

*ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING*



*LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH
LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY
(A Christian Day School)*

*225 WEST TENTH STREET
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 16501
(814-454-0106)*

JANUARY 28, 2024

AGENDA
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
JANUARY 28, 2024

A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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| 1. Opening Prayer | Pastor Jay Mitchell |
| 2. Discussion on the Process of Voting | Mr. Stan Rose |
| 3. Appointment of a Secretary | Mr. Stan Rose |
| 4. Adopt the Agenda | Mr. Stan Rose |

B. PASTOR'S COMMENTS

Pastor Jay Mitchell

C. REPORT OF LMA ADMINISTRATOR

Mrs. Michelle Thom

D. ELECTION OF COUNCIL

- | | |
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| 1. Nominating Committee Report | Mr. Greg Kern |
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E. REPORTS OF CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL, STAFF, COMMITTEES

- | | |
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| 1. Reports | Mr. Stan Rose |
| 2. Reports be Accepted and Placed on File | Mr. Stan Rose |

F. FINANCIAL REPORT

- | | |
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| 1. 2023 Financial Review and 2024 Budget | Mr. Greg Kern |
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G. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LUTHER MEMORIAL CONSTITUTION

Mr. Stan Rose

I. PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS BY CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Mr. Stan Rose

Be it resolved:

1. That we express our thanks to Almighty God for the blessings we have received during the past year, and that we pledge ourselves anew to dedicated Christian living, worship, and service in this new year of grace, 2024.
2. We express our thanks to all members of the congregation who served so faithfully in our church during 2023, especially those members of Congregational Council completing terms of service; Emma Chaffee, Mark Howell, Ann Flick, Skip Meyn, Jean McMillin, Stan Rose.
3. That we also express our sincere thanks and gratitude to our 2023 staff: Ciara Adams, Imarii Anderson, David Buerk, Norma Buerk, Cheryl Caram, Becky Carey, Caryn Chludzynski, Jody Donovan, Kim Evans, Amanda Fried, Walt Gaber, Amy Gilewicz, Linda Graffius, Beth Keller, Ron King, Pastor Karen Lundwall, Jan MacInnes, Rebecca McCormick, Pastor Jay Mitchell, Pastor Brian Moran, Heidi Myer, AJ Noyes, Sarah Prylinski, Sutton Rowland, Katie Romba, Miriam Scheid, Stephanie Sherwood, Caiden Snider, Karen Socash, Michelle Thom, Jenna Uhlig, Keven Zirolu.
4. That the Council be authorized to act on the report of the auditor when completed.
5. That the minutes of this meeting be considered for adoption by the Church Council not later than the second regular meeting following this annual meeting.

J. ADJOURNMENT

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| 1. Closing Prayer | Pastor Jay Mitchell |
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LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH STAFF

PASTOR JAY MITCHELL	PASTOR
WALTER GABER	CANTOR
BETH KELLER	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRY
SARAH PRYLINSKI	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRY
LINDA GRAFFIUS	PARISH NURSE / DIRECTOR OF CARE & HEALTH MINISTRIES
JAN MACINNES	CARE MINISTRY
MIRIAM SCHEID	PARISH MANAGER
NORMA BUERK	SECRETARY
MICHELLE THOM	ADMINISTRATOR LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY
AMANDA FRIED	SECRETARY LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY
DAVID BUERK	MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR
CAIDEN SNIDER	SUNDAY MORNING / WEEKLY SECURITY
SUTTON ROWLAND	SUBSTITUTE / SECURITY

LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

STAN ROSE PRESIDENT	MARK HOWELL VICE-PRESIDENT
EMMA CHAFFEE SECRETARY	GREG KERN TREASURER
ANN FLICK ASSISTANT TREASURER	
PAT BELLINGHAM	DAVID GRISWOLD
MICHAEL HEDLUND	DAVID KINZIG
JEAN MCMILLIN	OTTO 'SKIP' MEYN
PASTOR JAY MITCHELL	NATALIE MONTERO
GINA SNIDER	LIZ STROUP
JEFF SWANSON	PATRICIA YOUNG

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
JANUARY 29, 2023**

1. Meeting Called to Order at 11:45am by Les Fobes.
 - a. Declaration of a quorum – Led Fobes affirmed that after a count a Quorum was present.
 - i. Attendees: 69 attendees
 - b. Appointment of a Secretary – Emma Chaffee, Church Council secretary, will act as secretary.
 - c. Explanation of Voting Procedure – Les Fobes
 - d. Appointment of Tellers – The following served as tellers: Pat Bellingham and Rob Benacci.
 - e. Approval of Agenda:
 - i. Agenda was motioned to be adopted by Ken Kraut and seconded by Nancy Benacci. Motion was unanimously accepted.
2. Opening Prayer: Pastor Moran led an opening prayer.
3. Election of Council:
 - a. Greg Kern presented all 5 nominations for church council; Gina Snider, Michael Hedlund, Dave Kinzig, Jean McMillin, & Pat Young newly nominated for 2023. All were accepted.
4. President of Church Council:
 - a. Les Fobes briefed over the past year. Extended great thanks to Pastor Moran, Pastor Lundwall, & Michael Snider. Extended a word of thanks to the Call Committee, Property Committee, & Luther Memorial Staff.
5. Report of the Call Committee:
 - a. Chairman Tom Klomp presented a brief description of the transpiring's of the Call Committee and thanked Bishop Lozano, Pastor Moran, Pastor Lundwall, Norma, and the other members of the Call Committee.
6. Reports of Congregational Council, Staff, & Committees:
 - a. Briefed over reports and these were accepted and will be placed on file.
 - b. Motion to accept the reports made by Ken Kraut and seconded by Sandy Barbaro. Motion was unanimously accepted.
7. Treasurer's Report by Greg Kern, Treasurer:
 - a. 2023 Budget was presented by Greg Kern
 - b. Approval of Treasurer's Report was motioned to be approved by Ken Kraut and seconded by Skip Meyn. Motion was unanimously accepted.
 - c. Approval of Budget for 2023 was motioned to be approved by Brian Moran and seconded by Ken Kraut. Motion was unanimously approved.
8. Proposed Changes to Luther Memorial Church:
 - a. Bill Lasher went through the constitution and Les Fobes presented in Bill Lasher's absence.

Annual Meeting Minutes, cont'd.:

- b. Presented: Our current constitution has references to the Bethany Foundation which no longer exists. Council decided to remove these references, and at the same time review the entire constitution and make any necessary or desired updates. The changes are essentially editorial and are summarized below.

For these changes to become effective they must be approved at two consecutive Congregational meetings – this year and next.

1. Several typographical and formatting corrections were made but are not shown. Examples are the addition of periods to the section numbers; replacing periods with “)” on numbered subsections for consistency; spelling; and punctuation errors.
 2. Addition of a revision date to the header which will need to be filled in once it's approved by the congregation.
 3. Selection of options in the ELCA model constitution reflecting our practice that were not done in the original document – specific subsections are:
 - a. C5.03 – Council elects its own officers rather than the Congregation; removal of any references to by-laws since we don't have them.
 - b. C8.02 (d) – Associate members must be members of other Christian congregations (as proposed to ELCA or Lutheran)
 - c. C9.01, C9.21 – A call committee is elected by Council, not by the congregation.
 - d. C10.02 and C12.12 – Removal of the word [senior] in front of pastor since we are unlikely to have a senior pastor for the foreseeable future.
 - e. C13.04 – the Mutual Ministry committee is appointed by the president of council (as opposed to the vice-president) along with the pastor.
 4. C12.05 and C13.02 – removal of mentions to the Bethany Foundation
 5. C16.01 – adding the number of voting members (2) needed to propose amendments.
- c. Motion to accept the proposed changes to Luther Memorial Constitution made by Linda Graffius and seconded by Jessie Copfer. Motion was unanimously approved.

9. Columbarium Addition:

- a. Rick Kern presented Columbarium Committee's proposal to add 104 niches.
- b. Total cost will be \$32,850 which will come out of the Columbarium Fund that is currently at a \$50,000 amount.
- c. Estimated to be finished by early summer. Will move Altar (not demolished, but saved) & Baptismal Font.
- d. Motion to accept the proposed Columbarium Addition made by Sandy Barbaro and seconded by Lois Smith. Motion was unanimously approved.

