison, Jennifer Nelson and Pam Crouse. Andy thanked Deb Slagstad and the staff for their help this past year.

Next Annual Meeting-January 28, 2024.

Adjournment-Bun Hanson moved to adjourn. Dave Myre seconded. Voice vote, motion carries.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Minutes of the December 17, 2023 Special Meeting

Bethany Lutheran Church Special Congregational Meeting

Mission: We INVITE all; We GROW in Faith; We GO to share God's love and grace

Minutes from December 17, 2023 9:00 a.m. (prepared by Wanda Bock)

Opening prayer by Pastor Arthur

Audrey Kusilek, council president, called the meeting to order and announced we have a quorum. She gave a brief summary of our ministries this past year and where we are at with budget and pledges. She stated the council is asking the congregation to approve a \$250,000 line of credit using real estate as collateral at Dairy State Bank to help pay for two new boilers and a new air conditioning condenser unit with the remaining funds to cover any budget shortfalls. She asked for a motion to approve a \$250,000 line of credit using real estate as collateral at Dairy State Bank. Motion by Bruce Markgren. Seconded by Marty Haglund. Call for questions. Pastor Arthur stated he supports obtaining a line of credit. A few questions were asked regarding the boilers and air conditioning unit. Audrey was able to answer these questions and also gave an update where we are with insurance for the roof repairs necessitated by the hail last summer. Thanks was expressed to the property committee and to Audrey for all of their work on this. Call for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Council President's Report

Bethany Members,

In Jeremiah 29:11 it is written, *"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."* There is hope for the future of Bethany and all of our members.

Bethany has been blessed by being led by Pastor Arthur and Pastor Sue and a wonderful staff in 2023. They have led us through some difficult times, but we are entering 2024 strong. The walls of Bethany have allowed our youth to strengthen their faith and have allowed us adults to be positive influencers in their lives. I hope that all of us identify our God-given gifts and talents and find ways to share them to continue to Shine Jesus' Light in Rice Lake.

It has been a great honor to serve as the Bethany Council President this past year. I was blessed to be able to serve next to wonderful and faithful leaders. I want to thank my fellow Council members for their hard work and diligence. I also want to thank the chairs and members of the many Bethany Committees who kept our ministries moving forward and our building operational. As I continue to serve on the Council, I want everyone to know that I am always open to visiting about any concerns.

Our church will need to make decisions on our deferred maintenance items in 2024. We will need the support of all of our members to carry out these projects. Some of us will provide monetary resources, some of us will provide our time to carry out these projects, some of us will provide our lifelong faith to pray over these projects and some of us will leave lasting legacies to

Bethany to carry out future projects. Bethany members – you are all in one or more of these categories and all of them, just like all of you, are integral to the life of Bethany Lutheran Church.

Thanks be to God.

Audrey Kusilek, Council President

Lead Pastor Arthur Bergren's Report

Looking back on my annual report from last year, I had high hopes that Bethany would engage in a strategic planning process this year. It was not to be. Transition became the focal point of my ministry at Bethany in 2023.

In early 2023, we received the resignations of Dawn Paul, Amanda Baker and Leah Hullinger. I wish these women the very best for their futures. As you might imagine, losing three employees within the same month created an enormous hole in our ministry.

There were three key people who ensured Bethany did not miss a beat. Both Amy Brekke and Angie Buchli stepped up and filled the gap on the staff side. Deb Slagstad fulfilled the duties of the director of Church Business. All three of those souls were heroic. Without them, Bethany would have struggled. With them, Bethany thrived.

We then moved into a new staffing pattern. We welcomed Leatha Shores, Jenny Landes and Andrea Stakston to staff. We also benefit from the services of Amanda Andrews with Andrews Accounting Care. We are blessed to have these women of faith on Bethany's staff. Their love of God, work ethic and dedication to Bethany blend easily with our current staff.

Speaking of staff, it's an honor to serve with Pr. Sue Eidahl. Her history at Bethany, preaching and love of ministry is a true blessing. Her gifts for ministry are self-evident. I am thankful for Pr. Sue's presence on staff.

I finished teaching the 16-part adult education offering, *The Greatest Story*. I enjoyed walking through all of scripture with the participants. Over the summer, I offer a text study of the upcoming weekend's Biblical Texts. Watch for a new offering beginning in the fall of 2024.

On personal note, Jennifer and I travelled back to my alma mater, The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in late May. The event was the final worship service in their former building at 1100 East 55th Street. They have relocated to the top floor of another seminary not far from their old building. It was good to look around one final time.

It's good to get to know the membership of Bethany better. I have enjoyed our conversations. I have appreciated learning your family stories. I have been grateful to meet you in your homes. You are a great church filled with great people.

I am thankful for Bethany's staff and council. They put in long hours. They work so very hard. They love Bethany Lutheran Church. They are deserving of our appreciation. Thank you staff and council!

Lastly, I am thankful for my wife Jennifer. She is a true blessing to me. We continue to enjoy our lake home and the good people of Bethany Lutheran Church.

