



# 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

---





## South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

Dear friends in Christ,

This past October rostered leaders throughout the South-Central Synod gathered under the theme "Building, Learning, Growing." While we were gathered, the Rev. Kerri Parker of the Wisconsin Council of Churches led us in a visioning process to help us uncover our values. In a summary of the process Rev. Parker made some observations:

- *Prayer and scripture matter to us. We need to attend to the whisperings of the Spirit and be the Church.*
- *We desire to be collaborative.*
- *We have an energy for change and boldness.*
- *It feels good to Breathe, Bless, Dream, Share, Thrive and have Fun....*

These ring true to me as I think about this past year and as we plan for 2024. 2023 continued to bring challenges to the church, to our synod, and for many of our congregations. At the same time, we continued to trust and know that our God is our sure foundation. Our God is the source of all that we are. Lutheran Christians are anchored in God's grace and we walk by faith and prayer guided by the Holy Spirit. I am honored to have walked with and alongside of many of you in conversation this past year as we've counted on God to show up and be with us.

This past year also brought new collaboration around the synod. Congregations are in conversation with each other and with their neighborhoods about how best to share the love of Jesus. New partnerships are being born demonstrating that God is active. We are learning and growing as we trust in God's promises. As Matthew 13:31-34 reminds us, even a seed as tiny as a mustard seed grows into something mighty and beautiful in God's hands. God is growing beautiful ministries and relationships around the South-Central Synod.

We continue to step out in faith in this new post-pandemic world. We are changing and wondering even as we are certain of God's steadfast promise of love through Jesus Christ. We are being bold to dream and to share with one another. We are being courageous enough to sit back and breathe. We are daring to thrive and we are having fun.

I am grateful to you. I am grateful for the generosity you pour into this synod. Your financial gifts make a difference. Your gifts of service make a difference. Your gifts of prayer and encouragement make a difference. Your ministry, wherever God is leading you, makes a difference. Thank you!

Have a blessed annual meeting.

Your partner in Christ,

*Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe*

Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe

# St. Martin's Lutheran Church – ELCA

*'Where all are welcome to worship, to learn,  
to serve in the name of Jesus Christ.'*

## Staff

Pastor Maggie Andersen Peterson  
Janet Dahl — Office Manager  
Music Director — Janet Dahl  
Todd Duhr — Building Manager

## 2023 Church Council

Casey Peterson — President  
Amy Wildman — Vice President  
Janice Doyle — Secretary  
Artis Schulenberg — Treasurer  
Janet Gray — Member at Large  
Rick Weiland — Member at Large



2427 Church Street  
Cross Plains, WI 53528  
Phone (608) 798-2777  
Email [om@stmartinscp.org](mailto:om@stmartinscp.org)  
Website [www.stmartinscp.org](http://www.stmartinscp.org)

## Table of Contents

<b>Agenda .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Minutes from 2022 Annual Meeting .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Pastor's Report .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Council President's Report.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>St. Martin's Team Reports</b>	
Welcome Report .....	16
Worship Report .....	17
Learn Report .....	18
Serve Report (Missions) .....	19
Stewardship Report .....	21
Property Management Report .....	22
Audit Report .....	22
<b>Membership Report .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Treasurer's Report .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Budget .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Annual Congregational Meeting Opening Liturgy.....</b>	<b>29</b>

# AGENDA

## Annual Congregational Meeting St. Martin's Lutheran Church Sunday, January 28, 2024

1. Opening Prayer..... Pastor Maggie
2. Call to Order..... Casey Peterson
3. Count voting members (22= quorum)..... Members
4. Parliamentary procedure rules..... Casey Peterson
5. Reports
  - a. Presidents Report..... Casey Peterson
  - b. Pastors Report..... Pastor Maggie
  - c. Secretary report..... Amy Wildman
  - d. Audit Report..... Mark Niesen
  - e. Team Ministry Reports..... Amy Wildman
  - f. Treasurers Report..... Artis Schulenberg
6. Vote to approve Reports..... Members
7. Vote to approve proposed budget..... Members
8. Ongoing Business
  - a. Continuing Resolutions Update..... Casey Peterson
    - i. Organizational Chart Review
  - b. Preliminary Vote on Reconciling In Christ..... Pastor Maggie
9. New Business
  - a. Financial Discussion
    - i. Mortgage Reduction Campaign ..... Council
    - ii. Future Considerations ..... Council
10. Elections
  - a. Church Council (need two) ..... Members
  - b. Nominating team (need two) ..... Members
  - c. Synod assembly representatives (need two) ..... Members
    - i. Synod Assembly dates are May 17<sup>th</sup> and May 18<sup>th</sup> 2024
  - d. Internal Audit team (need one)..... Members
11. Closing Prayer

## 2022 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

### Annual Congregational Meeting – St. Martin's Lutheran Church Sunday, January 29, 2023

2023 Annual Report was sent digitally (hard copies were also available in the sanctuary) for review two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.

1. **Opening Prayer:** Pastor Maggie Andersen-Peterson led the group in an opening prayer and the Annual Congregational Meeting Opening Liturgy.
2. **Call to order:** Phil Fish, Council President, called the meeting to order at 10:20am.
3. **Quorum:** It was announced that there was a Quorum. 21 were needed for a Quorum. Council Secretary Amy Wildman counted forty-two (42) that attended in person and there were three screens (unknown how many per screen-no cameras) showing at the time of counting with approximately 3-4 screens coming on as the meeting continued.
4. **Parliamentary procedure review:** Phil Fish
5. **Reports**
  - a. **President's Report** – Phil Fish took a moment to share some of his highlights.
    - He was impressed with our average viewing of service online has ben about 10-15 households. For the Christmas viewing there were 66 households online.
    - Special Thank you to acknowledge our excellent staff – Janet & Todd. Both are so valued.
    - Special thank you to Jeff on AV – he does it quietly but we say thank you and appreciate what you do.
    - The sunrise service at Zander Park was great.
    - Missions great job for all their programs this year.
    - Business side – The Capital Campaign was a success raising \$39,177. Overall reviewed the items that the funds were used for. Noted runner will be replaced free of charge.
    - Developed lease with Gunderson on the shared parking lot.
    - Little Red lease – Set separate entry for Little Red and another for Missions. Worked well.

