



St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

2023 Annual Report

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2023 Annual Report

"You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty." Psalm 65:11 (ELW)

The year 2023 brought us again to in-person worship and events after the long disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. What we did not do as a synod was to return to everything as it had been before. Recognizing that God always calls us forward into a new future, congregations discovered myriad ways to build on the lessons and new practices learned during the pandemic. Likewise, the synod embraced new ways of doing familiar things and experimented with new ideas and programs.

Here are some highlights of the investment of time and energy by the synod office during 2023. All these are made possible because of the generous financial support that passes from congregations to the synod. Thank you for helping us be a church together as we all find ways to be faithful to our callings in a changing and complex world.

An undeniable highlight was the presentation of a check for \$1,000,000 to Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota during Synod Assembly last May. The check is for renovations to a building that will house the Families Together East Side Preschool on the lower level of Grace Lutheran Church in St. Paul. This partnership is one of the pillars of The Planting Hope Campaign, which has raised \$1,473,861 to date at the end of December 2023. This is one half of our overall campaign goal.

In addition to this transformational work with LSS-MN, in 2023 we also launched the first summer of paid internships, funded through The Planting Hope Campaign. From June through August, nine young adults served in a variety of congregations and Lutheran agencies. We are grateful for the work of Pastor Bristol Reading (St. Luke, St. Paul) in overseeing this project. Also, we gave significant financial support to congregational vitality through the campaign. Those investments are detailed later in this report.

Alongside the work of The Planting Hope Campaign, congregations like yours continue to contribute toward our budget of \$1,885,000 in mission support. Fiscal Year 2023 ends on January 31, 2024 and we hope to be at the goal by then. Again, thank you for seeing how your congregation's work is supported and expanded through our common funding of synod and ELCA churchwide ministries. Despite needing to navigate new realities in a post-pandemic world, God continues to crown our efforts with God's abundance. The synod's financial work is guided by David Roinas.

During 2023 there were 28 persons in the candidacy process, preparing to serve the wider church as pastors or deacons. Currently, 22 persons are serving their first call in the Saint Paul Area Synod. They also participate in a structured program of First Call Theological Education (FCTE). Both candidacy work and FCTE are led by Deacon Krista Lind. This past year two candidates received calls in other synods. As you might imagine, this work is important for the church today and for the church in the coming years.

Candidates ordained in 2023 include Pastor Jennifer Luong, Pastor Jua Jay Her, Pastor Carrie Stiles, Pastor Amy Vigesaa, Pastor Reed Fowler, Deacon Katherine Lindberg. We also received Pastor Stanley Ayashim, recently ordained in the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, as a first call pastor through our partnership with the Lutheran World Federation. We welcome these seven new rostered ministers.

In addition to first call candidates, the synod staff works with call committees in more than two dozen congregations each year. In addition, the call manual was revised this past year and new protocols were developed to assist congregations to be open and ready to receive candidates who are persons of color or from the LGBTQIA community. As a synod, we know how important the gifts of all leaders are to the work of God's church.

During times of transition, the synod finds pastors and deacons to serve in interim roles. Those serving in interim ministry meet monthly for prayer, mutual support and learning and are directed by Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer. With Rachel Holsten, front office administrator and registrar, Rolf coordinated the Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders in February, which brought together 165 participants from 52 congregations. The two most attended workshops addressed issues of racism and implicit bias, issues which matter to all of us in

this synod. In 2023, the synod also inaugurated the Deeper Dive series, a Zoom gathering for presidents and vice presidents. Twenty-four congregations participated in this inaugural series of monthly leadership training and support.

The synod also provides other initiatives to address congregational vitality. These workshops, which include Tools for the Church, Spiritual Gifts, Stewardship for All Seasons, Building a Culture of Generosity, and Liberating Structures, are led by Pastor Justin Grimm and members of the vitality team. In 2023, participants numbered more than 300.

Serving as mission developers and redevelopers during 2023 were Pastor Liz Eide, Lutheran Church of Peace; Pastor Jon Yurk, Christ the Servant; Pastor Thomas Tsen, Minnesota Faith Chinese; Pastor Dale Stiles, St. Paul in Wyoming; Pastor William Siong and Pastor Jua Jay Her at Eternal Flame; Pastor Gilo Agwa, Foundation of Life; Pastor Jodi Houge, Humble Walk; Deacon Kari Olson, Shobi's Table; and Pastor Ana Becerra, Cristo Rey. Pastors Ben and Kristen Eisele (Farmington Lutheran) completed an exploration for mission possibilities in Rosemount. When asked what is new (or renewed) in this synod, it's easy to see fresh ideas in all these settings.

During 2023 church groups were again able to travel to our partner churches in Guatemala and Tanzania. Five congregational groups were hosted by the Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala (ILAG). Two members of the Guatemala Committee, Janet Metcalfe and Jennifer Reinhardt, participated in an ELCA Global Mission international consultation in November. In 2023, 200 individuals from 16 congregations, nine affiliate organizations and two colleges traveled to the Iringa Diocese. As bishop, I was also thankful to be with our partners in Tanzania this past November.

The generosity of members of the synod supports our global companions with scholarships, emergency aid, congregation-to-congregation partnerships, and through prayer. Staff members Kirsten Levorson and Susan Seidel oversee the work of Bega Kwa Bega, which we undertake with our siblings in Tanzania.

A grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. allowed additional opportunities for pastors to be well equipped for today's challenges. Synod pastors of color and the synod program staff participated in a facilitated retreat in Sedona, Ariz., in February. In addition, this past year 19 pastors, deacons, mentors, and a facilitator were a part of the Second Act cohort for rostered ministers in their fourth through tenth years of service. Our Lilly grant programs are directed by Leslie Ortiz.

Behind the scenes, Mary Smith oversaw the launch of our new website (spas-elca.org), along with 51 editions of the weekly News and Events newsletter, 40 companion synod newsletters, 300 social media posts, and other essential communication from the synod. (You can sign up to receive our newsletters at spas -elca.org/subscribe-to-synod-news.)

With all this creative work of the synod staff, you may wonder what the bishop does. As bishop, I work on governance with the Synod Council and Executive Committee, as well as meeting with the finance committee. I ordain new pastors and deacons and preach regularly (29 times in congregations, synod and churchwide events in 2023). I help plan the Bishop's Theological Conference and gatherings of the ministerium. I represent the synod on institutional boards and at ecumenical and inter-religious gatherings. I am a member of the Conference of Bishops and through 2023 served as a liaison bishop on the ELCA Church Council, as well as co-chairing the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue. I work with congregations in times of conflict and oversee the discipline of rostered ministers, when needed. Best of all, I serve as a pastor for the pastors and deacons in this synod, meeting regularly with individual leaders.

If you have visited the synod office, you know that we are not a large-scale operation; but if you think about the range of ministry we do together in this synod, you know our collective impact is mighty. We can do so much because of the dedicated talent of the individuals on the synod staff. I am grateful for all that Rachel, Mary, David, Kirsten, Susan, Rolf, Justin, Krista and Leslie have accomplished this past year. I am also grateful for the work Ryan and Astine Bose did in the first half of the year as our shortterm volunteers in Iringa. I hope you will join me in thanking the synod staff when you see or speak to them.

Yours in God's service, Bishop Patricia Lull

Pastoral Acts & Statistics

2023 Annual Report

Average weekly attendance at regular worship services:	
9:30am Service	162
9:30am Summer Worship	149
7:00pm Wednesday Night Service	34
Total attendance at Holiday Worship Services:	
Ash Wednesday (6:30pm on Friday, Feb 22 due to snowstorm)	81
Wednesday Night Lenten Services	47
Maundy Thursday	97
Good Friday	119
Easter (6:15am, 8:30am, 10:30am, in person)	457
Thanksgiving Eve	73
Christmas Eve Services (2:00pm, 10pm)	344
Christmas Day	81
Membership Statistics:	
Members as of December 31, 2023	
Confirmed members	856
Child (Baptized) members	281
Members as of December 31, 2022	
Confirmed members	874
Child (Baptized) members	198
Baptisms	14
Confirmed	5
Weddings	1
Deaths	19
Funerals	22

Mike Ericson: Congregational President

2023 Annual Report

Dear Members of St. Mark's Lutheran Church,

2023 was another year of hope and progress as we continued a return to the new normal at church. I love to see our church family in person at weekly services, Wednesday night dinners and many other volunteer activities.

I want to start by thanking the congregation for your belief in and continued involvement at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. The positivity and optimism is alive at St. Marks as we continue to welcome new members and celebrated 16 baptisms this year.

