

**2023 ANNUAL REPORT
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Annual Report from the President – 2023 – Jill Thompson

Our Mission: Following Christ, Growing in Faith, Sharing God's Love

Ephesians 1:16-18 (English Standard Version) – ***I do not cease to give thanks for you***, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints...

I do not cease to give thanks for our Council members! They bring the Spirit of wisdom, revelation and hope to our Council deliberations. They are tireless servants of our God in their service to Good Shepherd through the Council. Many of them are involved in other ministries at Good Shepherd in addition to their Council service and since we accomplish a lot of our work through task teams, they serve on the task teams between meetings to accomplish Council objectives. I feel so blessed to work with such a great group of people!

I do not cease to give thanks for the many accomplishments of this Council through their work on our strategic focus areas, policy work, development of structures and fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities. We will report on the strategic focus areas and the focus for 2024 with a separate report that will be shared at the Annual meeting.

While ***policies*** may not be the most exciting thing to report on, they provide important direction for ministries, administration, and activities for the church. In 2023, we were able to:

- Finalize constitutional changes to align with the Synod's recommendations.
- Approve the re-establishment of Saturday evening worship.
- Revise and update Human Resource policies to clarify part-time staff benefits and some other benefits.
- Develop and approve a harassment/stalking policy.
- Begin updates to our child/youth safety policy to align with our Welcome Statement. We will complete this in early 2024 pending legal review.
- Start work to create building/intruder safety protocols.

Council brought their Spirit of wisdom recognizing that there were some important ***structures*** to establish or re-establish to facilitate long-term growth to enhance our spiritual growth and service to each other and the community.

- The council wants to maintain a strong relationship with Feed the Need STL as they develop their nonprofit status. As a result, Good Shepherd will have a permanent seat on their Board of Directors to serve as a liaison to the Council. As a part of their ongoing responsibilities, Council will approve those who agree to fill that seat.
- The council saw the need for Good Shepherd to work in an ongoing manner to develop and call forth leaders, to equip them and support them. As a result, Council clarified and re-established the Leadership Development Committee including a provision to provide a liaison to the Nominating Committee.
- The council established a clear structure and process to determine the annual transfer of Building Blocks revenue to Good Shepherd's budget to cover building usage, maintenance, custodial, etc.
- The council selected a local service agency to partner with, LifeWise STL, and launched a team to develop plans with LifeWise STL, for service and educational opportunities going forward.

Council recognizes their ongoing ***fiduciary responsibilities***. As a result, Council:

- Established a Finance Committee.
- Set up an ongoing Audit Committee.
- Increased advisory support and oversight of Building Blocks budget and monthly reports.
- Reviewed FMPC's overview of the facility needs through 2028 to enable Council to factor into annual budgets and utilization of COVID funds.

I do not cease to give thanks for our Council members! These many accomplishments would not have happened without their dedication, insights, and ongoing efforts. Thank you, Council!

I do not cease to give thanks for our staff members! The ***ministries*** of Good Shepherd are carried out by our incredibly talented and dedicated staff. They do so many things seen and unseen to enable us all to be known, to know others, to

grow spiritually and to do ministry. We cannot thank you enough! But I would like to give a special shout-out to Pr. Amy and Pr. Varinia for providing ministry during Pr. Josh's sabbatical. Again, there were many things seen and unseen that they supported to enable Pr. Josh to fully enjoy his sabbatical. Our administrative staff also provides support for the ministries and administration of our congregation. We are so grateful for you all!

I do not cease to give thanks for our Lead Pastor, Pr. Josh! I want to give Pr. Josh a shout-out for his leadership and support of Council. He has brought a "...Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of [Josh's] heart(s) enlightened, that [Council] may know what is the hope to which he has called [us], what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints..." Pr. Josh is a life-long learner and brings what he learns to help Council, to be more spiritually discerning and knowledgeable in our decision-making. Over the past year, he has helped reinforce our commitment to Be Known, To Know Others, To Grow Spiritually, and To Do Ministry as a Council. This Fall he brought lessons learned during his sabbatical to help us grow in our understanding of how to utilize spiritual discernment in our decision-making and how to be more focused in the direction we take as a Council. We are thankful!

I do not cease to give thanks for YOU! This is such a wonderful, welcoming congregation with a servant's heart. I am grateful for the many ways I see so many of you sharing your time, your talents, and your finances to enact the ministries of this congregation. You are a blessing to so many and I am excited to see how we can extend these blessings even further in the future.

With a glad and grateful heart,
Jill Thompson

Congregational Meeting Agenda
Following Christ, Growing in Faith, Sharing God's Love
January 28, 2024

- a. Call to Order and Opening Prayer
- b. Approval of Minutes
- c. Lead Pastor and President's Report
- d. 2023 Financial Report
- e. 2023 Audit Report
- f. 2024 Stewardship Plans
- g. 2024 Budget Proposal
- h. Celebrating Our Ministries
- i. Closing Prayer & Adjournment

2023 Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Council

President: Jill Thompson
Vice President: Sharon Misuraca
Treasurer: Lanny Schnipper
Secretary: Jan Thompson
Council at Large: Amy Fulbright, Bill Ericson,
Larissa Hautekeete, Greg
Mueller, Marcus Raymond,
Ed Seuc

Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes
Following Christ, Growing in Faith, Sharing God's Love
February 5, 2023

- A. Call to Order and Opening Prayer: After partaking in lunch, the meeting was called to order by Jill Thompson at 12:23 pm. This meeting was held in-person and via Zoom, for those who were unable to attend in person. A quorum was verified, with 103 in-person and 24 on-line. Jill Thompson opened in prayer.
- B. Approval of today's Congregational Meeting Agenda. Betty Gibson moved to approve as presented, Clara Anderson seconded. Approved Unanimously.
- C. Approval of Congregational Meeting Minutes: Special Meeting 3/6/22, Mid-Year Congregational meeting 6/5/22 Special Meeting 7/10/22. No questions, discussion, or changes were made. Urb Molitor moved to approve the minutes as presented. Steve Spoerle seconded the motion. Approved Unanimously.
- D. Constitutional Changes: presented by Lanny Schnipper. These changes were recommendations from our Synod. They are primarily language changes to Sections C10.08 and C12.04 (d). No questions or discussion on either. Jim Anderson made a motion to pass and was seconded by Rick Hautekeete. A written vote was taken by members. With 119 ballots cast (102 in person/17 virtual), the changes were passed unanimously.
- E. 2022 Financial Report: presented by Troy Larson (See handout) Less funds were spent on salaries due to staffing differences throughout the year. The HVAC needed to be replaced from PPP proceeds.
- F. 2023 Stewardship Plans: presented by Rock Foster. The plea for money is often the only thing that we think of as Stewardship. We also fulfill the mission by volunteering our time and gifts.
- G. Celebrating Our Ministries, I: Video made at request of the Stewardship Committee, and introduced by Pr. Josh.
- H. 2023 Budget Proposal: presented by Troy Larson.
(See handout) Expenses and inflation have affected the budget. We have not seen any real increases in giving currently. A balanced budget was presented. No questions or discussion. Joel Bretscher moved to accept the proposal; Bob Fingland seconded. The proposal was passed unanimously. A written vote was taken by members. With 118 ballots cast (101 in person/17 virtual), the Budget was passed, with 117 Yes votes, and 1 abstention.
- I. Lead Pastor's Report: presented by Pr. Josh Brecht.
Vision: Be Known, Know Others, Do Ministry, Grow Spiritually Although we are connected by technology in more ways than ever, we still see that people are just as lonely as ever. We all need a sense of purpose. Good Shepherd has an abundance of Ministry opportunities available to help us meet the goals of our Vision.
- J. Celebrating Our Ministries II – Come to the Oscars: hosted by Jill Thompson
Our Ministries exist because of the wonderful volunteers who use their spiritual gifts and fulfill their ministries. All volunteers were honored; special recognition was given to those who offered their gifts in special ways. AND THE OSCAR GOES TO
- Children & Family Ministry: Viki & Gene Longfield, Katherine Van Horn, Denise Sept
 - Youth Ministry: Kayla Dye, Laura Tjernagel-Fine
 - Fellowship Ministry: Diane Unverfehrt, Carol Ziemann
 - Music Ministry: Nancy Stelmachowicz
 - Worship Leaders: Janie Wolfangel
 - Audio Video Ministry: Jim Morell, Erik Oswald
 - Welcome Ministry: Elliott and Vicki Haugen
 - Leadership Ministry: Urb and Annette Molitor
 - Service Ministry: Gary, Karen, and Kristen Kallansrud, Steve Spoerle
 - Congregational Care Ministry: Barb Rouse, who is missed dearly.
 - Facilities Management Ministry: Mike Kelley
- K. Closing Prayer & Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by Bret Spoerle, with Greg Mueller seconding this motion. Passed unanimously. Pr. Josh closed the meeting with a prayer.