- Overall, he felt most goals were met with the exception of the Outreach Team. Phil noted that he will be moving over from Council to that Team this coming year.
  - Finally he encourages everyone to participate and/or host one of the Faith & Fellowship Circles. This will help facilitate discussion on the future of the church, where we are at, etc. He is really looking forward to next year.
- b. **Pastor's Report** – Pastor Maggie said she will piggy back off Phil's comments and she is also looking forward to this next year.
- Prioritize Outreach but Outreach is not successful if we don't have a direction from within. We as a congregation must be solid in our "why" and strong in our conviction in order to spread that word beyond and have people want to check it out. She used the example of the three-legged stool and our three legs are Worship – Learn – Serve. Need all three to be successful. It is not enough to just come on Sunday (worship). Goals are to find new ways to worship and some of that will come from the findings of the Faith & Fellowship Circles.
  - Soup suppers this year will be a dinner church model.
- c. **Secretary Report** – In Annual Meeting Report
- d. **Audit Report** – Submitted by Jeff Postle, Mark Niesen & Bill Windels – No specific comments made beyond what was printed in the Annual Meeting Report.
- e. **Team Ministry Reports** – In Annual Meeting Report

**Motion to Approve Reports (a – e)** by Jacqui Swanson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lois Weiland. Motions passed with unanimous consent.

- f. **Treasurer Report** – Artis Schulenberg
- Lois Weiland retired and we transitioned over to Clergy Financial.
  - Successful Capital Campaign to create the deferred maintenance fund.
  - Faith Promise cards had a successful participation helping to predict about \$184,000 pledges. Again special thanks to Lois Weiland for championing that.
  - Artis pointed out that Summer is always hard. The numbers attending and giving drop
  - The year ended about \$20,000 down. Line of Credit that will carry over is \$12,500.
  - Budgeting for Next Year – Expenses entered. Budget it bare bones.
    - Noting we are using the Line of Credit.
    - Payroll Expenses include 5% raise for Maggie and 3% for Janet & Todd.
    - Most expenses increased approximately 10% - Insurance, Utilities, etc.



- Noting we have included \$6,000 that feeds into the Deferred Maintenance Fund which is in savings. Look at this number as we can't afford it.
- Total Receipts are around \$311.

Discussion / Comments on Budget:

Deferred Maintenance:

- Karen Windels – How does this translate to Little Red? We have money left but don't have a project? Amy Wildman answered no we don't have a specific project at this time but the purpose of continually funding this line is to create a Rainy Day fund for unexpected
- Phil Fish stated he would be in favor to leave a budget line for this but do we need \$6K for coming year? Congregational discussion is that there is a need to fund this line can leave it for now and fund.
- Marci stated that we can't take the Deferred Maintenance out or not have the line. Could we reduce it to maybe \$3,000.

Audit Review Line

- Artis brought up the this is a bigger budget line at \$5,750. Do we need it? How often do we want to do an external audit?
- Bill Windels noted that there isn't a mandate to hire someone from outside. ELCA has specifics on how to do an audit.
- Lois also said we do not have to do an external audit. Now that we have an Audit Team this is better

General Comments

- Artis noted if we vote now to adopt the budget we will need to make adjustments. Can't meet \$312,000.
- Lois said she was going to be the Cheerleader and push and prove we can do it. Jackie Swanson stated she is on the same page as Lois. Today if the day to take care of this place we call our faith home. Future is out there but we have to take care of what we can do today. Must step up and do it now.
- Circle back to Little Red – Need to know what expenses we have. To do that means we need to amortize costs which can be expensive to do. Marci Bartlett asked would we / could we do a survey of the real estate market for comparison?
- Artis reviewed the Pie Chart which visually shows where money is spent.
- Kevin Boehnen asked where the mortgage is at. There is \$255,000 left to pay over seven (7) years. Next year we have to renegotiate the rate.
- Receipts – Amy noted that \$184,000 has been pledged at this time.
- Lee Swanson asked for clarification – Number listed as differences – what is that? Artis noted that there were (3) pay periods in December but she only had two (2).

6. **Vote to approve Reports** – Treasurer's Report – motion to approve the report (no specific changes were made) by Phil Fish / Karen Windels. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Linda Seabee. There was continued discussion. Later Lee Swanson had a call for question on the previous motion and it was accepted with unanimous consent.

**7. Old Business:**

- a. Summary of Capital Campaign.
- Amy Wildman gave quick summary as this has been addressed and discussed in previous comments and reports. Raised \$39,177. Planned projects were completed: Sealed parking lots, replaced sanctuary door, fixed aisle crack. Did have one of the AC units that went out and was replaced.

**8. New Business**

- a. Approve revised Constitution (Casey Peterson)
- Casey went through slides that had a side by side comparison of current wording vs proposed changes. Most changes were required by ELCA. By-Laws were where we could have some of our own input. With the by-laws some notes to refer to Continuing Resolutions for more definition.  
Constitution = ELCA & Congregation  
By-Laws = Congregation & Council  
Continuing Resolutions = Adopted by Council & Congregation
  - Van noted the wording change of Teams to Committees by the ELCA. Personally, does not like this as Teams implies everyone contributes. By-laws can change but Constitution can't. Continuing Resolutions are also more flexible. Patty Harper agreed with the term Teams for those.
  - Motion to approve the Constitutional Changes by Van Valaskey and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Marci. All Passed. (NOTE: Synod has last vote on this final draft)
- b. Formation of a Discernment Group to study Reconciling in Christ
- Pastor wanted to make clear that this is not us voting to be RIC at this time only a step to continue exploring this. This will take approximately 6 months – 1 year. Would like 2 – 3 volunteers to do one on one interviews and small groups. There will be 1 day of training from RIC. Motion by Karen Windels to continue and form a discernment group; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Maureen Berghoefer. All approved by unanimous consent.
- c. Financial Discussion – These items were discussed in the Budget discussion

- Investigate possible sale of church lot – Motion to have Council investigate what is involved if we were to sell the lot by Jackie Swanson; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Doris Fish. Passed by unanimous consent.
  - Marci asked when Council would expect to have an answer to make it a smart goal – April / June?
- Investigate church mortgage – Look at options & report back to Congregation before any action. No motions made – Monthly payment is \$3,300 / Principal \$25,000/year & interest \$11,000. Waiting until next year
- d. Amortization Investigation (added) – Marci made motion to continue investigating what it would take to amortize costs fo building. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Amy Wildman – All approved by unanimous consent.