Pr. Arthur

Visitation Pastor Sue Eidahl's Report

I have been your Visitation Pastor for over two years now. It is hard to believe. This past year has been full of programming, preaching, pastoral care, and leadership. I love what I do. Thank you for your support, prayers, participation, and offerings that make all that I do possible. Thanks be to God! It has been busy but fruitful.

I have been grateful for the opportunity to partner with so many of you in building and equipping the scaffolding for pastoral care at Bethany Lutheran Church during this program year. My responsibilities have included providing personal and individual care in the form of visitation, pastoral meetings, and a listening ear. But I have also focused on supporting the development of structures to support pastoral and congregational care. I sit on the Caring Community Team which gathers monthly to provide input about care-giving strengths and weaknesses at Bethany, and to work together to think through implementation. Much of what we develop together comes from those discussions.

Here are a few highlights in the main areas of ministry:

Visitation: Home Communion, Hospital, Checking In

Worship: Bethany, Brentwood, Heritage Lakeside, Dove, Wild Church

Education: Club 9, VBS, Adult VBS, Bible Study

What I will share with you is my deep appreciation to you for calling me to be your visitation pastor. It has been my joy to preach, teach, share the sacraments, share the struggles, share the grief, and share Christ by your side.

Bethany is a congregation with deep resources for compassion and caregiving. I am grateful for the opportunity to walk with you all as we grow together in capacity and intention, following Jesus.

Pastor Sue

Director of Worship, Music & Member Engagement—Amy Brekke

Dear Bethany Members,
Grace and peace to you.

2023 WORSHIP MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS:

As Director of Worship, I work with the pastors to plan and execute worship opportunities; recruit and schedule worship assistants, research new ideas and oversee worship advertising. Bethany offers three weekly services, Saturdays at 5:30 pm and Sunday at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion is offered at all. Outside the weekly worship schedule, special services are during Advent and Lent, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter. The 10:00 a.m. service moved outdoors during the summer months, June – August.

2022 MUSIC MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS:

As the Director of Music, I oversee all operations of music ministry; including stipend employees that serve as accompanists and directors and volunteer musicians. Bethany's Music Ministry encompasses all ages (3 yr – adult) along with special programs and various styles of music for worship. Thank you to the many, many volunteers that keep this ministry vibrant.

Current musical groups that rehearse on a regular basis:

Kids Choir, Bethany Choir, Worship Praise Teams, Middle School Hand Bells, Vesper Bells, Bethany Belles

Special musical groups that meet on a "less-regular" basis:

Hallelujah Chorus on Easter, Memorial Day Choir, HS Handbells, HS Praise Team, Christmas Choir, Bethany Brass

Bethany is blessed to have many talented musicians in its music ministry. As this ministry has been blessed, it is our hope that we may inspire and bless others. It is only through generous acts that we can truly be blessed. In 2023, we put this into practice by including special offerings at our major musical events.

Sunday School Christmas Program - Under the direction of Amy Pelle, thirty-five of our elementary students presented "Shine Jesus' Light". In honor of their work, the students asked congregation members to consider offering a special gift to "God's Global Barnyard". In response more than \$2,200 was collected! The students choose which animals would be purchased with the funds.

Bethany Christmas Concert - Over 80 Bethany and community musicians came together on December 17 to present a Christmas musical celebration entitled "Jesus, the Light of the World" An offering was collected with half of the donations being used to incur expenses and half to support musical youth programs in our community. Total collection exceeded \$1,700. This year's Christmas concert will be Sunday, December 15, 2024

From the 2022 Christmas concert, \$1000.00 was donated to Kids From WI in 2023.

Bethany continues to open its space to music organizations for rehearsals and performances: Red Cedar Symphony Orchestra, Northwinds British Brass, Piano Fest, and piano recitals.

The majority of Bethany's Music Ministry, excluding salaries, is funded through the generous designated donations and memorials of the congregation. Thank you!

Beyond my day-to-day responsibilities, I serve on two special program groups, Bethany Arts and The Good News-Break; two committees, the Worship & Music and Missions Outreach (acting chair); and president of the Heart of the North conference.

It is my sheer joy to serve in ministry with each of you.

In God's service,
Amy Brekke

Director of Education, Youth & Congregational Ministries—Angie Buchli

Education, Youth and Congregational Ministries are an integral part of Bethany. Our mission at Bethany is to promote discipleship through education, relationship building, fellowship, and service. We want to foster faith formation by making sure all receive an invitation to “Come and See”, to experience and learn about Jesus’ love for everyone and his light in the world, to become a part of Bethany and feel they are important and valued, and then equip them to go out and share that love with the world.

Education, youth and congregational ministry at Bethany takes much more than just the staff to carry out. We would not be able have our many education, youth and congregational ministry opportunities without wonderful Education Team and our host of amazing volunteers. A huge thank you to all of our Education Team members, ushers, greeters, worship assistant, Sunday School teachers, Here We Stand Guides, Club 9 mentors, Vacation Bible School leaders and guides, bus drivers, and chaperones and more! We greatly appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity of your time! Thanks to these volunteers, Bethany is able to offer and support many opportunities for Christian education, youth and congregational ministries, and service opportunities.

