

2023 ANNUAL Report



SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING APRIL 21, 2024

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, ELCA
720 S. 2nd St. Mankato MN
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BETHELEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Spring 2024 SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, April 21, 2024

10:45 AM – 11:45 AM

Dining Room

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order** President Jason Bruns
2. **Opening Prayer** Pastor Jay Dahlvang
3. **Approval of Minutes** November 19, 2023 Fall Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting: Bob Ihrig
4. **Old Business** None
5. **Annual Reports** Written & Posted on Website
6. **New Business**
 - A. Election of 2024-2025 BLC Officers, Council and Board/Committee Members: Bob Ihrig
 - 1) Nominating Committee report & ballot
 - 2) Additional nominations from the floor
 - 3) Election
 - B. Recognition of Outgoing/New officers, Council & Board/Committee members: Jason Bruns
 - C. 2022-26 BLC Strategic Plan Update: Pastor Jay Dahlvang
 - D. WELCOME Update (Refugee/Asylum Seeker Project): Pastor Jacie Richmond
 - E. Other
7. **Lord's Prayer** Pastor Jacie Richmond
8. **Adjournment**

Our Mission

Bethlehem is an inviting community that is growing in Christ, loving our neighbors and serving God's world.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Congregational Council/Boards/Committees

June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025

April 8, 2024 Update

COUNCIL

25 Marie Slotemaker	President
25 Matt Drewitz	President-Elect
25 OPEN	Vice-President
27 Bob Ihrig	Secretary
27 Jeremy Carter	Treasurer
27 Barbara Glass	Member at Large
25 Josie Lust	Member at Large
26 Cynthia Zacharias	Member at Large

ADULT EDUCATION BOARD X

26 Bob Ihrig
26 Michael Slotemaker
25 Cynthia Zacharias
25 Todd Hanselman
27 Dennis Frank
27 Char Bezanson

FACILITIES BOARD X

26 James Arentson
26 Jim Christensen
26 Noah Nelson
26 Sarah Morgan
25 Scott Wolner
25 Joe Wagner

CHILDREN'S BOARD X

26 Shawna Peterson-Brown
26 Abbe Austin
26 Holli McCann
26 Laura Phillips
25 Brittany Renberg
25 Chelsey Kunkel
27 Josie Lust

MUSIC & WORSHIP BOARD X

26 Nancy Rorem
26 Michaela Kerner
25 Marilyn Biedscheid
27 Betty Groth
27 Linda Frederick
27 Sheila Stevensen

COMMUNITY & GLOBAL MISSION X

26 Amy Haigh
26 Sue Larsen
26 Barb Glass
25 Werner Fick
25 Jan Blaisdell
25 DeAnn Bennett

STEWARDSHIP BOARD

26 Bob Ihrig
26 Jeannie Phillips
25 Heather Hammond
25 Marian Mallory
27 Amy Haigh
27 OPEN

ENDOWMENT BOARD X

26 Chuck Piehl
25 Ray Beckel
25 Sara Maslakow
27 Dennis Sandersfeld
27 Susan Weinberger

WELCOME & INCLUSION BOARD

26 Marian Mallory
26 Jessica Auel
26 Jeannie Phillips
25 Roger Haug
25 Melissa Wagner
27 OPEN

•TOTAL Positions for 2024 Election = 40

•BOLD Names represent Confirmed NEW members or EXTENDED terms of office to be approved

•X represents COMPLETE membership for 2024-25

YOUTH BOARD

28 Sheila Stevensen
26 Angela Bruns
26 Jessie Schaefer
25 Tanya Ringgenberg
25 Danielle Johnson
27 OPEN

Bethlehem Congregational Council/Boards/Committees

June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025

April 8, 2024 Update

FINANCIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE X

*Position To Be Appointed by the Council in 12/24

26 Wendy Keenan
25 Mark Larsen
24 Frank Larsen*

FAIR TRADE COMMITTEE X

25 Jolene Beckel
25 Paulette Bertrand
25 Etta Poole
25 Betty Groth
25 Bridget Poole Padilla
25 Kristen Simon-Frank

FINANCE COMMITTEE

*To be appointed by the Council

26 OPEN
26 OPEN
25 Mark Woelfel
25 OPEN
27 Diana Olson
24 OPEN

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

25 Jason Bruns Past President
25 Amanda Neubert Past Council Member
25 Bob Ihrig
26 Amy Haigh
26 OPEN
26 OPEN

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE X

*Approved by the Council on 2/20/24

**Approved by the Council on 3/19/24

25 Jason Bruns Past President
25 Marie Slotemaker Current President
25 Bob Ihrig
25 Dowain Kerner
26 Brad Groth
26 Mary Bliesmer**
27 Pru Gushwa*
27 Ray Beckel*

GENERAL SERVICE GROUP CHAIR X

25 Donna Engles

•TOTAL Positions for 2024 Election = 40

•BOLD Names represent NEW members or
EXTENDED terms of office to be approved

•X represents COMPLETE membership for
2024-25

2024-25 Positions Remaining To Fill

8

2023 Ministry Report



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Regina Hassanally". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bishop Regina Hassanally

Annual Report of the Lead Pastor for Semi-Annual Meeting of April 21, 2024

Thank You

Thank you for the nearly fifteen years since you called me to be your pastor. Your faith gives me faith, and I need a faithful community gathered around the gospel of Jesus—I expect there are others besides Bethlehem, but we are most blessed to have it right here! A special thanks to Pastor Jacie, for her ministry and friendship. A special thanks, as well, to our outstanding staff, who continue to be a joy to be around, and offers excellent work to advance Bethlehem's mission. Our council and committee leadership this year has been excellent, thanks to all of you!

Some Numbers

Our in-person worship attendance went up in 2023. That feels significant, and more than a post-covid bounce. We recognize the value, and necessity, of worshiping in person, together with others, a God who came in the flesh. We made amazing progress in reducing our mortgage debt—thank you! If we take into consideration dedicated money in the bank, our actual mortgage balance is now under \$400,000, with more than half the capital campaign to go. I think we are going to soon throw a great party once the mortgage is paid off, thanks to your generosity. Also, though we finished the year with a deficit, we were not far off our projected budget, and have bounced back nicely early this year, helped by lower snow removal and heating costs. Your financial generosity is only surpassed by the generosity of your serving—thank you!

Strategic Plan Update

If I listed the importance of my responsibilities as your lead pastor, right behind proclaiming the gospel, and leading the staff, would be ensuring that we realize the vision developed by listening to the Holy Spirit, the community, and one another, and described in our strategic plan. We review the plan's goals and objectives at each council meeting, to see how we are doing. This spring, we will reconvene the plan's leadership team to review the objectives under each of the five goals, to see if they have been completed, need to be attended to, or should be let go. We will also consider some new objectives under each of these goals as we are now more than halfway through our five-year plan.

Partnerships

Pastor Jacie's call has enabled us to begin and deepen partnerships with community groups doing the work of the gospel. We renewed our lease with LSS and the Reach for another five years. VITA Tax Services continues to do returns in Grounds for Joy. We host the Lincoln Park National Night Out, and are an election precinct. Musicorum and the American Guild of Organists hold concerts here. We are partnering with other ELCA churches in sponsoring the Cruz family's quest for asylum. We have built strong relationships with the Reach, Connections, Crossroads Campus Ministry and their Food Ministries, and the Diversity Council. We have a large contingent at the annual Pride Parade and attended the Juneteenth celebration as a church last summer. The other night, Pastor Jacie, Anna, and I attended a meal with our Muslim friends at the Wisdom House, as they invited us to join them in breaking the fast in Ramadan.

Congregational Activities

I advise the Stewardship Board, Adult Education Board, Endowment Board, Finance Committee, and began this year to work with the Facilities Board. I serve our ninth graders and their families as they complete their confirmation studies. I host and lead a number of classes, and have found particular satisfaction in the growth and development of our Life in the Spirit group as we share spiritual practices. I am responsible for our Men's Group, which has grown exponentially as we grow in our relationship with God through our relationships with others.

Serving the Synod and Community

At the request of the bishop, I have been assisting her in adjudicating a congregational conflict. I also serve the synod in helping them set minimum compensation guidelines to aid congregations in salary decisions for pastors and deacons. I continue to serve on the YMCA board of directors as they have hired a new executive director, and find joy in my mentee I visit each Thursday on his lunch break at Dakota Meadows.

Care Ministry

It's such an honor to be invited to your joys and sorrows, and we have had both this year. I miss our departed saints and am comforted to know they are in Christ's eternal care. Each year, I make hundreds of visits in homes, hospitals, care centers, and jail, and stand by dozens of gravesides. We have a dedicated group of care ministers, and I hear over and over from our Bethlehem members how your love and support mean the world in our time of need. Thank you.

Pr. Jay Dahlvang

Associate Pastor's Annual Report to Congregation 2024

Worship

This year our congregation celebrated another Reconciling In Christ Sunday on January 28th, 2024. The theme was on Amos 5 about justice rolling down. Leading up to that day we created a congregational waterfall out of fabric strips that represented our hopes, dreams, and prayers for inclusion in our congregational life.

Also in January 2024 we tried a new form of worship with an intentional dinner church. This was a special worship service held on a Wednesday night. This communion service incorporated a meal as a part of the service itself. Instead of a traditional sermon people sat around tables eating together and talking about the scripture for worship with one another. This idea came from a night during the previous year where we had to be flexible with worship due to food not being delivered on time for our regularly scheduled evening meal. This time around we wanted to be intentional about combining worship and the meal.

Youth/ Young Adult Ministry

In the summer of 2023 I worked with our Faith Formation staff to update the comprehensive plan for Bethlehem's faith formation ministries. This included an update to the scope and sequence of the lessons in Torchlight and Confirmation through 2027. Along with that update came some additions and changes to our faith formation activities. We changed some of our faith milestones for children, youth, and families in our ministries including some new milestones. We now pray for the baptismal birthdays of all of our children and youth in worship once a month. We are also this year hosting bi-monthly events for SPARKS which is a gathering for children 1-2 years of age and their families. Another new thing that was introduced this year was something called Brave Conversations which is where youth in grades 5-8 attend with a trusted adult to talk about a topic that may be difficult to talk about. We will host two of these events a year. This year the topics were on Mental Health & Suicide and Phones, Technology, and Boundaries.

Another new thing that began the fall of 2023 is a monthly gathering for youth that is trying to focus on our high school youth. Some of our gatherings so far have also included youth in younger grades as well, but we are intentionally focusing on inviting and connecting with Bethlehem's high school aged youth. Pastor Jay, our Faith Formation director Anna, and I are also trying to connect one-on-one with all of our post-confirmation high school youth as well at least once in a calendar year.

Also in the fall of 2023 I worked with two Bethlehem members to try and begin a monthly gathering for Bethlehem's young adults. We invited all young adults in the congregation from ages 18-30. Unfortunately this group is off to a very sluggish start, but I am committed to keep

working on providing opportunities for these members of our congregation and community to have a space to gather and build relationships.

WELCOME

Our congregation continues to be a partner in the ministry of WELCOME as we accompany the Cruz family. In one year since we began to walk alongside this family they have formally applied for legal asylum with the help of a law firm. The family has secured a home for themselves, they have applied for various benefits to help them while they are unable to find employment, they are going to school to learn English, and they are learning the basics of budgeting and other various life skills. They have also received medical assistance and are working on getting driver's licenses. There are many more stories to tell about this wonderful family and they have come so far in a single year!

In November of 2023 the five congregations who are assisting this family came together to celebrate this wonderful partnership. We got to hear from members of the core team of volunteers helping the family, and the Cruzes themselves even spoke! It was a wonderful opportunity for the five congregations to come together to celebrate the ways God has been among us through this ministry.

Bethlehem as well as the other four congregations have committed to being involved with this ministry for another year. We look forward to seeing the Cruz family continue to grow in independence and confidence.

Ecumenical/ Community

This year I helped to begin a new ministerial group for the Mankato area pastors. I was assisted by the Very Reverend Cindi Brickson from St. John's Episcopal Church here in Mankato. Pastor Jay has also helped to arrange some of the meetings of this newly forming ministerial. My hope is that this group will continue to grow and that it will help foster positive relationships among area pastors and may open up some new possibilities for working together.