Adjournment at 1:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Jan Thompson, Congregation Secretary

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Following Christ, Growing in Faith, Sharing God's Love
Mid-Year Congregational Meeting
June 4, 2023

12:00 Meeting was called to order by Jill Thompson. A quorum was verified with 94 members present, both in-person and on Zoom. Jill Thompson opened in prayer.

12:02 Approval of Agenda: A motion for approval of today's Congregational Meeting Agenda was made by Bill Talbot and seconded by Betty Gibson. Motion Passed Unanimously.

12:04 Approval of Minutes from February 5, 2023, Congregational Meeting: A motion for approval of the 2/5/23 Congregational Meeting was made by Betty Gibson and seconded by Rick Hautekeete. Motion Passed Unanimously.

12:06 Constitutional Changes: Second voting on recommendations from our Synod-language updates: C10.08 Holding remote meetings, C12.05(d) Council may incur obligations of up to 2.5% of budget more than anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregational meeting.

Remote Meetings: C10.08. This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, if there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by Missouri state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

BUDGET EXCESS PROVISION (currently approx. \$12k to \$30k): C12.05 (d). The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of up to (1.0% former) 2.5% of the budget more than the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization. The second voting on these Constitutional Changes passed unanimously.

12:11 Election of Council and Others: Review of nominees for current positions: Council President Elect: Ed Seuc
Council Treasurer: Lanny Schnipper, completing Troy Larsen's term, Council Secretary: Jan Thompson, renewing for second term, Council Members At-Large: Bill Erickson, Amy Fulbright, Marcus Raymond (completing Lanny Schnipper's At-Large term). All Council Members were elected with an overwhelming majority.

Endowment Committee: Steve Boyer (chair), Dan Engle, Rick Hautekeete, Ann Hibbard, Tim Sorensen. All Endowment Committee Members were elected with an overwhelming majority.

Nominating Committee: Della Bretscher, Beckie Fingland, Larissa Hautekeete, Sharon Misuraca, Lyle Ziemann, Joyce Candela. All Nominating Committee Members were elected with an overwhelming majority.

12:16 Budget Updates: We have had a strong start to the year for income, with a generous Easter season. Expenses are on track with expectations. We have had a typical income slump from June-September. If this slump repeats, we may be facing a \$50k-\$100k deficit at year end. Increased giving of 5-10% should close this gap. (Remember September) Employee Retention credit (ERC) is pending.

12:26 Audit Committee Update:

Appointed members: Glenn Kraft (chair), Megan Boyer, Craig Rich, Cindy Wright

Process: Using ELCA Resources, they will complete subsections of the ELCA recommended audit practices each year and will bring the report to Council and at the next Congregational meeting.

12:29 Strategic Plan Updates: 2023 – 2024 Foundational Plans

Leadership Development: Reconstituted Leadership Development Team, with Brett Spoerle as chairperson.

Member Engagement: Reconnecting with members who we have not seen for a while.

Service 2.0: Potential partner has been identified.

Strategic Focus Areas:

Children/Youth/Families: Updated the Child/Youth Safety Policies

Belonging: Council working on a physical safety & security roadmap

Spiritual Growth: Reviewed budget for adequate resources

Service: Supporting Feed the Need STL becoming 501C3 and engagement with local service partner.

12:36 Acknowledgement of Outgoing member positions:

We thank you for your service, and appreciate your time, talent, and commitment to Good Shepherd!!!

- Past-President: Bob Fingland
- Council Member At-Large and Liaison for FMPC: Gene Unverfehrt
- Council Member At-Large: Paul Davis
- Council Treasurer: Troy Larsen
- Endowment Committee: Dan Engle (chair, but remaining as a member), Beth Anderson, Steve Schilson
- Nominating Committee: Dawn Engle, Robert Goerss, Marilyn Jones, Kim Sherwood, Gene Unverfehrt, Linda Webb

12:40 Celebrating 15 years for Pr. Amy Stewart as a Pastor and 5 years for Gail Brecht as a Deacon.

We celebrate your years of service to ministry and are extremely blessed by all you do for this congregation.

12:42 Closing and Adjournment: Jill Thompson closed with a prayer. Mike Kelly moved to adjourn the meeting, and Chad Bladow seconded. Motion Passed Unanimously. Adjournment was at 12:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Jan Thompson, Congregation Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT – Lanny Schnipper

- Giving to the general fund was about 3.5% higher than 2022. We have a predictable income stream and a generous congregation.
- We still fell short of income expectations by about \$35,000.
- Expenses were about \$25,000 higher due in part to some unforeseen property needs and insurance rate increases.
- The result was a loss just over \$60,000.
- This loss was absorbed by off-budget federal COVID relief funds (ERC – Employee Retention Credit).
- The remaining ERC funds will be designated by the church council.