**9. Elections:**

a. **New Council Members** – Need two

- Jan Doyle was nominated for a three-year term.
- Janet Gray agreed to extend her term for another three-year term.

Bev Brunner made the motion to approve these two as new & continuing Council members.

James Hartung seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

b. **Nominating team** – Looking for two volunteers.

- Marci Bartlett
- Judy Valaskey.

Karen Windels made the motion to approve these two for Nominating Team. Jackie

Swanson seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

c. **Synod Assembly Representatives** (need two)

- Mark & Jenny Niesen volunteered.

Motion by Cheryl Hartung to approve, second by Linda Sebree. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

d. **Audit team**

- Gordie Esser – Motion by Jackie Swanson, second by Jenny Niesen. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

10. Closing prayer by Pastor Maggie – All recited the Lords Prayer

11. Motion to adjourn by Congregation and second by Amy Wildman

**ADJOURN: 11:58am**

## PASTOR'S REPORT

My dear beloved siblings in Christ of St. Martin's,

First, let me acknowledge how tremendously grateful I am for your support this year, especially as I encountered several medical roadblocks. Your patience and prayers for healing meant everything to me in what was a very difficult time. Thank you.

Despite my personal setbacks, I am proud of what St. Martin's achieved together in 2023:

- We incorporated **dinner church** into our Lenten program. For six weeks each Wednesday evening, we gathered to break bread, retell stories of scripture, sing, and worship together over the dinner table. We concluded this series with a special **Maundy Thursday** service that reimaged the fellowship of the Last Supper by bringing dinner tables right into the sanctuary for a worship of feasting, song, and preparation for Jesus' final days.
- Also in Lent 2023, our ministry teams united under the theme **For All Who Hunger**. Through worship, education opportunities, and service projects, we focused on spiritual and physical hunger, how these two hungers are connected, and how we can mutually feed each other's needs when we work together. We also collected food for WayForward and money for Lutheran World Relief.
- We launched a new, innovative faith formation program for our youngest members called **Family Worship, Play & Learn**. This program was designed based on feedback from our families that they wanted a Christian education program for their children that was flexible and unthreatening for busy schedules, encouraged intergenerational relationships, and used Bible stories to teach children a love of service and kindness to others. These Family Nights have been much appreciated from kids, parents, and even a supportive grandparent and family friend or two!
- Our council has been hard at work at an **organizational restructuring** which promotes a bottom-up, lay-led model of ministry, meaning that our activities start with the initiative of members like you, supported by the leadership of council and pastor. This structure comes directly from our mission statement: "Where all are WELCOME to WORSHIP, LEARN, and SERVE in the name of Jesus Christ." We hope that this structure will make us more flexible and better able to adapt and change, as well as facilitate conversations and collaboration between ministry teams.
- In September, our ministry teams came together to celebrate **God's Work, Our Hands** with a fantastic outdoor worship service at Legion Park, followed by a morning of service projects. These service projects brought us out into the Cross Plains community, from weeding at the public library and village hall, to singing at Milestone Retirement Center, to decorating Meals-on-Wheels bags for the elderly, to packing up personal care kits to send to Lutheran World Relief. Through it all we wore our St. Martin's shirts with pride and told the world what we are all about is love of God, love of community.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without your support. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. I pray for you every day and I thank God for every challenge and every opportunity we experience together.



I believe that this year will be filled with similar adventures, and I am excited to get started. Here are some of my goals for 2024:

- Publish an updated membership directory.
- Collaborate with other congregations for high school and young adult ministries.
- Establish a more visible role in the life of Cross Plains and online..
- Continue the exploration of RIC and what it means for St. Martin's.
- Find more ways to bring together our ministry teams for a common cause.

Of course, in addition to this list of goals, we plan to keep up our commitments to meaningful worship, deepening spiritual practices, and maintaining our community services.

And now for some hard news. Looking to 2024, it is clear that we face significant challenges ahead. For the second year in a row, we finished out the year with a negative balance. The fact is this: **we simply do not have the financial resources to support our current ministry model.** We must find a way to pivot in one of two ways. Either we change our ministry model to reduce our costs, or we vastly increase our outreach and donor base. Unfortunately, neither of these solutions will be quick or easy. Fortunately, the task of reshaping how we do church together, which is the primary Christian mission of listening and responding to God's calling, can be fun and rewarding! The responsibility to evangelize and share the Gospel may be difficult, but I promise that sharing this Good News with others is the very thing that gives us life.

Here is one more truth: **we need more leaders.** We are blessed to have a small handful of dedicated members who regularly volunteer their time and energy over and over again to the work of being church together, but these ministry leaders are facing burnout. As your pastor, I too am overwhelmed with administrative tasks that impede my ability to work on ministry projects. Going forward, continuing to rely on the leadership of these same few individuals will not be enough to carry us into modern age of the Post-COVID 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church. We need the input of every single member of our congregation. Whether it is helping with an administrative task, serving on a ministry team, acting as a worship assistant, promoting the church online, etc., there is a role for everyone in God's church.

**The most important job you can do is share St. Martin's and our ministries with your loved ones.** Tell people about why this community is important to you. Talk about how your life is changed by being follower of Christ. Invite the people you care about most to experience this joy for themselves. Bring others to church, because the Gospel we have to share is good, life changing, and it is worth sharing.

The Peace of Christ be with you always,  
Pastor Maggie

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19)*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Friends in Christ,

As I look back on the year 2023 I am grateful. I joined council to learn more about what it means to be a member of St. Martins and to make a difference. What I found was that it is me that has been changed by all of your love, generosity and passion for God's work.

2023 had many victories and some struggles. We made some very positive changes and had some difficult discussions. But through all of that we continued to come together and fulfill our mission to Worship, Learn and Serve in the name of Jesus Christ. Each one of you contributed to serving our community and welcoming new members in to our family. Your kindness, faith, prayer, and generosity should be saluted. It is the people of St. Martin's that brings hope for a future of serving God.

