



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION 2025

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|---|------|
| Annual Report Index | 1 |
| 2025 Congregational Meeting Agenda | 2 |
| 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes (4/21/2024) | 3-4 |
| 2025 Budget Meeting Minutes (5/4/2025) | 5 |
| Membership Statistics for 2025 | 6 |
| Audit Reports for CLC & LLP | 7 |
| 2026 CLC Nominee Candidates | 8 |
| Pastors' Reports | 9-11 |
| President's Report | 12 |
| Little Lamb Preschool Report | 13 |

COMMITTEES

| | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Christian Education | 14 |
| Christian Growth | 15-16 |
| Hospitality and Outreach | 17 |
| Property | 18 |
| Social Ministry | 19-21 |
| Stewardship | 22 |
| Worship & Music | 23 |
| Youth Ministry | 24-26 |



2025 Congregational Meeting

Christ Lutheran Church, Valparaiso, IN

November 9, 2025

"Because of you, this Church changes lives!"

Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Approval of Minutes of 2024 Annual and Spring 2025 Budget meetings
3. Year in Review
4. 2025 Church Council Acknowledgments
5. 2026 Church Council Nominees & Election
6. 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: 474 in 242 households
Confirmed Members: 394 in 232 households
Voting Members: 344 in 195 households

Quorum: **35** voting members

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Annual Meeting
April 21, 2024

The April 2024 Annual Meeting was called to order at 9:28 a.m. by Kurt Stefans.

Pastor Tim led us in the opening prayer

There were 76 voting members in person and online for the meeting.

Kurt Stefans reviewed the Agenda and Meeting Overview.

2023-2024 Impact Review::

- Who Me? Stewardship Campaign had 140 Statement of Intent returned with 220 total givers (highest rate of participation to date)
- Recurring Giving has increased

2024 - 2025 Ministry Plan

- Due to increase in the amount pledged from the Stewardship campaign the expected giving for 2024-2025 is \$953,691
- \$995,275 unrestricted income (3% direct ministry support)
- 2024 - 2025 ministry plan with a 4% salary increase for staff is \$16,204 more than the 2023-2024 ministry plan
- History of Salary Increases
 - 2019 there was a 3% increase
 - 2020 there was a 0% increase
 - 2021 there was a 1% increase
 - 2022 there was a 3% increase
 - 2023 there was a 0% increase
 - 2024 there was a 0% increase
- Council feels confident in the 4% salary increase
- Pastor Tim prayed before we voted on the new ministry plan
- Motion passed unanimously

Consideration of Constitutional Amendment

- From our Youth Board, a proposal to amend the CLC Constitution and bylaw to extend the possible tenure of the elected Youth Representative to Council by adding the bold items to the following lines:
 - C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) and **the youth or young adult** shall be elected by written ballot at the annual meeting of the congregation. The term of office of such members of the Congregation Council shall be for two (2) years with the term of office beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31, except the youth or young adult and the Little Lamb

Preschool Board Chairperson. The term of office of the youth or young adult and Little Lamb Preschool Board Chairperson may be for less than two years and begin and end on dates other than January 1 and December 31. Members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at a time appointed by the Congregation Council.

- Changing the language gives our youth more flexibility.
- This part of the amendment will be voted on today.
- Youth board made the motion, it was 2nd, and approved.
- In November of 2024 the following will be brought to the Congregational Meeting for a vote.
- "C12.02.03. A youth or young adult at-large representative will be elected each year to serve a one-year term beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31. They may serve up to three consecutive terms."

CLC Endowment Fund

- This committee is being established to receive, manage, and distribute funds designated to support the mission of CLC.
 - These funds are beyond the regular operating budget.
 - The term is for 3 years.
 - There will be a financial advisor to help advise about the investments.
 - Those being nominated to fill the positions on the committee are:
 - Lois Felten
 - Grace Safrin
 - Erik Ciesinski
 - Dave Eickemeyer
 - John Hughes
 - Kate Byrne
 - Pastor Tim
- There was a motion made, seconded, and motion passed.
- Closed with the Lord's Prayer
- Kurt Stefans adjourned the meeting at 10:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Sara Long, Council Secretary 10/6/2024

Christ Lutheran Church

Church Council Meeting

Date: May 2025

Attendance: Angela Wehner, Bill Iltzsche, Kate Byrne, Judy Chevalier, Karen Hernes, Crystal Ridley, Gregg Copeland, Josh Vittitoe, Sally Ecklund-Baker, Chirstiana McLean, Sam Graber, Christine Bull, Anna Stewart, Pastor Tim Knauff, Pastor Erica Gibson-Even, Kaitlyn Jedrezejowski, Heather Budnik, Brett Furuness, Jen Gottlieb

- Meeting called to order at 6:04 pm by Angela • Opening Prayer: A n g e l a
Members said their high and lows

Minutes for April 8, 2025: Motioned: Kate, 2nd Brett. Approved.