Annual Meeting Minutes, cont'd.:

10. Presentation of Parking Lot Proposal:

- a. Les Fobes presented the surveyor's proposed plan of adding 36 parking spaces, tree plantings, lighting, lighting of Luther Memorial Building, Lighting of Greenspace, Pavilion, Irrigation, Signage, and Renew Erie wall.
- b. Approved by Council and money will come out of Bill Schaal, Jr's fund.
- c. Approval from city of Erie pending the revised plans with removal of other driveway (received last Friday January 27, 2023). We will then have 6 months to break ground for that permit.
- d. Received 2 bids (Good for 30 days from the date of receiving; January 19, 2023) from Lindy & McCormick. Cost will be no more \$230,000.
- e. Motion to accept the proposed surveyor plan made by Carol Schaal and seconded by Jeff Swanson. Motion was unanimously approved.
- f. Council will then vote on bids and which contractor to go with.
- g. \$230,000 divided by 236 giving units in the church over 3 years (52 weeks in a year) would be 6\$ additional per week.
- h. Motion to accept spending up to \$230,000 that will be borrowed and financed made by Liz Stroup and seconded by Carol Schaal. Motion was unanimously approved.

11. Presentation of Changes to Luther Memorial Academy's By-Laws:

- a. Presented by Les Fobes.
- b. Proposed to make Luther Memorial Academy a member-managed Limited Liability Company.
- c. Proposed tenures for school board
- d. Approved by School Board and Church Council.
- e. Motion to accept new Luther Memorial Academy By-Laws made by Marilyn Rositer and seconded by Ken Kraut. Motion was unanimously approved.

12. Proposed Resolutions by Congregational Council:

- a. Presented by Les Fobes.

13. Adjournment:

- a. Closing Prayer presented by Pastor Karen Lundwall as well as a thanks to Les Fobes.
- b. Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Ken Kraut and seconded by Liz Stroup. Motion was unanimously approved.

***SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE
LUTHER MEMORIAL CONSTITUTION***

Our current constitution has references to the Bethany Foundation which no longer exists. Council decided to remove these references, and at the same time review the entire constitution and make any necessary or desired updates. The changes are essentially editorial and are summarized below.

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4. C12.05 and C13.02 – removal of mentions to the Bethany Foundation.
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NOMINATING COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023



The Nominating Committee, formed ad-hoc at the October 2023 meeting of Church Council, was asked to seek church members willing to stand for election to Church Council at the annual meeting on January 28, 2024. The committee members were Stan Rose and Greg Kern with some help from Pastor Jay.

Stan Rose has finished his first 3-year term and does not wish to run again. Emma Chaffee has finished her first 3-year term and will run again. Skip Meyn has finished his 2-year term and does not wish to run again. Jean McMillin has finished her 1-yr term and will run again. Mark Howell and Ann Flick have finished their second 3-year terms and cannot run again. Dave Kinzig has finished one year of his 3-year term and cannot finish the next 2 years.

This means that there are seven open positions.

The following seven members have agreed to become nominees for the seven available positions for Luther Memorial's Church Council:

Emma Chaffee – 3 years

Rob Cooney – 3 years

Les Fobes – 3 years

Jonathan Gaber – 3 years

Tom Klomp – 3 years

Nick Lang – 3 years

Jean McMillin – 1 year

Respectfully submitted,
Greg Kern
Nominating Chair



***REPORT OF THE
CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023***

It has long been my belief that the church either moves forward or falls backward; there is no standing still. At Luther Memorial this past year, it has been clear to me that we have chosen to move forward. As we entered 2023, we took one of the most positive, forward steps that a congregation can take by voting to extend a call to a new pastor to lead us into the future. Our year and a half journey in the wilderness without a called pastor ended when, on January 15, we voted to call Pastor Jay Mitchell. Joyously, Pastor Jay accepted our call and we welcomed him into our midst at the end of March. As I accepted the vote of the Church Council in February to serve as president for the coming year, my determination was to work with the council and the congregation to make our new pastor welcome and to do all that we could to enter upon the next chapter of mission at Luther Memorial in a positive and optimistic way. As I consider our work together since calling and welcoming Pastor Jay, I take great satisfaction in proclaiming that our journey forward has been successful and God pleasing and that our calling to make Christ known in the Erie community and throughout the world continues with a renewed vigor.

The many pages that comprise this annual report of the work of Luther Memorial during this past year speak loudly and clearly of our progress. I encourage you to read them all and I give thanks for the many faithful members' ministry and accomplishments that are documented in the following pages. I'll simply highlight a few of the milestones that marked this past year's journey.

- The call and installation of Pastor Jay Mitchell
- The completion of our new and improved parking lot
- The emergence of a green space that, indeed, became green thanks to the installation of the new sprinkler system
- The installation of a new and greatly improved outside lighting system
- The completion of an expanded columbarium
- The calling of a new Luther Memorial Academy Administrator
- The renovation and upgrade of the Chapel area restrooms
- The onset of a comprehensive adult forum program
- The introduction of innovative new ministries for youth and adults

None of the accomplishments listed would have been possible without the tireless work and commitment by the Luther Memorial Church and Academy Staff. We will lift them up and thank them individually in a resolution of thanksgiving as a part of our annual meeting agenda. I also want to express my thanks and appreciation to the members of the 2023 Church Council. Their commitment to the mission of the church and their careful and prayerful deliberations of matters large and small has kept us sharply focused on the important ministry that occurs in the name of Jesus through Luther Memorial. Finally, I thank God for all who call Luther Memorial their church. Your ongoing commitment of support for and participation in our shared ministry is a visible testament to our desire to serve God. As we continue to respond to God's Grace and love, our commitment to service grows ever stronger. I look forward to all that is to come for Luther Memorial Church and Academy and to all the opportunities for ministry in Jesus' name.

I wish you peace and joy in service to the Lord,
Stan Rose
Church Council President



REPORT OF THE PASTOR ***ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023***

¹² But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; ¹³ esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers and sisters, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. ¹⁵ See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil.

Siblings, it is such a joy to sit down to write the first of what I hope to be many Annual Reports for you. Admittedly, it has only been about ten months since we began our ministry together in earnest, but as I sit to write this on January 15 it is one year to the day since you placed great trust and hope in me by calling me as your pastor. Daily I am grateful for your trust and for your partnership in this journey of faith. Know that I pray for you and welcome you to pray for me and for the ministry of Luther Memorial.

The above quotations from Saint Paul's letter to the Thessalonians are one of my favorites in all of scripture. It was read at my ordination and again when I was installed as your pastor. In short and succinct sentences (something he is not always known for), Paul lays out what it means to journey in faith and especially to journey **together** in faith. I cannot help but look to verses 16-19 and see our ministry together and particularly to use them to lay out my ministry among you:

Rejoice Always

Together in the past ten months we have done much rejoicing. We welcomed three new siblings through the sacrament of Baptism, six new members through affirmation of faith and transfer, and four new adults in faith through the rite of Confirmation. We also celebrated as six of our young saints received the Lord's Supper for the first time. We gave Bibles to three young saints as well. We celebrated with one couple their marriage. We also celebrated Christ in our midst in worship 48 times not including midweek services during Lent.

It was also my privilege to preside at Commencement for Luther Memorial Academy in June and to be here to help welcome Mrs. Thom as our new principal! Also it has been a joy to lead chapel for LMA most of the weeks of the 2023-2024 school year and share with Mrs. Keller when I was not able.

But those are just the statistics and do not include the meals we have shared, stories we've told, gatherings we've hosted, and other times of being together in joy. I am so grateful to those of you who have opened your homes and your lives to me over the past ten months and invite you—particularly if you have not yet—to connect. I'd love to get to know you all the better outside of the church building.

Pray without Ceasing

Know that you are always in my prayers. And I hope that you continue to keep me in yours. This is the very foundation by which we are made one in Christ. In prayer we have gathered around five families in their grief as we commended siblings to the loving arms of their Redeemer. We gathered around our youth as they went off to Confircamp. I have had the opportunity to visit several of our members who have been hospitalized and a goodly number of our homebound members. Again, please be sure to reach out to me if you are in need of the visit—or if you just want a friendly chat. Being together in prayer is always holy time.

Report of the Pastor, cont'd.:

Give Thanks in All Circumstances

Not a day goes by that I do not give thanks for your warm welcome and embrace of me and my ministry among you. What a beautiful community we are when we are together! I would be remiss if I did not extend my gratitude to:

- + Pastors Lundwall and Moran and Michael Snider for their coverage during the interim. Let us not forget there was almost three months of 2023 that they were still service our community in this capacity.
 - A side note of gratitude for Pastor Lundwall who graciously covered twice for me with very little notice due to illness.
- + Les Fobes and Stan Rose who were our Council Presidents this year and who have nobly steered our congregation toward the bright future God intends for us.
- + The members of the Call Committee and **both** Councils who were part of the Call process and helped to onboard me with patience and love.
- + The Board, faculty, students, and family of LMA who have embraced me and my sometimes overly excited presence among them.
- + Finally to each of you and all of your for your work leading up to my beginning with you and your welcome, hope, trust, and infectious joy that has shaped the start of our adventures together!