2023 GENERAL FUND INCOME STATEMENT		
GENERAL FUND INCOME	2023 ACTUAL	2023 BUDGET
GENERAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS	\$1,139,892	1,185,642
GENERAL FUND VARIOUS REVENUE	54,757	56,480
GENERAL FUND INVESTMENT INCOME	12,409	1,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,207,058	\$1,243,122
GENERAL FUND EXPENSES		
BENEVOLENCE	\$103,067	\$107,610
SALARIES	475,065	472,151
HOUSING ALLOWANCES	100,000	100,000
PENSION	55,433	55,434
BENEFITS	135,718	131,829
PAYROLL TAXES	22,691	23,658
PROPERTY	209,966	190,650
ADMINISTRATION	89,999	79,650
MINISTRY TEAM EXPENSES	75,620	82,140
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,267,559	\$1,243,122
EXCESS INCOME/EXPENSES	(\$60,501)	\$0.00
EMPLOYEE RETENTION CREDIT (ERC) RECEIVED	97,910	
GENERAL FUND BALANCE AT JAN 1, 2023	233,556	
2023 SURPLUS ADDED TO BALANCE (remaining amount from ERC)	37,409	
GENERAL FUND BALANCE AT DEC 31, 2023	\$270,965	

2023 Statistics
Membership at end of 2022 = 1320 Membership at end of 2022 = 1223
Children in Italics

Baptisms (+11)

Anderson, Olivia Christine
 Cannon, Cody Paxton Miranda
 Andrason, Robert Ritchie
 Bieg, Isabella Mae
 Doss, Peyton Elise
 Heine, Raeleen Carol
 Hibbard, McKenna Jae
 Johnson, Kodah Lee
 O'Mara, Charles Reid
 Sherwood, Summer
 White, Emma Ann

Confirmations (11)

Bunch, Alexis Lauran
 Damman, Lauren Helena
 Horning, Jo Marie
 Lanfersieck, Elle Marley-Rose
 Larson, Owen Lee
 Mahoney, James Decklan
 Miraflores, Theodore Alfonso
 Schnipper, Audrey Erin
 Sinnokrak, Joshua Michael
 Spann, Gladra Sadie
 Yonker, Abigail Lynn

Weddings

Stacey Anderson and Mike Willenborg
 Courtney Mellanby and Luke Myers
 Walter Deitzler and Susi Manner
 Melissa Webb and Zac Schaefer

New Members/Inactive to Active (+34)

Decker, Gary & Nicholas, Laurie
 Dehn, Brianna
 Dougherty, Mark & Teresa
 Drury, Shirley
 Hammond, Tim & Cindy
 Harrison, Anthony & Lauren
 Ketsenburg, Phillip & Shelly
 King, Terry & Jackie
Christian; Jessica; Lucas
 Mellanby, Susan
 Miele, Frank & Jenny
Riley; Anthony
 O'Neill, Dee
 Putney, Sandra
Jack; Emma; Henry
 Rather, Kathy
 Sandfort, Jim & Mellanie
 Schmid, Mike & Karla
 Webb, Tom & Julie

Transferred

Out/Inactive/Moved/Previous member) (-118)

Amo, Alex & Elise
 Borchardt, Cory & Angela
Derek; Mason
 Botkin, Donna
 Brandt, Debbie
 Bryant, William & Rachel
 Butler, Doug
Michael; Mark
 Carnahan, Patrick & Marsha
 Combs, William
 Cosentino, Sue
 Cosentino, Olivia
 Curtis, Daniel
 Curtis, Julia
 Curtis, Rebecca
 Dallman, Steve & Lisa
 Daugherty, Anna
 Ewald, Kevin
 Ewald, Noah
 Facchin, Noah
 Field, Steven & Rachael
 Franz, Nathan
 Gackstatter, Gary & Gretchen
Jack; Sophia
 Golz, Joel & Theresa
 Goode, Bob & Karen
 Hendrikse, Eugene
 Herter, Casey
 Howard, Blake
 Howard, Ian
 Howland, Phil & Kathryn
 Hrdina, Chris & Kelly
Brennen Hall; Cash Hrdina
 Jones, Alexis
 Jones, Debbie
 Kelpe, Steve & Sue
 Kohl, Maryann
 Lankford, Barbara
 Lewis, Brad & Katherine
Grant; Elizabeth; Trent
 Lueders, Alisha
 Lueders, Jerry & Gayle
 Lundvall, Jon & Katie
 Malof, Jeremiah
 Malof, Rachael
 Mayer, Elizabeth
 Mayer, Susan
 McCommis, Kyle & Brenda
Roger; Caroline; James; June
 Messerly, Caleb

Messerly, Colleen
 Metroff, Bill
 Meyer, James
 Mueller, Helene
 Neubert, Mackenzie
 Neubert, Paxton
 Otto, Andrew
 Otto, Julia
 Paul, Steve
 Peglar, Rob
 Pramik, Emma
 Remaklus, Jennifer
Ben; Nathan
 Sachtleben, Sherwood & Nancy
 Saia, Angie
 Sanguinette, Brittany
 Santillan, Daniela
 Santillan, Sarai
 Schnorbus, David & Melissa
Elizabeth; Nicholas
 Seuc-Hester, Marissa
 Steffen, Luke
 Steinkoetter, Josh
 Stenslokken, Doug & Patti
 Walberg, Ron & Sally
 Warchol, Dennis & Robin
Kim; Thomas; Alyssa; Dannielle
 Ware, Jeff & Sherri
Margie; Jack
 Williams, Ryan & Dana

Funerals/Deaths (-16)

Azzarello, James
 Bahr, David
 Calcagno, Kay
 Davidson, Jean
 Essig, Alma (funeral/non-member)
 Hackman, Vernon
 Hintz, Emily
 Johnson, Peggy
 Lochmoeller, Jane
 Peck, Reed
 Pingel, Doug (funeral/non-member)
 Pyatek, Nancy
 Rouse, Barbara
 Stemme, Virginia
 Wakefield, Charlotte
 Weissflug, Helen
 Wirth, Dorothy
 Wittmer, Eleanor

Administrative Adjustments (-8)
(Database corrections)

LEAD PASTOR – Josh Brecht

As I look back over 2023, I can hardly believe all that has happened in just twelve months. God has done some remarkable things in our community this year, and it continues to be a great blessing to serve as Lead Pastor at Good Shepherd. When we look at the state of Christianity in our world today, it can be discouraging. Statistics show a decline of Christianity, and the steep rise in those who claim no religious connection at all (the 'nones'). These are reminders of how crucial our ministry is for the world today. These are challenging times to be the Church. The odds are not in our favor. Yet we boldly claim that Jesus is still Lord and God is still moving! Here at Good Shepherd, we have a long history of beating the odds and making the impossible possible. In 2023, we have seen beautiful signs of life and continue to see faith growing.

SERVICE

In March, an intergenerational group of high school students and adults went to **South-Central Florida for hurricane relief**, serving with Praying Pelican Missions. It was dirty and difficult work, but an incredible opportunity to learn first-hand the unbelievable challenges that linger long after a natural disaster.

In April, **Feed the Need STL** hosted the first full mobile pack at Queeny Park. Through this phenomenal ministry 1,000,000 meals were provided through FMSC (plus donated canned goods for local needs), and thousands of volunteers grew in generosity, service, and love of their neighbors.

Throughout the year we engaged in an intentional process to prayerfully select one primary local service ministry to partner with at a more significant level. **LifeWise STL** was identified, and we are thrilled to see the passion that has already emerged for this partnership. We look forward to all the ways we can learn, grow, and help make a deeper impact in our local community.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” – John 15:12

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Thank you for the incredible gift of **Sabbatical** this summer. Along with rest and rejuvenation with my family, I was able to read several books, and take significant time in the Bible, in prayer, and in silence and solitude with God. This time was transformative for me. I was able to re-connect with God in a deeper way and come back to Good Shepherd more rooted and centered. Out of this experience, we created **weekly memory verses** from the Bible, and have implemented more intentional prayer and discernment practices in our staff and council meetings.