Reflection of 2023:

Staffed Nursery (September through May)
Sunday school (ages 3 years -5th grade) weekly September through May
Celebrate Milestone Ministry (Kindergarten Bible Sunday, Frolic Frist Bibles for baptism, first communion)
Wednesday Afternoon Programming for HWS Students
Here We Stand confirmation on Wednesday evenings (September through April)
Club 9 Confirmation (September through May)
HS Youth Group – Tuesday mornings & Wednesday evenings
SS youth & families invited to show at Pablo (February 2023)
First Communion Class & Milestone (Spring 2023)
Palm Sunday & Easter breakfasts
Baccalaureate service, card bags, and blankets (from Women of Bethany) in May 2023
Stellar VBS June 12-15, 2023
French Fry Booth at Barron County Fair in July 2023
HS Summer Trip to synod youth gathering, “Journey” event at UWRF July 23-28, 2023
Adult VBS (August 2023)
Rally Sunday at Mommsen’s Harvest Hills Pumpkin Patch
Recruiting high school youth & adult leaders & fundraising for ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, July 2024
10th Grade Confirmation prep (final meeting, faith statements, meet with pastor & myself, rehearsal, affirmation of baptism service)
Community Halloween Hot-dog Event (October 2023)
All 10th Grade Confirmation students received individualized banners & crosses (October 29, 2023)
Prepare Ye Congregational Event (November 2023)
Sent care packages to college students (December 2023)
2023 Children’s Christmas Program
Promotion of youth (K-12th grade) being more involved in worship services (communion assistants, readers, ushers)
Synod Youth Events (Christ Jam & Synod Youth Board)
Congregational Breakfast between services on Christmas Program Sunday
Advent & Lent taking faith home activities for everyone

As always, it is both a pleasure and privilege to work with our congregation. It is my hope that education, youth and congregational ministries at Bethany provides opportunities for everyone to deepen and strengthen their relationship with God and each other so that they may grow in grace, faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Thank you for all of the thoughtfulness and generosity that has been given in support of education, youth and congregational ministries at Bethany. Without that we would not be able to equip people to shine Jesus’ light into the world.

—Angie Buchli

Business Coordinator—Jenny Landes

During 2023 the position of Bethany's "Director of Church Business" has gone through a major transition. The job has been divided into two new positions – Business Coordinator (Jenny Landes) and an outside accountant (Amanda Andrews of Andrews Accounting Care). Throughout a five-month period (March – July) Deberra Slagstad stepped up and worked with Amanda Andrews to establish processes and procedures to keep the church running, to facilitate the transition and trained Jenny when she started in August 2023. Pastor Arthur, the Church Council and the council's Transition Committee have provided leadership throughout this process.

The word "coordinator" really describes what this role has become (and will continue to become).

As a part-time position, it requires coordination with others on things like:

- Assisting Bethany congregation members.

- Collaborating with the Bethany staff in many ways.

- Organizing weekly offering & giving (that is not done online) together with the Financial Secretaries Susan Derro and Renee Swanson and then with the accountant.

- Working with vendors, researching & ordering supplies needed by the staff and the congregation.

- Organization for payment of the monthly bills and payroll along with the accountant and the treasurer, Wendy Markgren & Joe Erickson.

- Working with budget reports as needed by the staff, church council and its committees and keeping financial records.

- Compiling and distributing monthly council packets for their meetings.

The coordinator's focus is on keeping things running smoothly to facilitate the continued ministry of this great church. *"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow."* Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 We have set up a system of double checking involving at least two separate people, keeping paper and digital records and working together to help ensure financial strength. And as the position of Business Coordinator continues to evolve, we will continue to lift each other up as we all work together to take care of our church, congregation and community.

Respectfully submitted by

Jenny Landes

The Altar Guild of Bethany is a wonderful way for any Bethany member to serve our church. The work is light and quick but very important.

We continue to be the 'behind-the-scenes' group that sets the table for the Lord's Supper. Each week we prepare the communion elements, change the décor (paraments) to coincide with the church seasons of the church year. Over the last year, we have kept our beautiful altar prepared, kept the candles full of oil, and readied the communion elements each Saturday and Sunday. If you would like to know more about the décor – stop by the Sacristy on Sunday morning and we will be glad to share our work.

Please reach out to me if you are interested in joining our group.

Audrey Kusilek, Chair
Sue Finstad, Secretary

Caring Community

Caring committees can be the heart of our congregations. Bethany's Caring Community committee provides innovative services that let our congregation members and friends know they are valued. We are called to serve one another.

Bethany's Caring Community meets once a month. The meetings include prayer, personal check-ins, reports on visits, calls and who needs our help in our congregation. We have "care teams" that are ready to respond to specific needs and requests from our congregation that include:

Meal Team: Make a meal for special need – new baby, death, illness and more.

Respite Care: Help for the caregiver – a chance for the caregiver to get away for a short period of time.

Household Help: Yard work, light repairs.

Grief: Follow up companions – letters are sent out to a family member on the one-year anniversary of a death.

Card Writing: To write and send cards to homebound and people in need. Cards are sent out weekly.

Hauling and Moving: Trucks to help haul and move items and people to help with moving.