Minutes for April 21, 2025: Motioned: Sam, 2nd Sally. Approved.

Heather: No additional Financial Information.

Motion to receive the financial report made by Sally and 2nd by Bill.
Approved.

Held Congregational Meeting for the budget 2024/2025 on May 4th, 2025.
Motion was made by Kurt Stefans. 2nd by Jacquie Chevalier. Approved.

Stewardship and Budget discussion was held with comments and questions.

To suspend payment to Social Ministries through the 2024-2025 Fiscal year
was made by Kate, 2nd by Gregg. Approved.

"Thank you" with gratitude and appreciation to LLP for the loan of \$9,100.00 for
windows (no interest on repayment). Motion was made by Brad. 2nd by
Anna. Approved.

Pastor Tim reviewed Staffing Process, revise job description and
responsibilities.

Bring to Council for hiring.
From members of Council, a 'Search Team' would be recommended.

The discussion of the policies for hiring was tabled.

Motion to close the meeting at 8:19 pm was made by Sam. 2nd by Gregg.
Approved.

Closing prayer: Pastor Erica

Respectfully Submitted, Judy Chevalier

MEMBERSHIP STATISTIC FOR 2025

Members received

Baptisms: 16

Adult Baptism: 0

Affirmation of Faith/Transfers: 13

Members removed

By death: 4

Moved/Transfers: 15

Pastoral Acts

Funerals: 2

Students confirmed: 5

To: Church Council

Re: Financial Audit for Fiscal Period 8/1/2024 - 7/31/2025

Dear Church Council Members,

The Audit Committee has reviewed the financial records for Christ Lutheran Church (CLC) and Little Lamb Preschool (LLP) for the fiscal year 2024-2025. The review process included the following steps:

1. Verification of various payments for accuracy.
2. Reconciliation of bank statements and financial transactions for all CLC and LLP accounts.
3. Review of the balance sheet for accuracy.
4. Comparison of salaried and hourly staff payments to the budget.
5. Verification of recurring transactions for timely payment.
6. Cross-checking weekly offerings worksheets against bank deposits.
7. Verification of payroll taxes and payments to the IRS and the state of Indiana.
8. Confirmation of authorized signatures and procedures.
9. Evaluation of internal procedures, which were found to be sufficient.

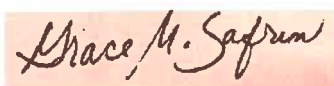
We found no material discrepancies, and the financial statements appear to be accurate. However, we did not verify the fixed assets during this audit.

Recommendations:

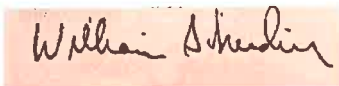
1. We recommend reviewing and updating the CLC audit guidelines, which have been in use for several years.
2. We suggest scheduling an external audit by a CPA firm every 3-5 years to verify the accuracy of the records and ensure proper procedures are followed.

Respectfully submitted by:

Grace M. Safrin



William Scheiderich



Brian Boedeker



2025 CLC Nominee Candidates

Bill Iltzsche

Position on Council: President
Family: Spouse: Diana Iltzsche
Member: Since 2009
Previous Positions: Vice President

Tim Kratz

Position on Council: Vice President
Family: Spouse: Kelly Children: Melanie, Timothy and Kayla
Member: Since 2018
Previous Positions: Property

Ellen Swayne

Position on Council: Christian Education
Member: Since 2017
Previous Positions: Nominating Committee, Secretary, Synod Voting Member, Financial Secretary, Vice President and President

Jeri Simms

Position on Council: Christian Growth
Member: Since 2023

Jonathan Bull

Position on Council: Stewardship
Family: Spouse: Christine Children: Maya and Jay
Member: Since 2010

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

Isabel Ecklund-Baker

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Bill Scheiderich
Heather Abbring

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Angela Wehner (chair)
Sara Long

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Brian Boedeker
Scott Casbon

Report of the Senior Pastor 2025

Rev. Tim Knauff, Jr.