After listening, prayer, and discernment, we felt called to launch a **Saturday evening worship service** in September. There has been great enthusiasm and participation for this worship, and we look forward to seeing the Spirit move in our collective worship in 2024, and how people experience God's presence more and more.

“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.” – John 15:4

COMMUNITY

We have tremendous leaders at Good Shepherd. Our **Council** is simply incredible, and I am so grateful for the gifts, expertise, and faithfulness of all of those who serve. We have exceptional leaders serving on many other committees and ministry teams, as well, working diligently behind the scenes to ensure excellent ministry happens.

The **staff of Good Shepherd** are some of the most talented, gifted, and creative people I have ever had the privilege of working with. They continue to give their very best, and I give thanks to God that I get to serve with such phenomenal people every day.

All these ingredients, service, spiritual growth, and community are **the foundation of a thriving church now and into the future**. We are blessed with this wonderful faith community today because of the faithful work and witness of those who labored before us. The ministry we do in 2024 lays a foundation for the next generation of Christians. May the Holy Spirit lead and guide all that we do, so that this ministry entrusted to us would thrive today, tomorrow, and far into the future.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last” – John 15:16

In Christ,
Pastor Josh Brecht

PASTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL CARE – Varinia Espinosa

“So, let’s not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don’t give up or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.” Galatians 6:10

What a year it was 2023! It was a year to learn, to listen, to try, to reflect, to evaluate, to make possible some ideas I had in mind, with the invaluable help of volunteers who didn’t hesitate to do their best for Christ and His church. During 2023 I was part of the Welcome Team, Visitation Team, Care Ministry Team, Stephen Ministry, Altar Guild Team, and, I have been collaborating in making the Assistant Ministers schedule, Altar guild cleaning schedule, and Flower Ministry bouquet schedule for the entire year.

I have been visiting almost every week not only those homebound, sick at home or in hospitals but also people in their 90’s, 80’s and 70’s from our church directory. I have been providing communion at home and delivering flower bouquets, or just doing follow up to those who were sick. I have had the opportunity to accompany people in their last days of life and commended them before the departure to heaven.

I do not remember the exact number of people I have visited in 2023, but I do not have any doubt that I did more than a hundred visits. Some of them were only one time visit, others were more than one.

In the Care Ministry, each member of the team is responsible for any of the following: make phone calls to those in the prayer list, or those who were assigned for me to another member of the group; another person is in charge to send cards to those homebound, sick or in need of a little encouragement; another person is in charge of sending cards to college students in special occasions; and three of us make visits or deliver flower bouquets almost weekly (in this regard we have a couple of volunteers than help us every other week).

At the middle of the year, I organized a training for an Altar Guild together with Janie Wolfangel. We developed a booklet with directions and explanations about this ministry. We were able to bring together people who were part of the group in the past, and new people interested in being part of the group. We formed four groups, one working at 9am, another at 11am, another at 5pm on Saturday, and a group working to clean the altar on a weekly basis, filling the candles in need of more oil, changing the eternal candle, and making sure the candlelighters are in good condition.

Also, I assumed the task of preparing the schedule for the Assistant Ministers.

In 2023, I had also the opportunity to teach the CG’s Bible Study a few times, especially the one that talks about “Preparing your Memorial Service”.

Besides that, I am an ELCA Coach. In that regard, I have been involved in the last 2 years in the ELCA Congregational Lead Initiative, offering coaching to 5 pastors of 5 congregations in the Caribbean Synod. This was not only individual coaching but also Team Coaching monthly.

As a part of being an ELCA Coach, I am working to get my credentials as an Associate Certified Coach (ACC), and after that I will work to get my Professional Certified Coach (PCC) through the International Coaching Federation. I am a Certified End of Life Coach and a Life Coach through End-of-Life Coaching that is accredited by the ICF.

On April 2023, I was the recipient of a scholarship to allow me to continue to explore, learn and gain more expertise in the Coaching world. The training started in April 2023, and it will end in April this year. I started having classes once a week, but this month, January 2024, the classes are twice a week due to the specialization I chose to take as part of the program I enrolled in. After that I will be a Professional Master Coach through Latam Coaching Network, Peru.

I also want you to know that the ELCA invited me to be the only Latina Clergy in a Racial Justice and Faith certificate. I was confirmed as one of the 11 participants in the first cohort of the PLTS certificate in Racial Justice and Faith. The launch of this initial cohort for the program is being underwritten by a grant from the Association of Theological Schools. This includes 7 online learning modules over the course of 2 semesters; courses are asynchronous to fit into my schedule. Rooted in Womanist principles, the Racial Justice and Faith Certificate program invites BIPOC and white students to examine their own stories and histories from a faith lens by asking the questions: How do you as a leader make connections between your faith and the way you respond to racial injustice? What reflective skills do you need to take faithful action that will transform your community?

I am very excited to be part of that cohort: learning, engaging, contributing and being open to listening and considering possibilities that perhaps I have been ignoring or not paying attention.

Also, the ELCA Quality of Call for Women in Ministry Initiative, which focuses on supporting rostered women in their calls. This initiative is trying out a small group of rostered women who would prefer to be coached in Spanish. This is a pilot program of 8 sessions with 2 coaches, and I am one of them. Tentatively this cohort will start in February, but it will do when the cohort of 8 women is completed. This cohort can take 2 months or more to complete what the Initiative wants.

It is a joy to be able to serve at Good Shepherd as your Pastor of Congregational Care. My doors are always open to listen and pay attention to those suggestions, ideas or concerns that can help us to improve the care from each other.

In Christ Jesus,
Pr. Varinia Espinosa

PASTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP – Amy Stewart

Back in May, I celebrated 10 years of serving as a pastor here, and in December I celebrated 15 years of ordination. What a gift to be on this journey with you all, and for my family to participate in the life of this beautiful community! There is much to celebrate in 2023 as my role here allowed me to engage in ministry with you all in some of our focus areas.

In the area of **Children, Youth, and Family**, I had the joy of leading weekly chapel with our littlest friends, the Building Blocks Preschool students. I was able to connect with their families around school events and several of them connected with Good Shepherd and are attending worship and Sunday school opportunities.

Along with Emily and Delaney, we hosted 45+ children and youth for Be Like Jesus back in the Spring. They came together for service projects in our community, fellowship, and play. It was also a chance for cross-generational interaction with many adult leaders.

I have the privilege of leading 50+ middle schoolers through Confirmation instruction on Wednesday nights. These nights build relationships among the youth and between the youth and many committed adults, including our amazing small group mentors, who share their time so generously.

In addition to Wednesdays, many of our middle school youth had the opportunity to attend Confircamp and many of our high schoolers participated in a Youthworks service trip. Each of these weeks provided students a chance to grow spiritually and build community through a sense of belonging.

Speaking of **Belonging**, in that focus area, we've seen small groups continue to thrive and more groups beginning to form. These groups offer folks a chance to know others and be known, and we see time and time again that in life's ups and downs, these groups continue to show up for one another with connection and support. On Sunday mornings, the Parent Fellowship has also provided a safe space for good conversation and community.

