



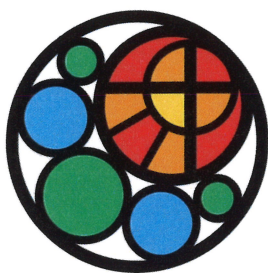
# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

# ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION 2023

Annual Report Cover and Index  
2023 Congregational Meeting Agenda (Draft)  
Congregational Annual Meeting (11/13/2022)  
2023 Church Council Leaders  
Membership Statistic for 2023  
Audit Reports for CLC & LLP  
Pastors' Reports  
President's Report  
Little Lamb Preschool Report

## COMMITTEES

Christian Education  
Christian Growth  
Hospitality and Outreach  
Property  
Social Ministry  
Stewardship  
Worship & Music  
Youth Ministry



## 2023 Congregational Meeting

Christ Lutheran Church, Valparaiso, IN

November 12, 2023

*"Because of you, this Church changes lives!"*

### Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Approval of Minutes of 2022 Annual Meeting
3. Year in Review
4. Updated Spending Plan for Fiscal Year 2023-2024
5. Report from "Deepening our Welcome"
  - a. Resolutions to establish and implement a Welcome Statement
6. 2023 Church Council Acknowledgments
7. 2024 Church Council Nominees & Election
8. Closing Prayer

### Proposed Rules of Assembly

1. Each speech from the floor on all resolutions and motions will be limited to 3 minutes.
2. A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s). *(Someone cannot comment on a proposal and, at the same time, call for an end to others' comments. Calling for an end to debate must be their first and only comment.)*
3. A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. *(It's not appropriate to call for an end to all comment on all issues or agenda items, only the topic currently under consideration.)*
4. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately pending question is not in order. *(See above; it is important that we are able to get through all agenda items.)*
5. Any recount must be ordered by a majority vote before the end of the assembly at which the voting result was announced. *(In the case of a recount request, it should be submitted during the Annual Meeting itself)*

Baptized Members: 590 in 260 households  
Confirmed Members: 441 in 243 households  
Voting Members: 365 in 196 households

Quorum: 37 voting members

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Annual Meeting  
November 13, 2022

The 2022 Annual Meeting was called to order at 9:27 a.m. by Luke Venstrom.

Pastor Tim led us in the opening prayer

There were 95 voting members in person and online for the meeting.

Luke Venstrom reviewed the Agenda and Meeting Overview.

Approval of the 2021 Annual meeting and Special Called meeting minutes.

Motion to accept 2021 Annual meeting minutes, seconded, no discussion, motion passed.

Motion to accept Special Called meeting minutes, seconded, no discussion, motion passed.

Year in Review:

- Live Bold campaign
- Returns on Live Bold investments
  - New logo
  - New website
  - New app
  - Facilities: LLP teacher prep area
  - **Christian Education:** In-Person Vacation Bible School returned, with over 20 adults and youth helping to welcome 50 children
  - **Christian Growth:** 11 active Stephen Ministers and 5 new in training
  - **Property:** Bioswale project received a grant from NIPSCO to expand
  - **Youth:** Serving 20-30 kids per week across 3 programs, confirmed 8 teens in 2022, 9 teens to be confirmed in 2023
  - **Worship and the Arts:** Under Brian Bartusch's direction, 6 Cantors are now a regular part of our Sunday morning worship; increased instrumentation for Festival Worship Services; 4 Handbell Ensembles (2 adult, 2 youth 3rd gr-HS)
  - **Social Ministry:** Over 1800 kits (school, fabric, baby and personal care) and 350 quilts collected for Lutheran World Relief
  - **Little Lamb Preschool:** Teacher salaries were increased to be closer to their peers in public education, funded by a grant from Early Learning Indiana
  - **Pr. Erica:** A year of ministry anchored in the good news of God's grace - in preaching and teaching, baptisms and funerals, prayer and care
  - **Pr. Tim:** Hybrid livestream and in-person worship unites us across geography, travel, and personal circumstances. Remarkably, combined average attendance (311) is actually higher than pre-covid!



#### Amendments:

- Motion to Ratify the proposed amendments to the Constitution of Christ Lutheran Church that would make the Constitution of Christ Lutheran Church compliant with the updated model constitution as provided by the ELCA.
  - Motion seconded, no discussion, motion passed
- Motion to ratify the proposed amendments to sections C12.01 and C12.02 of the Constitution of Christ Lutheran Church and add bylaw C12.02.04 as described in the memo submitted to the Council of the congregation on March 8th, 2022.
  - Motion seconded, no discussion, motion passed

#### CLC Spending Plans

- Buckets in Spending Plan
  - The Building: Facilities for Ministry
  - The People and What They Do: Ministry Coordination & Ministry Support
  - Everything Else
- Summary of Prior Fiscal Year (8/1/21 - 7/31/22)
  - Slide showing expenses are greater than our income by \$130,511
  - Slide showing "How did we survive a \$130,000 deficit?"
    - We started FY 21-22 with a surplus of \$110,000 in the operating fund.
      - Part of the surplus was from two rounds of fully forgiven PPP loans
    - We borrowed \$40,000 from our restricted funds to cover operating expenses.
      - \$20,000 was used to make up the cash deficit to pay operating expenses in FY 21-22
      - \$20,000 was used to make up a cash deficit in the first month of FY 22-23
  - Slide showing: **Expenses** are \$30,000 less than in the spending plan
  - Slide showing: Need an increase of \$34,600.00 in income above projected to support the reduced plan
  - Slide showing: **Projected: Expenses > Income by \$108,000**
  - Motion to approve the reduced spending plan for fiscal year 2022-2023 approved by the church council on Oct. 20, 2022.
  - Motion seconded, discussion, motion passed ( 1 nay)
- Cheryl Slack thanked the council for being diligent in working to create this reduced spending plan.
- Proposed Spending Plan for Next Fiscal Year (23-24)
  - No increase in spending over what was originally proposed for FY 22-23
  - Motion to approve the spending plan for fiscal year 2023-2024 approved by the church council on Oct. 11, 2022.
  - Motion seconded, no discussion, motion passed ( 1 nay)