Do Not Quench the Spirit

As we look ahead to 2024 I am enlivened to consider a full year together! We are quickly coming up on the end of the “firsts” together. I began my ministry with you on the Third Sunday in Lent. That Sunday in the church year is not too far away (who can believe!). I am honored by the ministry we have shared and filled with excited for all that lies ahead for us. Just because we are coming to the end of the firsts, it does not mean that we will not encounter new ideas and plans together; it does not mean we will not be called to embrace a sometimes uncertain future; it does not mean that we will not all be stretched as we listen to and heed God’s call to dance in the Spirit and we are drawn into God’s bright and beautiful future together. But we trust we do so truly together, bound together in love of God and each other, and always, always following where our Savior leads.

As I have said many times, I continue to keep you in my prayers and hope that you keep me in yours. Together, let us live into God’s call here at Luther Memorial.

Always yours in Christ’s service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Jay".

The Rev. Jay C. Mitchell, pastor



*REPORT OF THE PASTORAL ASSISTANT
TO HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023*

As always, I must begin by thanking you for your continued support of the ministries of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church these past seven years. Your support enables this ministry site to continue to provide important outreach to the neighborhood of Little Italy, as well as to the wider community in the City of Erie. Your good wishes, thoughts and prayers are sustaining to me and your siblings in Christ at Holy Trinity.

The past year of 2023 was the first of total return to full, year-long outreach ministry at Holy Trinity and we were blessed to be able to add a Thursday lunch to our regular pattern of Tuesday dinner, Wednesday and Saturday lunch. With the continued pick-up of rescued food from Country Fair Stores and Giant Eagle bakery, and the addition of the Panera pick-up from Luther Memorial, we are able to distribute bags of prepared foods on Tuesday evenings along with the meals. The generous congregations of the Erie Conference also provided the traditional Thursday end of the month “Sloppy Joe Dinners” each month, enabling our friends and neighbors to be served 8,000+ meals, and the additional 1,000+ food bags. Your continued support of these ministries is a gracious gift for which we cannot thank you enough.

However, as with all programs in the post-pandemic era, we have seen a decline in volunteers, as many have grown older and are unable and others have moved on. So if you or anyone you know may be interested in volunteering time once or twice a month for 3 hours or so please contact us and we will gladly show you the simple ways in which we serve people, with food.

We were blessed to receive a grant for \$67,000 from the Lutheran Foundation for Long Term Living in June for the installation of a free laundromat at Holy Trinity. One of our rooms at the Gym entrance doors is being converted into a laundromat with two washer/dryer and room for a third set, that we hope to have open by March. The laundromat will allow our friends and neighbors access to free laundry services and the ability to use our locker room facilities for showering while doing their laundry. We plan to give them the opportunity to get a little body wash, a little shampoo and little dignity through this new and much needed ministry.

We continue our small group Bible Study on Wednesday evenings from 7-8:00 pm using our conference call toll free number that is graciously led by Pr. Harbaugh in his retirement and me. We are approaching a completion of all the books of the Bible when begin the study of the book Psalms in January. You are welcome to join using the conference call toll free phone number 848.777.1212 Conf. ID: 6436436431#.

Worship continues each week at 11:00am and we continue worship a steady 40 or so siblings in Christ each week. Our Sudanese community remains strong and vibrant and an integral part of our worship, as they provide special music every other week, and when an Arabic reader is he lector for the day the first and second readings are read for the community in Arabic.

Please know that the continuation of these ministries is a result of your vision and willingness to be the church in the world, and that the congregation truly appreciates your witness, and that you are welcome and encouraged to visit any time the spirit would move you, and are always most obviously welcome to volunteer your time and talents in whatever way you are moved, as well.

On a personal note, I do miss coming to Luther Memorial to lead and share in worship as we were able to do in the past, but know you remain close in our hearts and thoughts and prayers. I cannot say it often enough, thank you again for your ongoing prayers, good wishes and support, wishing God’s peace and blessings to each and every one of you; in Christ,

Ron King



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRY
ANNUAL REPORT – 2023

The following groups, programs, and special events are under the umbrella of Christian Education at Luther Memorial Church. With the lifting of Covid restrictions programming has continued to grow.

Sunday School	Wednesday Lenten Studies
Vacation Bible School	Adult Spiritual Growth
Third Grade Bibles	Baptism Celebration
First Communion	Dinner With Our Flock
Christmas Pageant	Care Squad
Confirmation Classes	Rally Day
Nursery	Bingo / Yard Sale
Camp Lutherlyn	LYO Service Sunday
Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO)	Gods Work, Our Hands
Acolyte Training	Soup Sales

The Cradle Roll is overseen by Jeanne Gaber.

The Baby Blanket deliveries are overseen by Linda Graffius.

The following were new or occurred in 2023:

- Fundraising for the LYO will continue and planning has begun for the next National Youth Gathering which will be in New Orleans, 2024.
- No attendees for Winter Retreat at Lutherlyn for 2023.
- Trunk or Treat was well attended by LMC and LMA families.
- The annual Easter egg hunt on Palm Sunday following the 10:30am service has been well attended and continues to bring spring happiness.
- The LYO (grades 7-12) continues to grow as does our Sunday School.
- Confirmands attended 6 weeks of classes from 11:30am to 1:00pm with Beth, Sarah, and Pastor Jay leading up to Reformation Sunday in October. Lessons, topics, and lunch were enjoyed.
- Confirmands attended 6 weeks of classes from 11:30am to 1:00pm with Beth, Sarah, and Pastor Lundwall leading up to Reformation Sunday in October. Lessons, topics, lunch, and a project were all enjoyed.
- Our nursery continues to be overseen by Anna Keller.
- Thank you to our church families for participating in our Family Christmas Program. This past year families chose, created, and presented a verse from the classic Christmas carol, “The Twelve Days of Christmas”. The meaning of the verse was read by a member of the family while another member of that family hung the family made ornaments on the tree.

Christian Education, cont'd.:

- Our Sunday School grades PreK-5 have been meeting the second Sunday of the month in Fellowship Hall 9:30 to 10:15am. LYO meets the third Sunday of the month 9:30 to 10:15.
- Thank you to Cathie Dugan, Keri Cooney, and Kelly Lang for volunteering to teach and guide our young children in their Christian faith.
- Confirmation Camp in June 2023 at Lutherlyn was well attended by the LYO aged youth. Thank you to our dedicated and generous church members and church council for their continued support and financial donations for sponsorships.
- Fundraising for the youth has continued with selling of ham loaves, greeting cards, seasonal basket raffles, BINGO, soup sales, and bake sales.
- The Care Squad continues to make cards for the V.A. Hospital and other small outreach projects.
- Volunteer opportunities were able to be done this past year from God's Work Our Hands, CROP Walk, and passing out of food in December at Bethany Outreach Center.
- Service Sundays with the LYO continue to look for opportunities to serve members of our congregation in 2024.
- The 9th Annual Scavenger Hunt was during the fall 2023. "God's Work. Our Hands" was embedded in the hunt. The hunt ended at the Erie Zoo with donations of family made scarecrows made during the hunt.
- LYO hosted BINGO Fall 2023 and will host Spring 2024.
- VBS ran Wednesday evenings May 24, 31, June 7 and 14 from 5:30 – 7:00pm. Each evening began with dinner followed by a Bible story, game, and a craft. The format worked well and many families attended as did the young at heart.
- LYO Christmas Extravaganza is held annually the first Friday in December and was well attended. This past year we celebrated Harry Potter style. Youth were greeted with a visit to the sorting hat to place each into their house and groups were off for a scavenger hunt throughout the building. Points were earned and bragging rights were won. A great meal was enjoyed and everyone had a great time visiting with friends.
- Continued thanks to Lynette Gustafson, Amy Scott, and Lena Donnelly for their dedication in organizing, recruiting, practicing, and presenting the St. Lucia Program at Luther each December. Also many thanks to our cantor, Walt Gaber, and our Luther Memorial choir who are part of this special event.

Christian Education, cont'd.:

Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes the Body of Christ to raise a person of faith. Volunteers in Christian Education do important work and we are truly thankful for each and every person who has been a part of the team to help one another to know Jesus Christ. You are all so greatly needed. We continue to work, adapt as necessary, and thanks to your support of our Christian Education programming we continue to learn and come together as God's family.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Keller and Sarah Prylinski



“It would’ve been quicker if Paul just posted his letters to the Corinthians on his Facebook page.”