We are blessed with an outstanding staff who continue to perform at a high level lead by Pastor David Bjorklund, who began his second year as our Lead Pastor. Pastor David is an excellent leader, communicator, and preacher. We welcomed seminary intern Kate Lindberg, who stepped right in and hit the ground running. Kate moved to Minnesota from Massachusetts to attend Luther Seminary. She is a great addition to St. Mark's and the congregation immediately embraced her.

We began the Call Committee process again with the St. Paul Area Synod for the purpose of calling an associate pastor/deacon to fill the associate position. Thanks to the leadership of chair Bonnie Meyers and dedicated committee members, the congregation voted to call Kate Lindberg as our new deacon. We are so excited to have her on staff with a focus on children, youth, and families.

We continued with community involvement activities at North High School, North St. Paul Food Shelf, Welcome Back Teacher's Breakfast, God's Work Our Hands projects, North St. Paul Fall Roundup Parade and so many more.

We continue to give thanks to the Property Committee and dedicated staff who made improvements to our campus. Additionally, we continue to give thanks to the estate of Lucille Lowe and the largest gift ever donated to St. Mark's Church. We were able to hire Tom Paulson as our first full-time director of music and worship in many years. Tom's 30 years of experience was recognized immediately by the choirs and the congregation. Thank you Tom for your leadership.

And a final thank you to an outstanding church council: Vice President Tyler Ronsberg, Secretary Josh Hirman, Treasurer Kelly Nickell, Virgil Christoffersen, Bob Engwer, Gary Hook, Martha Klopp, Dave Lande, Brian Larson, Carolyn Newell, Candy Peterson, Pastor David Bjorklund and Deacon Kate Lindberg.

In God's Loving Service,

Mike Ericson, Council President

Reports from the Ministry Staff

The Rev. David Bjorklund: Lead Pastor

2023 Annual Report

Dear Friends,

I give thanks to God for bringing us together as the people of St. Mark's. We've had quite the year together and I think we can all agree our congregation is headed in a positive direction. There is a renewed spirit of optimism and vitality among us. That spirit is so powerful it is almost tangible. Perhaps you have felt it when we gather together for worship and fellowship. I know I feel it whenever we are together.

A lot has changed in the past twelve months. Last January you called me to take on the role of Lead Pastor. In February we hosted another incredibly talented intern. Intern Kate was such a gift to us that you called her to serve as our first ever Deacon. It was a great joy for me to be Kate's internship supervisor and an even greater joy to have her as a colleague and partner in ministry. I know we are all thankful for the amazing work of the Call Committee.

In August we brought on Tom Paulson to serve as our full-time Director of Music and Worship. It had been a number of years since we've had a full-time person in that role and in the past five months we've seen what a difference it makes. Tom has brought his insights and expertise to bear and our music ministry is the strongest it's been in years. And we're just getting started! I know we will continue to see our worship and music ministry thrive under Tom's direction.

Bringing on Tom and Deacon Kate were the first steps in addressing what has been our congregation's two biggest areas of concern, Music Ministry and Children, Youth, and Family Ministry. With these vital positions filled by those two talented and gifted individuals we are well positioned to make the most of this moment in time. I believe good things are ahead.

A colleague once shared some wisdom with me that he had received along his journey. "We vastly overestimate what we can achieve on our own in a year while vastly underestimating what we can achieve in five years of faithfully following God's lead." Those words reminded me that the work we do as a church takes time to bear fruit. Seeds must be sown and given time to germinate and grow. The fruits of our labors do not appear suddenly on the branches.

The seeds we have sown post-pandemic are growing and we are beginning to see the first fruits. Every week visitors are joining us for worship, seeking to hear the Word of God and looking for a place of belonging. Every week members who stepped away during the pandemic are making their way home. This is what happens when we faithfully live out our lives As Church Together. This is what happens when we open ourselves to the work of the Spirit in and among us. God is with us and working through us.

We will continue to plant new seeds. We will continue to nurture the seedlings that have broken through the soil. We will continue to tend and care for the plants that are growing tall. We will continue to harvest the fruit of the kingdom, all the while giving thanks to God who gives the growth.

Friends, may we venture forth with confidence and boldness for God is indeed with us and is doing great things among us!

Your Servant in Christ, Pastor David Bjorklund

Deacon Kate Lindberg: Associate

2023 Annual Report

"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs" Matthew 19:14

Beloved community of St. Mark's,

I am thankful beyond words to have been brought into your circle here at St. Mark's. In February of 2022 you welcomed me in as intern and we've been growing together in our faith and our lives each and every day since and for that, I give thanks to God. When I began my internship I was given many opportunities to jump in and get my feet wet in different areas of ministry at St. Mark's. One of them being the Tuesday morning Bible study, and getting to know the different women's circles. Another area I was able to learn and further develop my skills was in children, youth and family ministry. We entered the season of Lent together soon after my arrival and I deeply enjoyed leading alongside our Wednesday night educators as well as planning and executing the children's sermons during this season.

After completing my six month internship which included heading up Vacation Bible School, and joining Pastor David and our confirmation students for their canoe trip on the Namekagon River. St. Mark's then extended a children, youth, and family position for me while I was in my call process. During this time, we were able to plan out the academic year for Sunday School education and Wednesday night programming. An exciting development this year was that we started offering two classes of Sunday morning education so that children from preschool through grade six have opportunities to further develop their faith and engage in relationship building with their peers. The ELCA curriculum that we are using helps children learn different stories in the Bible in creative and engaging ways. Pastor David continues to lead and guide our confirmation students on Wednesday nights. Our Wednesday night programming is designed to foster a deeper conversation with students about our shared faith and what this means within our greater society. We offer classes for preschool through high school.

I am so grateful for the dedicated adult volunteers who help make this educational experience possible for our youth. It does take a village to raise a child, and it takes a whole congregation to help plant the seeds of faith that we will then work to diligently water over the course of their lives.

We announced this fall that we will be taking a group of high school students to the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. I am so excited to say that we have ten youth signed up and I am looking forward to seeing our young people get to experience such an incredible opportunity.

I am so honored and humbled to have been called to serve the people of St. Mark's and to walk alongside you. You have welcomed me into your community with open arms and have put your trust in me. I look forward to what this next year will bring for us and give thanks to God for our life in Christ together and the good we will do.

Peace,

Deacon Kate Lindberg

Tom Paulson: Director of Music & Worship

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John Ferguson is the retired professor of church music at St. Olaf College in Northfield. He is famous (or infamous, I'm not sure which) for saying, with great regularity, "If you sing well, sing to praise the giver. If you don't sing so well, sing to get even!" I know he says this mostly tongue in cheek but, in the words of the immortal Karen Walker, "It's funny 'cause it's true!"

Think about all the scripture that commands us to worship. We read, "Sing to the Lord a new song," "Come before God with singing," "Praise God with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." Notice the commands, the imperatives – Sing, Come, and Praise. Notice also what scripture does not say: "Sing only if you sing really well." "Sing only if you are reasonably competent." It doesn't even say, "Sing only if you like the song." It just says sing! This is one of the most basic things I want us to learn together, to put away our Minnesota, Scandinavian reserve, and make a joyful noise to the glory of God, together. We may not be perfect, but God will be praised.

It has been a rewarding fall. I started on August 1, and have spent much of my first six months getting to know people and the ways of the congregation. If I forget your name, please excuse me and remind me. A few highlights:

- On my first Sunday, Ken Indrelie, Russ Payne, and I led what was supposed to be an outdoor service, indoors due to inclement weather.
- On my second Sunday I wrote my first Music Notes column in the bulletin and Thursday announcements, something I have done for other congregations, and that many people found very helpful and inspiring. It is a very effective communications tool. So far it has been very well received.
- On September 10 we held our first rehearsals for the fall with St. Mark's Choir and Jubilee Handbell Choir. In October I brought Tom Michel, Diane Sell, Tyler Ronsberg, Ken Indrelie and Russ Payne together to form a worship band, and we have been leading worship once a month since.
- In my second month, Pastor David invited me to preach (on Sunday September 17) on music as ministry, the core of which opened this report. Many thanks to David for his faith in me, especially after only a month or so of working together. It seemed to be well received by the congregation, they applauded! I hope that set a positive tone for my ministry here.
- In November I extended an open invitation to the congregation to join the St. Mark's Choir to sing the joyful music of Christmas. I am very pleased that 8 people responded, and many of them want, and have been able to continue singing this January.
- Both the organ and the harpsichord need some major work. I will work with the finance committee and Pastor David in 2024 to figure out how to handle that.
- Many thanks to Dorothea Jirsa, Diane Sell, Ken Indrelie, and Tyler Ronsberg, for their help in leading
 music at our Wednesday evening services. Thanks to their leadership we can have choir rehearsal and
 worship simultaneously.
- We had a lovely All Saints Day, a Service of Comfort, Healing and Hope. I suspect this may become a St. Mark's tradition.
- Christmas was lovely (and clement). Special thanks is due to Diane Sell & Peyton Bynum; Choir of St. Mark's; Jubilee Handbell Choir; Jennifer Arsenault, flute; Betty Wolf, cello; and Dorothea Jirsa, piano/ organ duets.