- Thanks to outgoing council members for their service:
  - Laura Venstrom (LLP Board Chair 6/15/22)
  - Karl Schmitt (Property Comm.)
  - Luke Venstrom (President until 12/31/22)
  
- 2023 Church Council slate:
  - Vice President: Kurt Stefans
  - Treasurer: Scott Steinwart
  - Secretary: Sara Long
  - Financial Secretary: Faith Noe
  - Christian Education: Christine Bull
  - Christian Growth: Kathy Stefans
  - Stewardship: Crystal Ridley
  - Youth: Kris Albers
  - Youth Representative: Dana Abbring
  - Worship and Music: Lois Felten
  - LLP Board Chair: Rachel Lieske/Lis Tracht (LLP Board Chair 7/1/2023)
  - Auditing Committee: Bill Scheiderich, Grace Safrin, Scott Casbon
  - Nominating Committee: Luke Venstrom, Tim Sutherland, Ed J. Seykowski, Andrew Soleim, Tony Reinhold, Ruth Cozza
  - Synod Assembly Voting: Phyllis Schroeder, Kathy Sutherland, Sue McPherson, Don MacMillan, Tim Sutherland
  
- Approval of the 2023 Church Council nominees:  
 Motion to approve the 2023 nominees to the church council, audit committee, nominating committee, and synod assembly voting members, seconded, no discussion, motion passed
  
- Pastor Erica led us in a closing prayer.
- Luke Venstrom adjourned the meeting at 10:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Sara Long, Council Secretary 10/10/2023

**2023 CHURCH COUNCIL LEADERS**  
**CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Valparaiso, Indiana**

President	ELLEN SWAYNE <a href="mailto:ellenjswayne@aol.com">ellenjswayne@aol.com</a>	219-299-8699
Vice President	KURT STEFANS <a href="mailto:kurtst60@gmail.com">kurtst60@gmail.com</a>	(847) 612-3024
Treasurer	SCOTT STEINWART <a href="mailto:SSteinwart@firstmerchants.com">SSteinwart@firstmerchants.com</a>	219-464-1282
Financial Secretary	FAITH NOE <a href="mailto:faith_noe@yahoo.com">faith_noe@yahoo.com</a>	219-462-8202
Secretary	SARA LONG <a href="mailto:jslong1758@comcast.net">jslong1758@comcast.net</a>	219-465-6324
Christian Education	CHRISTINE BULL <a href="mailto:christinemwitt@gmail.com">christinemwitt@gmail.com</a>	219-246-9073
Christian Growth	KATHY STEFANS <a href="mailto:kathy.stefans@gmail.com">kathy.stefans@gmail.com</a>	847-612-3025
Worship and the Arts	LOIS FELTEN <a href="mailto:lfeltencl@gmail.com">lfeltencl@gmail.com</a>	219-241-3816
Property	SCOTT SCHNABEL <a href="mailto:schnabsa@comcast.net">schnabsa@comcast.net</a>	(219) 789-1687
Hospitality & Outreach	JACQUIE CHEVALIER <a href="mailto:jacquierchevalier@yahoo.com">jacquierchevalier@yahoo.com</a>	(219)309-6437
Social Ministry	LISA OWEN <a href="mailto:jlo46383@msn.com">jlo46383@msn.com</a>	219-477-9240
Stewardship	CRYSTAL RIDLEY <a href="mailto:Teamridley03@gmail.com">Teamridley03@gmail.com</a>	219-242-5030
Little Lamb Board Rep	RACHEL LIESKE <a href="mailto:Rachel.v.roberts@gmail.com">Rachel.v.roberts@gmail.com</a>	219-242-1492
Youth	KRIS ALBERS <a href="mailto:aakrisa@gmail.com">aakrisa@gmail.com</a>	219-309-9563
Youth Representative	DANA ABBRING <a href="mailto:Dabb3001@gmail.com">Dabb3001@gmail.com</a>	219-464-1678

**Nominating Committee**

Luke Venstrom  
Tim Sutherland  
Tony Reinhold  
Ed J. Seykowski  
Andrew Soleim  
Ruth Cozza

**Audit Committee**

Scott Casbon  
Grace Safrin  
Bill Scheiderich

**Synod Assembly Voting Members**

Phyllis Schroeder  
Kathy Sutherland  
Tim Sutherland  
Sue McPherson  
Don MacMillan

**STAFF**

Senior Pastor	TIM KNAUFF, JR. <a href="mailto:pastortim@clcvalpo.org">pastortim@clcvalpo.org</a>	219-242-7308
Pastor	ERICA GIBSON-EVEN <a href="mailto:pastorerica@clcvalpo.org">pastorerica@clcvalpo.org</a>	219-309-1754
Director of Youth Ministries	KAITLYN JEDRZEJOWSKI <a href="mailto:kaitlyn.jedrzejowski@clcvalpo.org">kaitlyn.jedrzejowski@clcvalpo.org</a>	331-245-6683
Director of LLP	JEN GOTTLIEB <a href="mailto:jen.gottlieb@clcvalpo.org">jen.gottlieb@clcvalpo.org</a>	219-309-6019
Director of Music Ministries	BRIAN BARTUSCH <a href="mailto:brian.bartusch@clcvalpo.org">brian.bartusch@clcvalpo.org</a>	219-307-9864
Parish Administrator	JENNY BIAS <a href="mailto:jen.bias@clcvalpo.org">jen.bias@clcvalpo.org</a>	219-228-0573
Business Manager	HEATHER BUDNIK <a href="mailto:heather.budnik@clcvalpo.org">heather.budnik@clcvalpo.org</a>	219-707-7295
Property Manager	MILAN COBURN <a href="mailto:milan.coburn@clcvalpo.org">milan.coburn@clcvalpo.org</a>	219-510-2421
Parish Nurse		

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**MEMBERSHIP STATISTIC FOR 2023**