Homebound Communion: Volunteers visit and bring communion to homes, assisted living facilities or nursing homes. This is for members when temporary or permanent limitations prevent them from attending worship services. This year we had 22 recipients and just over 200 communions served.

Reaching Out Funeral Luncheons: Organizes and serves funeral luncheons.

Prayer Ministry: When a prayer request comes into the church, an email is sent to Bethany's prayer warriors. This is an opportunity to remember one another in prayer.

Prayer Shawls: Pick up some yarn, this is already purchased for you, and knit or crochet a shawl. Shawls are given to injured, grieving, sick and those in need of comfort.

The Caring Community coordinators have done the work to put the lists together. Now, for the Bethany members. We need your eyes and ears open to let us know who could use our help. Listen and watch for those among us who need us! We will make the connections and put a team into action! Please let Pastor Arthur, Pastor Sue, the office, or a Caring Community member know if you know of someone who could use our help.

Caring Community Team: Gail Weber, Pastor Sue, Monica Berkseth, Paulette Hanson, Kathy Swenson, Shirley Peterson and Pauli Storm

If you would like to be added to a team list to help, please contact the office or Gail Weber.

Invite & Welcome

2023 was a fun year for the Invite and Welcome Team! We had the opportunity to welcome new members to Bethany, not once, but twice last year! We hosted new member classes and a reception in both the Spring and Fall. Both events included lunches for the new member classes as well as treats on the day of the receptions so the congregation could get to know our newest members!

In addition, the Invite and Welcome team hosted one of the Lenten dinners in the Spring, which was a very nice opportunity to share some food and fellowship with one another. In the late Fall, we did a “Pop” Into Bethany outreach event where we passed out bags of popcorn during a vendor event at the Rice Lake Cedar Mall. Each of these bags had a sticker attached that personally invited the community to join us at Bethany for any of the holiday services, events, and programs. We passed out over 250 bags to members of the community! To end the year, a couple members of the Invite and Welcome Team assisted with cookies at the Prepare Ye event. This was a fun and creative way to add a sweet treat to this event and we enjoyed helping the others that took part.

This year, we welcomed a new council representative, Tammy Roberg, to our committee, as well as a new Bethany member, Laurie Chada. It has been wonderful having both of them on our team. As we begin this new year, we are already looking forward to welcoming a new crew of new Bethany members in January and February!

Thank you,

Kayelon Campbell Murphy, Chair

Stewardship

The 2023 Stewardship theme was “Grow 10 Percent”. This was a theme to show that stewardship is about gratitude and not guilt. With a 10 % increase in giving for all giving members we can realize that together we can do so much more than we can do alone to further God’s work. Stewardship is more than a fall campaign. God expects us to be generous through gifts of our time and our possessions every day. Together the continued practice of giving will continue to give Bethany strength to carry out God’s work.

-Kevin Jacobson, Chair

The Mission Outreach Committee (MOC) supports Bethany's mission statement through its mission work with an emphasis on serving neighbors outside the walls of Bethany. Current members are: Carol Kohlmeyer; Shirley Peterson; Joan Gerland; Pat McCann, council representative, and Amy Brekke, acting chairperson and staff representative. Any one interested in this area of ministry is more than welcome to join us. Contact any of the members for more information. Below are the ministries in which we are involved.

Bethany Missions Designated Fund Ending December 2022 \$4,409.40

Bethany Missions Designated Fund Ending December 2023 \$8,254.40

NOISY COLLECTIONS:

The MOC has organized a special collection of coins at all three weekend services when there are five Sundays in a month. The MOC chooses a ministry to be the recipient of the collection. MOC is happy to receive suggestions. The MOC reserves the right to make the final determination. 2023 collection totals:

January 29th – Pregnancy Help Center - \$496.00

April 30 – Dream Ship - \$551.00

July 29-30 - Mission Jamaica - \$577.51

October 28-29- Nature's Edge Therapy Center - \$227.49

December 9-10 – In conjunction with the SS Christmas Program – God's Global Barnyard \$2,306.26

The dates for the 2024 Noisy Collections: March 30-31, June 29-30, September 28-29, December 28-29

MISSION JAMAICA:

Bethany continues to support the Mission Jamaica ministry through financial and gift donations. Collections in 2023 included the second suitcase project. Mission Jamaica Garage Sale was held August 10-12.

TRUCK LOADING: Saturday, October 14, 2023 twenty five volunteers loaded the Lutheran World Relief trailer. A special thank you to Gary and Jane Dvorak and the United Parcel Service for use of their loading equipment. And, a special thank you to Deb Stange for tracking all the boxes and churches. In all, the volunteers loaded over 2,000 quilts, 108 personal care kits, 36 fabric kits, and 500 school kits! A special collection was taken during the quilt blessing to help cover shipping cost. Bethany members generously donated \$1,364.00!