Another new thing that also came out of this monthly ministerial group was that Bethlehem is now hosting a weekly text study for pastors. This is a time where the pastors can study the Biblical texts and help each other get ideas for preaching.

During the weekend of Mankato's Pride celebration I got the opportunity to participate in a special worship service with other local area clergy at First Presbyterian Church. Approximately 60 people from the community attended this special service and blessing for Pride.

Synod

I continue to serve as a member of the board for Crossroads Campus Ministry. This past year Crossroads welcomed a new Campus Pastor, Pastor Jenna Couch, to the ministry. The board is grateful for her presence and energy that she has for the ministry. We are excited to see the gifts that she will bring to that place.

Pr. Jacie Richmond

Snapshots of Bethlehem's Family Faith Formation Ministry

Anna Wencil, Family Faith Formation Ministry Director

Education

LIGHT & NightLIGHT (Preschool-4th Grade)



We had a fun year of ministry with our littles on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. Our program continues to thrive with consistent attendance on both days. Our kids led two wonderful Christmas programs and shared their musical gifts during Palm Sunday. We are thankful to have a handful of parents who always stick around to support the program where needed. I am very thankful for the creativity and consistency of Kaitlin Carter, who leads the program each week. We're both grateful for the continued support of Marci Rossow, our Nursery Coordinator, who is always there to help, too.

Torchlight & Confirmation (5th-9th Grade)

I am the primary lead for our 5th-8th grade program. Each Wednesday, we meet in Youth Room for games, discussion, an activity, and a closing spiritual practice. Over the past few years, it has developed into a fun, hands-on, project-based learning experience. Last year, we ended the year by building cardboard arcades that reflected the kingdom of God. This fall, we wondered how faith and science are both good and necessary and ended by creating wonder poems using old hymnals. This winter, we remembered our baptisms by having each youth research their own baptism and bring back pictures and details to share with their small group. During Lent, our 7th & 8th graders were paired up with a mentor, while our 5th & 6th graders practiced and prepared to lead worship on Palm Sunday. I delight in all the time I get to spend with those kids.



High School (9th-12th Grade)

Both Pr. Jacie and I have been working to build consistent gatherings for our 7th-12th grade youth to gather every month during the school year. We continue to build connections with our older youth whenever possible amidst their busy lives!

Milestones (3yo-12th Grade)

Our milestones are faith formation experiences or classes for parents and kids or youth to attend together.

As a part of our new comprehensive plan, we reworked some of our milestones. Our 5th-8th grade milestones are now called Brave Conversations, and we offer two each year. This year, we offered one on mental health & suicide, and another on phones, technology, and boundaries. Pr. Jacie and I were very thankful for the partnership of Michaela Farley, a licensed therapist from Christian Family Solutions, who lead the conversations with us. The conversations were very well attended, and we look forward to host different topics next year. We also started a new way of marking an annual milestone—baptism birthdays! We now pray for all of our kids and youth during their baptism month. Our children's and youth boards also sign a postcard, which we send to everyone.



Summer Activities & Experiences



VBS (Preschool–6th Grade)

Our first time partnering with Centenary UMC for VBS was a big success! Our theme was Renew. Each day we read the Parable of the Sower and focused on another part of the story, with a big focus on creation care. It was a joyful and meaningful week. We were thrilled to have 50 kids registered, and are grateful to have so many wonderful parents and volunteers made it happen.

Service & Sun (7th–12th Grade)

We had 3 youth participate in our first time offering Service and Sun, a fun and meaningful local service experience. We partnered with Christ the King, Messiah, and Epiphany Lutheran Churches. Each day, we completed one service project and one fun activity. One highlight was visiting Global Health Ministries and packing supplies to send to our partners at lambi. Attending a Moon Dog's game and a daily ice cream stop were other great highlights!



Camp at Shores of St. Andrew (2nd–9th Grade)

We took 11 kids to camp last summer! We have been working to build up camp participation since I came to Bethlehem 7.5 years ago, so this is very exciting! We had a blast exploring God's creation, swimming in Lake Andrew, singing camp songs, and growing in faith. We look forward to bringing even more kids in 2024 thanks to extra funds from the Endowment Committee to provide more financial support.



Montana Adventure Trip (7th–12th Grade)

7 youth and 3 adults, including Pr. Jacie and me, took the train out to Montana for a week of adventure at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. Each of us challenged ourselves in new and different ways, which made for an exciting and meaningful experience. It was a wonderful experience with a top notch camp, and I hope we can take kids back again very soon!

Bethlehem Lutheran Church: Office Report 2023, prepared March 2024

Congregational Services Coordinator, Molly Nelson & Office Assistant, Christine Schulz

2023 by the numbers:

4 Baptisms

- Oliver Johnson, January 8, Parents Connor & Crystal Johnson
- Oakley Clemenson, April 23, Parents Annemarie & Shawn Clemenson
- Lucy Beth Csizmadia, November 12, Parents Erin & Steven Csizmadia
- Lillian Wels, November 12, Parents Ashley Ganger & Dustin Wels

1 Wedding

- Sara Maslakow & Mitchell Skulzacek, May 26

16 Funerals

- Roger Saman 1/30
- Randy Drager 3/1
- Stanley DeFries 3/3
- Robert "Bob" Kulseth 3/11
- Cindy Ringgenberg 6/7
- Douglas Wilkins 3/26
- Clayton Wolf 4/22
- Verona Roberts 8/8
- Lynette Freyberg 10/6
- Richard Bouquet 11/6
- James Norland 11/4
- Steve Twardoski 11/3
- Ruth Reichwald 11/21
- Victoria Reedstrom 11/18
- Carol Peterson 11/27
- Betty Sanger 1/6/2024

Attendance: In-person weekly attendance averaged 198 worshippers (138 on Sundays, 60 on Wednesdays) compared to 197 per week in 2022.. Online worship attendance continues to average around 15-20 viewers per week.

Volunteers: We have well over 100 volunteers assisting in everything Bethlehem does, from worship services, Wednesday night suppers, funeral serving, Family Faith Formation events and education, adult education, and so much more. Our volunteers regularly meet the needs of Connections shelter and Crossroad's Lunch-for-a-Buck.

Website traffic 11,000 views in 2023 compared to 13,000 in 2022.

Facebook Reached 25,574 in 2023, up from 20,440 in 2022, with 87 new page likes.

Instagram Reached 366 in 2023, compared to 67 in 2022. We gained 13 new followers in 2023.

Hours: The office is open 9-5 Tuesday-Thursday, but is in use nearly every day of the week during the program year. Our building is used 7 days a week, nearly every week, during the program year. Church meetings and building rental occupy an average of 15 hours a week outside the public hours.

Organizations Using Our Building

- Long Term: Lutheran Social Services (LSS) has been a tenant in our building since 1975 and The REACH joined them in 2011.
- Regular: VITA Tax Services, Musicorum, Sons of Norway, Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association, Lifelong Learners Council, Riverbend 4-H Club
- Occasionally: Scouts of America, South Front St Block Party Committee, Organ Recitals, Grief Support, Cancer Support, Teens Encounter Christ (TEC), Connections Ministry and the Kato Sleep Out, Elections Precinct, Red Cross Blood Drive, Mankato Public Safety, Flu/Covid Immunization Clinics, NicBluCares, Night to Unite,

Financial Update 2023

Fiscal year 2023 was challenging. Worship and activities carried on with something for everyone and for every age group. In this report, there are explanations of several aspects of the financial ups and downs of the year.

The year began with a \$0 general fund balance. The general fund balance fluctuated over the course of the year between a small positive balance in January and a very large deficit balance of \$62,176 at the end of September. The year-end general fund balance was a deficit of \$17,000. The budget for 2023 was a \$13,700 deficit budget. So, the year-end deficit was not out of line. The budget for 2024 is a \$16,733 deficit budget. An expected estate gift has not yet been received. This gift will cover the deficit budget amount for 2024. The Budget Committee worked hard to present a budget which meets the needs of the congregation, but is fiscally responsible. Member giving by year end was at 97% of budget (budget of \$525,500 vs. actual of \$507,591).

Benevolence giving, as always, was strong in 2023. Total benevolence giving was \$142,544. A total of 22 organizations (local, national and international) benefitted from your generosity. A full list of the organizations and amounts contributed is included with this report. The monthly mission projects continue to provide much needed assistance to deserving organizations.

The Stewardship Board held its annual general fund pledge campaign for 2024. A total of 165 pledges were received. The total dollar amount pledged was \$371,299. The number of members using electronic giving continues to increase. Many members are now using the Breeze program for personalized electronic giving. Any questions about electronic giving should be directed to the church office.

The first year of the capital campaign “Imagine; A Vision of Hope” was completed in 2023. A total of \$276,706 was received for mortgage reduction. Over the course of 2023, regular mortgage payments of \$98,244 were made. In addition to the regular mortgage payments, additional principal payments of \$356,000 were made. The principal balance at the end of the year was \$591,601.

As of December 31, 2023, Bethlehem had cash on hand of \$115,680. This consisted of four things. The general checking account at MinnStar Bank had a balance of -\$17,023. Second, the MinnStar Bank savings account had a balance of \$64,727. These are funds that have been restricted by the donor and are being held for specific purposes. Third, petty cash had a balance of \$100. And finally, the Mission Investment Fund account had a balance of \$67,876.

The budget for 2023 is not a balanced one, so effort needs to be made on both increasing contributions and controlling expenses to make this a reality. Emphasis on electronic giving will continue in the future with various options available – sign up in the church office, look for the “Donate Now” button on the Bethlehem web page, or download the Breeze app to any smart phone.

Thanks to all of you for your continuing support of the ministry and mission of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Ruiz, Financial Secretary
Jeremy Carter, Treasurer

Bethlehem Lutheran Church 2023 Benevolence

The following benevolences were paid in 2023

American Red Cross	1,300.00	
Asylum Family	3,016.24	April Mission Project
Bethlehem Endowment Fund	585.00	memorials
Blessings Box	500.00	
CADA House	500.00	
Connections Ministry	5,374.26	October Mission Project
Connections Ministry	2,400.00	monthly contributions
ECHO Foodshelf	4,916.69	March Mission Project
ELCA Disaster Relief	300.00	
Global Health Ministries	754.49	May Mission Project
God's Global Barnyard	6,032.24	December Mission Project
Green Lake Lutheran Ministries	726.25	February Mission Project
Iambi Secondary School	8,132.43	September Mission Project
Lutheran Campus Ministry	727.29	August Mission Project
Lutheran World Relief	9,298.91	June Mission Project
Lutheran World Relief	64,802.29	School Kit Project
Misc. Contributions	1,400.00	
Missionary - Pastor Kristin Engstrom	6,330.00	
Partners for Affordable Housing	1,416.58	July Mission Project
Salvation Army	1,000.00	
Samaritan Fund	2,495.85	Assistance to members
SE MN Synod Support	15,000.00	Annual Synod Support
The REACH	2,295.24	January Mission Project
The REACH	3,040.00	memorials
World Hunger	200.00	
TOTAL	\$ <u>142,543.76</u>	

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Budget & Actual 2023 and Budget 2024