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Members received

Baptisms: 8

Adult Baptism: 0

Affirmation of Faith/Transfers: 28

Members removed

By death: 5

Moved/Transfers: 4

Pastoral Acts

Funerals: 7

Students confirmed: 9

To Church Council

Re: Financial Audit for fiscal period 8/1/22 through 7/31/23

Audit Committee reviewed the financial records for the fiscal year 22-23 for Little Lamb Preschool and Christ Lutheran Church and complete the following:

- 1 – Verified the bank statement and financial transaction for all bank accounts for CLC and LLP.
- 2 – Reviewed various payments for accuracy.
- 3 – Verified recurring transactions for timely payment.
- 4 – Salaried and hourly staff payments to budget.
- 5 – Verified payroll taxes and payments to IRS and Indiana.
- 6 – Reviewed sheets and compared amounts to bank deposits.
- 7 – Reviewed the balance sheet for Accuracy.
- 8 – Verified procedures for authorized signatures.
- 9 – Procedures are sufficient.

In conclusion of our review, we found no material discrepancies and the financial statements appear accurate. The fixed assets were not reviewed as there were no changes to fixed assts and there is not a detail of furniture and equipment.

We recommend 2 changes to the Guidelines for CLC and LLP Audits

- 1 – Remove #4. LCL and LLP does not have petty cash. Debit cards are used for small transactions.
- 2 – Change #5c. When LLC hires during the summer months for fall session and church council does not meet, the director of Little Lamb Preschool has the authority to hire.

We also recommend roll overing CDs to Money Market or Saving Account to capture higher interest.

Respectfully submitted by:



William Scheiderich

Grace Safrin



## Report of the Senior Pastor 2023

*Rev. Tim Knauff, Jr.*

I had an interesting experience this past spring: as I was preparing for Sunday I noticed that the last time I'd preached on those particular readings, appointed for that particular day, was 3 years ago and the week we shut down the church building. I was intrigued, a little disturbed, surprised at the flood of feelings and memories that came alongside: telling our staff we need to go home, telling our community we wouldn't be worshipping in person for an unknown length of time, the feeling of worry and protectiveness we felt for our beloveds who were particularly vulnerable to the pandemic, the hard and heart-rending work of discerning how to begin coming together and when. So much happened in such a short time -- do you remember?

This year, 2023, we seem to be getting back to something like our stride after all we went through. The number of people, groups, and activities in the building is at or beyond pre-pandemic levels; the number of people worshipping with us on Sundays is above pre-pandemic levels, and our online presence continues to touch people we had no way to connect with in the past. Our youth programming is at or above pre-pandemic levels, even as we've welcomed our newest Director of Youth Ministries, Kaitlyn Jedrzejowski and her energy and leadership. Little Lamb Preschool, Sunday School, choirs, bells, Deepening our Welcome discussions -- we are a lively place with a living faith life and a deep passion to grow in faith together.

This spring we invited each other to consider and remember our ***Growing Faith***: we are a church, a community where faith is challenged and grows. We remembered the very first groundbreaking when we pulled a plow together and planted wheat seeds. Together we are the living, growing fruits of that original, faith-filled planting: your lives and mine, the love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and all the other gifts the Spirit brings, as we live our disciples' way we are the fruits, the pride, the incredible bounty and blessing planted 53 years ago. We are a living tribute to the ever-creative presence of God's Holy Spirit, shaping us into the breathing, serving body of Christ!

As we approach 2024 together in faith, we know that God has more lives in mind to greet, welcome, learn from, cherish, and celebrate. God is still growing faith in and through us. Join me in praying for God's will, God's leading, and for us to recognize and tune fully into God's generosity. Together we are making a difference in our lives and the lives of others we will never meet. Your time, efforts, study, and generosity are blessed by God and bearing great fruits. Join me in thanking God and asking for more lives to learn from!

In God's amazing grace,

-Pastor Tim

Pastor Erica  
Annual Report 2023

*We call you to exercise among us the ministry of Word and Sacrament which God has established and which the Holy Spirit empowers: To preach and teach the Word of God in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; to administer Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; to lead us in worship; to proclaim the forgiveness of sins; to provide pastoral care; to speak for justice on behalf of the poor and oppressed; to encourage persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel; to impart knowledge of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its wider ministry; to endeavor to increase support given to our congregation to the work of our whole church; to equip us for witness and service; and guide us in proclaiming God's love through word and deed.*

*In accepting this call, you hereby promise to fulfill this pastoral ministry in accord with the standards and policies for ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Therefore, be diligent in the study of Holy Scripture, in use of the means of grace, in prayer, in faithful service and in holy living.*

When pastors think about their “job description,” we often reflect on the language above, from the “letter of call” that we receive from a congregation. It gives us a picture of the closet-full of “hats” we wear in this calling, and reminds us that in order to do any of it, we’ve got to be anchored in our own life with God and practices of faith. I am so grateful this year for CLC’s gift of Renewal Leave in summer of 2023 to that end! And for the generosity of the Lily Foundation in allowing me to fill that time in exciting ways. One of the gifts of this summer was the opportunity to see other faith communities, and the ways that the life of the church finds expression in ways that are very familiar and ways that are quite different. November marks 12 years that I’ve been blessed to walk with Christ Lutheran - time to listen, discern, and grow outside of our regular rhythms is so important for fruitful shared ministry going forward!

In 2023, we also returned to our practice of a Congregational Retreat. Time away together, to learn and reflect, to hear one another’s stories of faith and pray together - this is an important part of building community, deepening our faith, and discerning God’s call in our lives. We are already at work planning our 2024 retreat and invite you!

Discernment is a bit of a theme for all of the year’s highlights - 2023 was also a year spent engaged with the work of our Deepening our Welcome team. I was struck, recently, as I looked at our sanctuary with the ramps up to the altar. I didn’t know CLC before this new sanctuary was built, but I imagine it was already a community that loved folks across a variety of differences - but literally building in a welcome to those of us with mobility needs communicates something powerful. It says “we expect you, there is room for you: not just in a back row but at God’s table and up there in leadership roles.” The nature of our community has gotten richer whenever we have deepened our welcome (a woman pastor, more children in worship, neighbors with developmental differences, the men’s overnight shelter in our space) - I am excited to see how God is shaping us with these new questions of welcome!