May God bless us in 2024 that St. Mark's Music Ministry may thrive and grow to God's glory. May it always help us to love God, and love others.

Respectfully submitted, Tom Paulson Director of Music and Worship

Congregational Ministry Reports

Call Committee

2023 Annual Report

The Call Committee continued its work in 2023.

We completed minor edits to the Ministry Site Profile, including adding Pastor David as the lead pastor and updating the priorities to reflect the preferred skills and abilities for the associate position as identified by the congregational survey. The profile was then posted on the ELCA website.

We were informed by our synod contact that Kate Lindberg, our intern at the time, expressed interest in the position.

As outlined in the Saint Paul Area Synod Call Process Manual, if an internal candidate is interested in the posted position, the call committee should interview that person "before considering any other candidates. The interview and review should be thorough, as would be the case with any other candidates, without any assumptions because of familiarity." (Call Process for Congregations & Church-Related Organizations, spaselca.org)

On the evenings of July 25 and 26, the Call Committee interviewed Kate Lindberg. After the interviews were complete, we voted on written ballot whether or not to continue with Kate as the candidate. The vote was unanimous: Yes. We then called references and met again on August 2. After sharing information about our conversations with the references, we voted on written ballot. And again, we had a unanimous vote of yes.

The Call Committee had a joint meeting with the Church Council to share the results of the interview process.

On August 27, 2023 a special congregational meeting was held to present information about the candidate and the process, and to vote on the call for Kate Lindberg to fill the associate position at St. Mark's. The result was overwhelmingly "Yes."

On November 12, Deacon Kate Lindberg was installed at St. Mark's.

Many thanks to the Call Committee members for their hard work and commitment: Sherry Berry, Mike Clasen, John Haley, Joanie Henriksen, Meg Hirman, Martha Klopp, Rory Lamers, Judy Larkins, Myrna Meek, Candy Petersen

Bonnie Meyers Chair, on behalf of the Call Committee

Caring Ministries

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The Caring Ministry team focuses on home visits for the sick and homebound members of St. Mark's congregation. This is a chance to reach out to people who, due to sickness, disability or other reasons, cannot attend church. Team members make monthly visits, with time to chat and listen, pray, and provide Communion. When visits are not possible, cards and phone calls are other ways the team keeps in touch with the homebound member. The team leads a short worship service at Polar Ridge Senior Living facility once a month. In May, the team hosted a luncheon and worship service for our homebound members and their caregivers at St. Mark's. In addition, sympathy cards are sent out to families at the time of death of a St. Mark's member and then, at the one-year anniversary, another card is sent. These cards are created and sent by Karyn Mikel.

Team members include: Bob Engwer, Sue Engwer, Nancy Helm, Joe Hofacker, Diane Hofacker, Terry Kapaun, Linda Kapaun, Miland Meek, Myrna Meek, Barb Michel, Liz Elicerio-Nelson, Bonnie Pottratz, Karin Schmidt, Pastor David Bjorklund, Deacon Kate Lindberg.

Submitted by Barb Michel

Columbarium & Memorial Garden Committee

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The Memorial Garden with Columbarium has entered into the sustaining phase of this ministry. There were no congregation members inurned in our Columbarium this year.

One niche purchased this year. The operational expenses were as follows:

The irrigation system was started in the spring and blown out in the fall before frost. The grounds were professionally cleaned up and trash hauled away.

Financial Information:

Beginning Balance 2022	\$9,060.00
Income	+ 2,500.00
Expenses	- 2,126.3 <u>6</u>
Year-end Balance 2023	\$9,884.32

Committee Members:

Bob Engwer, Gary Hook, Terry Kapaun, Heidi McKenzie and Miland Meek

If you would like to purchase a niche, a Memorial Wall inscription or make a contribution to the ongoing maintenance of the Memorial Garden, please contact Heidi McKenzie at heidimc@stmarks-nsp.org or 651-777-7451.



Global Ministries

2023 Annual Report

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13

Below is a summary of the Mission Committee's activities and accomplishments of 2023:

Tanzania

Tanzania Secondary Student Sponsorships – In 2024, St. Mark's individuals or families will sponsor 20 Kihesa and 8 Mtwivila secondary students at a rate of \$450 per year for room, board and tuition. \$12,600 in new funds were donated in late 2023 for these secondary school sponsorships.

Other Kihesa and Mtwivila Project Support – In addition to the student sponsorship support, St. Mark's will donate around \$4,500 for other general projects yet to be named by Kihesa and Mtwivila. These funds will come from the Craft Fair that was held in December 2023, which raised \$1,634, and Soup Sunday/Bake Sale proceeds from the January 2023 and 2024 Annual Meetings.

Life Skills Center – The Inez Oehlke Endowment Fund provided a net amount of \$12,462 for the Kihesa Life Skills Center in 2023. The Kihesa pastors and partnership committee have developed a plan to strengthen existing and develop new programs at the Life Skills Center. Sixteen sewing machines will be repaired so that the sewing classes can begin again in January 2024. Secondly, an entrepreneurship training skills class will be taught starting in January 2024. The third training activity to be scheduled after the sewing classes will be computer classes. Their current computers are quite old, so they will be purchasing 10 new computers with our donations. In the future, they plan to conduct car driving classes for the youth. This skill is needed more and more for employment in Tanzania.

Other Funding Sources – In addition to the donations from members and friends for Tanzania, our Tanzania Mission received \$1,000 from St. Mark's general budget funds in 2023.

Travel to Tanzania – Mark McKenzie and Candy Petersen traveled to Tanzania in November 2023 with a group composed of members of several local churches. They had a wonderful experience and met with the staff and members of both Kihesa and Mtwivila congregations.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Wolf, Chair

India Mission Update from Pete Mogren

Angel and I returned on January 6 from our Mission trip to Hope Orphanage/Home and School in Bapatla, Southern India. This was our first trip to this facility. Our goal was to investigate the opportunity for St. Mark's to work with this organization.

The government closed REACH Home after the death of the founder during the Covid pandemic. St. Mark's had supported REACH Home for almost 40 years

Angel and I have been sponsoring the six children who were transferred to Hope Orphanage/Home and School from REACH Orphanage/Home and School because they are orphans with no family. We are happy to report that these six orphans from REACH are thriving in their new environment. I have known them since they were infants. We have watched them grow and know them well.

Hope Orphanage/Home and School is in the same town as REACH was. It was a very positive visit and we both feel very strongly that St. Mark's should move forward in finding a way to support more children. There are 40 children living there and 61 more that come to day school from the surrounding slums.

Global Missions, continued

The children are well cared for and happy. The building is clean and well run. The people who are running Hope are full of love for the children and it shows. Hope also has a solid Christian-based foundation.

The goal for 2024 would be to find six more sponsors. If anyone wants more information, please contact me, Pete Mogren, at 612-581-2776 or pmogren@comcast.net

Angel and I look forward to helping these children for many years to come with your support and God's help.