This past year, thanks to the proactive leadership of our Directory of Youth Ministries Kaitlyn Jedrzejowski, our congregation joined the “Youth Co-Op” of the ELCA. It’s allowed us to gather a really excellent team of leaders and an experienced coach to guide our research, brainstorming, and developing ideas for new ways to deepen our beloved youth’s connection to God, to each other, and to members of the congregation. It’s been exciting and interesting to learn with them and see what God is doing with our young people and our ministries!

Recently the team surveyed youth to find out their experiences and history with CLC, and especially what helps them feel connected to each other, to the church, and above to God. Besides learning that one student’s favorite space to hang out at CLC is apparently the attic, it was striking how many of our youth spoke about key moments in our youth ministries: Circle, Quake, Lutherwald, National Youth Gatherings. Many of them spoke about continuing relationships with adults at CLC. Nearly all shared a desire, an interest, in knowing God and our community better.

This is what we do! From the very beginning, when CLC was formed 55 years ago by cutting a furrow in the ground and planting wheat seeds, we are a community that follows Jesus and faith grows by leaps and bounds. I’ve spent the past several weeks with an enthusiastic, vibrant group of our newest members, and they are excited to be part of what God is up to here. This keeps happening to us: as we follow Jesus, as we welcome and love neighbors, as we serve and learn and grow and are changed, God uses us to bring others to a deeper awareness of mercy and grace and what I’ve been calling a “rightside-up” world.

Thank you for your own faithful journey, and being part of the living, breathing, serving, hugging, heart-beating body of Christ here. It is a gift and privilege to serve alongside our talented, dedicated team, and a gift and privilege to be one of your pastors.

In God’s amazing grace,

-Pastor Tim

Annual Report for 2025: Pastor Erica Gibson-Even

One of the pieces of the call of a pastor is to consider a zoomed out view of a congregation, and of the church in the world. What do God's people here in this community need right now? What does the world need from the Church right now? What are the unique challenges to following Jesus in this particular time and place in our world?

We find ourselves in the midst of a new and difficult environment these days. Our political climate has gone from bad to worse; norms that have held for decades in government and civil society are crumbling; division and hostility dominate our public discourse, and increasingly, our communities; values we thought were integral to our national and cultural identity are derided; the stability of systems that we've been able to take for granted is questionable. Individually, as a congregation, and in the wider Church, we are constantly trying to find our bearings in a world that is spinning in new, different, and often scary ways. I suspect I am not alone in learning, these past months, that I have unconsciously put more trust than I should in what always seemed the "normal, stable, safe" version of life that I've had as a white middle-class American.

What does it look like to be faithful in this moment? This is what we've been asking all year. I've heard it in countless individual conversations with CLC members. In book groups and Adult Faith Formation discussions. In the planning and conversations at the Congregational Retreat. It's what pastors and theologians ask when we are together. I find it shaping what I choose to lift up in Children's Time on Sunday mornings. It's certainly been on the minds of preachers every week. I've been heartened, and broken-hearted, by how many ways I've been met with the same question from dear folks at CLC: "Pastor, what now? How do we follow Jesus in the middle of all THIS?"

In her new book *For Such a Time as This*, theologian Hannah Reichel lifts up the wisdom of Karl Barth, who taught amidst the descent of Western Europe into totalitarianism and war. The storms of evil in our world draw power from our attention, and can paralyze us (think of Lot's wife turning back!) - so we ought not allow it to have our fascinated attention. "A short, sharp glance suffices," says Barth. Our calling as people of faith is to maintain clarity in our identity - not that we do not engage with the world, but that we do that best by focusing ever more clearly on our identity and call as followers of Jesus.

Who are we, as followers of Jesus, as Christ Lutheran Church, in this time and place?

So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone; in him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. - Ephesians 2:19-22

The encouragement the church needed when this epistle was written is what we have always needed, ever since.

We are reminded that **there are no solo Christians**. In all times and places, following Jesus is a community endeavor. We need one another. Particularly in this season where the world encourages us to think of ourselves as free-floating individuals and to immediately categorize others, we are reminded that neither we nor the person next to us is a stranger or foreigner - we are pulled together by God into the community that we need to survive.

We're reminded that **follower of Jesus is our primary identity**. Citizen with the saints, member of the household of God. In a world that demand we identify first and foremost with our family or our political position or our racial identity or our economic status, we do not play that game. We belong to Christ, an identity that transcends nations, cultures, races, and millenniums.

We're reminded that **others have gone ahead of us**. Apostles and prophets have led the way. Famous saints, unknown believers, and our own ancestors in faith have modeled lives of faithfulness: trust in God through joy and sorrow, personal lives of mercy and justice regardless of what the world brings. Learning their stories helps us write our own, to sharpen our vision for the Spirit at work, and sharpen our hearing for God's call.