		2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
	INCOME			
1	General Fund Offerings	525,000.00	507,591.06	525,000.00
2	Loose Offerings	2,500.00	6,785.36	5,000.00
3	Initial Offering	150.00	69.00	100.00
4	Lent & Holy Week	2,000.00	1,442.77	1,500.00
5	Christmas	3,500.00	6,583.17	2,500.00
6	Offerings (unrestricted)	\$ 533,150.00	\$ 522,471.36	\$ 534,100.00
7				
8	Benevolence	60,000.00	54,210.62	60,000.00
9	LIGHT Offerings	100.00	175.00	-
10	Bell Choir	-	20.00	-
11	Capital Fund	7,500.00	599.76	5,000.00
12	Samaritan Fund	1,000.00	2,155.00	1,500.00
13	Landscaping	1,000.00	611.63	1,000.00
14	Memorial (restricted)	1,500.00	10,885.00	5,000.00
15	Music & Worship	1,000.00	4,027.40	3,500.00
16	School Kits	-	64,860.00	-
17	LIGHT Program	-	1,402.69	-
18	Youth	5,000.00	8,834.27	5,000.00
19	Offerings (temporarily restricted)	\$ 77,100.00	\$ 147,781.37	\$ 81,000.00
20				
21	Mortgage Reduction	\$ 98,244.00	\$ 276,706.12	\$ 98,244.00
22				
23	Memorials (unrestricted)	10,000.00	3,088.25	5,000.00
24	Thrivent Choice Funds	2,000.00	1,035.00	2,000.00
25	Serving Groups	3,000.00	3,440.40	3,000.00
26	Radio Broadcast	5,200.00	4,505.13	5,200.00
27	Taxi	150.00	145.00	150.00
28	Wednesday Night Suppers (free will)	2,500.00	2,802.54	3,000.00
29	Adult Education Programs	250.00	550.00	300.00
30	Confirmation Fees	300.00	300.00	300.00
31	Facility Usage Fees	14,000.00	14,495.38	15,000.00
32	Lease Payment - LSS	44,000.00	44,000.04	44,293.00
33	Lease Payment - The REACH	25,200.00	25,200.00	25,368.00
34	Interest on Checking	60.00	53.08	55.00
35	Interest on Savings	250.00	159.50	175.00
36	Fair Trade Coffee	500.00	2,257.36	500.00
37	Miscellaneous Income	100.00	81.00	100.00
38	Other Income (unrestricted)	\$ 107,510.00	\$ 102,112.68	\$ 104,441.00
39				
40				
41	TOTAL INCOME	\$ 816,004.00	\$ 1,049,071.53	\$ 817,785.00
42				
43				
44	Funds from Estate			\$ 35,988.00
45				
46		Total Funds		\$ 853,773.00
47				
48				

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Budget & Actual 2023 and Budget 2024

		2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
49	EXPENSES			
50	Boards			
51	Church Council	450.00	439.12	450.00
52	Community & Global Missions	100.00	-	100.00
53	Adult Education	300.00	1,335.15	300.00
54	Welcome and Inclusion	500.00	409.53	500.00
55	Personnel Committee	100.00	-	100.00
56	Stewardship	200.00	117.91	200.00
57	Board Totals	\$ 1,650.00	\$ 2,301.71	\$ 1,650.00
58				
59	Music & Worship			
60	Music Supplies (adult choirs)	500.00	-	500.00
61	Music and Worship (savings)	-	508.11	-
62	Bell Choir Supplies (Sr Bells)	350.00	43.28	350.00
63	Youth Music	100.00	-	100.00
64	Organ & Piano Tuning	1,200.00	1,708.00	1,200.00
65	Worship Technology (from savings)	-	1,670.23	-
66	Copyright Costs	465.00	425.00	465.00
67	Worship Supplies	250.00	245.27	250.00
68	Communion Supplies	600.00	646.72	600.00
69	Church Decorations	200.00	-	200.00
70	Guest Musicians	1,000.00	550.00	1,000.00
71	Pulpit Supply	300.00	-	300.00
72	Organist music & expenses	250.00	124.76	250.00
73	Bethlehem Brass	150.00	50.00	150.00
74	Music & Worship Total	\$ 5,365.00	\$ 5,971.37	\$ 5,365.00
75				
76	Family Faith Formation			
77	LIGHT & NightLIGHT	2,500.00	1,638.39	2,500.00
78	LIGHT & NightLIGHT (savings - library)	-	1,172.86	-
79	Milestones Ministries	1,000.00	1,796.12	1,000.00
80	Nursery/Manger/Worship Bags	300.00	374.54	300.00
81	FLIGHTS: Family Fun Nights	500.00	599.50	500.00
82	Faith at Home Resources	100.00	15.63	100.00
83	Children's Retreat & Summer Camp	1,500.00	1,717.15	1,500.00
84	Vacation Bible School	3,000.00	1,807.77	3,000.00
85	Christmas Program	100.00	129.75	100.00
86	Background Checks	200.00	59.75	200.00
87	Youth Curriculum & Resources	250.00	120.30	250.00
88	Middle Grade Ministries / Confirmation	1,400.00	1,056.67	1,400.00
89	Confirmation Camp	1,200.00	1,250.00	1,200.00
90	Youth (from savings)	-	15,183.64	-
91	Relational Ministry	100.00	41.20	100.00
92	Youth Retreats & Activities	1,800.00	2,043.80	1,800.00
93	Summer Mission Trip	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
94		\$ 14,950.00	\$ 30,007.07	\$ 14,950.00
95				
96				
97				

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Budget & Actual 2023 and Budget 2024

		2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
98	Benevolence			
99	Southeastern MN Synod	15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00
100	Samaritan Fund	5,000.00	4,895.85	5,000.00
101	Monthly Mission Projects	60,000.00	54,210.62	60,000.00
102	Memorials - Restricted	3,000.00	3,635.00	3,000.00
103	Sunday School Missions	100.00	-	-
104	School Kits	-	64,802.29	-
105	Benevolence Total	\$ 83,100.00	\$ 142,543.76	\$ 83,000.00
106				
107	Administration			
108	Office Supplies	2,750.00	4,081.29	3,000.00
109	Postage	2,250.00	2,766.94	2,250.00
110	Copy Machine	5,500.00	4,663.60	5,500.00
111	Telephone & Internet	3,500.00	4,199.16	4,000.00
112	Website Design & Support	200.00	190.00	200.00
113	Computer Support / Updates	3,000.00	2,382.84	3,000.00
114	Computer Equipment	6,000.00	2,021.72	5,000.00
115	Rally Sunday / Wednesday	400.00	386.01	400.00
116	Advertising	180.00	370.00	400.00
117	Radio Broadcast	5,600.00	434.40	5,600.00
118	ACH / Simply Giving Fee	1,000.00	820.21	750.00
119	Taxi	2,000.00	26.00	1,000.00
120	Devotionals	500.00	623.40	500.00
121	Serving Groups	1,500.00	4,173.89	2,000.00
122	Wednesday Night Supper	6,000.00	9,307.20	6,000.00
123	Special Projects (from memorials)	-	2,088.30	-
124	Offering Envelopes	500.00	191.10	500.00
125	Synod Assembly	600.00	600.00	600.00
126	Theological Conference	350.00	705.40	330.00
127	MN River Conference Membership	150.00	-	150.00
128	Reconciling Works	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
129	Softball Team	380.00	380.00	380.00
130	Staff Recognition	125.00	213.61	500.00
131	Volunteer Recognition	100.00	207.95	100.00
132	Misc Expense	100.00	235.08	100.00
133	Fair Trade Coffee	500.00	1,857.79	500.00
134	Workers' Compensation Insurance	5,300.00	5,141.09	5,300.00
135	Administration Total	\$ 49,485.00	\$ 49,066.98	\$ 49,060.00
136				
137				
138	Mission Investment Fund Mortgage	\$ 98,244.00	\$ 454,244.00	\$ 98,244.00
139				
140				
141				
142				

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Budget & Actual 2023 and Budget 2024

		2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
143	Property			
144	General Property			
145	Repairs & Maintenance (general)	15,000.00	10,949.48	15,000.00
146	Repairs & Maintenance (major)	15,000.00	12,118.58	15,000.00
147	Facilities Savings	-	15,370.00	-
148	Inspection / Service Contracts	3,000.00	5,492.23	4,500.00
149	Custodial Supplies	1,500.00	2,399.22	2,000.00
150	Property Insurance	14,000.00	17,245.61	17,250.00
151	Grounds Maintenance (snow removal / lawn)	5,000.00	7,339.64	5,000.00
152	Landscaping (savings)	-	889.08	-
153	Equipment	500.00	169.00	500.00
154	General Property Total	\$ 54,000.00	\$ 71,972.84	\$ 59,250.00
156	Utilities			
157	Gas	18,000.00	21,970.70	23,000.00
158	Electric	21,000.00	24,216.47	23,000.00
159	Water & Sewer	4,250.00	4,090.28	4,250.00
160	Waste Removal	4,800.00	5,268.24	4,800.00
161	Utilities Total	\$ 48,050.00	\$ 55,545.69	\$ 55,050.00
162				
163	Property Total	\$ 102,050.00	\$ 127,518.53	\$ 114,300.00
165	Personnel			
166	Pastors			
167	Salary / Housing	142,087.00	143,411.00	145,401.00
168	Pension / Medical	53,449.00	53,574.40	54,061.00
169	Continuing Education	2,250.00	800.00	2,250.00
170	Travel Expense	3,000.00	1,903.85	3,000.00
171	Associate Pastor Moving Expenses	-	2,574.36	-
172	Books & Publications	500.00	50.67	500.00
173	Professional Expenses	600.00	-	600.00
174	Pastors' Total	\$ 201,886.00	\$ 202,314.28	\$ 205,812.00
176	Music Scholars (M & W savings)	\$ -	\$ 3,900.00	\$ -
177				
178	Lay Staff			
179	Wages	219,463.00	216,134.89	226,918.00
180	FICA / Medicare Taxes	17,615.00	17,812.88	18,186.00
181	Pension Plan	9,575.00	8,293.40	9,925.00
182	Health Insurance	18,919.00	18,619.44	18,963.00
183	Supplemental Health Insurance	2,400.00	2,333.33	2,400.00
184	Travel Expense: Family Faith Formation	1,200.00	531.88	1,200.00
185	Cont Ed / Prof Exp: Family Faith Formation	1,600.00	1,146.08	1,600.00
186	Continuing Education: Office Staff / Music Staff	2,200.00	965.11	2,200.00
187	Lay Staff Total	\$ 272,972.00	\$ 265,837.01	\$ 281,392.00
188				
189	Personnel Total	\$ 474,858.00	\$ 472,051.29	\$ 487,204.00
190				
191	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 829,702.00	\$ 1,283,704.71	\$ 853,773.00
192				
193	Projected Budgeted Surplus / (Deficit)	\$ (13,698.00)		\$ -

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023-24 Board/Committee Goals & Activities

Table with 4 columns: Board/Committee, Council, Member-At-Large, and names for various roles like President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.

2023-2024 Committee Goals and Activities (Includes 5-Year Strategic Plan and Other Identified Goals)

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & PLANNED ACTIVITIES

1. Engaging Youth

Strategic Goal #1: We will implement creative and effective ways to better engage post-confirmation youth and their families, and young adults.

Objective 7: Intergenerational Activities: We will promote an intergenerational activity twice a year in which all Bethlehem members will be invited to participate.

Status: Council members promoted and participated in "God's Work Our Hands" activities including school-kit packing and neighborhood cleanup on Sunday, September 10 and Wednesday, September 13 with BLC adults and youth.

A number of Council members participated in the annual Rake the Town with BLC youth in November as part of a BLC Men's Group activity.

Council members provided a Fat Tuesday silent auction basket and cash donation, volunteered for the event and attended the dinner with other BLC adult members and youth.

Objective 8: Lutheran Campus Ministry: We will support Lutheran Campus Ministry financially, with volunteers, and by providing contact information for Bethlehem students enrolled at their university.

Status: Council members financially supported the August Campus Ministry monthly mission.

Council members contributed funds, food and volunteer time to serve Lunch 4 A Buck to campus students and staff in October.

Associate Pastor Jacie serves on the Campus Ministry board of directors that coordinated activities and selected and installed a new Campus Ministry pastor. She attended the installation on February 18. She provided Campus Ministry updates at monthly Council meetings.

2. Sharing Gifts

Strategic Goal #2: We will empower our members to share the gifts God has given us.

Objective 18: Mortgage Payoff Milestones: We will celebrate milestones as we pay off the church mortgage.

We will monitor and initiate periodic payoffs of the BLC mortgage principal.

Status: Several milestones have been celebrated with public acknowledgement and \$100,000 mini-candy bars during the year in which the mortgage principal balance has been reduced from the original \$1.1 million to \$483,337.13 as of March 1.

3. Respectful Climate

Strategic Goal #3: We will foster a climate of respect and appreciation to nurture the differing perspectives among our members and the greater Mankato community.

Objective 21: Conflict Resolution Policy: We will review and update our conflict resolution policy as appropriate. We will do this in collaboration with the BLC Personnel Committee.