Blessings,

Angel and Pete Mogren

Global Missions Committee Members:

Jim Wolf (Chair), Betty Wolf, Pete Mogren, Angel Mogren, and Betty Beane

Hospitality Committee

2023Annual Report

Hospitality is an important part of our church. It is a chance for us to show love and care for each other and for our community. Below are a few of the events hosted by St. Mark's in 2023:

- We enjoyed an **outdoor service** this past summer which included a **picnic** where the community could participate as we welcomed our new music director, Tom Paulson.
- A St. Mark's group attended the **Twin's game** for some more summer fun. Thanks to Alan Wyman for arranging this outing which included bus transportation to and from Target Field.
- We hosted a very successful **Welcome Back Breakfast** for the staff of North High School. Teachers and staff were able to take a break during their preparation for the 2023-24 school year to have breakfast at St. Mark's. This is a favorite annual event for North High.
- God's Work, Our Hands day of service included over 40 of our members, split into groups, to support the work of the church and help out our community. We prepped items for the parade, started preparations for Wednesday dinners, wrote cards for essential workers, arranged snacks for the police/ fire break area in Fellowship Hall which is greatly appreciated by them, prepared materials for Christian education, cleaned the drama closet, worked on St. Mark's landscaping, pulled weeds at Richardson Elementary, and pulled buckthorn at Southwood Park. Thanks to all who participated in these activities!
- The North St. Paul Fall Round Up parade had 30 folks from St. Mark's walking in the parade, handing out can coozies, candy, and bags to the community, along with an invitation to worship with us. This year was a great success with a festive flamingo-themed float.
- This was our third year of the **Trunk or Treat** event co-sponsored with the local Girl Scouts. This year we had a great turnout. There were 15 trunks and approximately 300 visitors! The trunk décor and costumes were fun and creative thanks to everyone coming out on a cold October evening. It was great to visit with so many families from St. Mark's, the Head Start preschool, and our greater community. We look forward to having even more trunks and visitors in 2024!
- Many people enjoyed the **pie social** after the Thanksgiving Eve worship service. It's a great way to come together and remember why we are thankful before the holiday begins.
- **Police/Fire Hospitality.** St. Mark's continues to provide space and hospitality for the North St. Paul and Maplewood Police and Fire Departments to take a break. We invite them to use our space in Fellowship Hall to enjoy a beverage, grab a snack or have a meal while they are on duty. Many people have contributed to this project and they really appreciate it.
- This year, we returned to a more traditional **Progressive Dinner** format with appetizers hosted at homes followed by dinner and entertainment at church. The Edina Chorale Carolers provided fantastic music for the evening which was attended by nearly 80 people, including many new members. There is always room for more guests and more volunteers to help in the planning, so hopefully we'll see you next year!

Thanks to everyone who participated in one way or another to help make these events successful. It is greatly appreciated! New event ideas to keep our church a vibrant and relevant part of our community are always welcome. If you have an idea, talk to someone on the Hospitality team, which includes: Virginia Coller, Suzanne Ericson, Wanda Hurtgen, Gary Martin, Julie Urban, Judy Larkins and various volunteers specific to each of the events.

Respectfully submitted,

Mental Health Ministry

2023 Annual Report

St. Mark's launched our Mental Health Ministry (MHM) in 2023 to encourage education and awareness of mental health wellness and illness issues. This initiative was prompted by Bishop Patricia Lull's challenge (in late 2022) asking congregations to learn more about mental health issues. St. Mark's applied for and received a Saint Paul Area Synod grant, which was used to help fund a church-wide Mental Health Wellness and Awareness Workshop in February. A second grant from St. Mark's Foundation funded the luncheon portion of the workshop. The purpose of the February mental health workshop was two-fold: in addition to finding out how many members were interested in learning about mental health, St. Mark's leaders wanted to identify ways we might better support people whose lives are touched by mental illness. Forty-three people attended the workshop and generated multiple ideas for outreach, education, advocacy, and enhanced community.

Mental Health Workshop: Kay King, an adult educator with the Minnesota Chapter for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), spoke at the three-hour workshop. King explained that mental health illnesses, just like physical conditions, have better success rates if treated early. Fifty percent of people with mental illness have symptoms by age 14, she said, also noting that one in five people experience mental illness at some point in their lives. Because of fear of stigma, many people live with mental illness for years before getting treatment, a scenario that can result in broken relationships, financial difficulties, homelessness, and incarceration. Workshop participants convened in small groups to brainstorm specific ideas and possible next steps for St. Mark's. There was widespread interest to begin the process of discerning how we move forward; select specific new initiatives that will best fit our congregation and community; and incorporate mental health-related initiatives into existing programming such as our Wednesday night dinners, Bible studies and youth events. After the workshop, the MHM leadership team surveyed participants. This led to further identification of priorities; expansion of the leadership team; development of a mental health book club; involvement in the church ministry fair; resource displays for Mental Health Awareness Month; and discussion of future workshops or seminars.

Mental Health Ministry Sunday: As part of a special series at St. Mark's lifting up specific missions on specific Sundays, the MHM team developed communications, including bulletin boards, posters and a resource table. This special Sunday (Oct. 15) also featured a second successful workshop. Kylie Davis, a counselor from North High, led a seminar at St. Mark's, discussing mental health challenges facing youth as well as identifying ways parents, grandparents and other adults can support mental health for young people. North High counselors indicated interest in working with St. Mark's on future initiatives including sharing information with parents about future mental health education programming through their newsletter.

Foundation Funding: As we close out this year and plan for 2024, we are heartened by the thoughtful and generous investment of up to \$3,000 for the MHM from the St. Mark's Foundation to be used for speakers, books, educational materials, promotion and other related costs.

Going forward, St. Mark's MHM plans to focus on developing a church-wide, wellness-based program. This ministry seeks to be inclusive and offer broad appeal so everyone can participate: people with mental illness, caregivers, allies and anyone interested in learning more about mental health illness and wellness topics. Beginning in January, we will host sessions of MN NAMI's *Hearts and Minds* program, teaching us new ways of caring for our minds and bodies. We are building a resource section in our library and have launched a small lending library for children. The Mental Health Book Club welcomes new members at any time and will continue to select, read and discuss mental health-related books.

If you are interested in learning more or wish to help with programming, please contact any MHM team member. The 2023-24 team includes: Rod Larkins, Amy Reddy, Julie Urban, Judy Larkins, Co-Chairs Bonnie Meyers and Shari Hamilton, Deacon Kate Lindberg and Pastor David Bjorklund.

Personnel Committee

2023 Annual Report

The Personnel Team is an advisory group. The responsibilities include:

- Develop personnel policies
- Provide oversight on personnel matters
- Develop and update employee job descriptions
- Provide annual budget

This past year, the Personnel Team has been involved in the following:

- The Employee Handbook was completely updated. The updates follow both State and Federal Laws that pertain to small businesses. We also follow the Synod Guidelines for employees. This ensures that our employees are protected and valued.
- Copies of the handbook are in the church office and available for viewing.
- We assisted with the hiring process of the lead pastor, deacon, custodians and music director
- We reviewed an updated job descriptions for music director and custodians.
- Prepared a yearly budget for staffing at St. Mark's.
- Conducted volunteer recognition for several groups at St. Marks.

In closing, we want to express our thanks to the entire staff at St. Mark's. We as a church are blessed by every employee and volunteer who work tirelessly in achieving a welcoming, loving, and sustainable place to call our church home. We want to thank the congregation for all your prayers and support.

Personnel Committee members include Carolyn Newell, Suzanne Ericson, Lynn Wyman and Julie Urban.

Respectfully Submitted by: Julie Urban Chair, Personnel

Property Committee

2023 Annual Report

The Property Committee had a good year and below is a summary of 2023, highlighting many accomplishments. In addition to providing regular maintenance, we have successfully completed several long-standing projects.

Project highlights from 2023:

- We replaced the air conditioning system in the sanctuary, ensuring a comfortable environment for our congregation during services and events.
- The large sanctuary beams were repaired and wrapped with a protective metal covering to prevent water damage, preserving the structural integrity.
- To enhance accessibility, we installed automatic push button door openers in the narthex, making it easier for everyone to enter and exit the church.
- New floors were installed in the Fireside kitchen and the Head Start rooms.
- We collaborated with the students of North High School to refurbish one of our rain gardens.
- The Grace Space was completed for the children and their families.
- To streamline the process of changing banners in the front of the sanctuary, a new lift was installed, facilitating ease of use for our volunteers.
- We addressed the issue of water leakage by repairing the sanctuary skylights.
- To meet the growing electrical demands of our church, an upgrade was made to the electrical panel in Rees Hall.
- We trimmed many trees and removed those affected by disease.

Looking ahead to 2024:

- We plan to replace the original furnaces in Rees Hall early in 2024.
- We will continue to invest in security and safety upgrades.
- We will investigate our options to replace the stoves in Rees Hall

We would like to invite all members of our congregation to join the monthly group of volunteers called Saturday Stewards. This group meets on the first Saturday of every month and offers tasks/projects suitable for all skill levels. It is a wonderful opportunity to contribute to the upkeep of our church and strengthen the sense of community.

We are so grateful for the dedication and hard work of our volunteers and the support of our congregation. Together, we have accomplished significant milestones in improving our church facilities and grounds.