Above all else (or beneath it all, holding everything up and holding everything together!), **Christ is our cornerstone**. We are not responsible for saving the world, nor are we the least bit capable. But we know how the story ends - the fullness of life for all creation. And that is always and only the gift that comes through Jesus. And Jesus is SOLID. Knowing Jesus more deeply will always be the way to knowing our part in things.

Who are we, as followers of Jesus, as Christ Lutheran Church, in this time and place? We are a holy temple, a dwelling place for God - **we exist for the sake of the world**. In our individual lives, in our work as a community, we are being shaped as signs of God's love and justice for all those around us. In our daily living, in our civic participation, in our care for creation, and in our love of neighbor. We follow Jesus.

Christ Lutheran Church – 2025 President Report

Angela Wehner

Throughout this last year I have had the privilege of walking alongside Christ Lutheran Church as the Congregation Council President. And what a walk it has been. With the support of the Church Council and Pastors, we collectively took a realistic look at not only what our overall vision (both short term and long term) is, however also at our overall financial status. Endless hours were spent in Council meetings as well as Committee meetings by members of both - full of review, discussion, discernment, and compromise. I cannot express enough how wonderful it was to see so many different people at different tables come together in a respectful manner, keeping the overall vision in mind and banding together.

Each Committee brought to the table their own set of successes, challenges, and concerns in the face of the budget review and revision. Deep discussions were held, and priorities were prioritized. New ideas were born, and new experiences were held; each one received with open arms of the congregation.

This was, undoubtedly, also a year of change; a few that stick out to me are as follows:

- Vacation Bible School took on a new look
- Kaitlyn, our Youth Director, moved on to new endeavors
- CLC's Boy Scout Troop disbanded
- A Rummage Sale fundraiser was held

Amidst all the reflection, pivoting, and change, CLC continues to hold on to the missions and values we are known for. Our congregation continues to support ministries both near and far. We open our doors to many local groups such as AA, GA, Girl Scouts, etc. We offer support to AMOS and LWR, etc. Little Lamb continues to be a large ministry to the community. These are just a few of the ways we have both extended and maintained our presence outside the doors of CLC.

As I wrap up my term, I pray that, as we move forward, we continue to keep in mind our mission, vision, and values. I pray that we continue to work hand in hand and side by side, to the glory of God. Each one of you brings your talents and gifts to this congregation, and for that I am thankful. Because of your involvement, this church changes lives.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Wehner, CLC Congregation Council President

2025 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 Cailey Flora, Chairperson; Kelli Ciesinski, Vice Chair; Lis Tracht, Secretary; Heather Budnik, Treasurer, Samuel Graber, Kerstin Koch, and Vickie Copeland.

LITTLE LAMB STAFF

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

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

God (as always) has blessed Little Lamb Preschool 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 every LLP team member bring joy into the school day. **LLP has 129 students attending 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 continuing our very popular Extended Day program -Lunch Bunch. It begins in January and runs through May. The students 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, NAEYC Accreditation Standards, and a partnership with 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 called **brightwheel**. It is an app to increase communication between school/teacher/parent. We have two large fundraisers per year to help us meet our financial obligations. We host an all-school carnival in the fall and an art show and breakfast in the early spring. These are whole family events that reach well beyond our walls of CLC and host around 350 people. **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 (Pastor Tim and Pastor Erica), scheduling (Jenny), 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 (Accreditation + rating) during the 2025-2026 school year. We are also participating in a cohort with VCS and local preschools to bolster relationship between preschools and the Valparaiso Community Elementary Schools.**

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

Christian Education Annual Report 2025

SUNDAY SCHOOL

- We had Sunday School for our children PreK-4th grade. Teachers teamed up and provided lessons for 3 groups: PreK-Kindergarten, 1st/2nd grades, and 3rd/4th grades.
- We integrated an opening program for Sunday School. Every Sunday, the children met in the Little Lamb Annex to sing songs, be silly, and pray together before going to their classrooms for lessons. We are integrating memory work passages and church liturgy into this time for the 2025-2026 school year.
- We had a Sunday School Christmas Program and a cookie reception during The Faith Formation hour in December 2024.

FAITH FORMATION

- We provided a 2-week program on “Faith and Welcome” during Faith Formation hour on January 19th and 26th. We discussed how Faith and Welcome play out in our families and with young people. We had good discussions and provided helpful resources.