Status: The conflict resolution procedures in the Personnel Handbook were updated by the Personnel Committee in July and August and approved by the committee on August 8. The Council reviewed and approved these recommendations on August 15. These were sent to all BLC pastoral and non-pastoral staff. This update was reviewed and included in the BLC Personnel Handbook.

4. Community Partnerships

Strategic Goal #4: We will continue to work in partnerships to serve the needs of the community with a relevant purpose and meaningful action.

Objective 23: Refugee & Asylum Seeker Support: With synod support, we will collaborate with other community churches to provide housing and assistance to families/individuals who are relocated to Mankato, and are seeking asylum.

Status: We have provided individual and organizational support for the WELCOME project during the year.

Updates have been provided by and discussed with Pr. Jacie in associate pastor reports at monthly Council meetings.

Pr. Jacie has served as a BLC representative on the WELCOME coordinating committee.

Council members attended an August Moondogs baseball game fundraiser for the Cruz family.

Council members attended the special WELCOME November 9 celebration dinner for the Cruz family.

Both pastors attended a February meeting with pastors from other Mankato area church involved with WELCOME.

We financially supported the April WELCOME monthly mission.

Objective 24: Connections Shelter: We will continue to provide funding, meals, and volunteers to Connections Shelter.

Status: We continued to encourage Bethlehem members to support the Connections Shelter Ministry with individual financial contributions and volunteerism & meals during the multiple weeks designated for Bethlehem from October 2023 to April 2024. Individual Council members were included in providing such support as well.

We financially supported the October Connections Shelter monthly mission.

Individual Council members have financially contributed to the 2024 Connections Kato Sleep-Out to be held on April 26. The BLC fundraising event for this event is coordinated by a Council member.

Objective 25: Community Needs Assessment: Council members will annually survey community leaders, asking what the greatest community needs are and how a church like ours can meet those needs.

Status: Each Council member interviewed 1 community leader during 2023-24 to assess community needs and the potential role of BLC in addressing those needs. Interview results were discussed at Council meetings during the fall and winter months.

Community leaders included the superintendent of Mankato Area Public Schools, the executive director of VINE, MSU-Mankato President & Vice-President of Student Affairs, Vice-Chairman of Mayo Health System, Mankato West HS principal, Blue Earth County social worker supervisor, Scheels management representative & 2 Mankato public safety officers.

Objective 30: The REACH: We will continue to support The REACH with funding and volunteers.

Status: We continued congregational support for The REACH in the 2024 annual budget with a monthly \$200 designation of funding to support its daily meal program.

We approved new rental leases for the REACH and LSS in August.

Council members financially supported the November REACH monthly mission.

BLC pastors met with The REACH staff each month to discuss a variety of issues and enhance the relationship between the 2 groups.

Meeting were held in February between REACH staff, Council and Facilities Board representatives to explore additional physical meeting space for use by REACH staff. The Council, at its March 19 meeting, discussed and approved a proposal to provide use of part of the BLC Youth Room for REACH activities in return for increased monthly rental charges.

Council members attended the open house tours and pancake breakfast sponsored by The REACH staff on March 17, 2024.

Objective 33: Community Meals: We will provide a free meal, open to the community throughout the program year.

Status: We budgeted \$6,000 in the 2024 BLC budget to support expenses for the Wednesday night suppers from September-May. Four volunteer serving teams organized, served and cleaned up for the weekly suppers. The income, expenses, activities and participation for the suppers were reviewed at the February 20 Council meeting. This has been a successful weekly activity with 50-60 community members and BLC members in attendance.

5. Embracing Diversity

Strategic Goal #5: We will embrace diversity by demonstrating welcome and respect for different identities, listening to develop growing relationships with diverse communities, and working for the good of all in the community.

Objective 37: Reconciling Works Support: We will annually make a financial contribution to Reconciling Works to support their work.

Status: Financial support of \$1,000 for Reconciling Works was included in the 2024 BLC budget.

OTHER GOALS

6. 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

We will support implementation of the new 2022-2026 strategic plan for the church by guiding our boards, committees, staff and congregational members to address specific goals.

Status: The strategic plan was shared and promoted with BLC Council, board and committee members at the June 5 leadership gathering.

The Council actively promoted the inclusion of strategic plan goals and implementing objectives in 2023-24 board & committee goals and planned activities. Activities and accomplishments on these goals were encouraged in the 2024 board and committee annual reports for the April 21 semi-annual meeting.

An update on one of the 5 strategic goals and supporting objectives was shared by the pastors with the Council at each monthly meeting starting in August, 2023. This will be done two times for each goal during the year through the month of May.

A printed status report was compiled for each meeting for an end-of-year progress report on the strategic plan.

7. Financial Review Process

We will finalize and approve a standardized report form for use by the Financial Review Committee in the annual internal review of church finances.

Status: A report form, based upon the ELCA Congregational Audit Guide and feedback from BLC members, was developed during the summer and fall. It was presented for Council discussion at the October 17, 2023 meeting and approved at the November 21, 2023 meeting. This will be used for the first time in 2024 in the review of 2023 BLC finances.

8. Zambia Ministry Partnership

We will continue to support the partnership with Pastor Kristin Engstrom in her pastoral ministry in Zambia.

Status: We supported funding from the Endowment Board to support this ministry. Pastor Engstrom visited BLC during the summer of 2023 and in March of 2024.

9. Welcome & Inclusion

We will continue to emphasize efforts to proclaim the gospel; become a more welcoming congregation, and invite participation in our mission and ministry. This will include supporting the implementation of the Reconciling in Christ resolution by the Welcome & Inclusion Board and the congregation.

Status: Council members attend the January 28 Sunday & January 31 Wednesday RIC worship service & the January 28 adult forum presented by the Welcome & Inclusion Board to update & highlight its activities as well as to celebrate the 50th RIC anniversary.

Financial support of \$1,000 for Reconciling Works was included in the 2024 BLC budget.

10. Pastoral Performance Reviews

We will complete the annual performance review of each pastor during the summer.

Status: The President, President-Elect and Secretary conducted the annual review of the pastors in August with positive results. The reviews were shared with the Council at its August monthly meeting.

11. Bethlehem Pastoral and Lay Staff

We will value and support our pastoral and lay staff with fair compensation, a good work environment, encouragement to develop their professional skills, recognition of their accomplishments, and challenge to strive for excellence in their areas of responsibility.

Status: Performance reviews of BLC lay staff conducted by the Personnel Committee were completed in July and reviewed at the August 15 Council meeting.

We approved recommendations of the Personnel Committee and the Budget Committee for salary increases for lay staff, music staff, weekend janitors and the nursery attendant for 2024. We approved enhancements of pastoral salaries and vacation compensation for 2024 that comply with synod compensation guidelines and pastoral preferences.

We reviewed and approved recommendations from the Personnel Committee to publicly recognize BLC staff members on 5-year employment anniversaries.

We approved recommendations of the Personnel Committee for implementation of the January 1, 2024 Minnesota Employee Sick and Safe Leave Time state law at the January 16 meeting. Changes in the Personnel Handbook were approved to incorporate provisions of this law.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023-24 Board/Committee Goals and Activities

Board/Committee: Adult Education Board

Chairperson: 2024 Chuck Piehl

Secretary: 2026 Bob Ihrig

Members: 2025 Todd Hanselman

2026 Michael Slotemaker

2024 Karen Sandersfeld

Council Liaison: 2025 Cynthia Zacharias

Staff Liaison: Pastor Jay Dahlvang

2023-2024 Board Goals & Activities (Includes 5-Year Strategic Plan and Other Identified Goals)

Goals

1. Respectful Climate

Strategic Goal #3: We will foster a climate of respect and appreciation to nurture the differing perspectives among our members and the greater Mankato community.

2. Spiritual Disciplines

We will continue to educate BLC members on the spiritual disciplines, including worship, scripture reading, and prayer and provide opportunities to practice these disciplines within and outside BLC.

3. Monthly Mission Education

We will provide the opportunity for education related to the monthly missions identified by the Community and Global Mission Board.

4. Adult Forums

We will offer a variety of adult forums and other learning opportunities that will encourage participation of all adults.

5. Small Groups

We will promote purposeful small groups with the intent of strengthening relationships among Bethlehem members, and guide all current and new members to participation in at least one small group.

We will update the current catalog, listing available small groups; defining their purpose and activity; detailing when and where they meet, and noting whether they are open to adding additional members.

6. New Adult Education Programs

We will explore and evaluate new ways of providing adult education programs and opportunities.

Planned Activities

1. **Strategic Goal #3: Objective #22: Diverse Perspectives**

We will invite one community member or organization each month to represent diverse voices and perspectives, and to present to our worship gathering, adult forums, and youth groups. We will coordinate this with the Welcome & Inclusion Board and Youth Board.

Status: A January 7 forum on the topic of Reconciliation and Diversity Initiatives, to be presented by Mohamed Asladig of the Greater Mankato Diversity Council, will be held on May 12.

2. Spiritual Learning

We will work with the pastors to provide opportunities to learn about spiritual disciplines in small-group Bible studies and other settings.

Status: The Wednesday morning Book of Faith and Life in the Spirit groups met regularly in-person this fall, winter and spring facilitated by the pastors.

The Tuesday morning Bible study group continued to meet and study the upcoming Sunday lectionary on Zoom.

3. Monthly Mission Education

We will work with the Community & Global Mission Board to provide adult forums about established monthly mission partners.

Status: The following adult forums were held or planned in conjunction with the December 2023, March 2024 & May 2024 BLC monthly missions:

December 3	God's Global Barnyard - ELCA World Hunger	Amanda White – ELCA
March 3	Forgiving Medical Debt for Pennies on the Dollar	Pastor Peter Geisendorfer-Lindgren (THEE Alliance of Faith Communities)
April 28	House of Hope	Mark Johnson

4. Adult Forums & Life-Long Learning

We will schedule adult forums during the year on a variety of topics of interest to BLC members to promote life-long learning.

Status: The following adult forums were held during the year to provide life-long learning opportunities:

FALL/WINTER FORUMS – 2023-24

September 24	Friendship Families	Kristin Odland (Director of the Friendship Families, Minnesota State International Student Center)
October 1	Challenges Facing The Church Today	Dr. Sarah Ruble (Associate Provost and Dean of Academic Programs and Accreditation in Provost's Office and Professor in Religion, Gustavus Adolphus College)
October 8	ISAIAH (A multi-racial, state-wide, nonpartisan coalition of faith communities fighting for racial and economic justice in Minnesota)	Kathryn Lozada (Southern Minnesota Organizer)
October 15	MENTAL HEALTH SERIES "Mental Health & Youth"	United Way Mental Health Task Force (Barb Kaus & Sandy Hasse)
November 5	MENTAL HEALTH SERIES "Rural Mental Health"	Dr. Megan Mahowald (Blue Cross Center for Rural Behavioral Health - MSU-Mankato)
December 10	Christmas Hymn Sing - Grounds for Joy	Christine Schulz

WINTER/SPRING FORUMS - 2024

January 14	Martin Luther King, Jr. Speaks in Mankato	Documentary Film & Matt Moore
January 21	Compassionate Communities	Mary Ann Boe & Mary Bliesmer
January 28	Reconciling in Christ	BLC Welcome & Inclusion Board
February 4	VINE Faith in Action	Melinda Wedzina (Chief Executive Officer, VINE)
February 11	BLC Landscaping Update	Sarah Morgan
February 18	The Lutheran Liturgy	Pastor Jay Dahlvang & Pastor Jacie Richmond
February 25	The Challenges of Public Safety in Mankato	Public Safety Officer Dakota Wendell

March 10	Traveling the Lutheran World with Becky Sullivan	Becky Sullivan
March 17	The REACH: Open House & Pancakes	The REACH Staff
March 24	Master Gardening & How Not To Kill Your Tree	Shane Bugeja (Extension Educator and Master Gardener Coordinator)
April 7	What Can We Do About Climate Change?	Leigh Pomeroy
April 28	House of Hope	Mark Johnson
May 5	The Cruz Family & WELCOME Update	Pr. Jacie Richmond & Cruz Family
May 12	Reconciliation and Diversity Initiatives	Mohamed Asladig (Greater Mankato Diversity Council)
May 19	Playing the Sanctuary Organ	Christine Schulz

5. Small Groups

We will work with the Congregational Services Coordinator to update the current small group directory to promote BLC member involvement and learning in a variety of small groups focused on lifelong learning.