Property Committee:

Mike Clasen, Chair Mark McKenzie Gary Hook Doug Ronsberg Brian Larson Greg Linder Rod Larkins Heidi McKenzie

Social Ministry

2023Annual Report

As a congregation, the center of our life together is worship, where the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments are shared. From that center we are sent out to serve, and St. Mark's has a long and strong history of service in our church and community. Here are some highlights of the past year:

- Caring Hands volunteers serve families at a time of grief and loss by setting up a comfortable space and serving a meal at the time of a funeral or memorial service. In 2023 we had 16 funeral luncheons at church. The team of volunteers is led by Kathy Mewis. Additional volunteers are often needed to make cookies or bars. If you would like to be on this list, please contact Kathy or the church office.
- Wednesday Night Community Meal. Meals are provided on Wednesday evenings during the school year. All are invited. Freewill offering is gladly accepted but not required. Thanks to Julie Urban for heading up the team of dedicated volunteers who make this possible. The team welcomes anyone to come and help on Wednesday nights. We start at 3:00. Our average attendance is 85. In the first half of the 2023-24 school year (Sept Dec), 1,243 people have been served!
- St. Mark's partnered again with **Interfaith Action's School Supply Drive** (serving 10 programs in the Greater St. Paul area) to provide students from low-income families with the essential school tools they need. Backpacks, supplies and cash donations were collected. Many children benefitted from your generosity. Special thanks to Sherry Berry for coordinating the collection.
- The Polar Pantry has replaced the Polar Pack program. Instead of purchasing items and filling backpacks for students to pick up, this partnership provides North High with monetary donations and some food/hygiene products (a list is available in Rees Hall) to the district-wide pantry located in the District Center across the street. Monetary donations are used to buy food directly from Second Harvest. Students and families can "shop" at the pantry to obtain the items they need. The staff at North are very thankful that we continue to help them provide this support for families experiencing food insecurity. Monetary donations can be made to St. Mark's, noting they are for the Polar Pantry.
- Free Produce Events. We continued our partnership with Second Harvest and the NSP Food Shelf to host three free produce events (July, August, and September.) This has been a powerful way to both serve and connect with our neighbors. Over the 3 dates, we helped over 500 families get fresh produce at no cost. We could not have done that without the time of so many of you. Thank you! Special thanks to Julie Urban and Suzanne Ericson for coordinating the event and to our reliable volunteers who showed up each month. Also, thanks to our partners at the North St. Paul Food Shelf and Second Harvest for providing the food.
- **Thanksgiving meals.** New to our ministry this year, St. Mark's worked with North High to help families with meals at Thanksgiving. With your generous donations we were able to provide 50 families with a complete Thanksgiving meal 10-12 lb. turkey, sides and dessert. Thank you for supporting St. Mark's partnership with North High School, its students, and their families.
- **Gift Goes On Christmas Giving Program.** As a community, we supported 9 families (24 individuals) in our own congregation, Head Start families, and Ramsey County families in need with gifts and food cards, plus an additional 13 people with food cards only. Liz Elicerio-Nelson coordinated the effort. Our youth created gift bags of "keep you warm" items for each person that included: winter hats, scarves, socks, blankets, mittens, gloves and soft toys. Giving by St. Mark's included: personal gift requests for 24 people; all the hats, scarves, blankets, gloves/mittens, socks, blankets, and stuffed animal toys; and 48 food gift cards.

Stewardship for All Seasons

2023 Annual Report

The Stewardship for All Seasons (SAS) committee meets monthly to consider opportunities to encourage sharing the blessings received by the St. Mark's community to support the work God calls us to in this place and time. We are seeking additional members – please let us know if you would like to learn more about this work!

A specific task for the group is to develop and manage the annual fall stewardship campaign, during which all congregants are asked to provide their intent to support St. Mark's through giving and prayer. The SAS committee identifies initiatives and goals for the campaign, explains and promotes those initiatives and goals, and assists pastors and staff in preparing materials and securing volunteers to present temple talks.



The 2023 campaign year focused on increasing our awareness and participation in the activities and committees available at St. Mark's.

- We organized and promoted a Celebration of Ministries event in May in conjunction with an outdoor worship service and picnic. It was well received and well attended. Our goal was to obtain contact information for 10 people interested in learning more, and we doubled that goal.
- We worked with Pastor David and Deacon Kate to focus on one ministry per Sunday during the months of September and October. Those who spoke on behalf of the ministries featured did so with passion.
- We sought the creative talents of Gary Martin and Judy Larkins to help create videos that featured interviews with a wide variety of St. Mark's members who talked about what volunteering has meant to them.
- And, we asked for the congregation's support for the work we continue to do here at St. Mark's.

Intent Sunday was on November 19, 2023. We asked for an increase in regular donations of seven percent (7%). Currently, 160 members have returned intent cards for a net decrease in total pledges of just under \$16,000 (4.1%).

On behalf of the Stewardship for All Seasons committee, thank you for your prayerful response to the fall campaign. We are grateful for your commitment to St. Mark's.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the SAS Committee.

Committee members: Kathy Hanon, chair Pastor David Bjorklund Betty Beane Beth Jensen Dave Lande Rod Larkins Ann Mott, staff

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church Foundation

2023 Annual Report



The St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church Foundation continues its mission of conveying the Christian message to people through excellence in worship, education and the building of relationships, both within the church and out into the community.

During 2023, the Foundation board members worked on introducing the new logo emphasizing its full name "St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church Foundation." The task of reviewing the bylaws was completed, making sure they are up-to-date. The board members held a workshop in the fall, focusing on The Foundation's strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The workshop generated many good ideas that can be incorporated into the workings of The Foundation. Foundation Week 2023 was again a highlight for showcasing information about the Foundation.

The Foundation Grants Committee worked to identify focus areas for 2024 and will partner with church committees and staff to develop grants to support these important ministries. The focus areas identified by the Grants Committee include the church's mental health ministry, music ministry, and its children, youth and family ministries. The grant process in place for grant requests by people from the congregation and the community will also continue.

The Foundation continued to carry its mission forward by endowing grants for \$4,500 during 2023:

- Helping North High School families, a grant was given for food gift cards to help with gift baskets during the recent holidays.
- Kate Lindberg, an intern at St. Mark's during 2023, received a grant in recognition of her dedication and support of St. Mark's Church community during her internship.
- St. Mark's youth were recipients of a grant to help fund their canoe trip.
- Woodbury Chorus and Orchestra received help with the purchase of a much-needed van to travel around the state as they performed concerts to raise funds for local food shelves.
- The Mental Health Committee received help with seed money to begin a long-term program at St. Mark's Church.
- Highlighting St. Mark's ministries, a grant was given to the Stewardship for all Seasons committee for the Ministry Fair held in the spring.
- The Foundation helped fund the entertainment for the annual Progressive Dinner.
- The Foundation continues to work with church staff, the congregation and stake holders in the community to find ways to help those in need.

The Foundation was blessed in 2023 with financial gifts of more than \$19,000 through legacy gifts, donations, memorials, Thrivent Choice Dollars, and employee matching gifts from U.S. Bank. The Foundation's assets are invested to continue to support the community through grants in 2023. The finance committee works to maximize the return on investments through engagement with professional financial advisors, creates the budget for the Foundation, and monitors the financial health of the assets of the Foundation.

The Foundation continued its commitment to keep the congregation informed about the Foundation's progress and activities. The Foundation website, announcements in the church weekly updates and Foundation Week continue to be good resources of information about the Foundation.

The Foundation Board of Trustees includes: President Terry Kapaun, Vice President Barb Michel, Treasurer Tom Michel, Secretary Karyn Mikel, Judy Duffy, Paul Ellefson, Kathy Hanon, Ken Indrelie, Linda Kapaun, Rod Larkins, Steve Linder, John Pottratz, Craig Sterling and legal advisor Bill Baumeister.

For more information about the Foundation, please browse the St. Mark's Foundation website at www.stmarksnspfoundation.com

Women of St. Mark's

2023 Annual Report

Ministry Vision: As an organization of Christian women, we encourage all women to grow in their faith, be of service to others and engage in fellowship with other women.

The Women of St. Mark's have four Bible Study Groups. We are a part of the St. Paul Area Synodical Women's Organization and the Women of the ELCA. The groups meet for Bible Study and fellowship. We remember St. Mark's shut-ins with cards and small gifts throughout the year. The Prayer Shawl Ministry knits/crochets 25-30 comforting shawls each year for those in need. Monetary support is given to the North St. Paul Food Shelf, Second Harvest Heartland, Welcome Desk/Food Pantry at North High School, LSS Crisis Center/LSS Preschool Project, Feed My Starving Children, Kihesa Student Support in Tanzania and the Tanzania Water Project. Other gifts were given to the North St. Paul Toy Shelf, Shobi's Table, St. Mark's "The Gift Goes On," and disaster support for Turkey, Syria, Ukraine and Maui. In August, we thanked Darlene Dent for being our secretary and welcomed Linda Haley into that position.

In addition, we plan the following events. All women of the church are welcome and encouraged to attend.