Also in this area, we continue to provide monthly outreach to our college students, reminding them that they are not alone, that they are connected to this faith community, and to give them encouragement and support during these formative years.

As the leadership for Trivia night transitions away from high school, we celebrate the success of 2023's event. While it was ultimately a fundraiser for youth, this event offered a great sense of belonging, playfulness, and cross-generational fellowship for the whole congregation. No doubt it will continue to do so into the future.

Finally, in the focus area of **Spiritual Growth**, many opportunities were provided for folks to grow in their faith beyond worship, the Sunday School hour, and Wednesday nights. We offered a monthly "Grow Spiritually" podcast, Epiphany Star Words, a Lenten daily "Praying in Color" exercise to encourage Scripture reading, a summer daily prayer rhythm for all the areas of involvement at Good Shepherd, and prayerful art during Advent to help experience Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

As we move into 2024, I look forward to seeing how we will continue to explore, together, what it looks like to Follow Christ, Grow in Faith, and Share God's love with each other and the wider world!

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY – Emily Horning

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." - Matthew 19:14

We have been blessed with a year that has shown growth in VBS participants, committed leaders, and deeper connections among the children of GSLC.

Here are some events that marked Children's Ministry in 2023:

- The Sunday School year continued high numbers throughout the spring and then kicked off in the fall with Rally Day. Highlights of Rally Day included a massive slide on the hill, BINGO sponsored by small groups, and live music.
- 14 children sang with the adult choir on Palm Sunday.
- The "Prayground" area in the sanctuary received some additions: new toys, new books, and a new rug.
- Be Like Jesus, our 3rd-8th grade service lock-in, had 47 participants participate in eleven service projects.
- In September, we celebrated First Communion with 13 families. The two-week family discussion events leading up to this faith milestone were led by Pastor Josh.

- Additional faith milestones in 2023 included: Little Lambs First Bible presentation, age 2 ABC Christmas Books celebration, and Kindergarten Spark Bible presentation.
- The return of our Books of Bible milestone class included 33 third, fourth, and fifth graders. Many thanks to Kim Deitzler for leading this class one final time.
- Vacation Bible School had 88 campers and almost 60 volunteers!
- The FMSC Feed the Need Youth Pack was attended by 61 participants! We enjoyed fellowship and pizza following the pack at Greensfelder Rec.
- Fall Festival was unique this year, with a “crockpotluck”, indoor games, hallway trick or treating, and a movie in the sanctuary. Over 150 people attended, with over 40 costume contest participants!
- The Easter Children’s Celebration was fun for all: 94 families (19 from Good Shepherd), 1800 eggs were found by 153 children, 100 cookies were decorated, and many games were played, and prizes won.
- Hosted two family movie nights over the summer for 30+ people each time.
- Outdoor Christmas Eve Live Nativity was a hit- over 50 kids and countless adults enjoyed petting the animals, dressing up in nativity clothing, and taking photos.
- Wrote and executed multiple Childrens’ Messages during worship.

Ongoing programs include Sunday School; SHiNE Wednesday evening faith formation for 2nd – 5th grade. All these offerings are made possible because of the support of this congregation and the army of volunteers we are blessed with at Good Shepherd. We currently have 12 volunteer leaders involved in our Sunday morning Children’s Ministry program, and two regular volunteer leaders each Wednesday evening for our SHiNE programs.

Budget: As 2023 was the first year I was in full control of my budget, I kept meticulous spreadsheets of all spending in each account.

Sunday School/Milestone was over by \$134, but I attribute that to the extra \$800 that was spent on gift bibles for 4th and 5th graders, which will not need to happen in 2024.

VBS was under budget by \$1300 (and I spent only as much as we brought in, so we really broke even). I am anticipating allowing volunteers to pay for at least a portion of their shirts in 2024 and am planning on VBS making a profit in 2024.

Seasonal Events/Fellowship was \$185 under budget. With our new focus on in-house events and less community events, our budget for Easter and Halloween will not need to be as large.

SHiNE was under budget by \$1200+ this year. I sourced free curriculum and used a Thrivent grant for our service project.

Wednesday Night Meal expenses were under budget by almost \$400. We utilized a buffet-style service this fall semester, which has allowed us to better anticipate meal sizes and purchasing. One of our last meals each semester has a “clean out the freezer” dessert, eliminating additional purchasing and allowing us to be better stewards of our funds.

Looking ahead to 2024, I see continued growth in our children’s programming, an increase in inter-generational service opportunities, and more fun events that serve Good Shepherd’s families. I feel privileged to call Good Shepherd my church and my employer, and I strive to maintain and expand this ministry.

In Christ, Emily Horning

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY – Delaney Rhea

I entered 2023 with only a few months under my belt in a whirlwind and I feel like I exited the year with more confidence based on the experience that I have gained in this position for the last year and a half.

In 2023 I feel that our Children, Youth, and Family team really came together in purpose and efficiency.

Our Wednesday night youth programming has been very successful. Emily Horning and I have made changes to the menu and service to maximize food options while minimizing costs. We have asked for and received positive feedback about the meals we are serving. Last year we introduced a very successful Thanksgiving inspired meal in November along with a few other new entrees.

In RiSE confirmation on Wednesday nights, I continue to have over 20 students regularly come for recreation and learning time before dinner. Our middle schoolers participated in the Be Like Jesus lock-in and many service projects around the local community. We had a fun outing to an escape room as well. I attended several days of Confirmation Camp with our RiSE Middle Schoolers at Camp Toma Shinga over the summer. The camp was an amazingly well-run program with many daily opportunities for faith, bonding, and outdoor activities. I also learned some tricks from the kitchen leader about serving large groups that has been helpful for our Wednesday nights. Over the summer, our middle school students helped Emily Horning as leaders during Vacation Bible School. On the last day a group of nine students stayed after to help take down all the VBS decorations and spent the rest of the day playing games, bonding, and having a sleepover.

RiSE Sunday School continues to be a small but engaged group of middle schoolers. Throughout 2023 they have been using the ELCA Faith Lens blog as a launching point for faith conversations on Sunday mornings. They participated in a service project to benefit the Building Blocks preschool, and they served as worship leaders once in the spring and again in the fall. I have been especially fortunate to have my two main teachers, Kayla Dye and Laura Haran, return in the fall of 2023. Our kids are lucky to have such dedicated and caring leadership on Sunday Mornings.

The FLY high school group also had a very successful 2023. I'm very pleased with the steady number of students who regularly come to our Wednesday meetings. We had a lock-in, breakout room, dinner out at Culvers, and ice-skating events that were all well attended. Once again, and for the last time, FLY led the Trivia night in March and had a full house of tables participating. Pastor Amy and I lead a team of 11 FLY youth on a service trip to Milwaukee in July. Although exhausting, the memories, faith conversations, laughs, and experiences shared on that trip were true blessings. I am continually amazed by the willingness of our high school students to show up fully authentic and ready to participate in faith and fun. In the spring of 2023, I had Travis White as a co-leader in FLY on Wednesday nights and his calm, witty way of interacting with the students is always appreciated. In the fall of 2023 Sarah Leach joined as a co-leader and has brought great energy and ideas to the group. I am very blessed with wonderful volunteers who also care deeply about the spiritual and emotional well-being of our students.