As we have moved out of the dislocation of the pandemic and recuperation, it has been a time of discernment - what is next? Who are we now? The Holy Spirit has called us and accompanied us and equipped us, for the 50+ year journey that brought us to this day, both in recent dislocations and in this next phase of becoming - thanks be to God!



## 2023 President's Report

Because of you, Christ Lutheran Church started the year with Church members attending a retreat at the Lindenwood Retreat Center in Plymouth, Indiana. The speakers gave thought-provoking talks. We had wonderful discussions, worship time, music, and fellowship. It was a time to meet new people and strengthen relationships.

Because of you, Kaitlyn Jedrezejowski joined Christ Lutheran Church to become the Youth Ministry Director. Clint Mullet stepped down from the Youth Ministry Director position at the end of May. Kaitlyn has led the Circle and Fusion groups and Confirmation class with many activities and opportunities to grow their faith.

Because of you, we were able to bring back the Hospitality and Outreach committee after COVID. They add to the Faith Formation time by greeting visitors and the congregation and serving us delicious treats at various events and during Faith formation hour.

Because of you, the Worship and Arts committee along with Music Director Brian Bartusch highlighted many artworks in the Gathering space. Brian Bartusch also arranged for many musicians to perform during the worship services and accompany the choir and handbells. There was an Organ Concert Series to commemorate the 5-year anniversary of the Pipe Organ featuring Dr. Sunghee Kim, Dr. John Bernthal, and Brian Bartusch.

Because of you, the Church Property Committee, Milan Coburn, and volunteers were able to do the repairs and maintenance to maintain the building and grounds.

Because of you, we can help support Little Lamb Preschool, and Sunday School programs. We can have various Bible studies, Faith Formation presentations, and book clubs.

Because of you, the Deepening Our Welcome group has developed a Welcome statement and educated us through round table discussions, book studies, speakers, and panels of adults and youth.

Because of you, April 30<sup>th</sup> the congregation celebrated with Pastor Tim on his 10-year anniversary of being Senior Pastor at Christ Lutheran Church. Pastor Erica was able to take a sabbatical during June, July, and August to explore “Dislocation as a Spiritual Practice” at the Holden Village and time abroad to learn, worship, engage in fellowship and renew with others.

Because of you, twenty-two members travelled to Costa Rica to build, help, learn, worship, and enjoy fellowship with others. This was a long-awaited trip after being cancelled due to Covid.

Christ Lutheran Church has many things happening daily, weekly, and monthly because of you. Please continue to pray for the church and its staff, congregation, and visitors.

I want to thank the Church Council, CLC staff and the congregation for your prayers and support you have shown me. I could not have done this without you.

Submitted by

*Ellen J. Swayne*

# 2023 Little Lamb Preschool Annual Report

## CHRISTIAN MISSION STATEMENT

Little Lamb Preschool, in union with Christ Lutheran Church, serves God by shepherding God's children as we nurture the whole child in partnership with families.

## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

We are a Christian preschool whose goal is to provide excellence in education and a loving, safe learning environment for every child. Based on the philosophy that young children learn best through play, we provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for them to explore, make discoveries, and learn respect for themselves and others. We firmly believe that all children are wonderful gifts from God to be cherished and nurtured. In collaboration with families, we encourage and support children to learn and grow socially, emotionally, academically, physically, and spiritually.

## BOARD MEMBERS

Our hardworking, committed LLP Board members include, Lis Tracht, Chairperson; Samuel Graber, Vice Chair; Shana Provenzano, Secretary; Heather Budnik, Treasurer; Rachel Lieske, Kerstin Koch, and Kate Byrne.

## LITTLE LAMB STAFF

Our excellent, dedicated staff includes Mary Comstock, Sharon Castellanos, Teri Coplan, Ashley Kimmel, Laura Venstrom, Colleen Vathauer (teachers), Dani Dziedzinski, Cheryl Mulder, Mallory Raab, Renee Shiplov (teaching assistants), and Jen Gottlieb (Director).

## MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We completed our 2022-2023 school year with Graduation, Beginner picnics and Mother Day celebrations in person. It was an extremely meaningful time for us as we were able to share the school and students with our families. Fall of 2023 has begun with increasingly reduced COVID precautions. God (as always) has blessed us with an unbelievably dedicated and hardworking team and wonderful families. We currently have 10 energetic and joyous classes. Each age level is busy learning, growing, and forming relationships. The children and each and every LLP team member brings joy into the school day. **LLP has 1138 students attending the ten different classes** within four classrooms. We offer two 5-sessions per week, five 3-sessions per week, and three 2-sessions per week classes. This year we are planning on having our Extended Day program -Lunch Bunch. It begins in January and runs through May. The students will experience lunch at school, provided by Valpo Schools Nutrition. Our developmentally appropriate curriculum is updated on an ongoing basis following guidelines from Indiana's Foundations for Early Learning Standards, Creative Curriculum, ELEA and NAEYC Accreditation Standards, and input from community Kindergarten teachers. Children attend Chapel Time weekly and participate in daily classroom devotions. We plan to offer a week-long STEAM camp during the summer. We are employing a family engagement tool **Bloomz**. It is an app to increase communication between school/teacher/parent. LLP continues its role on the VBS planning committee and volunteering during the VBS week. **LLP is an NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accredited preschool, a Level 4 Paths to QUALITY school (Indiana's rating system for Early Childhood Centers) and a member of the ELEA (Evangelical Lutheran Education Association).**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We appreciate the CLC Staff supporting us through music experiences (Brian), Chapel and Program Openings (Pastors Tim and Erica), scheduling (Jenny & Kaitlyn), finances (Heather) and continual property maintenance (Milan). We thank congregation members who helped our LLP ministry and those who support us in prayer and encouragement. We especially thank all that have financially donated to our school by providing equipment, memorial gifts, scholarships, monetary gifts, and educational materials. Your help reaffirms our church and school's commitment to providing an excellent Christian early childhood education.

## PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We continually strive to improve the quality of our program, while maintaining its respected reputation, by meeting the educational, social and spiritual needs of our students, their families, our congregation, and community. **LLP is working towards maintaining Level 4 Paths to QUALITY school and our NAEYC Accreditation. during the 2023-2024 school year.**

Little Lamb Preschool is very thankful to be a ministry of CLC and an outreach to the Valparaiso Community.

## Christian Education Annual Report 2023

Christian Education had an exciting year!

- We had Sunday School for our children PreK-4th grade. The children were split between 2 groups: PreK- Kindergarten and 1st-4th grades for the 2022-2023 school year. We are very excited to have enough teachers to provide 3 groups: PreK- Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grades, and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grades for the 2023-2024 school year.
- We were able to have a Sunday School Christmas Program and cookie reception during the Faith Formation hour in December 2022.
- We continued adult Faith Formation opportunities.
- We were able to bring back some of our Together in Faith programs- the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4th grade Bible presentations in March, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Apostles Creed presentations in March, and Prek-Kindergarten Lord's Prayer presentations in May.
- We continued our CLC Coffee Klatch for the 2022-2023 school year. We welcomed all parents to attend for coffee and conversation.
- VBS was up and running this past June 2023.
- We will have representation at the Chili Cook-off 10/21/23 and at the Trunk or Treat event 10/29/23.

# **Christian Growth Committee**

## **Annual Report 2023**

This congregation is so blessed by the dedicated members who serve as part of the Christian Growth Committee! The mandate of the Christian Growth Committee is ***“implementing programs and activities to increase the spiritual growth of the members of the congregation***

### **Bread Breakers, led by Amy Knauff**

Three adult groups and three family groups met throughout the 2022-2023 season. Our '23-24 kick off took place on September 24th, with 4 adult groups and 1 family group signed up and ready to go.

### **Caring Meals, led by Amy Knauff**

The Caring Meals ministry uses [www.takethemameal.com](http://www.takethemameal.com) to line up meal providers with the meal receivers. There are 43 people on the caring meals mailing list. Meals are provided to families due to illness, death of a loved one, birth of a baby, or some other difficult time.

Since the last annual report, we have provided 12 meal schedules for congregational members. Referrals can be made through the church office or one of the pastors. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for this ministry, contact Amy Knauff @ 219-242-7448 or [amyknauff@gmail.com](mailto:amyknauff@gmail.com).

### **Faith Formation Hour, led by Kathy Stefans**

Our Faith Formation Hour occurs weekly from 9:20 am-10:20 am on Sunday mornings. An ongoing Bible study continues with Dave Keammerer in room 120.

A variety of presentations about different ministries we support, issues of interest, and Bible studies are scheduled in the sanctuary and/or Fellowship Room and Conference Room each week. Details are in the weekly eNews and on the website. If you have ideas for programs or studies you would enjoy, please contact Kathy Stefans @ 847-612-3025, [Kathy.stefans@gmail.com](mailto:Kathy.stefans@gmail.com) or Pastor Erica through the church office.

### **Grief Group, led by Pr. Jane Aicher**

At this time, the Grief Group is not meeting, but stands ready to resume when there is a need. Please contact Pr. Jane @ 219-921-6761, [jaicher@comcast.net](mailto:jaicher@comcast.net) or one of the pastors if you are interested in being part of a group.

### **Funeral Meal Ministry, led by Karen Seykowski**

The purpose of the Funeral Meal Ministry is to offer church families a time of fellowship and sharing with a meal or light refreshments following the funeral or memorial service of their loved one. Four funeral meals/receptions were provided in the last year.

We would certainly welcome more volunteers who would like to be involved in this ministry, to provide food and/or to help serve at the event.

Contact: Karen Seykowski [kjseykow@frontier.com](mailto:kjseykow@frontier.com) (219)216-7027

### **Stephen Ministry, led by Dr. Tim Knauff**

Stephen Ministry offers highly confidential support and encouragement for folks both inside and outside our congregation. At this point, we have 15 active Stephen Ministers who are presently offering support to 13 individuals. Our well-trained and caring Ministers are ready to walk with you. Over the years, Stephen Ministry has supported individuals facing divorce/separation, adoption or pregnancy issues; retirement concerns, depression, loss of job, loss of spouse, anxiety, loss of faith; people feeling isolated or lost. Find a Stephen Minister by contacting either one of our pastors at 219-462-6660 or by finding one of our Stephen Ministers. They wear blue name tags on Sundays.

### **Christ Caring Visitors, led by Holly Knauff and Beth Coburn**

Christ Caring Visitors are CLC members that meet monthly with our members who live in Assisted Living Facilities, reminding them they are an important part of the Family of God at CLC. We are now trying to include our homebound members as well. Each pair of visitors brings smiles, conversation, prayer, and Holy Communion. Please let us know if you would like to become a Christ Caring Visitor, or if you know a member that would like a visit. You may contact the church office, Holly Knauff @ [hknauff@gmail.com](mailto:hknauff@gmail.com) or Beth Coburn @ [bethmarie.coburn@gmail.com](mailto:bethmarie.coburn@gmail.com) for more information.

-- Submitted by Kathy Stefans, Chair

## Hospitality and Outreach

2022-2023

### Members:

Jacquie Chevalier, Judy Chevalier, Karen Hug, Holly Knauff, Ashley White, Brooke Robinson, Jorunn Scheiderich, Wanda Rogers

Special Thank you to Sara Long for all her help and encouragement getting H/O up and running!

The Welcome Center was opened right away, with baked goods donated by committee members and church members. We have reinstated home bake ministries, sending welcome cards to out of town guests and baked goods to local visitors.

We hosted the first Lent Dinner of 2022. We had a turnout of over 90 people!

We advertised our Lent and Easter Services in Valpo Neighbors Magazine.

Mission Bears now have their own page on the CLC Website, we hope to expand the participation and find out where our bears are living and comforting.