- **January-March** Quilting Ministry. 81 quilts were completed, blessed, and sent to LWR (some were kept for local use.) Thank you for your dedication.
- January Cabin Fever Game Day. 8 people attended and enjoyed games, snacks and fellowship.
- **March** Thankoffering Calendars show gratitude for our many blessings. Money collected was given to the Churchwide Women of the ELCA, ELCA World Hunger and the North St. Paul Food Shelf.
- **May** Mother-Daughter-Friend Brunch included a presentation titled *Father Knows Best, But Mom Knows Better* from storyteller Pati Kachel. 48 women and children attended the brunch.
- May Rachel's Day was observed to remember children who are victims of violence and abuse.
- **July** Summer Bible Study *Salvation Now* was led by Kate Lindberg. This was held at Polar Ridge Senior Living with 15 people attending.
- October Fall Luncheon. Program by Eric Gustafson from Shobi's Table Food Truck Ministry. 21 women attended and enjoyed a catered meal from Shobi's Table.
- **December** Advent Brunch was hosted with a "Lessons and Carols" format created by Kate Lindberg and Tom Paulson. 36 women attended this annual event for a wonderful time of reflection and preparation.

The St. Paul Area Synodical Women participated in our local convention, Churchwide Triennial convention, Cluster meetings and a Soup Luncheon (hosted by St. Mark's.) There were many opportunities for learning, giving and fellowship.

The Collection Cupboard is located in Rees Hall. Items collected include pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, eyeglasses for the Lions International sight projects around the world, and kits/projects for the women's organization. Bar soap and Boxtops for Education are not being accepted.

Respectfully submitted, Virginia Coller, Chairperson

Committee Members:

Sherry Berry, Sue Fletcher, Darlene Dent, Linda Haley and Bible Study Group representatives.

Women of St. Mark's Financial Report

2023 Annual Report

Prepared by Sue Fletcher

CASH ON HAND 12-31-2023	\$	4,705.50
RECEIPTS Offering Mother Daughter Friend Luncheon Summer Bible Study Fall Brunch Advent Brunch Thank Offering Memorials TOTAL RECEIPTS FOR 2023	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$	2,409.00 547.00 130.00 625.00 417.00 603.33 150.00 4,881.33
DISBURSEMENTS WELCA offering WELCA convention registration, offerings, resolutions WELCA-Churchwide-Hunger (thank offering) North St Paul Food Shelf Second Harvest Heartland St Paul Partners Tanzanina water project Feed My Starving Children St. Mark's Lutheran Church (office supplies donation) Mother Daughter Friend Summer Bible Study Advent Brunch North St Paul Toy Shelf North High Tanzania Support Shobie's Table fall brunch Lutheran Social student support Lutheran World Relief Turkey and Ukraine Lutheran Disaster Relief Maui A Gift Goes On Memorials Misc. Expense TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$	650.00 440.00 450.00 505.00 100.00 150.00 175.00 512.10 144.96 274.77 130.00 150.00 625.00 115.15 210.00 100.00 326.55 150.00 119.27 5,577.80
SPECIAL ACCOUNTS Quilting Prayer Shawls Craft Day Triennial set aside Capital Reserve set aside Total BALANCE AFTER SPECIAL ACCOUNTS	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$	1,515.11 230.58 87.75 - 325.00 2,158.44 1,850.59

Minutes: St. Mark's Annual Congregational Meeting - Sunday, January 29, 2023

Agenda Topic	Discussion	Action
Establish Quorum / Call to Order	Quorum obtained at 10:44 AM	Called to order at 10:45 AM by Mike Ericson
Opening Prayer		Pr. David Bjorklund
Review of 2022 and What's Next	Update to congregation on the past year: Intern Eric Gustafson's internship Pr. Mary Frolland's retirement Interim Pr. Arne Bergland Constitution committee Council retreat, Wednesday service/youth programming cont. Lucille Low's estate gift Digital signage, parking lot, HVAC, Grace Space (special thanks to Mark McKenzie and Mike Clasen) Stewardship for All Seasons Call committee and process Congregational survey Call committee continuing search for Associate pastor	Pr. Pastor David Bjorklund
Annual Business	 Approval of the Meeting Minutes from 2022 January 30 Annual meeting July 10 Special meeting December 11 Special meeting Approval of the Meeting Minutes from 2023 January 15 Special meeting Nominating Committee report Nominations were as followed: 	Mike Ericson (President) conducted annual business Motion by Sharon Hamilton, seconded by Betty Beane to approve Jan. 30 Annual minutes as stated. All were in favor. Minutes approved. Motion by Kathy Hanon,

Minutes: St. Mark's Annual Congregational Meeting - Sunday, January 29, 2023

 Election of church Council members: Gary Hook (i) and Candy Petersen Virgil Christoffersen (self-nominated from floor) Election of Synod Assembly voting members: 	seconded by Pete Mogren to approve July 10 Special minutes as stated. All were in favor. Minutes approved.
 Kurt Biedermann and Karyn Mikel Joe Danko and Bonnie Pottratz (self-nominated 	Motion by Barb McNeely,
from floor)	seconded by Dave Lande to
Election of Nominating members:	approve Dec. 11 Special
 Candy Petersen and Shannon Young 	minutes as stated. All were
	in favor. Minutes approved.
 Thank you for your service. The outgoing members of the Council, 	
Dan Colberg, Iren Hastings, Violet Hirman, and Beth Ingberg, were	Motion by Dave Lande,
recognized.	seconded by Julie Urban to
 Mike Ericson recognized Ann Mott for her dedication as well. 	approve Jan. 15 Special
	minutes as stated. All were
Sexual Harassment Policy	in favor. Minutes approved.
 Julie Urban announced the annual notification that the updated 	
policy is in the office and St. Mark's is in compliance.	Motion by Dave Lande to
 Bonnie Meyers and Mark McKenzie emphasized how 	elect the slate of officers by
important this policy is and St. Mark's must be a place	acclamation. Seconded by
of safety and security to all.	Bob Engwer. All in favor
	and approved.
 Review of 2022 Finances 	the state of the s
 St. Mark's cash position ended at a healthy balance of 	Along with Mike Ericson,
\$300,000.	Council members Bob
 Though service attendance was lower than last year, giving 	Engwer, Brian Larson, and
and contributions were higher.	Beth Ingberg discussed
 The budget proposed and passed last year had a deficit, but by 	review of 2022 finances and
year end was erased and ended in the positive through giving	2023 proposed budget.
and financial stewardship.	
 There is a \$100,000 Employee Tax Credit for 2022 that is 	
included in the 2023 proposed budget.	

Minutes: St. Mark's Annual Congregational Meeting - Sunday, January 29, 2023

						Motion made by Tom Hamilton, and seconded by Dave Lande, to approve 2023 proposed budget. All in favor and approved.
Discussion and Adoption of 2023 Budget	Staffed for full-time Lead and Associate Pastor, Seminary Intern, and part-time youth position	Includes an 8% raise for eligible staff ■ Julie Urban explained that the insurance premiums and cost-of-living expenses were a driving force for necessary increase	\$100,000 Employee Retention Tax Credit (2022) Beth Ingberg reminded the congregation that this credit is included in the proposed budget. In addition, the cash balance of \$300,000 can't be included in the budget, but is there to help cover the remaining deficit.	Music Ministry focus	Strategic Action Plan	 Jim Wolf asked what's included in property, for instance, new kitchen ovens and other appliances: Brian Larson responded that the BMI fund was one beneficiary of the Low estate gift, but that the committee wants to be good stewards with how that money can help facilities. The St. Mark's Foundation was another beneficiary that the congregation could utilize for worthy projects. Mark McKenzie reiterated that this is a good opportunity to push for more updates rather than fix-its. Bob Engwer noted that the estate gift is being thoughtfully considered and put into CD's to house money until some of these financial decisions can be made. Overall, the Finance committee feels this proposed budget is solid and recommends its approval.
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Minutes: St. Mark's Annual Congregational Meeting - Sunday, January 29, 2023

	 Sherry Berry asked if Genesis East is continuing their rental. ■ Pr. David Bjorklund said they are committed to rent for the year. 	
	New Business Action of the second o	Mike Ericson (President) led discussion
	 ZUZ3 Constitution ratification Alan Wyman (chair) spoke on behalf of the committee to review the timeline of past events, including St. Mark's and St. Paul Synod's recent approval of 	Motion by Judy Larkins to ratify the approved updated 2023 version of St. Mark's
	changes. In addition, Council recently passed the continuing resolution describing the Mutual Ministries'	NSP Constitution. Seconded by Gary Martin.
	 purpose. Alan will send the constitution to both Ann Mott and the synod for records, if ratified. 	All in favor and approved.
	 Recognition of Dorothea Jirsa ■ Gift and plaque offered to Dorothea for her service to St. Mark's. 	Pr. David Bjorklund and Mike Erison led recognition.
	 Barb McNeely recognized Helene Doran for her time and effort to St. Mark's. 	
	 Sharon Hamilton invited the congregation to next Sunday's mental health workshop and its importance to our community. 	
Closing Prayer	Closing prayer by Pr. Arne Bergland	Motion by Beth Ingberg and
and adjournment		seconded by Mark McKenzie to adjourn at 11:30 AM - all in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Josh Hirman, Council secretary