CHRISTMAS DINNER: Audrey Kusilek, chair

The Bethany Christmas Dinner was again a success due to the wonderful Bethany members that made it a point to help decorate Fellowship Hall, prepare the food, serve the food, deliver meals and help with clean up. We served close to 120 people in Fellowship Hall, delivered 31 meals to households and another 25 to Law Enforcement personnell and medical workers. We had close to 40 meals that were packaged for takeout. The meals all included roast beef, turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, carrots, dinner roll, cranberries and pie. Thank you to Lehman's Supper Club for donating the potatoes. Cousins' Hide-A-Way allowed Bethany to purchase most of the food items at cost and SYSCO Food Service agreed to match 2022 prices. The meal is offered for anyone in the community at no cost but donations are accepted.

Christmas Dinner Funds	\$1,650
Women of the Bible Free Will offering	\$313
Christmas Dinner Donations	\$921
2023 Expenses	\$1,752
2023 Christmas Dinner Balance	\$1,132

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Brekke, acting chair for the Missions Outreach Committee

The Personnel Committee consists of four members including three congregational lay leaders and the council vice-president who functions as council representative. Pastor Arthur also attends the meetings.

Member terms are for three years (staggered) and begin after the January meeting. Typically, a member functions as chairperson during the second year of committee membership.

In 2023 the members were:

Gary Chilson: 3-year term ended December 2022. Gary, however, graciously continued to serve on the committee in 2023 to provide continuity going into a difficult year. Thank you Gary.

Bob Halverson: 3-year term ending December 2025. Bob will serve as Chairman in 2024.

Tom Lundquist: 3-year term ending December 2024. Served as Chairman in 2023.

The Committee typically met on the first Thursday of each month in 2023. We anticipate a reduction in committee business in 2024. Accordingly, the committee will schedule regular business meetings quarterly, but convene as necessary if special issues arise.

Key Accomplishments in 2023:

Completed the Employee Handbook review and revision process. Recommendations were approved by the council and a new edition of the Employee Handbook will be distributed.

Reviewed the employee vacation policy and made recommendations for revision which were approved by the council.

Developed job descriptions for newly created staff positions which became necessary after the resignation of three employees in early 2023. Because it was recognized that a reconfiguration of staff responsibilities would be a good idea, the committee worked in close association with the Employee Transition Committee, council president, and Lead Pastor in developing these position descriptions. We recognize and commend the work of Deb Slagstad (Employee Transition chair) and existing Bethany staff members as having been invaluable in this effort.

Personnel Committee Roles and Responsibilities (revised December 2023):

Principally, to advise the Church Council regarding policies which support and protect the interests of church staff and congregation. Policies are developed with input from the Pastor.

Provide oversight and maintenance of the Employee Handbook via a continual review process.

Assist with development of position descriptions as necessary.

Ensure that employee review is being conducted and recorded by the supervisor (Lead Pastor).

In special circumstances, the Chair may be asked by the Pastor or Council President to participate in meetings with an employee- for example, exit interviews.

Assist the council, if called upon, to provide research regarding issues affecting employee salaries, for example, COLA. Note, however, that the Personnel Committee is not responsible for supervision of employees, setting or adjusting salaries, hiring or dismissal of employees.

Recruitment of committee members.

Submitted by Tom Lundquist, Chair

The Property Committee had a challenging 2023. The committee meets monthly on the first Monday of the month at 6:00 PM in the Conference Room. The committee has worked hard over the past year to ensure that our building continues to perform at the highest level. The committee has completed a total of 9 large projects for the year.

Current committee members include the following -Shirley Bergthold, Ric Brekke, Dave Jacobs, Joel Kohlmeyer, Lynn Koob, Wendy Markgren, Keith Moffatt, Dave Myre, Russ Schnacky, and Eric Roethel (Committee Chair).

Project Highlights from 2023

- Bus Garage Door Trim Installation
- Sanctuary Plaster Repair and Painting
- Replacement of air conditioner condenser units for basement air handlers (R22 Refrigerant)
- Wall protection for upper and lower hallways coming out of the elevators
- Replacement of the Fire Supervisory Alarm system
- Repair of the Rooftop air handler for the Gathering Room
- East parking lot asphalt replacement
- West parking lot sealing and striping
- Church carpet cleaning
- 40+ General building maintenance projects

Looking ahead to 2024, the committee will focus on some larger projects for the church including the replacement of both 5 MBTU boilers, Office rooftop AC condenser unit, sidewalk repairs, potential condenser replacement for two more R22 condensers for air handlers, stain glass window restoration and many other projects as they are prioritized by the committee and church leadership team.

It has been a great pleasure to serve the Bethany Lutheran Church and with the wonderful people that serve on the property committee. A special thanks is also extended to the committee members for their efforts with dealing the many heating and ventilation issues that happened throughout the year. Many hours were dedicated by the group to keep the air conditioning and boilers going this year.