SUMMER PROGRAMING

- We hosted 3 “Family Faith Gatherings” throughout the summer.
 - June 6, 2025, Potluck. We shared a meal, played mixed-generational games, and ended the evening with songs. A big thank you to Pastor Tim for the music.
 - June 25, 2025, Coffee Creek. We met for a picnic dinner and then went on a 30-minute walk.
 - July 14, 2025, Service Project Night. We assembled treats for the men’s shelter, tied quilts, and made cards for public service workers.

Christian Growth 2025

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

Bread Breaker groups spend time together sharing meals and fellowship throughout the year. 4 adult groups and 2 family groups (41 people) met throughout the 2024-2025 season. Our '25-26 kick off took place on September 28th with 4 groups (35 people).

Caring Meals, led by Amy Knauff

The Caring Meals ministry uses www.takethemameal.com to line up meal providers with the meal receivers. There are over 40 volunteers 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, CLC provided meals to 7 different households for various reasons.

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.

The Retreat Planning Committee, led by Pastor Erica

The church retreat was held February 7-9, 2025 at Lindenwood Retreat Center.

Faith Formation Hour

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 church hall and other rooms as needed each week. Details are in the weekly scribe, eNews and on the website. If you have ideas for programs or studies you would enjoy, please contact Pastor Erica through the church office.

Grief Group, led by Cheryl Slack

Christ Lutheran Church offers a Grief Support Group every other week on Wednesdays from 9:30 - 11 am in the Conference Room. (209) with dates listed weekly in the Scribe. The group serves adults who have experienced a loss of a spouse, parent, child, friend, or neighbor. The group is facilitated by Cheryl Slack, a Stephen Minister. You may contact her at 219-241-0677 or cdslack56@gmail.com or one of the pastors if you have any questions. There are currently 6 regular individuals who attend the grief group with plenty of space for additional persons. They will meet Wednesday, November 26, the day

before Thanksgiving. In December they will meet on the 10th and 31st and take Christmas Eve off.

Funeral Meal Ministry, led by Marilyn McGawn

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. In the past year meals were served for two funerals, for approximately 200 guests and volunteers. The families involved were most appreciative and let the volunteers know how meaningful this ministry was for them.

Thanks to the 38 volunteers who provide food and/or help serve at the funeral meals. We would certainly welcome more volunteers who would like to be involved in this ministry. Contact Jen Bias in the church office if you would like to be added to the volunteer list.

Stephen Ministry, led by Dr. Tim Knauff

Stephen Ministry offers highly confidential support and encouragement for folks who are suffering or facing issues, both inside and outside our congregation. At this point, we have 13 active Stephen Ministers who are presently offering support to 11 individuals. Our well-trained and caring Ministers are ready to walk with you. Over the years, Stephen Ministry has supported those 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.

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. Currently there are 9 CLC members serving in this ministry. 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 or Beth Coburn @ bethmarie.coburn@gmail.com for more information.

Hospitality and Outreach 2025

Members:

Sally Ecklund-Baker, Jacquie Chevalier, Judy Chevalier, Brooke Robinson, Ellen Swayne,
Lucas Ecklund-Baker

The team has been providing treats at the welcome center throughout the school year. Sign ups are appreciated as well as any extra goodies that can be left in the fridge.

We are sending welcome cards to visitors that have signed the guest book.

Last holiday season we collected 187 coloring books and 84 boxes of crayons that were distributed to NW regional Hospital Pediatrics, Family House, Hilltop, and Caring Place

We hosted a Lent Dinner with help from others in the congregation.

We advertised our Easter Services in Valpo Neighbors Magazine again this year.

Mission Bears continue to find homes and give comfort. We had many bears registered will continue this mission with bears for baptism.

We organized a summer potluck after a service.

I'd like to express my gratitude for Jacquie Chevalier organizing the rummage sale this September. Thanks to all who volunteered leading up to and during the event.

We are looking into additional ways to promote/advertise worship information.

We continue to promote name tags every week.

Thank you,

Sally Ecklund-Baker
Hospitality and Outreach

Property Committee Annual Report 2025

Committee Members: Gregg Copeland (chair), Milan Coburn (Property Manager), Scott Schnabel, Paul Conover, Betty Lockett, Tony Reinhold, Ed Seykowski.

The Property Committee manages a budget of roughly \$176,000 to maintain and enhance our beautiful facility and grounds. This includes salaries for our Property Manager, Custodians, and Building Attendants, utilities, set-up and tear down for many events and groups using the Church, routine repairs and upkeep, and major expense projects for such things as HVAC equipment, parking lot upkeep, roofing, and flooring. We take the task of CLC congregation stewardship very seriously in managing where our funds are spent.