CANTOR'S REPORT
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

“We proclaim the Word of God through Music”

I would like to thank all those who have participated in and helped lead our worship through music.

The core of our music ministry is found in the adult choir, which rehearses 1.5 to 2 hours per week (*Thursday evening rehearsals and Sunday morning warm-ups*). We are glad that we are now able to rehearse and sing together after a long period of COVID-19 restrictions. Participation has not returned to pre-COVID days, but I hope to continue to rebuild our choir. Please thank the following for their faithful participation throughout all or part of 2023.

Emma Chaffee	Jonathan Gaber	Mary Laver	Rose-Marie Rose
Barb Dennison	Molly Gaber	Otto ‘Skip’ Meyn	Kathy Sahlmann
Cathie Dugan	Ken Kraut	Barb Moore	Pat Young

The handbell choir has rehearsed throughout the year to prepare and perform selections for our worship services on a regular basis and for special services (*e.g. St. Lucia program, Christmas Eve*). Please thank the following for their faithful participation throughout all or part of 2023.

Christy Adams	Cathie Dugan	Lynnette Gustafson	Kathy Sahlmann
Pat Bellingham	Les Fobes	Mary Laver	Penelope Wolf
Pat Boyd	Jeanne Gaber	Lena Martin	Tessa Wolf
Emma Chaffee	Jonathan Gaber	Barb Moore	Veronica Wolf
Barb Dennison	Molly Gaber	Kara Partusch	

New choir members are always welcome. Please know that many of our singers do not read music and have not had formal music training. One component of choir participation is the friendships that are formed as we give back to God what He has first given us – our love of music, our talents, and our voices. Also know that you do not need to commit to full participation – we would welcome a shorter commitment by your participation in the choir for a single season (*e.g. Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter*).

I would like to thank the instrumentalists that have added their talents to our worship. During 2023, these included:

Bob Banks	Saxophone
Cathie Dugan	Timpani
Jonathan Gaber	Cello
Bill Lasher	Organ
Linda Melaragno	Violin
Barb Moore	Flute
Kara Partusch	Baritone Horn

If you have similar instrumental skills (*or know others in our fellowship that do*), please contact me as I have a special fondness for the use of instruments in worship beyond the organ, handbells, and piano.

Cantor's Report, cont'd.:

The two existing electronic organs continue to provide reliable service with a few minor maintenance issues. It should be noted that, as with any electronic device, their lifetime is finite, and we should prepare for their eventual decline or failure while maintaining them at their highest level. The small pipe organ provides valuable options for music in our worship. We also have an exceptionally fine grand piano in the nave which serves well as a solo instrument and for the accompaniment of instrumental and vocal music intended for the piano.

I thank those who serve on the Worship & Music committee, especially Cathie Dugan for her leadership and organization. The decisions and work of this group greatly contribute to the quality and completeness of our worship together. Also, a special thanks to Pastor Lundwall, Pastor Moran and Michael Snider who served us so well during our time of pastoral transition. Without them, my work would have been so much more difficult, and our worship life would have suffered immensely. And I welcome the leadership and guidance that Pastor Jay brings to our worship life and appreciate the importance he places on a rich and expanding role of music in worship.

Our Concert Series was on hiatus throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We presented one of Bach's cantatas for the Ascension for the Erie Lutheran Conference service held at Luther Memorial on that feast day – May 18. During the 2023-2024 season we have also restarted the “Second Sunday Family & Friends” concerts:

October – Linda Melaragno, violin
November – Barb Moore, flute
December – Bill Lasher, organ

The 30-minute Christmas Eve concerts were performed by the following Luther Memorial instrumentalists:

Bob Banks (<i>soprano saxophone</i>)	Linda Melaragno (<i>violin</i>)
Jonathan Gaber (<i>cello</i>)	Barb Moore (<i>flute</i>)
Walt Gaber (<i>piano</i>)	Kara Partusch (<i>baritone horn</i>)

The Mercyhurst Liturgical Dance Ensemble, under the leadership and instruction of C. Noelle Partusch, continues to regularly enhance our worship services through their interpretation in dance of portions of some services. They prioritize participation in our Palm Sunday and Reformation Sunday services.

I continue to serve as a member of the NWPALCA Synod Worship & Music committee which plans and evaluates synod-wide worship services. I am also on the board of the *Presque Isle ProMusica*, the chamber orchestra in residence at Luther Memorial. All these organizations have had their activities severely curtailed due to the pandemic with some events gradually returning.

Music is one of the ministries that draw people to our congregation. The success of this ministry is due to the dedication and hard work of the people involved in the program. As you can see, there are many individuals involved in making our corporate worship possible and enriching our lives through music. I apologize to any that I may have overlooked in this report. I thank all of those that have offered words of encouragement and appreciation over the past months.

As your Cantor, I look forward to leading our worship together in the coming months and years. And I thank God for calling me to serve this congregation.

Grace and Peace,

– Cantor Walt Gaber –



CARE AND HEALTH MINISTRY
PRAYER PARTNERS
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

Luther Memorial was blessed this year with Pastor Jay Mitchell being selected to be our pastor. Our Care and Healthy Ministry is also blessed because he believes in the necessity of our ministry. God is Good!

I think one of the ministries that a lot of you aren't aware of is one where knitted prayer crosses and the Word in Season booklets are taken to local medical facilities. Jan MacInnes took 318 knitted crosses and 216 Word in Season booklets to Hillman Cancer Center. Betty Pletz took 135 knitted crosses and 100 booklets to the surgical waiting area at Hamot. Forty five crosses and 20 booklets were taken to Allegheny Cancer Center. Allegheny NICU also received 5 blankets and hats for their fragile infants. What a wonderful outreach we are providing to our community! These beautiful crosses are made by our Magic Fingers Knitting group. They also make beautiful prayer shawls that were blessed by Pastor Jay in July. This group is faithful to this mission and to each other and are welcoming to anyone who wants to learn to knit or help with making these items. An offshoot of this group is a quilting group. This is another fun group that is dedicated to making quilts that are sent to third world countries by the ELCA.

The Prayer Partners are another faithful group who serve through prayer. We developed 3 lists because one (1) list was getting too long. There is short list, long list and private list. The guidelines for these lists will be at the end of this report. The best thing you can do to help this group is to let us know if there are any changes with the people you have added to the list.

The leadership of the Emergency and Preparedness Team was turned over to Jeff Swanson. No meeting was held this past year, but plans are moving ahead for this year. If you are interested in this aspect of ministry, please contact Jeff or Pastor.

I continued to write the newsletter articles and included information on "ending" of the pandemic, concussions, bone health and RSV to name a few. I have also shared these articles with the Northwest WELCA newsletter.

Whenever asked, I have provided transportation and attended doctor appointments with many members. Pastor and I visited members when they were in the hospital. Medical information is so complex that having assistance to interpret it is important. To keep up on current information I participate in appropriate zoom programs and webinars.

Our OWL's group has gathered for many interesting and fun programs. Twenty-one (21) attended the Valentine's Day lunch at the Bayfront Convention Center. Pastor's mother, Karen Mitchell, presented a program about Senior Brain Health. I think the most fun was had on Game Day. The group playing Scattergories laughed the loudest! We sang, played games and ate lunch at our annual Christmas Party.

The holidays bring us to delivering Easter flowers to the shut-ins. They love this sign of spring. We have continued preparing and delivering Cheer Baskets. This year 28 baskets and bags containing fruit, candy and homemade cookies were delivered. Some poinsettias were delivered but we need more help to deliver them.

Jan has continued the bereavement ministry by sending sympathy cards for loss of loved ones and loss of pets. We send the four (4) Stephen Ministry grief booklets and a card at the one year anniversary of their loved ones passing.

Care Ministry, cont'd.:

Our year ends with the beautiful Blue Christmas service. Twenty-seven attended and 20 watched on YouTube. Several people told us how much the service helped them and this makes it all worthwhile.

At last year's annual meeting I announced that I will be retiring this year. March 1 is my last day. Serving the people of LMC has been one of the most wonderful nursing positions I have experienced in my 55 years as an RN. Thank you all for supporting me and Care and Health Ministry. Volunteers are an integral part of church membership and I hope that more members will feel God's call to help sustain and grow Luther Memorial Church.

God Bless You All!