New members are always welcome to the property committee. Please contact Eric Roethel (608-475-0375) if you are interested in serving.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Roethel, Chairperson

Bethany's Reaching Out committee helps to organize and serve funeral luncheons. Serving on the committee is one of the most caring and helpful services we give to families during their time of grief. This ministry is open to all members of Bethany. Help when you can and do not worry if you are not always available. Members are notified in an email and then you can click onto Signup Genius and indicate where you can help. You can also let the church office know if you can help. Reaching Out is spearheaded by Gail Weber, Annette Messner and Sue Finstad. Respectfully submitted, Gail Weber

WELCA—Women of Bethany

This group provided much service to the Bethany ministry with luncheons, working together with the Circles, scholarships for camps, the Lutheran World Relief truck that transports quilts, school & sewing kits to those in need, and other projects in the kitchen and beyond. Members this year were:

Gail Weber	Co-chair, Kitchen Coordinator, Hannah Circle
Marie Anderson	Bethany 1/Naomi Circles
Sylvia Eby	Naomi Circle
Marlene Thurs	Elizabeth Circle
Jodi Babineau	Council Representative
Angie Buchli	Staff
Carol Stanonik	Secretary, Hannah Circle

At the end of October this group voted to disband as an executive board. Circles will continue as usual with possible expansion to evening circle(s). The funds from WELCA were graciously transferred to the church to be used for the kitchen.

Worship & Music

Committee Members: Amy Brekke, Tammy Roberg, Deb Slagstad, Linda Mullikin, Con Eastwold, Carol Sevals, Julie Stephens, Candace Falk, Andy Denison, Bun Hanson, Paul Hanson

The purpose of the Worship and Music Committee is to provide music and worship opportunities to and for our congregation, community and world that will enhance their relationship with God, their family and their fellow community members through a variety of music and worship service opportunities.

Throughout 2023 we have been able to return comfortably to our regular worship schedule. Many of the services are archived and available on Bethany's website for all to view at their convenience. Below are listed the opportunities and worship supports that this committee has directed and supported throughout this year:

- Special Appreciation Coffee Hour in January to thank all who volunteer and assist in our worship services

- Community outreach—Contributing sponsor for 'The Kids from Wisconsin' Program at the City Park in July, Sponsoring the Strikepoint Bell Choir Concert in August

- Special services as Christmas, Easter, All Saints Day, Transfiguration Sunday, Rally Sunday, Advent, Lent

- Updating banners, and working with the Altar Guild to update communion elements

- Sunday morning outdoor summer worship services in the tent

- Sunday morning services: 8:00 AM & 10:00 AM (radio, TV, Facebook, streaming, archived)

- Saturday Evening 5:30 PM worship service

- Christmas Concert December 17

- Supporting and maintaining technology for worship services and outreach into the community and world

- Coordinating the many volunteers who contribute support to our worship services: ushers, readers, musicians, song leaders, worship assistants, video operators

- Coordinating banners and decorating of the church for each season and holiday

- Updating and maintaining worship and music needs such as equipment, instruments and supplies

The Worship and Music Committee would like to extend a sincere 'Thank-You' to our staff (Pastoral, Worship & Music Director, Office Staff, Education Director) and the many congregation members who have given extra time, creativity, energy, and financial support to develop and provide worship opportunities throughout the 2023 year. It is through continued faithful work and support that we are able to come together and worship. Blessings to Everyone!

Respectfully Submitted, Paul Hanson, Chairperson

Balance Sheet

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
<u>Assets</u>		
Checking	\$82,592.67	\$76,115.11
Designated Funds	\$315,286.96	\$370,945.38
Bethany Trust Fund	\$665,836.27	\$781,514.40
Petty Cash Checking	\$782.35	\$1,441.33
Total Assets	\$1,064,498.25	\$1,230,016.22
<u>Fixed Assets *</u>		
Bethany Lutheran Church Building	\$10,419,950.00	\$10,419,950.00
Equipment & Furnishings	\$1,271,917.80	\$1,271,917.80
Martin Looper Van	\$52,378.00	\$52,378.00
Total Fixed Assets	\$11,744,245.80	\$11,744,245.80
TOTAL ASSETS	\$12,808,744.05	\$12,974,262.02

* Fixed assets are based upon insurance replacement value, not original cost. Property parcels without buildings are not counted in assets. The Martin Looper van is valued at cost in 2011, per insurance policy.

This Balance Sheet is prepared on a cash basis. It includes payment for all invoices received to December 31, 2023.