Brightest Blessings in 2024,

Delaney

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY – Jamie De Geer

Looking back on 2023 I give thanks to God for all the blessings he has bestowed upon us. Music is such a gift from God and an important part of the ministry of Good Shepherd. Not only is it an integral part of worship, but it is also a way to make important connections with each other and with the scriptures. Every word we sing is a prayer and every breath we take is a testament to the goodness of our creator God. Here are some of the highlights of the music ministry from the past year and how they support the mission of our congregation.

Children/Youth/Families: SHiNE Singers offered 4 songs in worship this year. Thanks to Karen Kallansrud for her assistance leading this group. I led a group of Sunday School Singers (K-5th Grade) who sang with the Faith Choir on Palm Sunday. Thanks to Emily Horning for helping to coordinate this special offering. Music Camp was a great success with an awesome group of campers, leaders, counselors, and helpers. Thanks to our Camp Director, Katherine Van Horn, for her leadership.

Belonging: The choirs have grown this year in numbers and quality. I give thanks to all the singers for their partnership in ministry and for being welcoming to new members. In worship, songs and hymns from other cultures were highlighted during Black History Month in February, Women's History Month in March, Asian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May, and Hispanic Heritage Month September/October. Carin Gado led a special choral retreat where singers learned some new techniques and helped kick-off our Saturday worship service where we welcomed back many members and provided a space to welcome new worshippers.

Service: Cudos to the choirs for coming together at a special retreat to learn/record/teach ELW Setting #6 which was then used in September and October as part of our focus on Hispanic music. We hosted a recital by Mu Phi Epsilon Music Fraternity which raised funds for music scholarships. Thanks to our volunteer music leaders; Kelly Witt and Jim Morrell who co-led the Hand Bells, Dianne Unverfehrt who leads the Tone Chimes and Larry Gustafson who has sung with and led the Four Crossmen for 38 years. Larry has stepped down from the group, but it will continue with a new singer and the other members sharing leadership roles with my support. Thanks to Larry for his support of this group for so many years.

Thanks to all the singers, instrumentalists, A/V operators, and especially the music/worship staff; Keith Kolander (organist), Gail Brecht (Contemporary Worship Director), Marcus De Geer (Special Music Accompanist), Andrew Leach (Technology Administrator), and Sam Heyl (5:00 Worship Leader). I look forward to sharing new experiences, making new connections, and celebrating with new music in the new year.

DIRECTOR OF CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP – Gail Brecht

2023 has been an incredible year, for which I give many thanks to God and to our musical community here at Good Shepherd. We have been blessed with some new talented faces in Contemporary Worship: John Hardin (electric guitar), Paul Rinke (bass/acoustic guitar), and Scott Harrison back on the drums. I am deeply grateful for them, and for those who have been offering and sharing their time and talent with us for several years: Richards Bagwasi, Thebe Bagwasi, Bethany Dreher, Laura Ewald, Amy & Jason Fulbright, Kathy Irwin, Eric Lindgren, Jim McCommis, Jimmie Miller, Tim Thurman, and Brandon Wade. Each of these folks has greatly blessed our community with their beautiful gifts of music in worship. Please take a minute to thank them for their music the next time you see them!

Our high school worship band (C+ Harmony) thrived in 2023! They fabulously led all the music for worship on a Sunday in May for the 11:00 service. We are hoping to do the same in 2024 and welcome some new high school talents this fall!

As always, if you have a desire to help lead worship at our Sunday contemporary service, please connect with me this year!

Deep Blessings,
Gail Brecht
Deacon/Director of Contemporary Worship

DIRECTOR OF BUILDING BLOCKS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER AND PRESCHOOL – Kathy Rebholz

2023 Thank You:

- Jill Thompson led the Church Council in offering/organizing support systems needed by Building Blocks.
- Financial Advisory Committee: Lanny Schnipper and Julie Davidson led a newly formed Building Blocks Finance Advisory committee. This has turned into a wonderful partnership where Good Shepherd can better understand the innerworkings and financial rhythms of Building Blocks Preschool. Lanny and Julie donated many hours and their expertise in documenting and representing data. Other members, Glenn Kraft, Jennifer Makowski, and Pastor Amy Stewart offered supporting roles.
- Safety Committee: Bob Fingland, Gene Unverfehrt, and Julie Deay researched and participated in numerous meetings regarding safety, intruders, and emergency procedures. Although many of these topics are still a work in progress, I am grateful to have this support system from Good Shepherd.
- Peg Metroff's Family Members (all who live out of state): Peg Metroff, a Building Blocks teacher who passed away in 2018, has a family who is committed to Peg's Scholarship Fund. This September, her family members and I met via zoom for the first time. They believe in the Building Blocks ministry and the goals of Peg's scholarship fund. It was a meaningful experience to meet with all of them!
- Good Shepherd: In 2006, I began my journey at Good Shepherd when I registered my two-year-old twins at Building Blocks Preschool. Soon after, I registered my third child and began teaching in the classrooms from 2009-2013; starting the music program in 2010. I took over as preschool director in 2013. This year I was surprised with several 10-year anniversary celebrations, flowers, and lovely cards from many church members and committees. Leading Building Blocks at Good Shepherd has been nothing but amazing. I cherish everything this ministry encompasses. I love it. Thank you!



Early Childhood Center and Preschool Operations

- 2022 Building Blocks Video Link (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUS2aIL4Zpc>).
- Brightwheel App allows for online student registration, online tuition payments, and parent / school text messaging system.
- Ministry and Community outreach program of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church for children ages 1-5 and teaches about God's love for each child; 75 students enrolled.
- Member of the *Evangelical Lutheran Education Association* (ELEA).
- Thematic Curriculum is integrated and play-based to encourage spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and independent development of the whole child. Activities that look like *play* have an educational purpose. Schedules are complete with Chapel Time, Science Discovery Room, and Music Class.
- Learning Without Tears Curriculum is a multisensory curriculum full of developmentally appropriate activities for our prekindergarten students. It teaches children about letters, body awareness, numbers, sequencing, spatial awareness and sharing.
- Family events are held throughout the year to facilitate family bonding and healthy partnerships with staff and other families (Meet the Teacher, Ice Cream Social, Family Fall Festival, Christmas Program, Grandparent's Day Program, Spring Picnic, Completion Ceremony).
- Parent Teacher Conferences are held twice a year to discuss developmental and foster open communication between school and parents/caregivers.
- Active Parent Group who collaborates special appreciation events for the teachers.

Preschool Staff

- Consists of 12 degreed staff members
 - (some with bachelor's and master's degrees in early childhood and elementary education, a licensed professional counselor, a degreed library science teacher, certified reading specialists)
- CPR certified and participated in professional development opportunities through the Missouri Department Office of Childhood, and various early childhood organizations.