Several people deserve a big thank-you for the many volunteer hours they put into doing this task: Vickie and Gregg, Betty, Marilyn, Irene, Vicky, Kathy R, Doc, Ruth, Scott, Kathy L, Tony, and Ed. Without their dedication CLC would not look as nice as it does!

Some of the projects we completed this year are:

- Circle Garden upgrade which provides a beautiful place in the front of our Church with landscaping, plantings, pathway, and a bench!
- Memorial Garden upgrade with some new plantings and stone.
- Bioswales, door planters, flowers by LLP, and new mulch by LLP and around trees.
- Replaced 8 windows in Little Lamb that were showing signs of decay with energy efficient vinyl windows.
- Repainted Room 107 (Brides Room), LLP girl's bathroom, outside playground shelter, and front CLC/LLP sign.
- Installed additional attic lighting for facility decoration storage area.
- Cleaned out and reorganized the attic.
- Worked with City and State fire inspectors. Our facility is maintained very well, but we did have some items stored too close to the ceiling in LLP so some additional storage shelves were added in the LLP Annex closet.
- Repaired south bank of parking lot lights where a squirrel had gotten in from the top of the pole and chewed through some wiring.

A couple areas of concern coming up are:

- Our rooftop HVAC units for Sanctuary, Gathering Space, and classrooms are 15 years old and needing more maintenance. We are budgeting a planned replacement of them over the next several years.
- Our roofing shingles over the Sanctuary and classrooms are showing premature wear. Working with Korellis Roofing and Certainteed on a potential warranty claim.

Social Ministry and Mission Committee
Annual Report 2025

Committee Members:

Diana Iltzsche; Bill Iltzsche; Lisa Owen; Irene Adams; Tim Sutherland; Kathy Sutherland; Kathy Lundstrom; Kathy Page; Tony Reinhold; Karen Seykowski; Becky Fry; Faith Noe, Adam Gibson, Wanda Rogers, Katie Sirko; Phyllis Schroeder; Anna Stewart; Mary Michna; Pastor Tim Knauff (pastoral representative)

The work of the committee is to offer our church family opportunities to learn about, support, and volunteer with organizations working 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—ranging from local, regional, national, to international organizations—is a line item in the Social Ministry and Mission budget, as well as receiving designated giving from CLC members.

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

The Monthly Emphasis calendar involves financial giving and volunteer opportunities for congregation members (including confirmation youth service projects) - within the community, in NWI, with our IK/ELCA Synod, & internationally - with yearly goals of approximately 300 volunteers/1500 volunteer 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/Food Pantry & Refugee Family support
 - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC takes leadership/provides volunteers for Hilltop SoupFundraiser
 - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC members (12 mo) supporting Valpo family transitioning to life in the U.S.
- **March = Mission/Diversity:** Lutheran Diaconal Association
 - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC hosts LDA Diaconal Sunday
 - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC has LDA Deaconesses serving as servant leaders in Valpo and beyond.

- **April = Homeless/Housing:**
- **Co-Action (formerly Housing Opportunities) incl. Food Pantry**
 - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC members donate items & vol. at Co-Action (incl. 2 serve on Board)
- **May = Mission/Diversity:** LGBTQ Outreach of Porter County & Reconciling in Christ
 - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC volunteers at NWI Pride events
- **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 provides supplies for AMOS Mission Trip & ARC Blood Donations 12mo.
- **August = Mission/Diversity:** Global Refuge (formerly LIRS) & Lutheran Braille Ministries
 - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC hosts vols. to create Braille Bibles
- **September = Mission/Diversity:** Gloria Dei Compass Lang. Prog. & Proj. Neigh. Freedom Recovery Fund
 - Volunteer Opportunities: Pack Away Hunger event in Crown Point & Compass volunteers 12mo.
 - Volunteer Opportunities: God's Work Our Hands with Trinity Luth. - Proj. Neighbors Vol. Days
- **October = Hunger/Poverty:** ELCA World Hunger/Luth. Disaster Response & Lutheran World Relief
 - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC LWR Truckload Ingathering Site incl. CLC 12 mo. Quilts/Care Kits/School Kits
 - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC members can volunteer for disaster relief with Lutheran Church Charities
- **November = Homeless/Housing:** Daybreak, Respite house (formerly N.C. Men's Shelter) & Gabriel's Horn
 - Volunteer Opportunities: CLC members can take volunteer shifts at new Daybreak House, also volunteer meal preparation to ease burden on shelter staff
- **December = Mission/Diversity:** Bethel Lutheran Gary (ELCA Urban Ministry) incl. Bethel/CLC Partnership
 - Volunteer Opportunities: Interfaith Action Network 12mo., Crisis Center donations, Lake Mich. Worship