We helped pick up and serve the Growing Faith cake with Stewardship.

We worked with Worship and Arts Concert Series by managing the receptions in May and September. Next one is October 2023.

We helped welcome VBS by serving/organizing hot dogs and chips.

We added signage to promote Summer Outdoor Services, and signage in the Gathering Space.

We added chimes to use at the beginning of 10.30 service to signify wrapping up coffee and cookies and prepare ourselves for worship.

October will be our first Trunk or Treat, and November brings a new activity in partnering with New members.

We continue to promote name tags every week.

Thank you,

Jacquie Chevalier

Hospitality and Outreach



## Property Committee Report to the Congregation 2023

I have found that it is somewhat difficult to sum up the past year because of the fact that so much has gone on by the efforts of so many dedicated staff members and volunteers.

The first area I would like to cover is the work done by our Property Manager Milan Coburn. For me personally, Milan has been my “go to guy” and has helped countless times in navigating my way through questions on policies, procedures, and especially budget preparation. Milan also demonstrates his ability to always look ahead at maintenance items that need to be considered in the future. This is such a valuable quality in assisting the Committee in setting priorities when preparing the budget. The following items are some of the many things that Milan has taken care of as part of his daily routine this year.

- Upgrades and replacement of exit lights for safety purposes and lighting for energy conservation. Many of these items qualified for NIPSCO rebates that Committee member Tony Reinhold submitted the paperwork for. My thanks to Tony for the many hours spent doing this.
- Lawn and garden maintenance. This year was challenging because of the amount of rain that we received at times. In addition to a heavy mowing and trimming season Milan also spent many hours installing brick borders and loading and spreading countless loads of mulch. Weed control and fertilizing was also part of the lawn maintenance work as well as leaf collection and snow removal.
- Painting. Milan was able to paint the following areas. The Church Conference room, two LLP bathrooms and classroom 308, Pastor Erica and Heather's office hallway, The Activity Center, and removed a closet, patched, and painted the Youth Room.
- Milan is also our contact person with contractors. Seeking bids, meeting with, and overseeing their work is a huge benefit to this congregation.
- The other maintenance items (plumbing, electrical, carpentry) that Milan covers are too numerous to mention. My advice is to just look around at our facility. The hard work and pride that Milan puts into our facility is evident around every corner.

Three major projects were completed this year. Due to budget constraints, the LLP Preschool board was approached by Milan to consider allowing us to use surplus COVID funds to finance three projects. Because of their generosity we replaced two Fellowship Hall HVAC units, seal coated a large portion of the parking lot, and replaced the carpet in the Activity Center in the amount of approximately \$60,000.00. My thanks goes out to the LLP board for their generosity.

My appreciation also goes out to several people who keep our Bioswale and garden areas in wonderful shape. Many hours are spent planting, watering, mulching, weeding, pruning and doing a final fall cleanup. That group consists of Vicky Krall, Gregg and Vickie Copeland, Marilyn McGawn, Irene Adams, Doc Knauff, Betty Luckett, Mike and Willem Bendicsen, Tim Sutherland, Kathy Lundstrom, Beth Coburn, Kathy Rowberg, and the members of the Boy and Girl Scout troops.



We recently completed one project that had been on the “to do” list for some time. Our plan was to refresh the Memorial Garden pathway with a fresh layer of crushed Red Granite chips. While I was expecting 6-8 people to show up, I was amazed that 13 came out to help. The entire 5-ton pile was moved by wheelbarrow, spread, leveled, and compacted in about an hour and a half. I have learned that the people of CLC are always ready to step up and help when needed. That day was no exception. In closing I would like to thank our committee members who have faithfully served in the last year. My thanks to Gregg Copeland, Ed Seykowski, Tony and Sue Reinhold, Betty Luckett, Marla Niksch, Karl Schmitt, and of course Milan Coburn.

Scott Schnabel     Property Chairman

## Social Ministry and Mission Committee Annual Report 2023

Committee Members: Diana and Bill Iltzsche; Lisa Owen; Irene Adams; Tim Sutherland; Kathy Lundstrom; Kathy Page (secretary); Tony Reinhold; Karen Seykowski; Becky Fry; Eileen Piehl; Phyllis Schroeder; Faith Noe, Adam Gibson, Wanda Rogers, Kathy Sutherland

The work of the committee is to offer our church family opportunities to focus on hunger, housing, homelessness and mission, with an added focus on social justice around diversity. Monthly emphases fall under these areas and provide giving and in many cases volunteer opportunities. Each of these organizations is a line item in the Social Ministry and Mission budget, as well as receiving designated giving from members.

CLC is completing another season of men's shelter hosting. Members and some guests from other congregations have provided hospitality through meals, supervision, conversation, prayer, laundry service, bagged lunches, and transportation. There is hope that by next fall a dedicated shelter building may be open in Valparaiso.

The list below describes for each month the ministries to which we invite the CLC family's attention, to increase awareness of opportunities to serve with our time and resources.

The Emphasis calendar involves Financial Giving and Volunteer Opportunities for congregation members (incl. confirmation youth service projects) - within the community, in NWI, with our IK/ELCA Synod, & internationally - with yearly Goals of 300 Volunteers/1500 Vol. Hours – and giving of \$25,000 from Congregational Budget & Over/Above Offerings.