- collaborates with local school districts and specialists to aide in the identification of students who may benefit from specialized early intervention.
- Member of the *West County Preschool Director's* group

Building Blocks Business Operations

- State of Missouri Rules and Regulations: unscheduled inspections by sanitation, fire, and state departments; required protocols for student admissions and immunizations; and required human resources procedures for hiring employees.
- a Limited Liability Company under GSLC;
- Brightwheel App used for online tuition payments.
- offers tuition assistance through the Peg Metroff Scholarship Fund

WELCOME MINISTRY TEAM – Elliott Haugen, Team Leader

Congratulations and Thank You! That's right – you were great again this year in strengthening Good Shepherd's Welcome Ministry. Your actions make this a warm and inclusive congregation, which is a major reason why individuals and families continue to visit, join, and attend this church. The Welcome Team also supports this ministry by identifying and following up with guests to thank them for worshiping with us, to answer questions, and to invite them to return. The Team assists the newest members and guests to feel like they belong here.

The Welcome Team coordinated two New Member information/orientation sessions this year. These two-part sessions were held in the spring and fall to provide a chance for new members to connect with the pastors and staff and to learn about Good Shepherd. A total of 28 people became members in 2023 after attending these classes; several others joined via baptisms and reactivation of prior membership. The October group of 17 was the largest single group to join in three years.

Who We Are:

Our Team members are Karen and Jon Fatzinger, Vicki and Elliott Haugen, Marilyn Jones, Mike King, Sally Kloppe, Pat and Dave Naffziger, Dawn and Scott Schwab, Linda and John Webb, Julie Weber, and Pastor Varinia. We are blessed by how these team members welcome guests and help new members get connected within the congregation.

What We Did In 2023

Each year our team develops and reviews goals that focus our work and support Good Shepherd's strategic priorities: Belonging; Children, Youth and Families; Spiritual Growth; and Service. The Team intentionally connects with new members and guests, offers orientation sessions, and helps link them to activities and groups. Many of our new members have faith experiences from other religions or denominations so we provide resources, like Luther's Small Catechism and other background material. We recommended a separate class about the Lutheran faith and thank Pastor Josh for his two-part class, called Lutheranism 102; it was very well received by new and existing members. Team members mailed welcome notes to the new members, while the Care Ministry provided flower bouquets to the latest membership group. We provided feedback to the office regarding the "First Time Guest" page on Good Shepherd's web site; the Connect app; welcome-related signage in the narthex; and any issues mentioned by new and current members.

Your Welcome Team looks forward to partnering with you to invite and include everyone in 2024!

As the apostle Paul instructed us in Romans 15:7 --

Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

SERVICE MINISTRY TEAM – Judy Leach, Team Leader

The members of the Service Team are responsible for organizing and managing outreach projects that ask the congregation to donate items requested by local non-profits that serve people in need in the St. Louis community. In 2023 there were 9 collection drives:

- Reverse Plate Offering during Lent with donations of personal care items and food to benefit Wings of Love, St. Patrick's Center, and Lutheran World Relief;
- Baby Shower in May with donations for Lutheran Family and Children's Services;
- Buy a Backpack in July to benefit the Back-to-School project at LifeWise STL;
- Thanksgiving Baskets in November for 150 families served by Wings of Love;
- Wartburg Seminary special Thanksgiving collection to help students at Wartburg Seminary with unpaid medical bills;
- Laundry basket and supplies collection to benefit families served by First Step Back Home;
- Christmas Giving Tree to provide items for the LifeWise STL Holiday Market;
- ELCA World Hunger Christmas drive;
- Food Bin collections throughout the year to benefit Parkway's Food Bank, Maplewood-Richmond Heights Weekends on Wheels program, and Circle of Concern's food bank.

The Service Team is also responsible for making allocations from the Local Benevolence fund to benefit thoroughly vetted 501c3 non-profits. In 2023 the Team allocated \$19,000 to 21 different agencies with the standard allocation rising from \$750 in the 1st quarter of the year to \$1000 for the remainder of the year. The change reflects our commitment to support fewer agencies than in past years at a more significant level.

All of this wouldn't be possible without the generous support of the congregation who always respond to requests for help with donations! Collectively we have made a significant difference in the lives of a very large number of people this year. We thank God for all of you!

Members of the Service Team in 2023 were David Franz, Melissa Huse, Karen Kallansrud, Sandy King, Cindy Kraft, Judy Leach, Dennis Mall, Janie Wolfangel, Kyle Butler, Pam McDaniel, and Pastor Varinia. New members are always welcome!

Gratitude from the Scrappy Ladies – Submitted by Vicki Haugen

The scrappy ladies of Project Boomerang continue to create new greeting cards to encourage others to stay connected with family and friends. Meeting on Wednesdays at the Haugen's residence, the scrappy ladies of Project Boomerang distributed a total of **8,743 greeting cards in 2023.**

Cards were created and items collected and distributed all year as noted:

1. Before each holiday, care cards and other items were delivered to the St. Louis Fisher House for Veterans and used by families staying there (299 cards).
2. Cards, snacks, t-shirts and prayer books were sent in Feb and July to deployed ELCA Chaplains (1,394).
3. In March, July and October unused cards were delivered to Lutheran Senior Services for low-income residents (6,585).
4. Congregational care and holiday cards were provided to Good Shepherd (290).
5. This is also the fifth year supporting LIRS (Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Service) "Hope for the Holidays". The scrappy ladies wrote supportive messages and the words for "Away in the Manger" in Spanish on Christmas cards (175). Cards, Thrivent shirts and a monetary donation were sent to St. John's Lutheran Church in Bloomington, IL. to distribute to needy US immigrant children.

Thrivent Action Teams and your donations supported this year-round project.

STEWARDSHIP TEAM – Rock Foster, Chair

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Amen
NLT 1Peter 4:10

The stewardship committee consists of Sharon Misuraca, Robert Engle, Christina Kling-Garrett, Chris Wheeler, and Rock Foster with Pastor Josh attending meetings and providing alignment with council and staff leadership. Each of the team members has their own passion and talent making this a flexible and effective team.

During 2023, we collaborated with the staff to increase telling of stories through the newsletter, videos, and a couple of temple talks around the fall campaign. Our intent was to provide more and varied examples of how Good Shepherd impacts the lives of our members and the entire kingdom of God. We plan to continue and increase these vignettes in 2024 encouraging all to be generous with their time, talents and treasures throughout the year remembering we are called to receive gifts gracefully, manage them responsibly and share them generously. We all have a unique mix of gifts to share. **If you have a meaningful story to share about the impact Good Shepherd has made on your faith journey, please contact any team member of the office staff.**

The fall campaign was successful; increasing the number of pledges by 10% which is 128 from 116. Also, our pledged dollars increased by 5% to \$674,000, which is approximately two thirds of our annual budget and is relatively consistent with the prior years. During 2024, the stewardship committee will continue to focus on storytelling, participation in ministries and expanding recurring and planned giving.

I am proud of the energy and commitment of the team and look forward to 2024 as a year of building increased generosity of all the gifts God has given all of us.

FEED THE NEED STL – Bob DeBolt

2023 represented some important new “firsts” for our 17th year of packing food for the hungry and starving. It was our first full pack held at our new venue, Greensfelder Recreation Center at Queeny Park. 2023 also marked our first time we packed in the Spring. The Spring 2023 pack followed right on the heels of packing a million meals In South County in October of 2022 and capped an incredible 7-month period where we packed more than 2 million meals.