2023 Activity Report For All Designated Funds

	<u>Opening Balance</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Debits</u>	<u>Ending Balance</u>
Trust Fund	\$652,848.41	\$233,353.30	\$104,687.51	\$781,514.40
World Hunger & LWR	\$0.00	\$11,796.00	\$11,796.00	\$0.00
Bethany Missions	\$4,409.40	\$4,430.00	\$585.00	\$8,254.40
Sunday School Offering	\$18.27	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18.27
Christmas Dinner	\$1,749.95	\$1,333.97	\$1,606.10	\$1,477.82
Good Samaritan Fund	\$7,589.71	\$255.00	\$5,777.74	\$2,066.97
Energy Savings Fund	\$295.40	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$295.40
Memorial Fund	\$5,198.91	\$1,586.00	\$1,020.16	\$5,764.75
Banner Fund	\$25.00	\$20.00	\$0.00	\$45.00
Altar Guild	\$747.92	\$0.00	\$14.07	\$733.85
Weddings	\$1,196.27	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,196.27
Youth Account	\$5,516.01	\$3,075.00	\$3,055.45	\$5,535.56
Library	\$497.13	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$497.13
Nursery	\$296.40	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$296.40
Children's Library	\$519.86	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$519.86
HS Trips	\$33,665.62	\$38,680.72	\$27,628.67	\$44,717.67
Choirs & Music	\$14,633.64	\$5,387.68	\$9,914.36	\$10,106.96
Worship Arts	\$10.00	\$255.00	\$0.00	\$265.00
Flower Garden	\$627.59	\$165.00	\$115.07	\$677.52
Building Fund	\$59,643.15	\$155,287.71	\$67,369.00	\$147,561.86
Hi League	\$1,399.52	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,399.52
Jr High League	\$6,393.75	\$563.42	\$650.00	\$6,307.17
MS Pizza Money	\$805.06	\$445.00	\$353.98	\$896.08
Triennial Fund	\$2,096.43	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,096.43
Mission Jamaica	\$8,391.58	\$80,247.79	\$74,857.06	\$13,782.31
ELCA Disaster Relief	\$0.00	\$12,250.00	\$12,250.00	\$0.00
Organ Maintenance	\$13,994.16	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$13,994.16
General Gift Fund	\$115,865.94	\$658.50	\$50,296.67	\$66,227.77
Media Project	\$0.00	\$587.62	\$587.62	\$0.00
Stained Glass	\$4,360.00	\$1,840.00	\$0.00	\$6,200.00
Malawi	\$0.00	\$977.11	\$35.00	\$942.11
BIC	\$830.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$830.00
Bible Fund	\$881.26	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$881.26
Facility Deposits	\$2,850.00	\$50.00	\$1,347.24	\$1,552.76
Bus Fund	\$18,378.65	\$1,678.00	\$3,607.00	\$16,449.65
Women of Bethany	\$0.00	\$9,118.77	\$966.68	\$8,152.09
Hospitality Fund	\$2,400.38	\$1,268.91	\$2,465.91	\$1,203.38
Special Projects	\$0.00	\$2,533.75	\$2,533.75	\$0.00
TOTALS	\$968,135.37	\$567,844.45	\$383,520.04	\$1,152,459.78

2023 Financial Statement & 2024 Proposed Budget

	<u>2023</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2024</u> <u>Budget</u>
INCOME			
Envelopes - General	\$670,414.00	\$626,665.68	\$645,000.00
Loose Offering	\$9,000.00	\$10,944.79	\$9,000.00
Lenten/Easter Offering	\$6,000.00	\$5,008.00	\$5,050.00
Thanksgiving Offering	\$300.00	\$105.00	\$150.00
Advent/Christmas Offering	\$3,500.00	\$2,025.00	\$3,500.00
Radio Income	\$10,000.00	\$3,390.00	\$3,000.00
Interest Checking	\$200.00	\$153.49	\$200.00
Total INCOME	\$699,414.00	\$648,291.96	\$665,900.00
 PASTORAL SALARIES			
Salary	\$87,637.00	\$87,637.00	\$88,152.00
Housing Allow	\$24,000.00	\$24,000.00	\$24,000.00
ELCA Benefit Pkg	\$33,355.00	\$33,328.27	\$33,607.00
Cont Education	\$1,500.00	\$250.00	\$0.00
Pub/Pastoral Exp	\$1,500.00	\$1,891.82	\$1,500.00
Social Sec Allow	\$6,570.00	\$6,570.00	\$6,570.00
Mileage Reimburse	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Total PASTORAL SALARIES	\$156,562.00	\$153,677.09	\$154,829.00
 EDUCATION SALARIES			
Salaries	\$98,283.00	\$98,282.96	\$100,248.00
Benefits	\$31,435.00	\$31,439.54	\$31,850.00
Expenses	\$5,300.00	\$2,973.46	\$1,500.00
Total EDUCATION SALARIES	\$135,018.00	\$132,695.96	\$133,598.00
 TOTAL MUSIC SALARIES	\$12,220.00	\$11,345.54	\$16,000.00

2023 Financial Statement & 2024 Proposed Budget (cont.)

	<u>2023</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2024</u> <u>Budget</u>
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SALARIES			
Salaries	\$116,028.00	\$124,082.87	\$125,300.00
Benefits	\$38,163.00	\$11,116.20	\$14,512.00
Expenses	\$3,000.00	\$40.00	0
TOTAL ADMIN. SUPPORT SALARIES	\$157,191.00	\$135,239.07	\$139,812.00
 FICA - EMPLOYERS PART	 \$17,330.00	 \$12,921.61	 \$15,726.00
 TOTAL ALL SALARIES	 \$478,321.00	 \$445,879.27	 \$459,965.00
 OTHER EXPENSES			
Benevolences	\$52,173.00	\$52,173.00	\$39,354.00
Education	\$14,000.00	\$14,059.83	\$10,750.00
Worship/Committees	\$10,370.00	\$9,174.78	\$13,250.00
Worship Supplies	\$4,000.00	\$2,002.49	\$4,000.00
Office	\$32,000.00	\$33,672.15	\$31,840.00
Conventions/Conferences	\$1,700.00	\$299.59	\$2,200.00
Special Ministry	\$3,000.00	\$2,138.95	\$2,000.00
Utilities	\$36,100.00	\$35,281.06	\$35,600.00
Maintenance/Repair	\$48,250.00	\$60,120.42	\$54,500.00
Insurance	\$19,500.00	\$19,309.00	\$22,966.00
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES	\$221,093.00	\$228,231.27	\$216,460.00
 TOTAL ALL EXPENSES	 \$699,414.00	 \$674,110.54	 \$676,425.00
 TOTAL CONTRIB OVER/UNDER	 0	 -\$25,818.58	 -\$10,525.00