Status: Publication of the small group directory is on hold pending further discussions with Pr. Jay and Molly Nelson.

6. New Adult Education Programs

We will discuss and explore new adult education opportunities for the members of the congregation.

Status: No discussions have been held on this goal and activity.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023-2024 Board/Committee Goals & Activities

Board/Committee: Children's Board

Co-Chairperson: 2026 Shawna Petersen-Brown

Co-Chairperson: _____

Secretary: _____

Members: 2026 Abbe Austin 2024 Josie Lust

2025 Chelsey Kunkel 2026 Laura Phillips

2025 Brittany Renberg **Staff Liaison:** Anna Wencil – Family Faith Formation Director

2026 Hollie McCann **Staff Liaison:** Kaitlin Carter – Children & Family Coordinator

Council Liaison: Amanda Neubert

2023-2024 Board Goals and Activities (Includes 5-Year Strategic Plan and Other Identified Goals)

Strategic Plan Goals & Objectives

1. Engaging Youth

Strategic Goal 1: We will implement creative and effective ways to better engage post-confirmation youth and their families, and young adults.

Objective 2: Mental Health: We will address the youth mental health crisis, creating spaces and gatherings that nurture mental health within our programs. We will create a list of mental health resources for youth in our community.

Objective 7: Intergenerational Activities: We will promote an intergenerational activity twice a year in which all Bethlehem members will be invited to participate.

2. Sharing Gifts

Strategic Goal 2: We will empower our members to share the gifts God has given us.

Objective 13: Survey Response Rate: We will annually increase the number and percentage of church members completing the Time & Talent Survey.

3. Community Partnerships

Strategic Goal 4: We will continue to work in partnerships to serve the needs of the community with relevant purpose and meaningful action.

Objective 29: Neighborhood Connections: We will develop and implement a strategy to connect with the neighborhood and businesses.

4. Embracing Diversity

Strategic Goal 5: We will embrace diversity by demonstrating welcome and respect for different identities, listening to develop growing relationships with diverse communities, and working for the good of all in the community.

Objective 36: Reconciling in Christ: We will annually observe Reconciling in Christ Sunday.

Other Goals

5. We will provide needed support, feedback, and consultation to Family Faith Formation staff as they plan programming for families and children to ensure continued engagement.
6. We will plan and execute events to engage families, including parents and children. To support the 2022-2026 strategic goals, we will invite and welcome guests of our families and members of our church community of different age groups (youth and adults).
7. We will collaborate with staff to provide resources to families, including parents and children, to facilitate a connection to church and to support children's physical, mental, and spiritual wellness, in support of the 2022-2026 strategic goals.

8. We will increase engagement with and support of the community through Family Faith Formation activities in consultation with staff.

Planned Activities

1. We will lead the planning and execution of family (FLIGHT) events twice during the year. We will invite different age groups within our church community (youth, adults) to at least one of these events and will encourage families to invite family and/or friends outside of our church community to at least one of these events.
2. We will lead the planning and execution of special events and projects on behalf of children and their families.
3. We will collaborate with staff to develop and provide resources to families, which may include bulletin board content; resources to support children's physical, mental, and spiritual wellness; and/or gatherings of parents.
4. We will collaborate with staff to develop and maintain resources for children in worship.
5. We will provide consultation to staff and other needed support regarding the execution of children's programming, with a focus on connecting and supporting our neighbors and community.

2023-24 Activities & Accomplishments

1. We supported Family Faith Formation staff to implement Vacation Bible School (VBS) in collaboration with Centenary United Methodist Church. Community members, in addition to members of Bethlehem and Centenary, were invited to participate.
2. We supported Family Faith Formation staff to implement several special events, including the final day of LIGHT/NightLIGHT in Spring 2023, the first day of LIGHT/NightLIGHT in Fall 2023, Trunk or Treat, and the Christmas program.
3. We planned and implemented 3 FLIGHT events, including a 'School's Out' celebration in June 2023, fall celebration at Pumpkin Junction and the Phillips' home, and a winter FLIGHT event at Spring Lake Park.
4. We supported fundraising for Family Faith Formation priorities, specifically supporting children and youth in attending camp at Green Lake Lutheran Ministries. This included a s'mores fundraiser on Camp Sunday, and a cinnamon roll fundraiser on Confirmation Sunday.
5. We considered several options for promoting wellness (physical, mental, spiritual, etc.) among children. We plan to implement a wellness-themed VBS in Summer 2024.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023-24 Board/Committee Goals & Activities

Board/Committee: Community & Global Mission Board

Chairperson: 2025 DeAnn Bennett

Secretary: 2025 DeAnn Bennett

Members: 2025 Jan Blaisdell 2026 Sue Larsen
2025 Werner Fick 2026 Barbara Glass
2026 Amy Haigh **Staff Liaison:** Pastor Jay Dahlvang
Council Liaison: Matt Drewitz

2023-24 Board Goals & Activities (Includes 5-Year Strategic Plan and Other Identified Goals)

Strategic Plan Goals

1. **Engaging Youth Goal 1:** We will implement creative and effective ways to better engage post-confirmation youth and their families, and young adults.
2. **Community Partnerships Goal 4:** We will continue to work in partnerships to serve the needs of the community with relevant purpose and meaningful action.
3. **Embracing Diversity Goal 5:** We will embrace diversity by demonstrating welcome and respect for different identities, listening to develop growing relationships with diverse communities, and working for the good of all in the community.

Other Goals

4. We will support our Monthly Mission Partners.
5. We will provide mission partners/goals and posts for congregation to view in Narthex; engage more Bethlehem members in the support through volunteering with ongoing missions, such as Connections Shelter & Lunch 4 Buck/MSU.
6. We will work with Elizabeth Ruiz for monthly financial updates.
7. We will watch for organizations in the community for mission opportunities.
8. We will work with existing mission partners and organize a Temple Talk (before worship service) or adult forum.

Planned Activities

1. **Strategic Plan Goal 1 Objective 8: Lutheran Campus Ministry:** We will support Lutheran Campus Ministry financially, with volunteers, and by providing contact information for Bethlehem students enrolled at their university.
2. **Strategic Plan Goal 4 Objective 23: Refugee & Asylum Seeker Support:** With synod support, we will collaborate with other community churches to provide housing and assistance to families/individuals who are relocated to Mankato, and are seeking asylum.
3. **Strategic Plan Goal 4 Objective 24: Connections Shelter:** We will continue to provide funding, meals, and volunteers to Connections Shelter.
4. **Strategic Plan Goal 4 Objective 26: Lincoln Park Neighborhood Participation:** We will participate in Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association activities and events.
5. **Strategic Plan Goal 4 Objective 27: Compassionate Community:** We will live into our Compassionate Community Charter and participate in Compassionate Community Events.
6. **Strategic Plan Goal 4 Objective 28: The REACH:** We will continue to support The REACH with funding and volunteers.
7. **Strategic Plan Goal 4 Objective 33: Community Meals:** We will provide a free meal, open to the community throughout the program year.
8. **Strategic Plan Goal 5 Objective 34: Community Celebration Presence:** We will have a visible congregational presence at the annual Mankato Pride, Mankato Juneteenth Celebration, and the Mankato Pow Wow.

9. **Strategic Plan Goal 5 Objective 35: Diversity Council:** *We will annually invite a speaker from the Mankato Area Diversity Council.*
10. We will continue to support long-time missions and look for new possibilities for monthly mission partners.
11. We will promote Monthly Missions using STAR articles, display boards and Temple Talks, Adult Forums or videos.
12. We will set financial contribution goals each month for Monthly Missions and post the goals in the STAR article and on the Narthex display.

2023-24 Monthly Mission Funding Goals

January: Green Lake Bible Camp <u>Goal:</u> \$1,000	July: Partners for Housing <u>Goal:</u> \$1,300
February: Echo Food Shelf <u>Goal:</u> \$3,500	August: Crossroads Campus Ministry <u>Goal:</u> \$1,000
March: THEE Alliance Medical Debt <u>Goal:</u> \$3,000	September: Iambi School Scholarships <u>Goal:</u> \$8,000
April: WELCOME (Cruz Family) <u>Goal:</u> \$3,000	October: Connections Ministry <u>Goal:</u> \$3,000
May: House of Hope <u>Goal:</u> \$2,000	November: The Reach <u>Goal:</u> \$2,000
June: Lutheran World Relief <u>Goal:</u> \$7,000	December: God's Global Barnyard <u>Goal:</u> \$10,000

13. We will work with Connections Shelter and Lunch 4 a Buck/MSU (Jan Blaisdell, contact) programs to provide meals/services.
14. We will give consideration to maintaining a permanent box located in the narthex for donated items for Holy Grounds.
15. We will encourage our Monthly Mission Partners to take on responsibility for promoting their missions and encourage the participation of BLC members.

2023-24 Activities & Accomplishment

1. A total of **\$27,740** in monthly mission dollars was raised in contributions from BLC members in **2023**. **\$2,415** has been donated in January & February 2024. Monthly missions were promoted with narthex educational displays, STAR newsletter articles, temple talks and adult forums.
2. We added 2 new recruits, Barbara Glass and Sue Larsen to our team. DeAnn Bennett is both President and Secretary until someone from our team feels comfortable to step up. We have a stable committee with all positions filled. We have restructured our group responsibilities to have different individuals take ownership of specific tasks. This seems to have streamlined our group's functioning. We like each other and have respect for each person's responsibility.
3. We are making connections with other groups and committees in the church. This makes for a better mission partner experience for everyone. Our new focus is Partnerships within BLC. We have reached out to the Adult Education Board and have discussed partnering with the Welcome and Inclusion Board.
4. We have worked many times to recruit donations and service partners with the Women's Book Club. They have consistently been very supportive.
5. Sue Larsen's focus has been with Connections. She has worked with Derek Brown and organized a temple talk with Liz Paul. She has solicited volunteers and donations from our Book Club. Sue's family hosts a night at Connections when it is BLC's turn to work at Connections. Jan Blaisdell is a regular volunteer there. DeAnn Bennett's family served a night as well.
6. We partnered with both the Endowment Board and Adult Education Board to support Thee Alliance Forgiving Medical Debt.
7. We partnered with the Adult Education Board to support the Global Barnyard campaign in December.
8. We worked with the Adult Education Board to organize an adult forum for the Welcome (Cruz Family) and House of Hope.
9. We worked with Green Lake Bible Camp to show a video in January to advertise their camp. Anna Wencel connected us with them.
10. We donated funds to the BLC youth group.
11. Werner Fick is still working on making more school kits.
12. Jan Blaisdell has excelled in her leadership of the Crossroads Campus Ministry Lunch 4 a Buck program.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023-24 Board/Committee Goals & Activities

Board/Committee: Endowment Board

Chairperson: 2026 Chuck Piehl

Treasurer: 2024 Kristine Rebelein

Members: 2025 Ray Beckel

2024 Dennis Sandersfeld

Council President-Elect: Marie Slotemaker

2025 Sara Skluzacek

Staff Liaison: Pr. Jay Dahlvang

2023-2024 Board Goals & Activities (Includes 5-Year Strategic Plan and Other Identified Goals)

Strategic Plan Goals

1. Engaging Youth

We will implement creative and effective ways to better engage post-confirmation youth and their families, and young adults.

Objective 9: Scholarships: We will increase the percentage of eligible Bethlehem college students who receive scholarship support from the church through the Endowment Fund.

Objective 10: Choir Scholars: We will continue to fund and support the choir scholars program.

Other Goals

2. We will continue and inform the Bethlehem community of the long tradition of fiscal responsibility in the management of the Endowment Fund.
3. We will grow the Endowment Fund through prudent investments consistent with the purpose of the Fund and future donations.
4. We will grow the Endowment Fund by encouraging future contributions.
5. We will share income produced by the Fund in support of Christian missions in the local community and the world at large.
6. We will help fulfill the ongoing mission of Bethlehem by supporting activities outside the regular church budget.
7. We will support the future of Bethlehem, especially by showing concern for the young adults of the congregation, through scholarships for further education of Bethlehem members.