One of the biggest changes we made this year was to the "team" or "committee" structure. In 2022, Council and a dedicated team of members worked hard to update and personalize our Constitution. That same team was tasked in 2023 with reviewing and updating the Continuing Resolutions. In the process of doing so it became evident that the continuing resolutions did not accurately reflect our current membership or mission. So instead of working on re-writing the resolutions, this team decided to first look at reorganizing the teams to better line up with St. Martin's mission. We consulted with the current teams and decided to consolidate and line up with the words of our mission. We now have the Welcome (Outreach), Worship, Learn (Adult and Child Education) and Serve (Missions) teams that work closely together on projects that flow through St. Martins. Seeing how all members of these teams continue to come together gives me great joy. I want to personally thank all of those team members who worked and assisted with all of this change.

Another huge change was with the children's program. The newly named Learn team along with Pastor Maggie sat down with families with children age 3 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and together they reimagined the way St. Martin's can support the children's faith. The Sunday morning children's church faded and gave way to the birth of the Worship, Play and Learn program. This group now meets the first and third Sundays of the month for the fall and spring semesters. One of the amazing things about this program is that all are welcome...you do not need to have a child to attend. Thanks to Pastor Maggie, Karen Windels and all of the Learn team members we are going to continue this program into 2024.

On Sunday September 10, 2023 our Congregation reimagined our Community Picnic and lined up with the ELCA to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday. This late summer event has always been a community focused event but the 2023 event actually got out there. Having service at the Legion Hall Pavilion, wearing our yellow GWOH shirts and completing service projects in the community clearly illustrated who we are and our support for our community. A huge thank you to ALL of the teams that came together and made this event a success. I am not sure if everyone would agree because there were some growing pains in the planning BUT it appeared to me that the simplicity of the event allowed more of the volunteers to enjoy the work they were doing. I continue to be blessed and encouraged by all of you who remain persistent in your efforts to serve God and our wonderful community.

I do want to take a moment to thank all of the personnel and volunteers that continue to keep St. Martin's visible in the community. The building and grounds could not function without the attention that Todd Duhr gives. Todd is always willing to assist and go above the line of duty and we all appreciate what he does. Janet Dahl continues to be a remarkable asset to the office and the music program. I know there are times when Janet has been asked to take on a project that requires extra time or planned worship music in a pinch but with her skill level and dedication she continues to excel. Thank you to all of my fellow Council members for all the great work you all have done and a special thank you to those members going off Council this year Amy Wildman and Artis Schulenberg. In addition, I want to make sure that I thank each and every one of the great volunteers that assist in the office, work on our community programs, help during worship services and help to spread the word of God!

As I look back on 2023, I reflect on our Mission statement where ALL are Welcome. Pastor Maggie plays an instrumental role in realizing our Mission. Pastor's passion, generosity, knowledge, drive and love for God is seen by all and provides a comfort that is not only felt inside our walls but that extends outwards to the communities around us. The light of St. Martin's can be seen through the giving tree, cookie sale, Feed Our Children Program and our continued partnership with Little Red School who continues to rent out the fellowship hall. I am looking forward to continuing this outreach and finding new ways to spread the word of God into our community.

I have learned so much about all of you and all that it takes to continue God's work here at St. Martin's Lutheran Church. The above mentioned activities are just the tip of the iceberg of what we have accomplished in this last year 2023 and I continue to be amazed at how much this congregation can do with God's help!

Thank you to all of you for the opportunity to serve as your president this year and I have hope as I continue on Council for one more year that we can work together to support the budget and come up with a creative way to continue serving God in our community.

God Bless,  
Casey Peterson

## WELCOME TEAM REPORT

Welcome Team (Outreach Team) members are Phil Fish, Lois Weiland, Tom Meier. The vision of the Outreach Team is to get involved with the active organizations in the community to integrate St. Martin's in the activities in some manner. The Outreach Team will communicate and support St. Martin's team activities through media, mailers, email blasts, etc.

Have you noticed our church sign messages?? As part of our community outreach, a catchy new message will appear every two weeks. Examples are "Now open between Christmas and Easter" and "Worship now, Beat the Easter rush" If you have a catchy phrase, let us know.

Other activities the team was involved in include attending Chamber of Commerce meetings, subscribing to the village newsletter titled "Cross Plains Post", supporting St. Martin's community day activities "Gods work, Our hands", Advertising for the Cookie Walk and placing signs throughout the community, assisting with the Hill & Valley Auto Show, and packaging for mailing, the community post cards.

We are discussing developing church sign messages with catchy phrases that members could post in their yards promoting St. Martin's. We continue to work closely with the other teams to promote their activities. We welcome suggestions and are always open for additional volunteers to the team. *Respectfully submitted – Phil Fish*

---

**Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Update:** As a subgroup of the Outreach Team, the RIC Task Force is composed of Kyla Schoenwetter, Van Valaskey, Karen Windels, and Pastor Maggie. RIC is a designation through the ELCA partner ministry ReconcilingWorks which identifies congregations that are welcoming and inclusive of people identifying as LGBTQIA+. RIC congregations also take a commitment to being actively working to end racism and other forms of discrimination against minoritized communities. At last year's annual meeting, it was decided that we would form a task force to explore the process of becoming an RIC congregation.

In 2023, the task force was established. During the year, we met with individuals from the congregation on a one-on-one basis (or sometimes as couples) to survey how people feel about how welcoming St. Martin's is currently, and what their personal feelings are regarding becoming an explicitly LGBT-inclusive congregation. The vast majority of these interviews gave positive feedback about becoming RIC, saying that personally they supported the idea and think it is time for congregations to more actively welcome the LGBT community. Many people mentioned family members or other loved ones who identify as LGBT and helped them to become accepting themselves. However, we did also get feedback from many people that although they personally support becoming RIC, they worry about what others (either others in the congregation or others in the wider community) might think. Some people feared that we might lose members of our congregation from this. Others feared retaliation or even violence. At the upcoming annual meeting, the RIC task force would like to hold a preliminary vote to get a "temperature gauge" on where the congregation as a whole stands. This will help us determine what future steps we should take and what further education is needed. (*Respectfully submitted by Pastor Maggie*)



## WORSHIP TEAM REPORT

We are pleased to be able to offer both in-person worship each Sunday at 9am, as well as an option of participating from home via YouTube/Live. After-worship fellowship has grown as more people feel comfortable gathering together again.