- **January** = *Hunger/Housing*: First Contact Christian Resources & Mike Steiner Fund
  - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC members welcome to volunteer 12mo. at First Contact & Meals on Wheels
  - Volunteer Opportunities: Advocacy/Writing letters 12mo. via BFW, ELCA, IAN, ProjNeighb, and LIRS
- **February** = *Hunger/Poverty*: Hilltop Neighborhood House/Childcare/Food Pantry
  - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC takes leadership/provides volunteers for Hilltop Soups Fundraiser
- **March** = *Homeless*: New Creation Men's Center/Day-Overnight Shelter/Resale Shop
  - Sat. overnight shelter at CLC April-Oct./provide food items-meals 12mo. for Men's Shelter
- **April** = *Homeless/Housing*: Housing Opportunities incl. Food Pantry
  - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC members vol. at H.O. (incl. 2 serve on H.O. Board/1 on staff)
- **May** = *Mission/Diversity*: CLC Mission Trip to Costa Rica (Summ. 2023) - international, intergenerational
  - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC 2023 Costa Rican Mission Trip and River Monitoring Conservation project
- **June** = *Hunger/Housing*: Food Banks of Northwest Indiana & Project Neighbors
  - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC food donations 12mo. to P.C. Food Pantries & vols. for Project Neigh.
- **July** = *Mission/Diversity*: ELCA G.M./Selian Hosp.-Tanzania & AMOS Med. Mission Trip-Guatemala
  - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC provide supplies for AMOS Mission Trip & ARC Blood Donations 12mo.

- **August** = *Mission/Diversity*: Luth. Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) & Lutheran Braille Ministries
  - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC host vols. to create Braille Bibles & CLC Community Garden harvest
- **September** = *Mission/Diversity*: Gloria Dei Compass Educ. Program & #66 Synod Endowment
  - Volunteer Opportunities: Pack Away Hunger event in Crown Point & Compass volunteers 12mo.
  - Volunteer Opportunities: God's Work Our Hands with Trinity Luth. - Proj. Neighbors/Allies Against Racism
- **October** = *Hunger/Poverty*: ELCA World Hunger/Luth. Disaster Response & Lutheran World Relief
  - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC is LWR Truckload Pickup Site (incl. CLC 12 mo. Quilts/Care Kits/School kits)
- **November** = *Mission/Diversity*: Lutheran Diaconal Association
  - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC hosts LDA Diaconal Sunday and Alternative Giving Fair Sundays in Nov.
- **December** = *Mission/Diversity*: Bethel Lutheran Gary (ELCA Urban Ministry) incl. Bethel/CLC Partnership
  - Volunteer Opportunities: Interfaith Action Network 12mo., Sojourner Truth House, Lake Mich. Worship

In addition, the committee has been working in these other areas:

- The Deepening Our Welcome committee has shepherded our church family through two years of study, conversation and discernment in preparing to become a Reconciling Church partner.
- Our third annual worship and picnic with Bethel Lutheran Church at the lakeshore in August grew to include 200 people from 8 congregations. Over \$1300 was donated to support Interfaith Action Network.
- Once again Christ Lutheran hosted a Sacred Ground discussion circle, an Episcopal church program teaching racial reconciliation and awareness. Participants joined via Zoom from several states and denominations. An effort was made to include church leaders throughout the ELCA UK Synod, in hopes of seeing other groups begin.
- The Costa Rica mission trip finally happened, as 22 adults and youth learned and grew through experiences there.
- Efforts to support diversity and justice in our communities include working with the Interfaith Action Network and Northwest Indiana African American Alliance.
- CLC continues to host the Lutheran World Relief in-gathering each October, welcoming and receiving donations from over 30 congregations.
- Our campus is also used by Lutheran Braille Workers, who compile Braille Bibles here.
- The Mike Steiner fund has had a slower year; to date it has supported two CLC members with total disbursements of \$842.90.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Lisa Owen, Church Council representative

## Stewardship Annual Report 2023

- Beginning in February we began our “Growing Faith” campaign.
- Throughout the lenten season, we shared how our church helps us and others to grow in their faith. We are a safe soil.
- We had another successful response rate with 56% returning a response.
- We have continued to share mission moments via videos highlighting exciting CLC ministries.
- We worked with the council to continue to thank members for their generosity.
- We have 2 new members to our committee- Jon and Ashley!
- We continue to participate in the Stewardship for all Seasons national consulting program.
- The chili cookoff was a fun success! During the dinner- we shared some of our committee information and encouraged members to get involved. Many chilis were shared, lots of smiles and fellowship- so all goals were met! :)
- Looking forward: we plan another early appeal in 2024, continued mission moments, more fellowship opportunities.

## Worship and the Arts 2023 Annual Report

### Highlights

- Lenten Dinners returned prior to midweek Lenten Services
- Spring and Summer services welcomed special musical offerings by youth (5-6) preparing for ISMA contests and Fellows from Lutheran Summer Music Camp
- Midweek Services held seasonally; thanks to many for the extra preparation for these services!
  - 6 Advent services using Taize style worship
  - 6 Lenten services using Holden Evening Prayer (in addition to Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Saturday Vigil
  - 8 Summer services using Unfailing Light
- Guest Preachers
  - During Pastor Erica's sabbatical we were blessed with several guest preachers on Sundays and Thursday night services
- Celebration of the 5th Anniversary of the Pipe Organ
  - Sun. 5/7/23, Dr. Sunghee Kim
  - Sun. 9/10/23, Dr. John Bernthal
  - Sun. 10/22/23, Brian Bartusch
- Ensembles have continued to grow!
  - 29 Sanctuary Choir Members
  - 11 Celebration Ringers
  - 8-1 Youth Ringers
  - 7-8 Treble Makers
    - Need additional, safer risers for choir
    - Considering adding chimes and octaves to bells
- Highlighting Artisans in the Gathering Space
  - Many thanks to Marla Niksch for finding artwork to display for most seasons!
  - Many thanks to Milan Coburn for installing hanging hardware!
- Continuing recruitment!
  - Please consider being a worship assistant by reading, serving, singing, ushering, baking or caring for the Altar!

Respectfully submitted,  
Lois Felten



## **Annual Report 2023**

Christ Lutheran Church's youth ministry continues to serve as a space in which the young people in both the high school and middle school groups feel welcomed, safe, and encouraged to explore their faith. Over the past year, we have witnessed many blessings in our ministries and a high level of involvement from both the youth and wider congregation. Our youth ministries serve as a stepping stone for our youth, providing an atmosphere for growth through the events, trips, projects, and community found here!