Pastoral Salaries Include: Lead Pastor, Visitation Pastor

Education Salaries Include: Dir. Of Education, Youth & Congregational Ministries and Dir. Of Worship, Music & Member Engagement

Music Salaries Include: Worship Accompanists, Choir Directors, Choir Accompanists, Ensembles, Bell Directors

Administrative Support Salaries Include: Business Coordinator, Communications & Publications Specialist, Accountant, Custodian,
Financial Secretaries, Kitchen Coordinator, Nursery Attendants

Financial Secretary's Report Year Ended 12/31/2023

General Funds

Regular offering	626,426.57
Loose offering	10,944.79
Lent/Easter	5,008.00
Thanksgiving	105.00
Christmas/Advent	2,025.00
Radio	3,390.00
Regular offering 2022	800.00
Regular offering 2024	6,063.71

Total General \$ 654,763.07

Other Funds

Worship Arts	255.00
World Hunger/LWR	3,769.00
Bethany Missions	4,085.00
Good Samaritan	185.00
Memorial	1,035.00
Building Fund 2022	200.00
Building Fund 2023	139,270.70
Building Fund 2024	150.00
Mission Jamaica	79,147.79
Banner Fund	20.00
Bus Fund	260.00
Choirs/Music	5,140.71
Christmas Dinner	1,333.97
Stained Glass	1,820.00
Clearing Fund	20,513.54
Confirmation Ministry	75.00
ELCA Disaster Relief	3,938.00
Hospitality	981.68
Flower Garden	140.00
HS Trips	23,685.95
Jr. High League	1,563.42
MS Pizza	424.00
Events	1,640.00
Malawi	942.11
Special Projects	2,533.75
VBS	1,050.83
Worship Supplies	808.95
Youth	683.00
Ministry Misc.	100.00
Women of Bethany	8,732.20

Total Other \$304,484.60

Total Offering \$ 959,247.67

Submitted by
Susan Derro

2023 Good Samaritan Fund

Income:

Balance (January 1, 2023)	\$7,589.71
Receipts	\$255.00
Total	\$7,844.71

Expenses:

Rent	\$588.39
ACEO	\$2,500.00
Utilities	\$1,132.70
Vehicle Maintenance	\$548.74
Transportation	\$425.00
Food	\$187.91
Gas Cards	\$395.00
Total	\$5,777.74

Balance on Hand (December 31, 2023)	\$2,066.97
--	-------------------

The Bethany Trust Committee is pleased to announce assets of \$781,514.40 , with zero Liabilities as of December 31, 2023. The Trust lovingly received an anonymous donation to the fund on December 12, 2023, totaling \$100,000 which is included in the year end figure.

This year, the Trust celebrated forty years of helping others with a 'Celebration of Giving' on October 15, 2023. It was a time of joyful reflection knowing the Trust had distributed over \$1,100,000 around the world since its creation in 1983.

The projected mission distribution for 2024 was set December 4, 2023, at \$32,000 plus fees (approximately \$5,000) during the last Trust meeting of the year.

Balance as of December 31, 2022: \$652,848.41

2023 Mission Distributions from the Fund

ELCA World Hunger Appeal	2500.00
RLMS Carnation Project	575.00
The GAP	2000.00
Anita Gutschick (Women of the Bible)	2500.00
Feed Our Kids (F.O.R.K.)	3000.00
Salvation Army (Barron County)	2500.00
Bethany Quilters	200.00
Benjamin's House	1000.00
Bethany Lutheran (Feed 2500)	1600.00
We Share Food Pantry	5000.00
Bethany Lutheran (Mission Jamaica)	3580.00
Bethany Lutheran (ELCA Youth Convention)	6750.00
Naomi Circle	600.00
Marketplace Foods (Celebration of Giving)	111.98

Total \$31,916.98

Distribution to Mission 2023: \$31,916.98

Balance as of December 31, 2023: \$ 781,514.40

Membership Statistics & Pastoral Acts

New Members:

Adult	15
Children	<u>13</u>
	28

Members Received During 2023

	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
Baptism - Children	11	0
Baptism - Adults	0	0
Affirmation of Faith	0	0
Other sources & statistical adjustment	0	0
Total Received	11	
Baptized Members Confirmed		12

Members Removed During 2023

Death	15	15
Transferred	6	6
Other sources & statistical adjustment	4	4
Total Removed	25	25

Membership - End of 2022: 1168
Membership - End of 2023: 1180

**Statistical information is data from Shelby Next*

2023 Pastoral Acts

Baptisms: 11

Weddings: 1

Funerals: 18

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 Boerenlities en Contradansen, 1710;
 arr. Julius Röntgen

Text and music are in the public domain. May be reproduced without restriction.



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).



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America