We are blessed to have guest musicians assisting with worship leadership throughout the year. Janet Dahl, Jan Doyle, Ron Goplin, and Karen Windels lead the music for our Sunday worship services, in addition to the vocal choir, bell choir, and soloists. New this year to our worship is an acoustic ukulele/guitar group consisting of St. Martin's members, Ron Goplin and Bill Windels, as well as community members, Judy Laubmeier and Alice Murphy who lead worship once a month. THANK YOU all for sharing your gifts so generously!

Special services included a return to Wednesday Lenten Soup Suppers, our first Maundy Thursday "Last Supper" Service/M meal, which was well-attended, as well as the Easter Sunrise service by the creek. Our acoustic musicians led us in several summer worship services: Little White Church Service, annual outdoor Swamplover's Service, and a fall outdoor service at the Lion's Shelter for "God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday. We prepared the Sanctuary for Advent with a Hanging of the Greens service, gathered Wednesday evening's during Advent centered around the Holden Evening Prayer service, and came together around the outdoor firepit marking the Longest Night.

We are grateful for the Altar Guild and other worship volunteers who serve our congregation, especially Artis Schulenberg, who skillfully and patiently coordinates all our schedules!

Your Worship Planning Team remains committed to offering a variety of opportunities for faith formation and spiritual growth. On February 18, eleven members participated in a Lenten Retreat at Vermont Lutheran's Gathering Place, with a theme, "Time to Treasure and Ponder: Receiving God's Story to Transform our Own". The fall retreat was canceled due to low registration. Looking forward to 2024, a "Retreat for Women's Christmas" was offered as a special time for women to gather at the end of the busy season for celebration, reflection, and visioning.

In June, the Cross Plains Area Mindfulness Meditation Group celebrated their one year anniversary and continues on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month from 6:30-7:45pm on a drop-in basis. This group is open to the public and welcomes people of all faith backgrounds to explore mindfulness and various forms of meditation for personal and spiritual growth. During warmer months we often meet outdoors and appreciate the leadership of various members who assist with planning our gatherings and freely offering their gifts to one another.

Our team bids a fond farewell to Allan Alt (and his wife, Sue), as they move from Cross Plains to be closer to their family. In his absence, we are searching for another Worship Planning Team member for 2024 – let us know if you are interested in serving with us.

See you in worship! *Respectfully submitted - Your Worship Planning Team (Sandy Salvo, Deb Goplin, Allan Alt, Janet Dahl, Pastor Maggie)*

## LEARN TEAM REPORT

- **Learn Team:** Our team is composed of 5 members (Pastor Maggie, Amy Esser, Cheryl Hartung, Stacie Rickman, and Karen Windels) and met monthly over the year. We send a representative to quarterly Council meetings (as a new alternative to the previous Team Leadership Council structure). We welcomed our new team's name (previously named the Youth and Family Ministry Team).
- **Worship, Learn and Play Program:** We initiated our new Worship, Learn, and Play program with a focus on children ages 3 yrs. Through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and their families. The program holds learning events on the first and third Sunday evening of each month. Input from families helped us outline the main elements and structure for this program. All congregants and their guests are welcome to join us. There are generally 9 children and their family members present, with attendance ranging from 14 to 23 people. Pastor Maggie and Karen Windels are the co-teachers for these events. A meeting with parents and attendees to critique the program occurred on Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>. Suggestions could result in some modifications to the program as it resumes in 2024.
- **Monthly Outdoor Movie Night:** These family-focused events occurred in June, July, and August, and were open to the public.
- **Confirmation:** Instruction for 5 students is under the direction of Pr. Maggie and Jenny Niesen. The group meets weekly during the school year. Four of the five students will be eligible for confirmation in spring 2024.
- **Adult Bible Study:** Adult Bible Study meets weekly after worship throughout the year, with a break in the summer months. The group is now studying the books of Samuel. There are usually a dozen or so congregants who attend these lively sessions. Monthly 'Spirited Conversation' gatherings occur on Sunday evenings at the 1909 Wine Bar and are open to the public. All adult studies are under the direction of Pr. Maggie.
- **Team Membership:** Jenny Niesen has resigned from the Learn Team after several years of committed membership. We welcomed Stacie Rickman to the Learn Team.
- **Adult Adventures:** A recent restructuring of St. Martin's teams led to the addition of the Adult Adventures program as part of the Learn Team. We look forward to working with any members of the Adult Adventures group in the coming year.
- **Community Outreach:** We hope to advertise SM's Christian Education programs more broadly to the Cross Plains community in the coming year.

*Respectfully submitted, Karen Windels, Learn Team Coordinator*

---

### ADULT ADVENTURES

This year found us busy, so we were not able to plan many adventures.

In the Spring, a group of ten St. Martin's members motored to Mazomanie to the Community Theater, April 16<sup>th</sup>. Our own Amy Wildman was in their current play, "Who Dun It?" We all agreed, it was a fun performance and Amy is a natural actor. We stopped for lunch at the 1855

Coffee House at 1 Brodhead St. This nice little restaurant/coffee house was originally the local bank and the safe now holds local art items for purchase.

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, our Adult Adventures destination took us to the Graedel homestead. Sandy Salvo led the Mindfulness Meditation Group of 14 folks on a Summer Solstice Awe Walk along Graedel's Serenity Path. The walk was followed by a Summer Solstice seated meditation on their deck. We discussed the scents, sounds, and sights we observed as we walked along the path. It was a lovely experience on a lovely evening. Thank you Sandy.

Our Autumn Adventure took place right here at St. Martin's Lutheran Church on Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup>. We invited Dr. Ruslana Westerlund here to share her story. She is local to Cross Plains.

Dr. Westerlund brought a human perspective to the war against her Ukraine. She told stories of her childhood and shared about how her relatives who currently live there are dealing with the war. Ruslana is very active in the local Ukraine Community and works with the local government officials to help make Ukraine more visible and known to Wisconsin people. Dr. Westerlund had her books available for purchase and was happy to sign them.