In addition, the committee has been working or supporting the following:

- CLC continues to support a Valpo family transitioning to life in the US—a special lunch & fundraiser was held in January (raising ~\$2700 dollars); a baby shower was held at CLC this fall, and a congregational support group meets regularly.
- We continue to help with Hilltop's annual soup supper fundraiser each spring.
- We continue to partner with Bethel Lutheran Church, holding our fifth annual outdoor worship and picnic this August, with other area congregations participating and attending as well. We had good turnout this year (~175-180 people), and over \$1000 was collected in gift offerings (designated for Lutheran Disaster Relief). In July, we hosted Bethel members for a worship service at CLC, with Pastor Joy guest-preaching.
- partnered with Bethel in celebrating their 150th anniversary with a work day in March, celebrations in April and May, and culminating with our fourth annual worship and picnic in partnership with Bethel Lutheran Church at the lakeshore in August, where over \$1500 was collected to support Bethel.
- Efforts to support diversity and justice in our communities include working with the Interfaith Action Network and Northwest Indiana African American Alliance.
- CLC members provided a welcoming presence at regional Pride events and are involved in a new "Out Loud Parenting" group that began meeting this September.
- We hosted three blood drives in 2025 (June, August, December planned).
- CLC continues to host the Lutheran World Relief in-gathering each October, welcoming and receiving donations from congregations across the state. This October, we loaded 582 boxes, totaling 10,882 pounds, from 20 churches.
- Our campus is also used by Lutheran Braille Workers, who compile Braille Bibles here.
- Several CLC members have become very involved with a newer organization, We Make Indiana, which now has a chapter convened for Porter County. Monthly meetings for WMI-Porter County were held at CLC for the second half of 2025, and a large and productive "Housing Assembly" was hosted at CLC in May, with political, religious, and non-profit leaders from the community joining a full sanctuary. We Make Indiana-Porter County is particularly focused on housing needs and disparities in the region, and the Interfaith Action Network—of which CLC is a part—is in conversations with WMI about whether they might merge for a Lake County branch.
- The SMM committee received a generous gift from previous member Eileen Piehl in spring 2025. We were able to disburse that meaningfully to several monthly emphasis groups as well as the Indiana-Kentucky synod of the ELCA. (Due to budget pressures and financial constraints, the Church Council voted to temporarily pause monthly emphasis contributions from the CLC budget this spring. Church offerings continued to support these groups during that time, and we restored the monthly, budgeted amounts in August of this year. SMM wanted to support those organizations during a difficult time with some of these monies during that interim period.)

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Stewart, Church Council representative

Stewardship Annual Report 2025

Stewardship focused this year on being a neighbor. God calls us to care for, accept, and love our neighbors. With that focus, we encouraged all to consider their giving and how CLC continues to live out God's neighboring ministry all year. CLC does a great deal to love, accept and care for its neighbors- near and far.

This year's commitments were down in numbers from last year. Total givers went down by 9. Our Statement of Intent responses were at 55%, and our total expected response for giving is \$837,201.85 for this year. Although this may be discouraging to some, the truth is this is an opportunity. It is a time for each of us to see where God is calling us to and keep faith knowing that God has amazing plans for each of our lives. With each step, no matter where we go, God is with us. Following with hearts full of faith, joy, and commitment to Christ, together we can continue God's ministry.

Additionally, we have our 3rd annual Chili cookoff coming up on November 15th! We hope to see you there for fun, fellowship, and full bellies!