Summary and highlights of the pack completed April 13-16th, 2023.

The Numbers:

- Meals packed – 870,912
- Meals provided – 132,912
- Total meals donated – 1,003,000
- 27 barrels of food donated for Operation Food Search/3,200 lbs.
- 2,934 volunteers
- \$274K of total funds raised.

The meals packed provided enough food for 2,750 kids to eat one hot meal per day for a year. We saw three Convoy of Hope trailers fully loaded during the event and bound for Honduras. Operation Food Search donations provided quality nutrition for 802 people for one day.

Since its inception in 2007 as a youth event in Good Shepherd’s gym, this event has paid for and packed more than 9.5 million meals, feeding more than 26,000 children a hot meal a day for a year as well as provided more than 23,000 volunteer opportunities for people in our community.

Demand for our food:

You may not be aware that following several decades of declines in the number of people suffering and dying from starvation, the last two years have seen an extreme reversal in that trend with more and more people on the verge of famine. In addition to natural disasters, where our easy to ship and nutritious food has been critical to impacted communities, new global conflicts in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa create millions of displaced peoples who need food to survive. On behalf of hungry and starving children around the world, the Feed the Need STL team would like to say thank you to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, for its continued leadership and support.

Until all are fed,
Bob DeBolt, Volunteer Co-leader

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE - Michael Kelley, Chair

The Facilities Management and Planning Committee (FMPC) continued working in 2023 to maintain and improve our 60000+ square foot building and surrounding grounds to have a welcoming, clean, and safe space for God's work among us.

As our facilities age, additional attention is required to details, from large and expensive to small but noticeable to things behind the scenes but critical. We strive to keep all of that on our radar, in proportion, and prioritize to keep the urgent from crowding out the important. We are thankful to be entrusted with this task. A few things of note you may or may not have noticed happening in 2023:

- Relighting of the sanctuary: old bulbs were removed and replaced with LED lighting. overly bright and dark spots were removed, altar area enhanced, and the entire space is brighter, easier for reading, in a warm color tone, and at a considerable savings in electricity which will be ongoing.
- Additionally, as noted in an earlier newsletter, with only a few minor exceptions, the entire building has been rebulbed with LED. Most of this effort was due to days (and nights) of work by Gene Unverfehrt, in the hundreds, fixture by fixture. This work continues in January as Gene and Roger Cannon repair and replace as needed emergency lights throughout the building. Even the outdoor accent lights and steeple flood lights have been either repaired or replaced.
- Kitchen upkeep has included the hand wash sink, the removal of a non-functioning garbage disposal (we have another), and the drop shades.
- In the gym we worked through a difficult smoke detector issue and a bat infestation.
- Our still very new rooftop air conditioning units were finished just in time for a very hot summer. They function as advertised, resulting in improved air handling, better and higher-level filtration, more outside air introduction, and savings in power. Thank you for financing this long-term improvement in comfort and health.
- Smaller items include playground surface repair, curb painting, garden fence repair, removal of a sizable tree that succumbed to the heat, and the addition of a handrail stepping up to the altar. These and numerous other day-to-day, mostly unseen items are handled ongoing.
- For 2024, projects have been presented to the council for evaluation and prioritization.

We have been handed a fabulous legacy in this building by those who have preceded us, who have contributed their time and treasure. God's good work happens here. We will do our best to enable this to continue.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Kelley, Chair, Rod Hollenbeck, Rick Hautekeete, Roger Cannon, Gene Unverfehrt,
Lanny Schnipper (Council Liaison), Julie Deay, (Staff Liaison)

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE – Steve Boyer, Chair

Good Shepherd is blessed to have an endowment that is used to fund approximately \$25,000 each year for approved projects. The current members of the Good Shepherd Endowment Committee are Steve Boyer (Chair), Dan Engle, Rick Hautekeete, Ann Hibbard, Judy Leach, and Tim Sorensen.

The purpose of the Endowment Committee is to use the funds allocated to it for grant requests to promote Good Shepherd's Mission and Vision Statement of "Following Christ, Growing in Faith, Sharing God's Love" while being "Guided by God's Grace". In 2023, the Endowment Committee approved funding for the following grant requests:

1. \$3,000 to Camp Tomah Shinga – Summer staff sponsorship
2. \$5,000 to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church for "Middle" room renovation
3. \$5,000 to Venture Crew – recliners for 10 tiny houses
4. \$500 to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church for Flower Ministry
5. \$5,000 to EWALU – Bible Camp & Retreat Center, Cabin renovations for summer camp
6. \$3,000 to Caren Abraham for Missionary Dentistry work in Africa
7. \$1,000 to Medical Lifelines UK – ambulances for Ukraine
8. \$99.77 to Adam Reis – GSLC Puppet Ministry

The Committee welcomes all grant requests for consideration. Such requests usually are \$5,000 or less and must meet the other criteria set out on the grant request form. This form is available on the Church Website.

The Committee looks forward to continuing its mission in 2024.

CHRONOLOGICALLY GIFTED – Urb & Annette Molitor

The CG's is a group of "chronically gifted" adults who gather for fellowship, bible studies, fun, exercise, & entertainment and to meet new people. The CG's is a welcoming and open group, and we encourage everyone in the group to take a turn at planning an event.

We normally meet every Thursday:

- 1st Thursday: Bunko at 10:00 AM in Rm 150 (Sept, Oct, Nov, Feb, Mar, Apr, May)
- 2ND & 4th Thursday: Bible Study at 10:00 AM in Rm 205, led by Pastor Josh – Discussion of the Scripture Readings for an up-coming weekend liturgy.
- 3rd Thursday: A planned monthly Activity—time & place varies.
- 5th Thursday: A Community Service Project.
- Every Thursday: Pickleball at 2:00 PM in the Gym (*Paddles are provided as needed*)

2023 Service Projects:

- March: We made Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits
- June: We made Fruit & Cookie Baskets for GSLC members in nursing homes or home bound.
- August: We filled handmade backpacks with school supplies for Lutheran World Relief.
- November: We collected gifts for, and volunteered at, the "**LifeWise StL**" Christmas store which helps families achieve economic well-being.

2023 Third Thursday Activities:

- January: Movie (*Courageous*) & Lunch at *Uncle Bill's*
- February: Valentine Luncheon
- March: St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef & Cabbage Luncheon
- April: Bev Schuetz presentation: "History of the Muny" and Lunch at the Hearth Room Cafe
- May: Visit to Missouri History Museum with lunch at the Museum Cafe
- June: Visit to the Missouri Botanical Garden with lunch at the Sassafras Restaurant
- July: Tour of the Scott Joplin House, State Historic Site, with lunch at "The Fountain" on Locust

- August: Lunch outside, lake side, at the Forest Park Boat House
- September: Bev Schuetz presentation: “The Remarkable Eleanor Roosevelt” and Lunch
- October: Chili Luncheon and sing-along led by Pr. Josh & Gail
- November: Lunch at the Blue Owl Restaurant in Kimmswick
- December: Christmas Party at Andre’s South, St. Louis

Urb & Annette Molitor