Minutes: St. Mark's Special Congregational Meeting - Sunday, August 27, 2023

Agenda Topic	Discussion	Action
Establish Quorum / Call to Order	Today's meeting took place in the sanctuary. Quorum obtained at 10:40 AM.	Called to order at 10:40 AM by Mike Ericson
Business	 Vote to approve candidate Deacon Kate Lindberg to Associate role of St. Mark's Discussion/Questions: Bonnie Meyers reviewed: Deacon Kate's call process, including the Call committee's interactions, interview, observations, and references, leading to a vote from the committee to move forward with the associate call. During the ballot distribution Pr. David Bjorklund responded to general questions about Diaconal role and responsibilities. Proceeded to vote Result of paper ballots:	Mike Ericson introduced Bonnie Meyers, chair of Call committee
		Mike Ericson announced that St. Mark's congregation approved Kate Lindberg to serve as Deacon by a majority of votes.
Adjournment		Meeting adjourned at 11:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Josh Hirman, Council secretary

2023 Financial Report & 2024 Proposed Budget

Saint Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church Analysis of Revenues & Expenses General Operations Fund 2023 Fiscal Year End

Accounts	2023	2023 Budget	Total Act. 2022
INCOME			
CONTRIBUTIONS			
GENERAL CONTRIBUTIONS			
Tithes & Offerings	\$521,234.18	\$525,050.00	\$515,499.01
Bequests	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$138,424.15
Initial Offerings	\$170.00	\$300.00	\$236.00
Holiday Contributions	\$14,391.50	\$24,000.00	\$15,122.55
Total GENERAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$535,795.68	\$549,350.00	\$669,281.71
OTHER INCOME			
Building Use	\$22,850.77	\$22,700.00	\$22,457.72
Miscellaneous Receipts	\$6,986.34	\$105,471.91	\$7,052.11
Total OTHER INCOME	\$29,837.11	\$128,171.91	\$29,509.83
Total INCOME	\$565,632.79	\$677,521.91	\$698,791.54
EXPENSES			
NOAH TEAM			
PERSONNEL	\$352,619.35	\$485,327.00	\$341,256.21
COMMUNICATIONS	\$4,832.41	\$6,750.00	\$2,927.27
OFFICE OPERATIONS	\$15,495.66	\$16,775.00	\$26,946.10
TECHNOLOGY	\$2,650.00	\$3,300.00	\$2,450.00
PROPERTY	\$133,228.85	\$148,565.00	\$127,571.45
STEWARDSHIP	\$6,362.89	\$4,900.00	\$4,831.44
RESERVE ACCURAL	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,535.20
OTHER PROGRAMS	\$1,452.40	\$1,400.00	\$447.66
Total NOAH TEAM	\$516,641.56	\$667,017.00	\$511,965.33
PETER TEAM			
BENEVOLENCE	\$24,000.04	\$24,500.00	\$23,500.04
SOCIAL MINISTRY	\$753.64	\$1,200.00	\$73.30
WORSHIP & MUSIC	\$14,246.91	\$15,700.00	\$20,135.70
HOSPITALITY	\$2,642.95	\$2,000.00	\$2,185.40
Total PETER TEAM	\$41,643.54	\$43,400.00	\$45,894.44
MOSES TEAM			
CHRISTIAN ED	\$10,474.16	\$12,000.00	\$5,803.41
Total MOSES TEAM	\$10,474.16	\$12,000.00	\$5,803.41
Total EXPENSES	\$568,759.26	\$722,417.00	\$563,663.18
Net Total	(\$3,126.47)	(\$44,895.09)	\$135,128.36

Saint Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church Balance Sheet All Funds 2023 Fiscal Year End

Assets		
Current Assets		
General Fund	0.00 === ==	
General Fund Checking	\$123,727.70	
Petty Cash	\$41.81	
General Fund Premier/Reserve Acct	\$50,964.41	
Mission Invest. Fund/Reserve	\$1,048.03	
General Fund Premier Investment	\$193,867.36	
Yr End - Contributions Receivable	\$2,060.00	
Total General Fund	\$371,709.31	
Gifts & Memorials		
G & M Checking	(\$81,406.40)	
G & M Premier	\$710,884.32	
G & M UBS CD Purchase	\$99,163.54	
G & M Year End - Memorials Receivable	\$0.00	
Total Gifts & Memorials	\$728,641.46	
Youth Fund		
Youth Checking	\$5,373.92	
Total Youth Fund	\$5,373.92	
Drama		
Drama Checking	\$10,843.41	
Total Drama	\$10,843.41	
Total Current Assets		\$1,116,568.10
Fixed Assets		
Land & Bldg	\$2,500,000.00	
Total Fixed Assets		\$2,500,000.0
Total Assets		\$3,616,568.10
Liabilities, Fund Principal, & Restricted Funds Long Term Liabilities General Fund MIF Loan Payable(LT) Total General Fund Equity - by Fund	\$136,078.94 \$136,078.94	\$136,078.94
General Fund Equity Fixed Assets	\$2,364,127.85	
General Fund Equity - Cash	\$303,759.75	
Total Fund Principal	\$2,667,887.60	\$2,667,887.60
Total Fund Principal and Excess Cash Received	\$2,007,007.00	\$2,007,007.00
Restricted Funds		
Temp Restricted General	\$67,742.77	
•		
Temp Restricted G&M	\$728,641.46	
Temp Restricted Youth	\$5,373.92	
Temp Restricted Drama	\$10,843.41	0010 (01 5
Total Temporarily Restricted	\$812,601.56	\$812,601.50
Total Restricted Funds		
Total Restricted Funds Total Liabilities, Fund Principal, & Restricted Funds		

\$3,616,568.10

Summary of Restricted Accounts 2023 Fiscal Year End

	Beginning Balance	Restricted Revenues	Restricted Expenses	Ending Balance				
	GENERAL FUND	revenues	Expenses	Dalance				
Reserve Account	\$50,661.96	\$350.48	\$0.00	\$51,012.44				
Clergy Opt. Payroll Deductions	\$12.52	\$6,077.34	\$6,087.12	\$2.74				
Program Staff Payroll Deductions	\$0.00	\$2,055.82	\$2,055.82	\$0.00				
Genl Fund Restricted Gifts	\$70.18	\$0.00	\$2,033.82	\$70.04				
Garden Team	\$1,535.19	\$2,960.00	\$2,557.50	\$1,937.69				
Social Ministry	\$1,794.94	\$1,913.00	\$515.94	\$3,192.00				
Lenten Lunches	\$430.27	\$90.00	\$303.52	\$216.75				
Scholarship Financial Peace	\$759.31	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$759.31				
Staff Gift	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00				
Progressive Dinner	\$727.47	\$1,691.20	\$1,991.19	\$427.48				
Adult Bible Series	\$66.48	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$66.48				
GF Pledge Pre-payment	\$550.00	\$103.00	\$653.00	\$0.00				
Total	\$56,708.32	\$15,240.84	\$14,164.23	\$57,784.93				
Misc. In/Out Accounts	\$30,700.52	ψ13,240.04	\$14,104.25	\$57,704.70				
Altar Flowers	\$34.57	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$34.57				
Holiday Decorations	\$5,939.60	\$3,603.35	\$6,587.86	\$2,955.09				
North Teacher Appreciation	\$583.29	\$0.00	\$300.90	\$282.39				
Funeral Food/Costs	\$1,272.17	\$17,145.98	\$16,832.42	\$1,585.73				
Wedding Fees/Costs	\$1,139.57	\$750.00	\$1,340.16	\$549.41				
CE - WED Family Meals	\$3,600.18	\$4,130.85	\$4,210.86	\$3,520.17				
North St. Paul Food Shelf	\$300.00	\$581.00	\$881.00	\$0.00				
GF Other Donations to Forward	\$327.00	\$485.00	\$632.00	\$180.00				
World Hunger	\$0.00	\$120.28	\$120.28	\$0.00				
BoyScouts - Pop Machine	\$499.77	\$0.00	\$86.28	\$413.49				
In/Out Purchases	\$103.94	\$3,372.11	\$3,039.06	\$436.99				
Total Misc. In/Out Accounts	\$13,800.09	\$30,188.57	\$34,030.82	\$9,957.84				
Total TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED GEN	\$70,508.41	\$45,429.41	\$48,195.05	\$67,742.77				
=								
	YOUTH FUND							
Youth - Pay It Forward	\$5,453.02	\$247.75	\$3,218.03	\$2,482.74				
Youth Memorial	\$0.00	\$985.00	\$0.00	\$985.00				
Pop Machine	\$0.00	\$187.75	\$40.00	\$147.75				
Youth Benevolence	\$0.00	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$25.00				
Total	\$5,453.02	\$1,445.50	\$3,258.03	\$3,640.49				
Sr. High								
Summer Experience Trip Registration	(\$853.04)	\$2,525.00	\$1,923.20	(\$251.24)				
Summer Experience Trip Fundraisers	\$55.23	\$3,170.00	\$2,442.09	\$783.14				
Youth Event Fees	\$411.35	\$573.00	\$413.00	\$571.35				
Total Sr. High	(\$386.46)	\$6,268.00	\$4,778.29	\$1,103.25				
Confirmation								
Confirmation Reg/Expense	\$630.18	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$630.18				
Total Confirmation	\$630.18	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$630.18				
Total TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED YOUT	\$5,696.74	\$7,713.50	\$8,036.32	\$5,373.92				
DDAMA FUDID								
	DRAMA FUND							
Drama Prior Years' Net	\$11,133.81	\$290.40	\$580.80	\$10,843.41				
GIFTS & MEMORIALS								
Technology								
Office Technology & Communications	\$1,837.46	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,837.46				
Computer Tech - Yr End Transfer	\$1,835.06	\$892.92	\$0.00	\$2,727.98				
Technology: Sanctuary Visual/Audio	\$4,233.63	\$0.00	\$3,240.00	\$993.63				
Total Technology	\$7,906.15	\$892.92	\$3,240.00	\$5,559.07				