Planned Activities

1. We will identify ways to communicate the goals and activities of the Endowment Fund to the congregation, including through the Bethlehem website.
2. We will promote growth and sustainability of the Fund through judicious investments in years ahead.
3. We will develop ways of informing congregation members of donation opportunities available through the Endowment Fund
4. We will select and fund special mission projects of the congregation within the community and the world at large.
5. We will determine and support activities outside the regular church budget that will help fulfill Bethlehem's ongoing missions (e.g., Choir Scholars program). [This activity will help advance Bethlehem's 2022-25 Strategic Goals - Objective 10]
6. We will select and fund recipients of the annual Endowment Scholarship Program at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. [This activity will help advance Bethlehem's 2022-25 Strategic Goals - Objective 9]

2023-24 Activities & Accomplishments

1. We began to explore coordination with several Bethlehem committees/boards to improve support of mission efforts not ordinarily covered by the regular budget. We made an end-of-2023 status report to the Council in January 2024.
2. We finished consolidating Endowment funds in a single investment account to better monitor Endowment assets.
3. We supported 17 separate programs within the congregation, community, and world during for a total of \$31,575.00.
4. We began to review Endowment pages on the Bethlehem website to see if they could be more user-friendly and informative.
5. We made 15 scholarship grants totaling \$9,000 in 2023 and considered increasing scholarship amounts in coming years.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Endowment Fund

Annual Report for 2023

Total assets invested as of 12/31/2023 =	\$1,453,214.68
Restricted assets as of 12/31/2023 =	\$1,358,849.73
Unrestricted assets as of 12/31/2023 =	\$ 94,364.95
Donations received in 2023 =	\$ 585.00
Endowment Spending in 2023 =	\$ 31,575.00

Recipients	Amount of Grant
15 Scholarships @ \$600	\$9,000
Pastor Kristin Engstrom Ministry	\$4,000
ECHO Food Shelf	\$1,000
SE Minnesota Synod/Iambi	\$1,000
The Reach	\$1,200
Connections Shelter	\$1,200
SE Minnesota Synod	\$1,000
Blessings Box	\$500
Young Adult Group Startup	\$500
Women's Event Speakers	\$250
Iambi Secondary School	\$3,000
BLC Summer Camper Support	\$3,000
Refugee Welcome Team	\$1,250
Mankato Literary Conference	\$500
Campus Cupboard at Crossroads	\$500
United Way Navigator Program	\$2,500
Bethlehem Samaritan Fund	\$1,175
TOTAL	\$31,575

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023-2024 Board/Committee Goals and Activities

Board/Committee: Facilities Board

Chairperson: 2026 Jim Christensen

Secretary: _____

Members: 2026 James Arentson

2025 Joe Wagner

2026 Noah Nelson

2025 Scott Wolner

2026 Sarah Morgan

Staff Liaison: Pastor Jay Dahlvang

Staff Liaison: Kevin Liebl

2023-2024 Board Goals and Activities (Includes 5-Year Strategic Plan and Other Identified Goals)

Goals & Planned Activities

1. Keep the building and grounds safe, clean, and in good working order.
2. Install a camera system to enhance security
3. Continue preparing for future projects for when funding comes available including: LSS Bathrooms, Parking Lot, and Audio/Visual Upgrades

2023-24 Activities & Accomplishments

No Report provided.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
2023-24 Board/Committee Goals & Activities

Board/Committee	<u>Fair Trade Committee</u>
Co-Chairperson:	2024 <u>Paulette Bertrand</u>
Co-Chairperson:	2024 <u>Jolene Beckel</u>
Secretary:	2024 <u>Betty Groth</u>
Members:	2024 <u>Etta Poole</u>
	2924 <u>Bridget Poole Padilla</u>
	2924 <u>Kristen Simon-Frank</u>

2023-2024 Committee Goals & Activities (Includes 5-Year Strategic Plan and Other Identified Goals)

1. We will promote Fair Trade Products.
Objective #1: We will maintain and sell fair trade products at BLC through the front office.
Objective #2: We will provide opportunities for BLC members to sample Fair Trade products.
Objective #3: We will sell Fair Trade products in the narthex during the month of October after services.
2. We will promote Fair Trade in the community.
Objective #1: We will participate in 1 MAFTTI event per year, or as available. To include virtual events sponsored by MAFTTI.
3. We will educate BLC members about Fair Trade practices and products.
Objective #1: We will speak in front of the congregation about Fair Trade one Sunday during the year.
Objective #5: We will work with LIGHT program coordinator to incorporate a Fair Trade education component (game, skit, etc.)
4. We will be financially self-sufficient.
Objective #1: Fair Trade products will be sold at cost. Our objective is to break even each year.

Planned Activities

1. We will increase purchase opportunities on Sunday morning during Fair Trade Month and certain holidays.
2. We will donate a Fair Trade basket for the Fat Tuesday silent auction.
3. We will participate in Trunk or Treat at Halloween.
4. We will maintain Fair Trade stock in the kiosk at the front office.
5. We will participate in the Women's Activity in September selling Fair Trade products.
6. We will participate in the Mankato Fair Trade Christmas Bazaar.
7. We will make MAFTTI Fair Trade materials available at all functions and in the church office.
8. We will use Fair Trade coffee with church functions.

2023-24 Activities & Accomplishments

1. We maintained a supply of Fair Trade coffee and chocolate in the church office for purchase.
2. We sold Fair Trade products at the SEMN Synod Assembly, May 6th, 2023.
3. We participated and sold Fair Trade products at the BLC Women's Event in September, 2023.
4. We participated with MAFTTI and held a BLC Fair Trade Christmas Bazaar on November 26th, 2023.
5. We donated a basket of Fair Trade items for the February 13, 2024 Fat Tuesday silent auction.
6. We provided Fair Trade shopping guides in the narthex.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023-24 Board/Committee Goals & Activities

Board/Committee: Music & Worship Board

Chairperson: 2026 Nancy Rorem

Secretary: 2024 Betty Groth

Members: 2025 Marilyn Biedscheid 2024 Sheila Stevensen

2024 Linda Frederick 2026 Michaela Kerner

Staff Liaison: Charlie Leftridge

Council Liaison: _____

2023-2024 Board Goals & Activities (Includes 5-Year Strategic Plan and Other Identified Goals)

Strategic Plan Goals

1. **Goal #1 Engaging Youth:** We will implement creative and effective ways to better engage post-confirmation youth and their families, and young adults.

***Objective 10: Choir Scholars:** We will continue to fund and support the choir scholars program.*

2. **Goal 2: Sharing Gifts:** We will empower our members to share the gifts God has given us.

***Objective 11: Annual Time & Talent Survey:** We will annually survey our members to invite them to use the gifts God has given them to make a difference in the church and the community.*

3. **Goal 5: Embracing Diversity:** We will embrace diversity by demonstrating welcome and respect for different identities, listening to develop growing relationships with diverse communities, and working for the good of all in the community.

***Objective 34: Community Celebration Presence:** We will have a visible congregational presence at the annual Mankato Pride, Mankato Juneteenth Celebration, and the Mahkato Pow Wow.*

***Objective 36: Reconciling in Christ:** We will annually observe Reconciling in Christ Sunday.*

Other Goals

4. We will support the Music & Worship Director, choirs, & musicians and maintain our organ and pianos.

5. We will decorate our worship space seasonally and during festivals.

6. We will be responsible for communion service, ushers, paraments and entryway decorations.

7. We will work toward fundraising to support strategic goals as outlined in the 2022-2026 strategic plan.

Planned Activities

1. We will support the budget for organ maintenance, music and equipment for our choirs and directors.

2. We will decorate the entryway on a regular basis. We will decorate the sanctuary for fall, Christmas, and Easter.

3. We will maintain volunteers and train any new friends in support jobs.

4. We have hired students for fall semester musician scholar positions. They will be evaluated by the Music Director.

5. We will each bring ideas on how best to support the strategic goals.

2023-24 Activities & Accomplishments

1. We provided the budget for the full evaluation and maintenance of our organ. We supported the tuning and maintenance of the pianos.
2. We decorated our sanctuary, narthex and entryways for all seasons.
3. Our 5 usher groups have recruited new members. We've provided instructions and maps for communion.
4. We have 4 spring semester musician scholars. We supported their experience at Bethlehem.
5. We have updated the process and procedures for communion assistants.
6. We supported our youth programs with donations to their Fat Tuesday Mardi Gras Dinner and silent auction.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023-24 Board/Committee Annual Report

Board/Committee: Personnel Committee

Chairperson/Secretary: 2025 Bob Ihrig

Members: 2024 Ray Beckel 2024 Pru Gushwa

2026 Lori Ruthenbeck 2025 Dowain Kerner

2026 Brad Groth **President:** Jason Bruns

Past President: Mary Bliesmer

2023-2024 Committee Goals (Include 5-Year Strategic Plan and other goals)

A. Strategic Plan Goals & Objectives

Goal 1: Conflict Resolution Procedures

Strategic Goal #3: We will foster a climate of respect and appreciation to nurture the differing perspectives among our members and the greater Mankato community.

Activity: ***Objective 21: Conflict Resolution Policy:** We will review and update our conflict resolution policy as appropriate. This will be done in collaboration with the BLC Council.*

Status: The BLC Conflict Resolution Policy was revised by the Personnel Committee in discussions on July 11 & August 8, 2024 with recommendations approved by the Council on August 15, 2024. The approved policy has been added to the Personnel Handbook.

B. Other Goals & Activities

Goal 2: Lay Staff Performance Reviews

Goal: We will complete all 2022-2023 non-pastoral lay staff performance reviews during June-July, 2023. We will complete any required 6-month reviews for new employees during 2023-24.

Activity: Annual reviews shall consist of individual meetings with each staff member, the pastors and representatives of the Personnel Committee:

- Staff self-appraisal of performance based upon established questions and goal accomplishment during 2022-2023 will be reviewed and discussed.
- Staff performance goals will be established for 2023-2024.
- Current staff job descriptions and staff operating handbooks will be updated as needed.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Lay Staff Position</u>	<u>Review Date</u>
❖ Kaitlin Carter	LIGHT/NightLIGHT Coordinator	Summer 2023
❖ Kevin Liebl	Custodian	Summer 2023
❖ Charlie Leftridge	Music Director	Summer 2023
❖ Molly Nelson	Congregational Services Coordinator	Summer 2023
❖ Elizabeth Ruiz	Financial Secretary	Summer 2023
❖ Christine Schulz	Office Assistant and Organist	Summer 2023
❖ Anna Wencl	Family Faith Formation Director	Summer 2023

Status: All eligible lay staff employees were reviewed with positive outcomes.

The following new employee was reviewed 6 months after the start of employment at Bethlehem:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Lay Staff Position</u>	<u>Review Date</u>
❖ Benny Montalbo	Weekend Janitor	January - February 2024

This included a review by Molly Nelson (Congregational Services Coordinator), a self-review by Benny and a final discussion and report by the committee. A positive report was concluded.

The following part-time employees were reviewed during the spring of 2023 and did not require an annual review.

❖ Marci Rossow	Nursery Assistant
❖ Grayson Bolstad	Weekend Janitor
❖ Kellen Schaefer	Weekend Janitor
❖ Alexa Bolstad	Weekend Janitor
❖ Amy Haigh	Wednesday Night Supper Coordinator

Goal 3: Lay Staff & Music Staff Compensation

Goal: We will make appropriate recommendations for 2024 non-pastoral lay staff & music staff compensation as part of the 2024 Bethlehem annual budget.

We will update the lay staff compensation framework to remain current on employee salaries.

Activity: We will review the results of BLC lay staff performance reviews and current national church employee compensation information to establish appropriate compensation recommendations for the 2024 budget. We will complete recommendations to the Budget Committee at the September 12, 2023 meeting of the Personnel Committee.

We will review and update the lay staff compensation framework at committee meetings during the year based upon current national church employee compensation information.

Status: At its August 8 & September 12 monthly meetings, the committee reviewed current and past lay staff compensation along with national church salary data. Positive performance reviews, cost of living and alignment with national church salaries for comparable positions were analyzed. Appropriate compensation recommendations to the Budget Committee, Council and congregation were made for the 2024 annual budget. These were approved by all 3 groups in the budget process during October and November.