If anyone has any suggestions for future 2024 Adventures, please share them with our team. Thank you. *Respectfully submitted, Jan Doyle, Artis Schulenberg, and Kathy Graedel*

## SERVE TEAM REPORT

St. Martin's seeks to show God's love to others throughout the community and far beyond. We fed the hungry locally and globally, we built beds, we crafted quilts and delivered them to welcoming hands. We collected and distributed health care kits to developing countries, participated in God's Work Our Hands and the Cookie Sale raised funds to support the Feed Our Children and Giving Tree Programs. Our deep gratitude to Team member Debbie McCue upon her retirement from the Team after many years of devoted service to the Feed Our Children Program. We were blessed to welcome Jenny Niesen and Colleen Runey to the Team this year. Other members include Doris Fish, Patty Harper, Kay & Tom Meier and Maureen Berghoeffer.

**WAY FORWARD (formally Middleton Outreach Ministry)** Our Lenten journey responded to local hunger with a mini Canstruction tower designed and erected in our sanctuary by Phil and Doris Fish which benefitted Way Forward. Nearly 600 pounds of food was collected along with \$250 donated from St. Martin's missions.

**WORLD HUNGER (Good Gifts Program)** Over \$1,500 was collected through Lenten offerings and the World Hunger-Good Gifts Program, along with \$250 from St. Martin's missions, purchasing two shares of Well Water, two shares of Microloans for Women, four shares of Start Up Sunday School materials and one Cow (we're a WI congregation).

**ST. MARTIN'S GARDEN** - The Team of Bruce Salvo, Tom Meier and Bill Windels tilled and enriched the soil, planted the seedlings, watered them faithfully and kept the weeds at bay. The harvest of potatoes, carrots and onions was delivered to Way Forward.

**SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE (SHP)** This national non-profit organization builds bunk beds for children. Their tagline is, "No child in our town sleeps on the floor." While St. Martin's has donated financially to the program and provided quilts in the past, 2023 was the first year we formed a Team and participated in the build. The goal for the day was 40 beds, over 60 were constructed.

**LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF** This year, in addition to 33 quilts, 50 personal care kits that were assembled during God's Work. Our Hands Sunday were sent to LWR. The kits bring comfort and dignity when natural disasters strike or when war displaces families. Each kit contained a bath towel, two bars of soap, a comb, toothbrush & fingernail clipper.

**COOKIE SALE** The narthex served as a welcoming center for those attending the cookie sale. Shoppers were treated to beverages & pastries, Christmas music and learned a little more about who we are and what we do at St. Martin's. A beautiful assortment of hand-made craft items donated by Barb and Don Whittler gave shoppers an opportunity to do a little Christmas shopping prior to buying cookies. A record breaking \$2,700 was raised for the Giving Tree and Feed Our Children Programs.

**GIVING TREE** The Giving Tree celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary by partnering with Park Elementary, Glacier Creek Middle School and Sunset Ridge social workers and adopted 56 children and their siblings enrolled in their respective schools. While the Giving Tree began under the rafters of St. Martin's, we are now honored to have growing support from the community. We were honored to have business partners Snap Fitness, Plastic Ingenuity and Challenge Fit join the effort by collectively granting nearly 100 wishes to the children. The Cross Plains Community Chest and American Legion provided checks to families residing in Cross Plains. "It takes a village" and we are certainly that.

*Above reports respectfully submitted – Maureen Berghoeffer*

**FEED OUR CHILDREN** For the 2022-23 school year, St. Martin's provided a total of 1251 Weekend Food Program bags for Park Elementary and Glacier Creek Middle School. Volunteers take turns packing the bags and Kay & Tom Meier transport them on Friday's to the respective schools. Thank you to all the volunteers that purchase food, pack bags and deliver the bags to the schools. *Respectfully submitted – Doris Fish*

**QUILTERS** The St. Martin's quilters met September through June on the second Monday of the month to *Tie One On*. This year 62 quilts were created: 33 to Lutheran World Relief, 24 to Sleep in Heavenly Peace, two to Cross Plains fire victims, two to the children of the refugee family that inspired our stewardship *Count Your Blessings* theme, one to Tyler Duhr to celebrate his high school graduation. *Respectfully submitted - Lois Weiland*



## STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Each year, I try to come up with a new theme for our stewardship drive. It took a bit longer this year, but I believe it's a good one. *Count Your Blessings*. As you may know by now, it was inspired by a refugee family from Yemen. Our daughter, Brooke, and some of her team members have agreed to mentor this family for a year. The family consists of a father who is 30, mother 25, son 7, daughter 6 and son 1. They spent five years in Jordan in a refugee camp before arriving in Chicago in September. They brought with them seven suitcases! Seven suitcases for five people...that's all that they have for worldly possessions. They have an apartment in the Evanston area where there is also an Arabic connection. The two older children are in a transitional school which means they are learning English and keeping up on their lessons in hopes to move into a public school. The parents are having lessons as well. What Brooke and her team do is that one of the team members visits them on a weekly basis and helps the family learn how to use appliances (imagine not knowing the language and trying to use a microwave, washing machine, dryer, etc.), take them to the grocery store (there is a small grocery store nearby that features items that they are familiar with), take them to the library, or just helping them learn how to navigate around Evanston. Basically, anything that the family needs, Brooke and her team try to accommodate.

So, are we blessed? We have our families and friends, we have our material possessions and many more things. Imagine moving to another country, not knowing the language or customs and then knowing that you will probably never return to your homeland. Never see your family or friends again. How do you count your blessings then? Ponder this and let me know your thoughts. As part of our stewardship program, we have reintroduced The Lutheran Moment, where I interview people about how they would handle having to flee the country and what their blessings are. If you would like to be interviewed or would like to hear from someone, please let me know.

A big part of our stewardship drive is always the Faith Promise. Faith Promises can be made any time of the year so if you haven't submitted one, please do consider making a promise to St. Martin's and to yourself. So far this year we have a total of \$173,928 Faith Promises. The Council uses the Faith Promise total when they are compiling the next year's budget. So, count your blessings and see how St. Martin's fits in. *Respectfully submitted – Lois Weiland*

## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT

St Martin's property team members for 2023 were Brian Graedel, Bill Windels, Todd Duhr (Building Supervisor) and Amy Wildman. Members are continuing to serve. We would welcome one or two new people to serve on this team.

**Building Manager Position:** Congregation member Todd Duhr is our staff building manager. His usual hours are 8 AM to 12 PM, weekdays. Todd is also a member of the property team. He is regularly assigned special projects, as well as completing day to day maintenance and property inspections. He is greatly appreciated by our team and those who work closely with him.