Linda Graffius, RN, Faith Community Nurse, Coordinator of Care and Health Ministry



Prayer Requests

The **Prayer Partners** group of Luther Memorial Church has been faithfully praying for many people for several years. Three (3) prayer lists are available:

- **LONG TERM** list (people who have been on for more than 1 year)
- **SHORT TERM** list (1 year or less). If someone on the short term list needs to be on indefinitely, i.e. for cancer treatment, please let Linda Graffius or Norma (in the church office) know.
- **PRIVATE LIST** – The names on this list are only available to the prayer group and Norma. The Grief list will continue to be in the bulletin each week.
 - The short term list will be in the bulletin each Sunday;
 - The long term list will be available at the welcome table on Sunday mornings;
 - If you would like the long term list emailed, please contact Norma;
 - The long term list will also be printed in the newsletter quarterly;
 - Our military men and women are currently listed on the short term list.

Emails and phone calls are not always made for updates as this has become difficult to do with so many people on our list. Therefore, if you have someone on the list and a change needs to be made, **you** need to contact Linda or Norma by email or by phone during our work hours.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Linda or Norma.



***REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023***

For 47 years, Luther Memorial Academy has been dedicated to providing high-quality education and fostering a nurturing environment for our diverse student body. We are proud of our legacy and the impact we've had on countless lives. I am honored to serve as the new Administrator at LMA as I was hired in July of 2023. Working hard to continue the traditions of LMA, but also to introduce new ideas is of my utmost importance.

For the 2023-2024 school year, we have welcomed two new staff members to the LMA team. Dr. Kevin Zirolì took our fourth grade position and Ms. Ciara Adams took our sixth grade position. As a T.E.A.M. (together everyone achieves more), we can continue to make a positive impact on the lives of our students and the Erie community.

Continuing traditions included LMA Sunday, highlighting Children's Grief Awareness Day partnered with The Caring Place, School Spirit Days to support Luther Lion at the Erie Zoo, the Thanksgiving Feast (led this year by Sally McAfee and David Kinzig), the Christmas Fair (led by Brooke McCall), the Christmas Carol Sing-along (joined this year by Mercyhurst Performance Choir), Middle School Dances, Read Across America Day (led by Kim Evans), Challenge 24, the National Geography Bee, and service hours for all grade levels.

New additions include a Family Picnic at the beginning of the school year and community events including LMA Seawolves Night and sponsorship of a Luther Memorial Zoo Boo Booth. Ciara Adams, sixth grade teacher, began a theater program at LMA and is planning a production of Peter Pan in the spring. To close out the school year, we are planning to participate in the St. Patrick's Day Parade and Lutheran Schools Week. Furthermore, LMA has enhanced their presence on Facebook (@luthermemorialacademy) in order to keep the community up-to-date on all the fun things that fill our days.

LMA adopted Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which is an evidence-based framework to improve and integrate all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. It is a way to create positive, predictable, equitable and safe learning environments where everyone thrives. PBIS creates schools where all students succeed. Clear school-wide behavior expectations were set forth where students are **ROARING** their way to success! The R.O.A.R. expectations are as follows:

- R**espect your community
- O**wn your behavior and education,
- A**lways staying safe, and make
- R**esponsible choices.

Through the EANS grant, we were able to update technology including ViewSonic Interactive Flat Panels for each classroom. We were also able to purchase a water bottle refiller, new desks and chairs for 7th, 8th, and specials classes, portable speakers with wireless microphones, three 20x 10 pop-up tents, and 32 new table/benches for Fellowship Hall.

Our student enrollment this year was the same as last year's enrollment (93 students), however this number is lower than the previous five years. Work is being done by the LMA School Board and myself in attempts to recruit more students for next school year. Luther Memorial Church has been a vital and treasured support for Luther Memorial Academy, and we are indebted to all who have supported us.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

MICHELLE THOM, Administrator
AMANDA FRIED, Office Manager

TEACHING FACULTY 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR

KAREN SOCASH – Kindergarten
KATIE ROMBA – Grade 1
BETH KELLER – Grade 2
CIARA ADAMS – Grade 6 Homeroom, English, Reading
AMY GILEWICZ – Grade 7 Homeroom, 6 & 7 Math, 6-8 Social Studies, K-8 Art
CARYN CHLUDZYNSKI – Grade 8 Homeroom, 6-8 Science, 6-8 Spanish, 8 Math
AJ NOYES – Specials K-8: PE, Health/Guidance, Music, Spanish K-5, Technology K-5, 6 Study Hall
KIM EVANS - Library
STEPHANIE SHERWOOD – Act 89 Reading
JODY DONOVAN – Act 89 Math (Kdg. – Grade 6)
JENNA UHLIG – Act 89 Math (Grades 7 & 8)
HEIDI MYER - IU Speech
MIRIAM SCHEID – Tech Support and Financial Support

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

JOHN BARTLETT – President	MARIA GOELLNER - Member
MICHAEL MCCORMICK - Vice President	PASTOR JAY MITCHELL - Member
GREG KERN - Treasurer	SHANNON MCADOO - Member
MIRIAM SCHEID - Assistant Treasurer	STANLEY ROSE - Member
NATALIE MONTERO - Secretary	JIM WERTZ - Member
KATIE ROMBA - Teacher Rep.	M J HOWELL - Emeritus
MICHELLE THOM - LMA Administrator	

BEFORE SCHOOL PROGRAM: CARYN CHLUDZYNSKI

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM: BETH KELLER – Coordinator
CARYN CHLUDZYNSKI

MEMBERSHIPS:

Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA)
Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5 (IU)

PARENT/TEACHER LEAGUE:

KIM WERTZ – President
MINDY BOYD – Vice-President
AMANDA FRIED – Secretary
PAULA NOBLE – Treasurer
BETH KELLER – Teacher Representative

SPORTS/ACTIVITIES:

Cross-Country, Swimming, Basketball, Track and Field, Girl Scouts

LMA Administrator Report, cont'd.:

GRADUATION AWARDS:

George E. Black Award for Most Outstanding Student
J. David Mumford Award for Academic Excellence
Helen Schade Award for Academic Fitness
Alice Engel Extraordinary Effort Award
Susan M. Belott Christian Service Award
Richard Strobel Award

THRIVENT GIFTING PROGRAM:

Thrivent Financial helps LMA through the “Thrivent Choice” program. This program allows members to direct funds to LMA. It is not a matching program, but rather a direct donation to our school. We count on members to keep us in mind and are very grateful for support.

SCHOLARSHIPS/MEMORIALS:

Library development, improved curriculum, and financial aid to students are dependent upon the generosity of others. LMA is indebted to the Women of the ELCA, Thrivent, and individuals and families who have been generous to us. The EITC and OSTC Programs, crucial to us, allows tax deductions for businesses that contribute to us solely for the purpose of financial aid for our families.

Yours in Education,
Mrs. Michelle Thom



LUTHER
MEMORIAL ACADEMY



Our Mission: Bethany Outreach Center impacts Erie’s lower eastside neighborhood by providing services and teaching skills to underserved families that will lead them to a path of positive life change.

FOOD PANTRY

THERE WERE 7006 VISITS TO OUR PANTRY SERVING 933 HOUSEHOLDS

CLOTHING CLOSET

There were **2887 visits** made to our closet by **686 households**. We received over **57,999 pounds of clothing and household goods**.

Wellness Program

25 households benefitted from our program

Project Partners who’ve shared their Time, Talents, Ties and Treasures:

Second Harvest Food Bank, Highmark, Country Fair, Erie Insurance, Lord Corporation, Cornerstone Construction, Pathstone, Mercyhurst University BTG Program, St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, LCBA Branch 49, Erie County Department Of Health, WQLN, St. Bens Education Center, Crop Walk for Hunger, EMTA, Erie Day School, ELCA, Faith Lutheran Church, Fulton Athletic Club, ROMOLO CHOCOLATES INC., THOMAS HAGAN

BREW HA HA, M.A.B.E.L. ~Mind And Body Education Link, Women of ELCA, The Erie Community Foundation Youth Philanthropists~ HEY! Hear Erie’s Youth, Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community, GURDWARA SIKH CULTURAL SOCIETY, Erie Crawford Central Labor, Sisters of St. Joseph, Delta Sigma Theta, AKA’s, Emmaus, Various Churches, Regional Camp Service Day, Mt. Ebal Missionary Baptist Church, GOYA, Greek Orthodox Youth of America, UE Local Union 506, PSN~Plastics Services Network, Cascade Park Club, Erie Crawford Central Labor, Community Labor Coalition, United Way Of SOUTHWESTERN, PA, MH Equipment

VOLUNTEERS: 160 gave 5,749 hours of their time

The Annual Turkey Man Drive: Made possible by Second Harvest Food Bank, Erie Insurance, Cornerstone Construction, and a wealth of volunteers throughout the

- Board Members:**
- Executive Team:**
- Carol Gleischer
President
 - Casey Hedlund
Vice President
 - Marnie Brown
Secretary
 - Eric Hedlund
Treasurer
 - Brenda McBride
 - Tim Ward
 - Nik Zaphris
 - Ron Oliver
 - Jim Horvat
 - Patricia Bellingham
 - Executive Director**
Mabel Howard



A very special thank you to our **HOPE TEAM:** Organizations, Businesses and Individuals contributing \$5000 or more in 2023: Luther Memorial Church, Luther Memorial Congregation, St. Stephens Lutheran Church, ELCA, MORLIN, Inc., PSN~Plastics Services Network. All of our donors, large and small as well as our volunteers, make it possible for Bethany Outreach Center to continue on with its good work. We appreciate each one of you.