Goal 4: Lay Staff & Music Staff Vacancies

Goal: We will conduct job postings, interviews and make recommendations to fill any vacancies that occur in non-pastoral lay staff positions during 2023-2024.

Activity: Should vacancies occur in non-pastoral lay staff positions, we will take appropriate steps, in accordance with established committee procedures, to post positions, interview candidates and make recommendations of candidates to be hired. We will forward recommendations to the Council for official approval at appropriate times during the year.

Status: No vacancies have occurred during 2023-24 so no hiring actions were required of the committee.

Goal 5: Personnel Policies & Handbook Update

Goal: We will review and update the personnel policies and handbook as appropriate from the last update approved in 2023.

Activity: We will review the current personnel policies and handbook to determine the need for appropriate updates. We will make approved changes in the handbook to maintain a current version.

Status: The conflict resolution procedures in the Personnel Handbook were updated by the committee in July and August and approved by the committee on August 8 and by the Council on August 15. These were sent to all BLC pastoral and non-pastoral staff.

The Personnel Handbook sick leave policies were updated in January to comply with the new Earned Sick and Safe Time state law that went into effect January 1, 2024. This included committee discussion on January 9, email follow-up discussion and Council discussion and approval on January 16. The final language was drafted and approved by the committee and Council in late January. The final draft and an Employee Notification were sent to all pastoral and non-pastoral lay staff.

Goal 6: Updates of Current Lay Staff Job Descriptions & Development of New Job Descriptions

Goal: We will complete appropriate updates of non-pastoral lay staff job descriptions and develop new job descriptions as needed.

Activity: We will review existing lay staff job descriptions after the annual performance reviews of lay staff to determine the need for any appropriate revisions and make appropriate updates.

Status: No revisions were required based on summer performance review discussions.

The LIGHT/ NightLIGHT Coordinator position was retitled in July to Children's & Family Ministry Associate upon the mutual recommendation of the Family Faith Formation Director, Anna Wencl and the Associate Kaitlin Carter.

Goal 7: Lay Staff Operating Handbooks & Calendars

Goal: We will update operating handbooks & calendars that detail responsibilities completed on a daily, weekly and monthly basis during the year for all BLC non-pastoral lay staff positions. These are designed to facilitate any future transition in non-pastoral lay staff personnel.

Activity: We will update staff operating handbooks based upon feedback provided by staff during the annual performance reviews.

We will develop a new staff operating handbook for the LIGHT/NightLIGHT Coordinator position, retitled to Children's & Family Ministry Associate in July, 2023.

Status: Appropriate revisions in the Office Assistant and Organist/Pianist positions were made based on summer performance review discussions with Christine Schulz. These were approved by the Council at its July 20 meeting.

The LIGHT/NightLIGHT Coordinator - retitled to Children's & Family Ministry Associate - operating handbook still needs completion this year. This will be developed in cooperation with Anna Wencl and Kaitlin Carter.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023-24 Board/Committee Goals and Activities

Board/Committee: Stewardship Board

Chairperson: 2024 Amy Haigh

Secretary: 2026 Bob Ihrig – Council Liaison

Members: 2024 Sally Burdick

2025 Heather Hammond

2026 Jeannie Phillips

2025 Marian Mallory

Staff Liaison: Pastor Jay Dahlvang

2023-24 Board Goals & Activities (Includes 5-Year Strategic Plan and Other Identified Goals)

Strategic Plan Goals

- 1. **Pledges: Strategic Goal #2: We will empower our members to share the gifts God has given us.**
Objective 17: We will increase the number and percentage of members who make a pledge commitment.
- 2. **Time & Talent Survey: Strategic Goal #2: We will empower our members to share the gifts God has given us.**
We will update, distribute and promote completion of the Time & Talent Survey in the fall.
- 3. **Legacy Giving: Strategic Goal #2: We will empower our members to share the gifts God has given us.**
Objective 19: We will annually promote legacy giving to our members and obtain one legacy commitment per year.
- 4. **Mortgage Payoff & Capital Campaign Pledges: Strategic Goal #2: We will empower our members to share the gifts God has given us.**
We will promote fulfillment of 2023-2025 capital campaign pledges and celebrate major financial benchmarks in the payoff of the BLC mortgage.
- 5. **Time & Talent Recognition: Strategic Goal #3: We will foster a climate of respect and appreciation to nurture the differing perspectives among our members and the greater Mankato community.**
We will recognize the contributions of time, talent and effort by BLC members in support of the church mission and ministry.

Other Goals

- 6. **Planned Giving Reading:** We will read and implement appropriate planned giving ideas from the collection of articles Stewardship 101: An Invitation to Financial Stewardship.
- 7. **Narrative Budget:** We will share 2024 narrative budget information with the congregation to communicate the programs and successes of the BLC mission and ministry that relate to our financial stewardship.
- 8. **Electronic Giving:** We will continue to promote electronic giving by BLC members to complete annual pledges and special contributions. An increase in the current member electronic giving totals is the goal. This will facilitate regular member giving and provide the revenue stream needed to meet regular church expenses during the year.
- 9. **Thrivent Action Grants & Thrivent Choice Giving:** We will continue to promote and coordinate Thrivent Action Grants and Thrivent Choice Giving by BLC members to support church programs and activities.

Planned Activities

- 1. **Pledges:** We established a goal of securing an increase of **10%** in the number of members making general fund pledges during the fall stewardship campaign.

Status Report: 165 pledges (same as 2023 pledges) totaling **\$371,289** were received for 2024. This represented an **increase** of \$13,046 or **3.64%** in total dollars pledged over 2023 pledges. Thank-you cards were sent to all pledging members. Reminder cards were sent in December to encourage 150+ members who had not yet submitted pledges for 2024.

2. Time & Talent Survey:

Objective 11: We will annually survey our members to invite them to use the gifts God has given them to make a difference in the church and community.

Objective 12: We will update our survey annually to ensure opportunities are presented that reflect our mission, strategic goals, and where the Spirit is leading.

Objective 13: We will annually increase the number and percentage of church members completing the survey.

We will distribute the compiled information to boards/committees to use to promote their membership and activities.

Status Report: The Time & Talent Survey was reviewed and updated at the July meeting for distribution to members in September. As of November 5, 2023, we had 115 completed forms with 73 of those including worship volunteers. For comparison, in 2022, we had 75 forms completed with 43 of those including worship volunteers. Survey results have been shared with BLC staff and appropriate boards and committees for future contacts.

3. Legacy Giving:

A. We will increase our understanding of legacy giving and promote financial legacy gifts from members to enhance the ministry and mission of the church.

B. We will update and mail legacy-giving information to all members in March/April with follow-up provided by the lead pastor with members who have chosen to participate.

C. We will update and provide current Stewardship “Dream Projects” in the mailing to identify specific legacy gift options for designation by members.

D. We will provide legacy-giving information in worship services via printed bulletins and verbal presentations as well as in the monthly STAR newsletter.

Status Report: The annual legacy-giving information was reviewed and updated at the February 6, 2024 board meeting. The updated Dream Projects were reviewed and approved by the Council in February. The mailing was completed in March.

4. Mortgage Payoff & Capital Campaign Pledges: Strategic Plan - Objective 18: We will celebrate milestones as we pay off the mortgage.

Status Report: Several milestones have been celebrated with public acknowledgement and \$100,000 mini-candy bars during the year in which the mortgage principal balance has been reduced from the original \$1.1 million to **\$483,337.13** as of March 1, 2024.

5. Time & Talent Recognition:

Objective 20: The Lead Pastor and Stewardship Board will send a minimum of ten written thank-you notes to Bethlehem members per month.

Status Report: A total of 35 thank-you notes have been sent by the board during 8 monthly meetings as of March 5. Additional notes have been sent by Pastor Jay to various BLC members during the year.

The Stewardship Board also invited the congregation, starting in March, to acknowledge the time and talent service of BLC members with thank-you cards with the mailing to be facilitated by the board.

6. Planned Giving Reading: We will hold discussion each meeting on the contents of the collection of articles Stewardship 101: An Invitation to Financial Stewardship to identify and implement new planned giving concepts and activities.

Status Report: Discussion has been held at board meetings about assigned articles. Different stewardship ideas gleaned from the readings have been implemented during the year including confirmation youth charity projects and updated pew online giving cards for worship services.

7. Narrative Budget: We will highlight information about BLC programs and activities in the financial details of the 2024 narrative budget.

Status Report: “Why Are The Lights On?” was published with the 2024 annual budget proposal that highlighted 20 major financial commitments representing Bethlehem’s mission and ministry for 2024.

8. Electronic Giving: We will provide information and sign-up opportunities during the fall stewardship pledge campaign. We will provide additional information and reminders throughout the year in worship bulletins and the STAR newsletter.

Status Report: The online pledge option was explained on the pledge form and made available on the BLC website during the fall stewardship campaign. Directions for weekly online giving are highlighted in worship service screen announcements and on the BLC website. Online giving cards were updated and made available in sanctuary pew holders for online givers to use to signify their financial support of Bethlehem.

9. **Thrivent Action Grants & Thrivent Choice Giving:** We will conduct activities to identify appropriate BLC needs for Thrivent Action Grant funding and facilitate the application process to secure such grants. Thrivent Choice Dollars will be actively promoted as contributions to support Bethlehem programs and activities.

Status Report: Background information developed in 2022 was updated at the November board meeting. This was shared with the congregation at the November semi-annual meeting and in the November weekly BLC News. It has also been posted on the BLC website for future access.

Thrivent Action Grants

A Thrivent action grant of \$250 was received to cover expenses for the December 10 stewardship campaign thank-you reception. This was facilitated by a board member with a BLC Thrivent member. Another \$250 grant was received to support the annual Fat Tuesday youth fundraising dinner on February 13. This is the 4th annual grant received to support this BLC event. Another Action Grant was received to support the planned May 15 Stewardship Appreciation Dinner to acknowledge the service of Wednesday Night Supper volunteers.

Choice Dollars

A total of \$1,035 Choice Dollars were contributed by BLC members to the church in 2023. Hopefully, eligible BLC members dedicated their Choice Dollars to Bethlehem by the March deadline for 2024.

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023-24 Board/Committee Goals & Activities

Board/Committee: Welcome & Inclusion Board

Chairperson: Melissa Wagner

Secretary: _____

Members: 2024 Marie Slotemaker 2026 Marian Mallory

2024 Jean Meyer 2026 Jessca Auel

2025 Roger Haug **Staff Liaison:** Pastor Jacie Richmond

2025 Melissa Wagner **Council Liaison:** Marie Slotemaker

2026 Jeannie Phillips

2023-2024 Board Goals & Activities (Includes 5-Year Strategic Plan and Other Identified Goals)

Strategic Goals & Objectives

1. Engaging Youth

Strategic Goal 1: We will implement creative and effective ways to better engage post-confirmation youth and their families, and young adults.

Objective #5: New Member Orientation: *New member families with high school youth will receive an orientation to the high school program.*

2. Respectful Climate

Strategic Goal 3: We will foster a climate of respect and appreciation to nurture the differing perspectives among our members and the greater Mankato community.

Objective #22: Diverse Perspectives: *We will invite one community member or organization each month to represent diverse voices and perspectives, and to present to our worship gathering, adult forums, and youth groups.*

3. Community Partnerships

Strategic Goal 4: We will continue to work in partnerships to serve the needs of the community with relevant purpose and meaningful action.

Objective #23: Refugee & Asylum Seeker Support: *With synod support, we will collaborate with other community churches to provide housing and assistance to families/individuals who are relocated to Mankato, and are seeking asylum.*

Objective #26: Lincoln Park Neighborhood Participation: *We will participate in Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association activities and events.*

Objective #27: Compassionate Community: *We will live into our Compassionate Community Charter and participate in Compassionate Community Events.*

Objective #28: Community Use of Facilities: *We will actively promote, recruit, and invite groups to use the Bethlehem facilities.*

Objective #29: Neighborhood Connections: *We will develop and implement a strategy to connect with the neighborhood and businesses.*

Objective #33: Community Meals: *We will provide a free meal, open to the community throughout the program year.*

4. Embracing Diversity

Strategic Goal 5: We will embrace diversity by demonstrating welcome and respect for different identities, listening to develop growing relationships with diverse communities, and working for the good of all in the community.