Worship and the Arts

2025 Annual Report

Highlights

- Spring and Summer services included several special musical offerings from youth sharing ISSMA pieces and Lutheran Summer Music students
- Easter Sunday with brass quartet and timpani
- Midweek Services seasonally; thanks to all who spent time in extra preparation!
 - Thanksgiving Eve Service presenting Unfailing Light
 - 6 Advent services using Taize style worship
 - Christmas Eve with Youth Orchestra (4 pm-20 youth participated!), Sanctuary Choir and Celebration Ringers (7 pm)
 - 6 Lenten Services using Holden Evening Prayer (and Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday with Sanctuary Choir, Good Friday, Saturday Vigil)
- New Summer Schedule
 - “One Church-One Service” at 9:30 weekly 6/8 to 8/3
 - 8/10 Worship in the Park, Gary, IN
 - Several area churches participated
 - Potluck/bbq followed
- Music Program continues to grow!
 - 32 Sanctuary Choir Members
 - 11 Celebration Ringers
 - 7 Treble Makers
 - New Youth Ensemble/orchestra periodically in worship; likely start on Reformation
 - Cantors leading Holden Evening Prayer during Lent, Psalms weekly on Sundays during program year
 - We have outgrown the current music room, planning to expand rehearsal space to better accommodate all who participate in the music ministry
 - Proposed expansion is investment in church’s music program and the facility as a whole
- Highlighting Artisans in the Gathering Space
 - Many thanks to Marla Niksch for continuing to expand our artwork display for liturgical seasons. She researches and prepares descriptions for each piece.
- Continuing recruitment!
 - Please consider being a worship assistant by reading, serving, cantoring, baking, or caring for the altar
 - We need more volunteers to help run LiveStream and Sound/Light booth due to members at college/moving; please consider helping; training provided!

Respectfully submitted,

Christiana McLean, Worship and the Arts Committee Chair



Christ Lutheran YOUTH

Annual Report 2025

Christ Lutheran Church's youth ministry continues to serve as and envision 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 a strong focus on faith formation events, community, service, and inclusivity!

We are without a paid youth ministries director at the moment. The search committee has been assembled and is working toward hiring a part time replacement.

Programming Updates

Circle (9th-12th Grade)

Circle has been meeting 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, fostering impactful and significant relationships for our youth. Our time together consists of a time of fellowship over a meal, activities, and discussion/Bible study.

The high schoolers have also attended some engaging and impactful events this past year. At the beginning of the school year, we had Gail's annual Pool Party, which saw a great turnout and was a fun way to kick off our year together! The youth also met for a pickle ball party at Valplayso over the summer.

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. This year's group is energetic and excited for the time they get to share together!

This year's theme is "Bible Survey". The Sunday Fusion classes are being "team taught" by two teams of two.

This past year, Fusion's theme was focused on loving your neighbors.

Also with our middle schoolers, this past summer had 10 youth participate in Confirmation Camp at Camp Lutherwald in Howe, Indiana. It was wonderful to see the youth 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 5 of our young people in the 2025 Confirmation class. These youth were highly inquisitive, enthusiastic, and deeply involved with their Confirmation experiences. Their service projects were strongly related to their passions and what interests them. Pastor Tim and Kaitlyn enjoyed seeing the Confirmands engage in these projects with their mentors. It was a wonderful year and we are all 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 2026 Confirmation class has 3 youth preparing to affirm their baptisms next year. Pastor Tim is excited to walk alongside these youth in this milestone of their faith journey and to see the ways they will carry their Confirmation experience with them!

Fundraiser Updates

This past year has been filled with a plethora of fundraisers for our youth programs including our Easter Bake Sale, the popcorn festival booth, and the silent auction.

Each of these fundraisers contributes to growing our youth ministries here at CLC. This past year, our youth identified values that they found to be most important in the communities they are a part of; these values included welcoming and inclusivity, community, service, and faith formation. Through your donations, these fundraisers help our youth ministries to live further into these pillars that our youth highly value. So thank you, thank you, thank you for the ways that you are supporting our youth ministries and helping us to build a lifelong community here at CLC!

Looking Ahead

Volunteering

One of the biggest goals we have on Youth Board is recruiting additional volunteers to help with our youth ministries here at CLC. We are seeking adults and at least one more youth member for our board. We welcomed two new active adult members and wished one youth member “bon voyage” on her journey to college.

The youth are not the future of our congregation, they are the **now**. Our youth serve our community as leaders in so many ways and I have been so thankful for the perspective and leadership of our amazing youth. As the youth continue to serve as leaders and continue to develop and form their faith, in what ways can we as the congregation support them in that journey?

As our Youth Board has continued envisioning and brainstorming what our volunteering could look like, we have come up with the idea of specific job descriptions for various youth ministry volunteer roles. We understand that it is important to know what various volunteering roles ask for in terms of commitment and time, and so it is our goal to provide a more deeply informed understanding of what volunteering looks like. Since there are so many ways to volunteer, there will be a plethora of opportunities that vary in time commitment and responsibilities. We hope that this next step in strengthening our volunteering initiatives will bring about encouragement and excitement for anyone who is wondering “Where is God calling me?”