**Meetings and Activity:** The property team met 3 times in person and conducted some business by email and phone during 2023. Todd and our team were also available for set up and take down of equipment, tables, or chairs at special events during the year. Team members contributed to the completion various of building and grounds projects.

Our budget for 2023 finished under estimate. Therefore, The budget submitted to the council for 2024 remains same as 2023. The condition of our building remains excellent. Our potential near-term costs continue to be our aging air conditioning units. *Respectfully submitted - Bill Windels, Property Team Coordinator*

## AUDIT TEAM REPORT

St. Martin's Lutheran Church Audit Team Final Report for Calendar Year 2022

The team consisted of Gordie Esser, Mark Niesen, and Jeff Postle. Artis Schulenberg, Treasurer, assisted the Team at each meeting.

The team met four times during December 2023/January 2024 to examine various components of the church financial transactions and record keeping. Throughout this process six individual audit tasks were completed. Some of these tasks included multiple components. These tasks and the findings of the audit are described below:

### Task 1 - Review the Binder of Council Minutes for 2022

The first task was to review the binder containing the Council minutes to 1) determine if there is a complete set of Council minutes and Treasurer's reports for 2022, 2) check to see if all meeting minutes were approved, 3) determine if Council proposed any budget items that were not in the church budget and 4) determine if all Council members met the standard for meeting attendance (no more than three absences for the year).

We examined all twelve months of 2022 for the above items.

We determined that meeting minutes were present for all months, although the minutes for June 22, 2022 were out of order in the binder.

We determined that the Treasurer's reports were present for 11 months and missing for one month (November 2022). One report was out of order in the binder. We subsequently found the November 2022 Treasurer's report in the Treasurer's files.

We learned from the Treasurer that approval of the Council meeting minutes is now part of the consent agenda process. We noted that formal approval of the minutes was documented in seven months but in five months it was not clear whether the minutes had been formally approved.

We checked the Council minutes from 2022 to determine if the Council approved any funds that were not in the church budget and if any approved funds exceeded spending limits. The minutes from all 12 council meetings in 2022 were examined and no instances of Council approving funds that were not in the church budget were found.

### Task 2 - Validate Church Vendors

The second task was to validate all church vendors from five selected months. To do this we looked at ACH (Automatic Clearinghouse) records, cancelled checks and the church ledger for the selected months.

January 2022: Fifteen vendors were noted and validated.

April 2022: Twenty-eight vendors were noted and validated.

July 2022: Sixteen vendors were noted and validated.

August 2022: Sixteen vendors were noted and validated.

October 2022: Seventeen vendors were noted and validated.

This task successfully completed with no discrepancies noted.

### Task 3 - Confirm Selected Church Payments

The third task was to determine whether the church paid monthly property insurance bills, monthly ELCA dues, and monthly payments for Pastor Maggie's health insurance and retirement for five selected months in 2022. The selected months were the same as in Task 2.

We determined that property taxes were paid in each of the five selected months and payments were made for Pastor Maggie's health insurance and retirement. We only found one payment for ELCA dues (in August), but further investigation showed that payments were made in other non-audited months. It appears that payments for ELCA dues were not made in all months due to church budget constraints.

This task was successfully completed with no discrepancies noted.

#### Task 4 - Examine Sunday Church Service Receipts

The fourth task was to match Sunday Counting Team completed forms with transaction reports from Church Windows and bank deposit slips. Five Sundays were sampled (2-20-2022, 4-10-2022, 5-8-2022, 8-21-2022, and 11-27-2022). All entries for these five Sundays matched.

It was noted that the record keeping for Sunday service receipts was somewhat hard to follow. It would be helpful to be more descriptive on the memo/description line of the transaction report rather than just entering "deposit".

This task was completed successfully with the a comment and a suggestion for improvement.

#### Task 5 – Examine Vanco Electronic Giving Records

The fifth task was to match Vanco e fund transfer invoices with Vanco e service deposits at Lake Ridge Bank using a sample of five months (January, April, August, October and December of 2022).

All entries for these five months matched and the task was completed successfully with no discrepancies noted.

#### Task 6 – Examine Church Payroll Accounting

The sixth task was to examine St. Martin's payroll accounting. We examined the year end pay stubs from Clergy Financial for the four St. Martin's employees in 2022. We then compared the pay stubs to the year 2022 W2 forms for each employee. We compared year to date pay, federal and state income tax withheld, and Medicare and Social Security payments. We found a match for three employees and are requesting additional information from Clergy Financial for the fourth employee to determine if the pay stub matches the W2 form.

#### Conclusion

Six components of St. Martin's financial accounting and record keeping for calendar year 2022 were examined by the Audit Team. These six tasks were successfully completed and no significant discrepancies or irregularities were found. A few minor record-keeping issues were noted and these can easily be improved. Although no irregularities were found, this audit cannot confirm that all church financial transactions were accurately reported.

Respectfully submitted,

The Audit Team

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Voting Membership as of December 31, 2022 211

Voting Members received during 2023

By affirmation of faith: 1

By Transfer: 10

Other:

**Total members received in 2023: 11**

Voting Members removed during 2023:

By death: 1

By transfer: 3

**Total members removed in 2023: 4**

2022 end-of-year voting membership:	211
2023 received:	+ 11
2023 removed:	- 4

**TOTAL VOTING MEMBERSHIP AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023: 218**

**Quorum needed for Annual Meeting (10%) 22**

## BAPTISMS, CONFIRMATIONS, MARRIAGES, FUNERALS

### BAPTISMS IN 2023

May 31 - Elaine Claire Wenzel

October 22 – Henry Joseph Goplin\*

*\*Baptism occurred at St. Martin's, membership elsewhere.*

### WEDDINGS IN 2023

None

### FUNERALS IN 2023

October 27 – Herb Niebuhr

### CONFIRMED IN 2023

Roman Blaha\*\*

*\*\*Participated in rite of confirmation ceremony in 2022, concluded studies and confirmed as voting member in 2023.*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

It should be no surprise to anyone that 2023 was another tough year financially for our congregation. It was not until last summer before our shortfall in receipts was really felt. Thankfully, special donations were made by some members that helped us through the worst months. But in the end our year-to-date receipts were not enough to cover our expenses for the year including our line of credit carryover from 2022 of \$12,500. For 2024 we have a \$23,000 line of credit carryover from 2023 that will need to be paid.