<p>Executive Director: Mabel Howard Location: 254 East 10th Street, Erie, PA 1503 Website: www.bethanyoutreachcenter.org</p>	<p>Executive Assistant: Luanne Churchill Office Phone: 814-456-6254 Email: mabel@bethanyoutreachcenter.org</p>
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LMC PROPERTY COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

The year 2023 saw big changes to the space where the old Western Motel stood. This year grass was planted, irrigation installed, parking lots paved, lighting installed, the Renew Erie wall painted and the sign painted. Property and church council have agreed to enjoy the greenspace and evaluate future plans for its use.

A thank you to the Property Committee members who have planned and supervised the greenspace as well as overseeing the repairs and maintenance for Luther Memorial Church. Members are:

David Buerk
John Evans
Les Fobes
Jeanne Gaber

Mark Howell
Tom Klomp
Miriam Scheid
Jeff Swanson

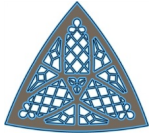
A special thanks to the family of Bill Schaal, Jr. for contributing money from his memorial fund to cover the cost of the new parking lot lighting and upgrade of lighting on the school and the 10th Street entrance. Bill Braendel underwrote the (Luther Memorial Church and Academy) sign on the 10th Street side of the Renew Erie building. Our gratitude also goes to the members of Luther Memorial who have pledged to the capital campaign fund.

General maintenance for the church year 2023 consists of \$33,353 including:

Plumbing - \$4,432
Landscaping - \$6,490
Repair and replace sanctuary lighting - \$12,561
Heating and ventilating repairs and maintenance - \$4,714

Respectfully submitted,
Les Fobes





LUTHER MEMORIAL CONCERT SERIES
ANNUAL REPORT 2023

During 2023, the Luther Memorial Concert Series (LMCS) committee members included: Pat Bellingham, Molly Gaber, Walt Gaber, Brian Hubbard, Greg Kern.

The pandemic has severely impacted our ability to present any programming for several years.

Bach Cantata Vespers (BCV)

After three years of COVID-19 restrictions, we were able to present one of Bach's Ascension cantatas and related music for the Erie Lutheran Conference's Ascension service at Luther Memorial on May 18.

Previous BCV services involved the Luther Memorial choir and several choristers from throughout the community. We believe that this is a niche in the Erie music and worship community that is particularly apt for Luther Memorial. We can celebrate and present our heritage while providing a welcoming and worshipful setting for some of the greatest sacred music created.

The 2023 **Christmas Eve concerts** consisted of several Christmas Carol arrangements performed by the following Luther Memorial instrumentalists:

Bob Banks (*soprano saxophone*)

Jonathan Gaber (*cello*)

Walt Gaber (*piano*)

Linda Melaragno (*violin*)

Barb Moore (*flute*)

Kara Partusch (*baritone horn*)

These musical selections originated as piano settings by contemporary composers. I orchestrated several of these to provide a greater variety of musical ensembles and to give all of us an opportunity to make music together.

Conclusion

The Luther Memorial Concert Series wishes to thank all those that have supported us through the years – through your attendance, compliments to the musicians and through your generous financial gifts. Our challenge to you – please expand this ministry of Luther Memorial by inviting a friend or family member and attend more of our concerts and extended use of music as in the Bach Cantata Vespers.

Respectfully submitted,
Walt Gaber

“We believe art feeds the spirit.”



WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT – 2023

The mission of the Worship and Music Committee is to *“plan the meaningful celebration of Word and Sacrament according to the Lutheran tradition.”*

Those who served on the committee during 2023 include:

Pr. Jay Mitchell	Cantor Walt Gaber
Pr Karen Lundwall	Pr. Brian Moran
Jessica Copfer	Joanne Dahlstrand
Mary Daniels	Cathie Dugan
Les Fobes	Betty Pletz

2023 has been an exciting year for the Worship and Music Committee, as the coming of a new pastor always brings fresh ideas and with it, changes in worship practices. While the committee does not plan the details of each worship service, it does oversee our liturgical procedures as well as the aesthetics of our worship spaces and the resources needed for our services. Pr. Jay has been instrumental in helping the committee think more deeply about the reasons behind what we do in our worship, and how we do it.

As a congregation, we have been trying out some new ideas and procedures, seeing how they fit into our worship life. Have you wondered about some of the new things that happen during our services? Please watch for Pastor Jay’s new blurb in the bulletin called “Worship Matters.” The first one appeared on January 14 and explained why we are singing a new response during communion. “Worship Matters” is meant to be an ongoing element in the bulletin. If you are wondering about something that happens in our worship, ask Pr. Jay! He has many interesting thoughts and fascinating bits of information to share.

In gratitude: There are many people whose efforts make our worship life run smoothly. Thank you first to Pr. Jay, for all the care and thought you put into making our worship meaningful, and to Walt for all the thought you give to making the music for our services timely and inspiring. A most well-deserved “thank you” also to Norma for all the work you put into coordinating many key components. In addition to producing our weekly bulletins, Norma coordinates the schedules for all worship related elements and personnel. Thank you to the assisting ministers, communion assistants, altar guild members, musicians, lectors, and online camera operators who offer their gifts to our worship life, and to Loretta Deeds, who coordinates the lectors. Your contributions are greatly appreciated. Thank you also to Les Fobes, whose attention to the details of the aesthetics of the sanctuary is greatly appreciated. Thank you to Caiden Snider, who is always on the spot, taking care of all manner of things that need to be done. There are many others who carry on their own quiet work all around us, often without having to be asked, and just because they see a task needs to be done. To you we owe a word of gratitude as well.

The committee would once again like to extend its heartfelt gratitude to Pastor Karen Lundwall, Pastor Brian Moran and Michael Snider for the time and thoughtful care you have given to ministering to the congregation during our time of transition between called pastors. It is much appreciated.

We know there will continue to be changes as we move forward, but the one thing that remains steadfast is the strength we have together as a church family. We care deeply for each other, and we care deeply for the ministry and traditions of Luther Memorial Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathie Dugan

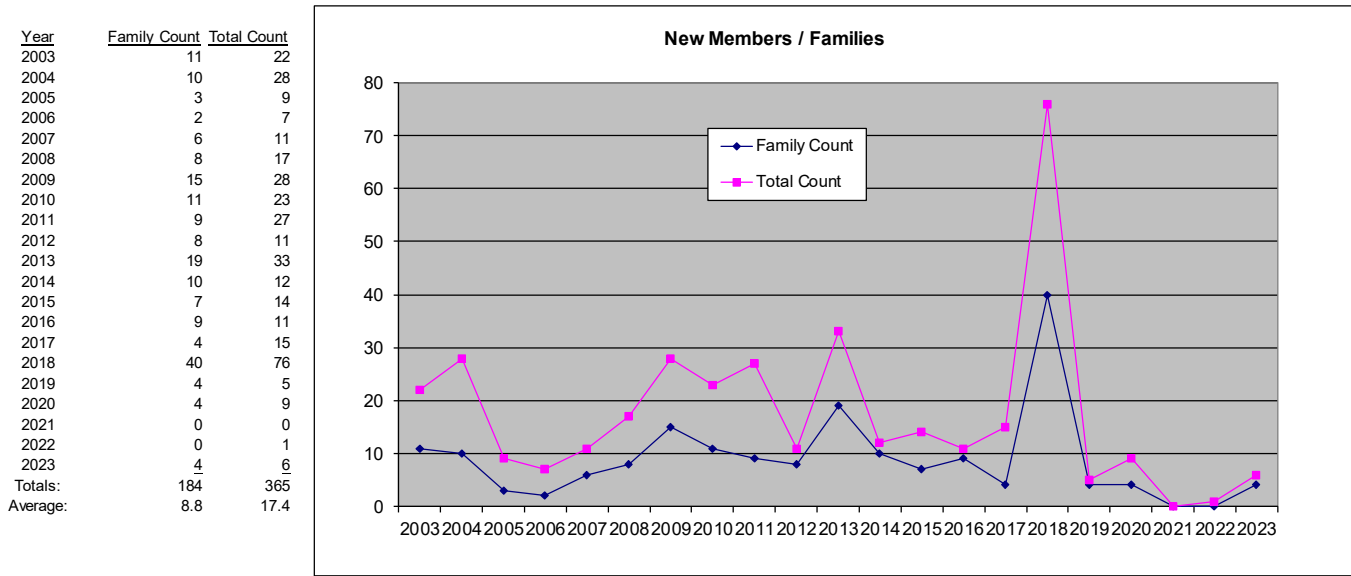
EVANGELISM / HOSPITALITY
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023



New Members received in 2023:

Barbara Dennison
 Kate Logan Jeffrey Logan
 Barb Moore Carl Moore
 Gail Zackrison

New Members / Families Through 2023:



Attendance

Average attendance before Covid in 2019 was 165 / week. In **2023** if we include YouTube as well as in-person attenders, average attendance was 150 / week. So, it was still down, but improved from last year’s average of 138 / week.