### **Programming Updates**

#### **Circle (9th-12th Grade)**

Circle has been meeting continually this past year and continues to serve as a safe space for our students in which they can be wholly and authentically themselves. The Circle community remains strong, continuing to foster impactful and significant relationships for our youth. Our meetings consist of a dinner, game, and discussion/Bible study. This year's theme is focusing on questions with God, encouraging the youth to explore different questions that have emerged throughout their faith journeys. The plan for the year is largely, if not entirely, based on the questions the high schoolers add to a "question box."

The high schoolers have also attended some engaging and impactful events this past year. In December of 2022, Circle had a laser tag event that saw 13 youth attend. Another event was the lock-in, which we had in May. We had a large turnout and the youth had a lot of fun being able to play games, watch movies, and pull all-nighters! Some of our high schoolers also attended the synod's mission trip, which took place in Louisville, Kentucky back in June. This event was quite impactful for the high schoolers that attended, and we were able to serve alongside some wonderful organizations throughout the week! At the beginning of the school year, we had Gail's annual Pool Party, which saw a great turnout and was a wonderful opportunity to have fun in community with one another!

The youth have also expressed a lot of excitement for the upcoming 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. We are planning to attend the Gathering with other churches in the NW Indiana area, which will be a great opportunity for our youth to meet other youth from different churches. There has also been a lot of enthusiasm around Quake, which will have a Chicago event in January of 2024. The high schoolers are very excited for the opportunity to return for Quake this year!

## **Fusion (5th-8th Grade)**

Fusion continues to provide an engaging and energetic environment for our middle schoolers, in which they can grow alongside one another. This is largely on track with last year's Fusion environment, which was also filled with energy and a group that asked very good questions. Our middle schoolers, in addition to weekly meetings, have participated in service projects and other outside events. Fusion continues to witness new relationships being built!

We have resumed meeting on Sunday mornings during the Faith Formation hour. With the welcoming of the new 5th grade class, we have seen an average of 12 youth each week. This year's group is energetic and excited for the time they get to share together!

This past summer, 5 middle schoolers participated in Confirmation Camp at Camp Lutherwald in Howe, Indiana. We had a great time despite extremely cold temperatures! It was wonderful to see the kids make new friends and form deeper bonds with each other. Lutherwald continues to be a life-changing and fruitful experience for our youth!

## **Confirmation**

We confirmed 9 of our young people in the 2023 Confirmation class. These youth were all highly inquisitive, enthusiastic, and deeply involved with their Confirmation experiences. Their service projects spanned a wide variety of interests and one of the major highlights of this year's Confirmation group was the presentation of their re-written Lord's Prayer to the congregation! It was a wonderful year and I am excited to see how the youth continue to grow in their faith journeys! A huge thank you as well to the families and Confirmation mentors who walked alongside the youth through their Confirmation journey.

Our current 2024 Confirmation class has 3 kids preparing to affirm their baptisms next year. Pastor Tim and I are excited to walk alongside these youth during this time in their lives. The confirmands are currently studying the life of Martin Luther. After this unit, we will explore Lutheran History, as well as CLC's own history.

We are also currently in the process of implementing an addition to the Mentorship program, in which 7th graders will receive a high school mentor during their 7th grade year. We are excited for this new mentorship opportunity!

## **Fundraiser Updates**

This past year has been filled with a plethora of fundraisers for our youth programs including our Easter Bake Sale and Trivia Night. Last year's Trivia Night brought in \$1,500 for

the youth ministries. The Easter Bake sale brought \$640 for our youth ministries. We most recently held our Popcorn Fest fundraiser, which brought about \$2,400. We are currently in the process of preparing for our Silent Auction, which will run from October 22nd-November 19th. The 2022 Silent Auction saw 100+ items donated, which is the most donations received in the past 5 years. We are hoping to stay on trend with that this year!

The Youth Board has been planning a Mardi Gras themed fundraiser in honor of the 2024 New Orleans ELCA Gathering, which will be held at CLC on February 4th. With current fundraiser estimates and with the approximate \$23,000 in the restricted funds accounts, we are in a very strong position for providing funds for both Quake and the Gathering, as well as potentially some other opportunities!

## **Orientations**

With the large amount of events coming up this year, there have been many opportunities for orientations with parents and youth to prepare together for what is in store this year. At the beginning of the school year, I held orientations for Adult Leaders, Circle, Fusion, Confirmation, and the National Youth Gathering. They all had strong attendance and were a great way to foster an informed environment!

## **Transition**

One of the biggest changes from this past year was the transition in the Director of Youth Ministries role. In March, I was hired on part-time as Clint Mullet began to transition out of the role. He served as a huge source of support and mentorship for me as I spent the months of March-May learning about CLC's context and youth ministries. At the end of May, I began full-time in the role. A huge thank you to Clint for helping smoothen the transition!

## **Looking Ahead**

### **Volunteering**

Our Fusion group has seen a strong willingness to volunteer. We currently have 4 high schoolers assisting with Fusion. We have also seen very generous donations from families in terms of preparing and serving dinners for Circle. However, our volunteer numbers for Circle are still on the lower end. Throughout this next year, I will continue exploring opportunities and methods of encouraging volunteering (leading discussions, preparing a game) in Circle.

### **Mentorship**

This year, Pastor Tim and I are very excited to introduce an addition to our Confirmation Mentorship program. 7th graders will have the opportunity to be matched up with a high school student and throughout their 7th grade year, will meet with this high schooler to reflect and think



through what characterizes a strong mentor for them. Alongside this, the pairings will also engage in some form of a spiritual practice together which aligns with the interests and passions of both individuals. We are both very excited to see what this new mentoring program will reap!

### Youth Gathering

This upcoming summer will be the ELCA's Youth Gathering in New Orleans. We have seen a lot of interest from our youth and preparations have been underway for the youth group! We are also partnering with other churches in the NWI area and attending as one large group. This is an exciting opportunity for youth from our church to meet and connect with youth from other churches in the area.

### Future Events

- 2024 Quake (middle and high school) will be January 26-28, 2024
- 2024 Camp Week (middle and high school) will be June 9-14, 2024
- 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering will be July 16-20, 2024

# Attendance