Throughout the year members were kept updated on our financial status through the Monthly Manna, temple talks, and "coffee with council" sessions. At the May coffee with council, selling off a piece of the church's property to help pay down our mortgage was presented. In October, five viable options were presented to help with our projected ongoing financial shortfall; Refinancing the mortgage, reducing pastor's time, finding a new tenant, sell the building/land and rent space, close or merge. There is no quick easy solution, but St. Martin's cannot continue business as usual; we need some innovative ideas from the congregation, we need new members in the pews.

Without an agreement from the congregation on how to move forward, 2024 budget is based on operating as we have done before, the only exception is regarding the mortgage. In July 2024, we will need to refinance, so there will be the opportunity to reduce our monthly payment by extending the number of years to pay back the loan. The assumptions used to determine the mortgage and interest expense are found in the 2024 budget notes. All other expenses were reviewed and adjusted as necessary. When excluding the 2023 & 2024 LOC expenditure from the total, 2024 budgeted expenditures are \$17,000 less than what was budgeted in 2023.

It has been my pleasure to serve our congregation for the past three years as a council member, with the past two years as treasurer. I encourage each of you to be involved and to share your God given time and talents with our wonderful St. Martin's family and invite your friends and neighbors to see what we are all about.

*Respectfully submitted, Artis Schulenberg*



## Receipts vs Expenditures

### General Fund

	2023 Total Budget	2023 YTD Actual	2024 budget	Notes
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$ 311,915.00</b>	<b>\$ 264,143.79</b>	<b>\$ 305,385.00</b>	A
<b>Expense</b>				
Adult Activities / Education	-	-	-	
Audit / Review	5,750.00	-	-	B
Computer Expenses	4,400.00	1,862.98	3,000.00	
Congregational Care	325.00	201.71	325.00	
Conventions	1,950.00	150.00	2,000.00	C
Copier Maintenance & Supplies	3,480.00	3,418.85	3,600.00	
Council Discretionary	200.00	-	200.00	
Education	1,900.00	-	1,500.00	D
Insurance	8,750.00	7,873.64	8,950.00	E
Line of Credit Interest	1,000.00	903.54	1,000.00	F
Pulpit Supply	1,000.00	1,046.61	1,100.00	
Mortgage Interest	11,280.00	11,523.48	13,128.00	G
Music, Worship & Audio Visual	6,965.00	2,893.21	6,965.00	H
Office Supplies	1,650.00	966.62	1,650.00	
Outreach Ministry	3,700.00	3,765.00	1,500.00	I
Total Payroll Expenses	<b>164,216.00</b>	<b>160,016.93</b>	<b>162,192.00</b>	J
Professional Services	6,380.00	8,193.70	7,000.00	K
Reimbursable Expense		917.71		L
Repairs & Maintenance Building	5,050.00	5,295.26	5,050.00	
Repairs & Maintenance Grounds	5,375.00	4,694.64	5,375.00	
Service Fees	900.00	653.45	1,500.00	M
Stewardship	450.00	-	250.00	
Synod & ELCA Support	6,600.00	6,600.00	6,600.00	
Transportation	550.00	-	550.00	N
Utilities	24,054.00	24,000.08	24,054.00	
Learn Ministry	2,250.00	66.00	550.00	
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 268,175.00</b>	<b>\$ 245,043.41</b>	<b>\$ 258,039.00</b>	
<b>Loan Principle Payments &amp; Fund Transfers</b>				
Mortgage Principle Payments	25,240.00	29,297.84	18,346.00	G
Line Of Credit repaid	12,500.00	12,500.00	23,000.00	O
Transfer to Def Maint Fund	6,000.00	-	6,000.00	P
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 311,915.00</b>	<b>\$ 286,841.25</b>	<b>305,385.00</b>	
<b>Difference</b>		<b>\$ (22,697.46)</b>		

## 2024 Budget Notes

- A A new rental agreement with Little Red Preschool became effective for the 2023 - 2024 school year, 10% increase to \$1,100 per month for 10 months.
- B External audit not required by the constitution, internal audit only.
- C 2023 convention was local, 2024 in Janesville.
- D Pastor and office manager's education allowance.
- E Insurance reviewed and modified, about \$700 savings.
- F The current LOC interest rate is 9%.
- G Continue current scheduled payments amounts through July 2024. The current mortgage rate is 4.8%, anticipating the new rate to be 8%. Budgeted new mortgage and interest payment at \$1650, 1/2 of current payment amount. Will decrease expenditures \$20,000/yr when compared to current payment amount. **Decreasing our monthly payment will extend the number of years before our mortgage is paid off.**
- H Includes funds to fix AV issues and/or replace equipment.
- I Reduce Cross Plains mailings from 2 down to 1.
- J Pastor increase of 5% (move closer to synod guidelines). 0% increase for all others. No pianists' wages budgeted. Two services per month now included in the Music Director's salary.
- K 2023 actual included Wegner advisory fees for lot sale and 990-T filing.
- L Expenses that are reimbursed, offset in receipts. i.e.: flowers
- M Bank, Vanco, and mortgage refinance fees.
- N Pastor's transportation allowance.
- O Line of Credit carry over from prior year.
- P To cover unexpected building expenses in future. Will only transfer from general fund if funds are available at year end.

<b>Designated Fund Balances*</b>				
	<b>1/1/2023</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>12/31/2023</b>
	<b>Beg Balance</b>	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>End Balance</b>
<b>Feed Our Children</b>	3,737.51	4,439.87	3,242.02	\$4,935.36
<b>Missions</b>	3,697.98	5,455.88	5,482.50	\$3,671.36
<b>Senior Youth</b>	2,101.71	-	-	\$2,101.71
<b>Memorials</b>	8,032.14	1,925.00	-	\$9,957.14
<b>Deferred Maintenance</b>	10,365.10	2,000.00	1,000.00	\$11,365.10
<b>Challenge Fund</b>	-	40,000.00	-	\$40,000.00
<b>Total Designated Funds</b>	<b>\$27,934.44</b>	<b>\$53,820.75</b>	<b>\$9,724.52</b>	<b>\$72,030.67</b>

## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OPENING LITURGY

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.**