We had 2 Baptisms during 2023:

HusaynZyad Adan Abu-zabiba Mackenzie J. Kozyk
 Maeve Helena Zamperini

Thank You!

- To Staff members and Congregation members who took the time to invite acquaintances from the school, their friends, and family members to join us – at church or on YouTube!

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Hedlund



LITURGICAL LIFE
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

Our 10:30 Sunday morning worship services continue to be live streamed and are available on our Luther Memorial website and YouTube. Presently six (6) volunteers rotate Sunday mornings to live stream our service. Additional help would be greatly appreciated and you are welcome to contact our church office for more information. Check with one of those who currently help; it's not hard and you'll pick it up in a snap.

The liturgical calendar continues to be followed throughout the year and paraments changed accordingly.

The Christmas trees in the main church, Faith Chapel, and throughout the building were set up. Decorations were ready to go for Hanging of the Greens. Thank you to David Buerk and Caiden Snider for their assistance with this.

Thank you to each and every one for their help this year. It was certainly needed!

VIDEO OPERATORS – LIVE STREAMING

Christy Adams
John Bartlett

Beth Keller
Nick Lang

Sarah Prylinski
Gina Snider

LECTORS ~ 10:30AM

Christy Adams
Diane Banks
John, Jack & Tessa Bartlett
Pat Bellingham
Emma Chaffee
Anthony Cimino
Loretta Deeds
Julie Ditz
Cathie Dugan
Ann Flick
Les Fobes

Patricia Gilbert
Linda Graffius
Dave Griswold
Lynnette Gustafson
Eric Hedlund
Holden Harris
Amelia Lang
Bill Lasher
Pam Masiroff
Lincoln McCall
Linda Melaragno

Cathy Meyn
Jane Moran
C. Noelle Partusch
Lois Smith
Michael, Matthew & Mason
Snider
Stan Rose
Marilyn Rositer
Jonathan Ulrich

ASSISTANT MINISTERS

Pat Bellingham
Rob Benacci
Emma Chaffee
Ellen DiPlacido
Julie Ditz

Cathie Dugan
Mark Howell
Jan MacInnes
Kate Martin
Pam Masiroff

Stan Rose
Michael Snider
Elizabeth Stroup
Linda Swanson

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

Cathie Dugan
Ann Flick

Elaine Kern
Martha & Tom Klomp

Jan MacInnes
Stan Rose

Liturgical Life Committee, cont'd.:

ACOLYTES

Serving as an acolyte is an important part of our worship. We thank those that served during our services. A special thank you to Jessica Copfer for serving as our acolyte for many, many Sundays! If your son or daughter would like to serve as an acolyte, please see Beth Keller or contact Norma in the church office.

Jack Bartlett	Lincoln McCall	Matthew & Mason Snider
Tessa Bartlett	Chloe Meucci	Gabe Stroup
Simone Boyd	Cecilia & Noah Montroy	Ellie & Maddie Wertz
Jessica Copfer	Bella & Blake O'Brien	
Gia Fracassi	Kara & Krista Partusch	

ALTAR GUILD

Altar Guild volunteers prepare for the celebration of communion. Adjustments to preparation have taken place over the past few months and we thank our altar guild for their continued patience and understanding. Communion by cup is done each Sunday.

Nancy Benacci	Mary Daniels	Martha & Tom Klomp
Sharon Burke	Loretta Deeds	Pam Masiroff
Jessica Copfer	Cathie Dugan	Donna Sedelmyer

USHERS

With each 10:30 service in need of four (4) ushers, a great deal of thanks goes to those who have helped throughout the year. Additional volunteers are always needed to usher; please let our church office know if you would like to help.

Diana Alvaro	Ann Flick	Elvin Montero
Diane Banks	Les Fobes	Natalie Montero
Sandy Barbaro	Jeanne Gaber	Carl Moore
Natalie, John, Tessa & Jack Bartlett	Pat Gilbert	Mary Mumford
Cathy Beck	Linda Graffius	Janet, Blake, Isabella & Jacob O'Brien
Marshall & Mitchell Boyd	Dave Griswold	Krista Partusch
Cheryl Brown	Lynnette Gustafson	Betty Pletz
Maria Brown	Eric Hedlund	Stan Rose
Sharon Burke	Mark Howell	Marilyn Rositer
Sue Cappelletty	Elaine Kern	Amy Scott
Doug Chaffee	Jane & Dave Kinzig	Gina Snider
Mary Daniels	Martha & Tom Klomp	Liz Stroup
Loretta Deeds	Kelley, Nick, Elliot & Amelia Lang	Linda & Jeff Swanson
Richelle Denning	Bill Lasher	Kathy & Jonathan Ulrich
Linda Ditz	Jackie Lupo	

Many thanks is extended to all the volunteers for their help; our church needs each of you. Your dedication always glorifies God and makes Luther Memorial Church a warm and beautiful setting for worship. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,
Norma Buerk



Feed My Sheep

***'FEED MY SHEEP' FOOD MINISTRY PROGRAM
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023***

This will be the food ministry program's 12th year of service to our congregation! Last year, 28 meals were prepared by participating volunteers. We are grateful to be able to provide this valuable service to our parishioners in need. If you are interested in helping out either in food preparation, assisting at funeral luncheons, or know of someone within our church community who could benefit from this service, please contact Norma in the church office at (814)-454-0106 or by email nbuerk@luthermemorialonline.org or Elaine Kern at 814-392-7189 or by email: elaine.kern@roadrunner.com.

We are always grateful for new participants!

Three funeral luncheons were held in Fellowship Hall in 2023.

Elaine Kern
'Feed My Sheep' Food Ministry Coordinator



***IN MEMORIAM
NOVEMBER 1, 2022– NOVEMBER 1, 2023***

RICHARD JEFFORDS
THELMA FETROW
HENRY GILBERT
BEVERLY HELD
BILL YOUNGMAN
MARK LECHNER
J. DAVID MUMFORD
PIA GLOVER
ANDREW DAHLSTRAND
JOAN PETERS

BARBARA BRALEY
JOHN VARNER
GLORIA ROSTHAUSER
SHIRLEY BROWN
SHELLEY SANDQUEST
MICHAEL DANIELS
MARIAN MILLIMACI
GLENN SOLES
ANN COLEMAN



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

The year of 2023 was our first full year back together as a congregation since the Covid restrictions. It felt good to finally be fully back and able to gather freely once again.

Highlights from the year included...

- February 'Souper Bowl' tasting event on the 5th
- Annual Church Picnic on June 18 back at the Rotary Pavillion
- The Installation 'Soire' for Pastor Jay on June 24
- 'Octoberfest' Tureen in Fellowship Hall on October 1
- Annual Christmas Coffee Hour after both services on December 17

We look forward to even more events in 2024 and welcome anyone to join our committee at any time.

Our first event of 2024 will be our 'Souper Bowl' Tasting Event on Sunday, February 4, in Fellowship Hall. Hope to see you then!

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Kern

2023 CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Sandy Barbaro
Les & Lois Fobes
Judy Johnson
Elaine Kern
Tom & Martha Klomp

Kathie Kraut
Jan & Skip MacInnes
Cathy & Skip Meyn
Lois Smith

Prayer –
Wireless access to God
with no roaming fee.



ALTAR FLOWERS
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

Flowers add that touch of beauty to our worship, and thanks to many the attractiveness of our weekly altar, front altar and columbarium flowers continue.

Anyone wishing to have flowers on the altar on Sunday is welcome to call the church office. Front altar and columbarium flowers are also available on any Sunday. If you would like flowers for a Sunday morning please contact our church secretary, Norma Buerk.