Objective #34: Community Celebration Presence: *We will have a visible congregational presence at the annual Mankato Pride, Mankato Juneteenth Celebration, and the Mankato Pow Wow.*

Objective #35: Diversity Council: *We will annually invite a speaker from the Mankato Area Diversity Council.*

Objective #36: Reconciling in Christ: *We will annually observe Reconciling in Christ Sunday.*

Objective #37: Reconciling Works Support: *We will annually make a financial contribution to Reconciling Works to support their work.*

Objective #38: Diverse Religious Instruction: *We will present a unit on our neighbors' faith to our confirmation students to help them understand Islam, Judaism, and other religious traditions.*

2023-24 Activities & Accomplishments

1. September Pride was well attended for the parade and our booth got lots of visits - we will continue to work to increase our presence this year!
2. We were excited to support Dinner Church this winter. We were able to worship with some of the people who often come for a Wednesday night meal, but don't typically come to the sanctuary. Thanks Pastor Jacie!
3. RIC Sunday's Adult Forum in January was well attended. We discussed ways BLC can continue to support our community organizations both financially and with our time to help improve the lives of our neighbors who are often marginalized.
4. Thanks to Marian Mallory we have sold more BLC/Inclusion T-shirts for fund-raising and promoting BLC! The funds will be used for our next outreach beginning in June to celebrate Pride and Juneteenth. Our theme is, "Everyone is Welcome in Our Boat!"

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023-24 Board/Committee Goals & Activities

Board/Committee: Youth Board

Chairperson: 2025 Tanya Ringgenberg

Secretary: _____

Members: 2026 Angela Bruns 2024 Beth Timm

2024 Danielle Johnson 2024 Gina Wibstad

2026 Jessie Schaefer **Staff Liaison:** Anna Wencl – Family Faith Formation Director

2024 Sheila Stevensen **Staff Liaison:** Pastor Jacie Richmond – Associate Pastor

2023-2024 Board Goals & Planned Activities (Includes 5-Year Strategic Plan and Other Identified Goals)

Strategic Goals & Objectives

1. Engaging Youth

Strategic Goal 1: We will implement creative and effective ways to better engage post-confirmation youth and their families, and young adults.

Objective #1: Time & Talent Survey: We will annually survey our post-confirmation youth, inviting them to tell us of their talents, gifts, and interests, and provide them opportunities to use their gifts.

Objective #2: Mental Health: We will address the youth mental health crisis, creating spaces and gatherings that nurture mental health within our programs.
We will create a list of mental health resources for youth in our community.

Objective #3: Outreach: We will reach out to youth groups in other communities and identify how we can better engage youth after confirmation as we find a model that works with our staffing and volunteer structure.
We will host consistent gatherings for post-confirmation youth.

Objective #5: New Member Orientation: New member families with high school youth will receive an orientation to the high school program.

Objective #6: New Youth Initiatives: We will develop one new small group/program/event per year, addressing identified needs of young adults, and/or young adult families.

Objective #7: Intergenerational Activities: We will promote an intergenerational activity twice a year in which all Bethlehem members will be invited to participate.

2. Sharing Gifts

Strategic Goal 2: We will empower our members to share the gifts God has given us.

Objective #13: Survey Response Rate: We will annually increase the number and percentage of church members completing the Time & Talent Survey.

3. Respectful Climate

Strategic Goal 3: We will foster a climate of respect and appreciation to nurture the differing perspectives among our members and the greater Mankato community.

Objective #22: Diverse Perspectives: We will invite one community member or organization each month to represent diverse voices and perspectives, and to present to our worship gathering, adult forums, and youth groups.

4. Embracing Diversity

Strategic Goal #5: We will embrace diversity by demonstrating welcome and respect for different identities, listening to develop growing relationships with diverse communities, and working for the good of all in the community.

Objective #38: Diverse Religious Instruction: We will present a unit on our neighbors' faith to our confirmation students to help them understand Islam, Judaism, and other religious traditions.

Other Goals & Planned Activities

5. We will lead hands-on projects during Torchlight & Confirmation, such as baptism blankets & Confirmation Stolemaking (also known as Stolepalooza).
6. We will build upon our successful youth participation on the 2023 Montana Trip and camp week at Shores of St. Andrew. We will get youth excited for experiences & trips.
7. We will explore new ways of communicating and inviting people to events. We will explore various ways of inviting via social media as well as personally inviting kids to youth events, especially one that isn't your child.

2023-24 Activities & Accomplishments

1. Fat Tuesday: Fat Tuesday continues to be very successful! We had a great turnout, and great youth to help.
2. Hands-On Projects: We led many hands-on projects, which we call Love in Action nights. With the youth, we made baptism blankets, decorated Christmas cookies, packed college student care packages, and made communion bread. Our 9th graders didn't need help making stoles this year, so we skipped Stolepalooza. We will offer it again in future years!
3. Youth Gathering & Camp: We are excited to build off the success of last summer. We currently have 7 youth going to the ELCA Youth Gathering and likely 14 youth going to camp at Shores of St. Andrew.
4. Mental Health: We created a list of local resources for mental health. This coincided with hosting a Brave Conversation with youth and parents around mental health with support from a therapist.
5. Engagement Survey: We reached out to youth leaders in the area to see what's working well for them and what they're struggling with, too. We learned that we have a lot of similar struggles and discussed how programming has changed as the lives of our youth have changed in the past 5-10 years.
6. Regular Youth Events: We have offered monthly youth events.
7. Embracing Diversity: We are recognizing and teaching about Eid and Ramadan in April, which aligns with our strategic goals of embracing diversity and fostering a respectful community.



**Semi-Annual Meeting of the Congregation
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Mankato, Minnesota
November 19, 2023
10:50 – 11:20 AM**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: 98 (Quorum = 75)

CALL TO ORDER: President Jason Bruns

OPENING PRAYER: Pastor Jay Dahlvang

MINUTES: **Action:** The minutes of the spring semi-annual meeting held on April 23, 2023, and the minutes of the special meeting held on May 14, 2023 taken by secretary Bob Ihrig were approved on a motion by Maria King and second by Dee Saman with all in favor.

OLD BUSINESS: None

REPORTS: Available on BLC website for member review.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. 2023-24 Council/Board/Committee Goals

Secretary Bob Ihrig highlighted the 2023-24 goals established by the Council and BLC boards/committees. These are available on the BLC website for member access.

Members were encouraged to review these goals to understand the planned goals and activities of our various established formal groups. These provide a focus and direction for each group during the year. Written reports outlining the results in accomplishing these goals will be presented at the spring semi-annual meeting.

The Council, boards and committees were thanked for their commitment to implementing one or more of 5 goals and 38 objectives of the 2022-26 BLC Strategic Plan. This commitment and supporting actions will be essential in successfully fulfilling the plan.

B. Strategic Planning Goals Update

Pr. Jay provided an update on the 2022-26 strategic goals. The 5 goals identified by the strategic planning task force and approved by the Council and congregation were reviewed. 38 specific objectives or activities have been written to implement the 5 goals. He noted that the Council reviews one of the 5 goals at each monthly meeting to highlight the goals and actions taken thus far. A year-end assessment will be provided at the April 2024 semi-annual meeting. The strategic plan task force will meet again in June to review this

assessment and determine what has been accomplished, what still needs action and determine any needed changes in the plan for 2024-25.

C. 2022 BLC Financial Review Report Approval

The Financial Review Committee and Financial Secretary Elizabeth Ruiz met on February 4 to conduct the official 2022 BLC financial review. The following March 3 report was submitted for approval by the congregation:

“On February 4, Elizabeth Ruiz, Frank Larsen and Kristine Rebelein met to review year-end financial information.

We looked over and reviewed the bank reconciliations. There were no discrepancies and everything reconciled to \$0.

We reviewed a few checks and they tied back to the reconciliations correctly.

We reviewed the estimated budget vs the actual budget numbers. We discussed some larger differences and they all reconciled correctly.

Payroll was reviewed and it checked out correctly.

We reviewed some payable accounts and they all checked out correctly as well.”

Action: Motion by Bob Ihrig; Second by Mary Bliesmer to approve the 2022 financial review report. Approved on a unanimous vote.

D. 2024 Proposed Budget Approval

On recommendations by the Budget Committee and the Council, the 2024 BLC proposed budget was presented and discussed. The following major points were highlighted by President Jason Bruns and Financial Secretary Elizabeth Ruiz for income and expenses with a proposed budget of \$853,773. This represents an increase from the 2023 budget of \$829,702 and equals a balanced budget of income and expenses.

- ❖ Lay Staff Salaries: The pay increases recommended by the Personnel Committee reflect the value placed on our staff. They are based on positive performance reviews, inflationary cost of living and the desire to align with national data on comparable position salaries.
- ❖ Monthly Budget Deficits: The September 30 general fund budget reflected a -\$62,000+ deficit. This improved to a deficit of -\$32,000+ at the end of October. This is a reflection of generous giving and fewer expenses. The congregation was thanked for its financial support.
- ❖ Budget Changes: Few major changes are proposed overall in the 2024 budget.
- ❖ Summary & Explanation of Line Items: A written summary and explanation of specific budget line items was reviewed as background for discussion. Minor adjustments were made in different accounts to cover current and projected income & expenses.
- ❖ Mortgage: This is being paid off with monthly payments of \$8,187 and capital campaign pledges that have totaled \$399,683 thus far. The mortgage has been reduced from \$1 million+ to \$632,000+. This is a positive development since it saves on future interest payments. The goal is to pay off this remaining balance during the next 2 years with capital campaign payments.
- ❖ Income: Projected income for 2024 is \$534,100 compared to \$533,150 for 2023. Total projected income is \$817,785. With projected expenses of \$853,773, this would result in a deficit balance of -\$35,988.
- ❖ Estate Gift: BLC will receive a financial gift from an estate. \$35,988 of this gift will be applied as 2024 income to achieve a balanced budget for 2024.
- ❖ Board/Committee Budgets: A few small increases were requested. All budgets were frozen at 2023 levels to minimize church expenses.

- ❖ Other Expenses: Other expenses for Music & Worship, Family Faith Formation, Benevolence and Administration were largely frozen at 2023 levels.
- ❖ Property Expenses: Projected to increase by \$5,250 to reflect needed increases in property insurance, custodial supplies and inspection/service contracts.
- ❖ Utilities: Projected to increase by \$7,000 to total of \$55,050 compared to \$48,050 this year.
- ❖ Staff Compensation: Lines 165-188 detail pastoral and lay staff compensation. Pr. Jacie's compensation is proposed to increase to align with the synod compensation guidelines based upon pastoral experience. In lieu of a salary increase, Pr. Jay recommended and the Council proposed an additional week of vacation for him to total 6 weeks for the year.
- ❖ The lay staff compensation proposal totals an \$8,420 increase from the 2023 budget that reflects wages, FICA/Medicare Taxes, pension plan and health insurance.
- ❖ Total pastoral and lay staff personnel costs increased by \$12,346 over the 2023 budget.

The following questions and information were shared by congregation members and Council members:

- ❖ Narrative Budget: The 2024 narrative budget was highlighted to reflect how BLC priorities are met with projected activities and expenses detailed in the 2024 budget in the document "Why Are The Lights On?"
- ❖ Benevolence: A question was raised about the commitment of BLC to benevolence. It was reported that benevolence totals 18-20% of the overall budget.

Action: The proposed 2024 BLC budget as presented with no changes was approved on a motion by Carol Meyers-Dobler and a second by Mary Bliesmer with a unanimous vote.

E. Appointment of Josie Lust to Council

Josie Lust was approved by the Council at its October meeting to fill the Council member-at-large position created by the resignation of Jessica Auel. Per the BLC constitution, this must be approved by the congregation at the next semi-annual meeting.

Action: On a motion by Wendy Keenan and a second by Liz Paul, Josie Lust was approved by the congregation to fill the Council vacancy on a unanimous vote.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pastor Jacie Richmond led the membership in prayer to close the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Dee Saman, a second by Maria King and a voice vote at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Ihrig, Congregation Secretary