Flowers not taken by those who sponsor them are delivered to those in the hospital, homebound, to celebrate an upcoming birthday, or someone who could use a smile. A visit and a friendly face go a long way for those who are unable to get out, see their friends and attend church.

Altar flowers that are delivered:

- Betty Pletz delivers flowers on the second Sunday of each month.
- Diana Alvaro delivers flowers for the remaining Sundays.
- Linda Graffius delivers flowers when making visits if possible.

Thank you to:

- Diana Alvaro for the preparation of containers for weekly deliveries.
- Volunteers for their help with delivery of cheer baskets and cookie bags to our homebound.

Donations of flower vases, juice containers and contact paper are always welcome for the weekly deliveries and may be dropped off in the church office.

Respectfully submitted,
Norma Buerk

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023



Thank you to the Sunshine Committee gals, for all the cards they signed and addressed to our church members/friends, which in 2023 was composed of the following volunteers – Norma Buerk, Coleen DiCenzo, Jane Kinzig, Lois Smith and Pat Young.

The main purpose of the Sunshine Committee is to try to give a little “sunshine” to our homebound folks with a few cards sent to them during the year. Cards are sent to the hospitalized, to homebound folks and other senior members for different occasions and holidays (sometimes just to say we’re thinking of them), birthday cards to those celebrating their yearly milestones, and sympathy cards to those who have had a loss in their family.

We are always grateful for donations to our card supply, and if anyone feels so inclined, we will also take donations for mailing all those cards. Through the Sunshine Committee just over 350 cards were sent out in 2022 – and that’s a LOTTA postage! Donations of cards or monetary gifts may be dropped off in the church office or given to Pat Young at any time throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Young
Committee Chairperson



**WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
OF THE LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH UNIT**

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

Our motto: As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, our society, and the world!

All Luther Memorial women are considered members of W/ELCA, and are encouraged to attend any of our monthly Circle meetings, and/or the two General Meetings held each year, usually in April and October.

Any profits from our usual small fundraisers are put to good use, assisting the work of the W/ELCA at Luther Memorial and on the Synod and National level. Yearly gifts have been given to City Mission, Bethesda/Holy Trinity Community Center, Bethany Food Bank, Bethany Outreach Center, confirmation retreats, and Luther Memorial Academy.

Our two (2) circles did again fill 40 Christmas stockings/gift bags for Warren State Hospital residents this past November...and Tea Bag Invites continued to be given to any woman who joins the church during the year. Last summer our two (2) Circles joined together for the April General Meeting, and then in October for a lunch and General Meeting.

For *many* years we have supported the “Pennies for Poverty” project – having canisters at all church entrances for people to throw in their change or dollar bills. This past year the Bethany Outreach Center was the “22” recipient. The 2023 year recipient has not been chosen as yet. We have also supported for several years, mostly through Pat Bellingham’s many efforts, the Human Trafficking issue in the Erie area, and awareness of same, through outreach and education work locally and throughout our NW PA Synod Women’s Organization, and also the Lily Project. We will also be supporting Rachel’s Garden – more of that coming up in 2024.

Pat Bellingham, W/ELCA NWPA Synod President, this past April was nominated by Bishop Lozano to be recognized at the “Lutheran Day in the PA Capitol”. She received the NWPA Synod’s 2023 Lutheran Advocacy Award at a luncheon at Camp Hill, and then received a legislative visit in the Capital in Harrisburg. Congratulations on your honor and award, Pat.

Officers for 2023: Pat Young – President; Mary Mumford – Vice President; Pat Bellingham – Secretary; Betty Pletz – Treasurer. The leader for the Tuesday Afternoon Circle was Pat Young and for the Deborah Circle, Judy Johnson.

Thank you to all who support Women of the ELCA for your service and dedication. We invite any and all women, regardless of age, to join one of our active Circles. Both meet on the first Tuesday of the month. The Deborah Circle meets at 12:00 noon in the parlor and the Tuesday Afternoon Circle meets in the parlor; mid-afternoon.

God’s blessings,

Patricia Young

President, Luther Memorial Congregational Unit

WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

After much thought and consideration, I changed my mind! Not something exactly new! I previously was not going to Phoenix for the Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention. But, the one thing I've learned as President of SWO NWPA, you can't outrun the Holy Spirit! For as many times as I have made a solid plan, HS jumps on my shoulder and says 'I've got another idea.' So I went to Phoenix in August for the Gathering and participated in a panel dedicated to Anti-Human Trafficking. I was asked to participate in this panel discussion for the Friday Plenary session about the work the NWPA Women are doing in Anti-Human Trafficking. My presentation about the SOAP Project and Truckers Against Trafficking was well received and I had lots of opportunity to share afterwards with women who had questions about the particulars. I am so proud of all we have accomplished and was honored to be able to share it with the 1100 women that were in attendance.

Another major focus of the workshops and classes at the Triennial Convention were issues related to our Native American Sisters. A short brief history of the Doctrine of Discovery and the Lutheran Repudiation of that Doctrine:

- Between 1776 and 1887, the United States seized over 1.5 billion acres from America's indigenous people by treaty and executive order, the Doctrine of Discovery.
- The doctrine was laid out in a series of papal "bulls," or decrees by the Catholic Church; the first one was issued in 1452. They authorized colonial powers such as Spain and Portugal to seize lands and subjugate people in Africa and the "New World," as long as people on the lands were not Christians, sanctioning the brutal conquest and colonization of non-Christians who were deemed 'enemies of Christ' in Africa and the Americas.
- In 2016, 19 ELCA synod assemblies passed a memorial that would charge the triennial ELCA Church-wide Assembly to consider repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery. With a vote of 912 to 28, the representative assembly adopted the memorial, making the ELCA the second major denomination in the United States to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery.
- In 2021, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton commissioned the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force, composed of Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders from across the church who are responsible for leading the work to realize the repudiation. Efforts by the Task Force thus far include:
 1. Establishing four sub-task-force groups: Church-wide Assembly, Settler Narrative, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and Declaration of the ELCA to American Indian and Alaska Native People. These groups will change and develop as the work continues.
 2. In September 2021 the ELCA Church Council adopted "A Declaration of the ELCA to American Indian and Alaska Native People," announcing this on Indigenous Peoples' Day.
 3. Encouraging the ritual practice of land acknowledgement at the beginning of every church meeting or gathering, in all expressions of the church.
 4. Researching and developing an appropriate settler narrative that reflects the Lutheran participation in colonizing Turtle Island and in genocidal acts toward Indigenous people over the past 500-plus years. (Turtle Island is the name some Indigenous peoples use to refer to the lands now known as North and Central America. The name comes from a creation story that relates to a time when the planet was covered in water. In this story, the turtle is said to support the world and is an icon of life itself.) If you wish to learn more, go to elca.org/indigenous.

W/ELCA Report, cont'd.:

The joint retreat in November with our Sisters from Southwest was a wonderful success. There were a few skeptics, me included, about what kind of weather would await us in November at Lutherlyn. Fortunately, it was a gorgeous fall weekend; a little bit of sun, not too cold, and crispy sounding leaves as we walked through camp. We couldn't have asked for better. There were 49 Women in all at the retreat, some came for 1, 2, and even 3 days. It seems like we might be going back to a three day retreat like we had pre-covid. If you would like to have a say in what happens with the Retreat, it would be wonderful for some to step up and be on the committee. It is a three year commitment – so that not everybody is floundering around the first year, not knowing what to do!

At our Retreat NWPA meeting, we decided that the \$1000 grant received from Church Wide would go to making traveling Prayer Rooms. Tracy will put together 5 tubs that will contain 5-10 Prayer Stations. One tub will go to each Region for that Region to use during meetings, presentations, community activities, whatever works. The tubs will be distributed to the Regions at the Convention in May. After one year, the tubs will be returned and exchanged for a new set of Prayer Stations. What a wonderful way to share our resources with everyone!

Women Empowering Women is NWPA's newest initiative to support all of the work that our Women are doing throughout our Synod. I recently sent out an email to explain the \$300 service grant monies that are available to each of our 5 Regions. We need to use our time and talents wisely – letting thousands of dollars sit in an account is not good stewardship – it needs to be used for God's purpose. There is an Application form and a Guideline form to help you apply for the service grant on our Facebook page. Jean Knapp is coordinating the program.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS - NWPA Women of the ELCA Convention – May 10-11, 2024 at Olmsted Manor, Ludlow, PA

Peace, through Christ,
Pat Bellingham, President
Synodical Women's Organization NWPA

Women^{of the} ELCA