Summary of Restricted Accounts (con't)

Property				
Garden Team	\$77.90	\$220.00	\$220.00	\$77.90
Recycling Grant - Ramsey County	\$305.36	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$305.36
Building Maintenance & Improvement	\$497,041.68	\$36,111.59	\$77,018.00	\$456,135.27
Bldg: Office Windows	\$1,120.17	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,120.17
Air Conditioner Repair	\$14,698.72	\$14,718.72	\$29,397.44	\$20.00
Parking Lot Repair/Maintenance	\$10,263.09	\$16,630.00	\$13,756.00	\$13,137.09
CAPITAL FUND Balance Xfer	\$27,498.63	\$0.00	\$10,846.00	\$16,652.63
Bldg: Chairs/Luth.Comm.Fdn. Bldg: Roof Repairs	\$453.44 \$104,934.70	\$120.00 \$1,909.79	\$0.00 \$106,844.49	\$573.44 (\$0.00)
Total Property	\$656,393.69	\$69,710.10	\$238,081.93	\$488,021.86
Other Programs	\$000 ,0 00.00	\$65,710.10	\$200,001.50	\$ 100,021.00
Undesignated Memorials	\$5,583.32	\$587.00	\$775.00	\$5,395.32
Memorials-Where Needed Most	\$165.05	\$3,166.44	\$472.88	\$2,858.61
Pastor Initiative	\$10,288.69	\$1,260.00	\$2,670.00	\$8,878.69
Memorials To Be Designated	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Library	\$4,281.49	\$0.00	\$19.97	\$4,261.52
G & M Items to Forward Foundation Dollars to Forward	\$571.37	\$250.00	\$585.00	\$236.37
G & M Hospitality	\$353.00 \$66.30	\$6,593.50 \$0.00	\$6,946.50 \$27.98	\$0.00 \$38.32
Women's Programs	\$130.00	\$125.00	\$255.00	\$0.00
UBS - CD Interest Earned	\$0.00	\$26,817.20	\$932.88	\$25,884.32
Interest on G & M	\$6,039.34	\$2,320.86	\$534.00	\$7,826.20
Total Other Programs	\$27,478.56	\$41,120.00	\$13,219.21	\$55,379.35
Social Ministry				
Social Ministry	\$2,070.88	\$115.00	\$0.00	\$2,185.88
Local Ministry Startup - Estate Gift	\$92,282.68	\$0.00	\$7,500.00	\$84,782.68
Refugee Support	\$6,597.67	\$980.00	\$4,648.00	\$2,929.67
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$1,542.03	\$2,534.07	\$1,566.30	\$2,509.80
Caring/Visiting Ministry Polar Back Packs	\$449.08	\$815.00	\$570.75	\$693.33
Fellowship Fund	\$7,060.07 \$21,550.99	\$1,830.65 \$1,312.08	\$1,180.89 \$4,576.34	\$7,709.83 \$18,286.73
Total Social Ministry	\$131,553.40	\$7,586.80	\$20,042.28	\$119,097.92
Missions	\$101,550.10	\$7,000.00	\$20,0 12.20	Ψ11,007,02
Missions: INDIA Child	\$25,330.53	\$27,704.14	\$35,849.64	\$17,185.03
Missions: INDIA Orphanage Improvement	\$647.58	\$0.00	\$647.58	\$0.00
Missions: INDIA (Memorial)	\$1,230.78	\$0.00	\$1,230.78	\$0.00
Missions: TANZANIA Sponsorships	\$1,009.44	\$14,081.70	\$13,333.69	\$1,757.45
Missions: TANZANIA Missions	\$2,093.93	\$2,712.06	\$4,650.00	\$155.99
Total Social Ministry	\$30,312.26	\$44,497.90	\$55,711.69	\$19,098.47
Worship & Music				
Worship Worship: Altar Guild	\$282.87	\$0.00	\$0.00	¢292 97
Worship: Sanctuary Banners	\$282.87 \$1,888.27	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$282.87 \$1,888.27
Worship: Grace Space	\$3,094.38	\$0.00	\$1,043.40	\$2,050.98
Total Worship	\$5,265.52	\$0.00	\$1,043.40	\$4,222.12
Music	ŕ		•	•
Music Ministry	\$9,041.65	\$4,088.56	\$0.00	\$13,130.21
Music: Organ	\$35.37	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$35.37
Total Music	\$9,077.02	\$4,088.56	\$0.00	\$13,165.58
Total Worship & Music	\$14,342.54	\$4,088.56	\$1,043.40	\$17,387.70
Christian Education				
Christian Ed-Children	¢2 000 52	\$20.00	\$0.00	¢2 020 52
Sunday School / Children's Ministry Sunday School: Emergency Help Fund	\$2,998.53 \$7.77	\$30.00 \$0.00	\$0.00 \$0.00	\$3,028.53 \$7.77
Total Christian Ed-Children	\$3,006.30	\$30.00	\$0.00	\$3,036.30
Christian Ed -Youth	\$2,000.20	\$2 0.00	\$0100	\$2,020.20
Youth Gifts	\$53.68	\$237.09	\$0.00	\$290.77
Youth Scholarships	\$1,826.76	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,826.76
Total Christian Ed - Youth	\$1,880.44	\$237.09	\$0.00	\$2,117.53
Total Christian Education	\$4,886.74	\$267.09	\$0.00	\$5,153.83
Drama				***
Drama	\$18,943.26	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,943.26
Total Drama Total TEMPORARII V DESTRICTED C.8.M	\$18,943.26	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,943.26
Total TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED G&M	\$891,816.60	\$168,163.37	\$331,338.51	\$728,641.46

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church Fiscal Year End 2023

		Cash Flow per Fund						_	
	G	eneral Fund	G & M Fund		Youth		Drama		All Funds
Cash @ 12/31/22	\$	307,097.01	\$891,816.60	\$	5,696.74		\$0.00	\$	1,204,610.35
								\$	-
Revenue - 2022		\$565,632.79	\$168,163.37		\$7,713.50		\$0.00		\$741,509.66
Expenses - 2022	\$	568,759.26	\$331,338.51		\$8,036.32		\$0.00		\$908,134.09
Net Income/(Loss)	\$	(3,126.47)	\$ (163,175.14)	\$	(322.82)	\$	-	\$	(166,624.43)
Beginning Restricted Balance	\$	70,508.41					\$11,133.81	\$	81,642.22
Ending Restricted Balance		\$67,742.77					\$10,843.41	\$	78,586.18
Net Gain/(Loss)	\$	(2,765.64)	\$ -		\$0.00	\$	(290.40)	\$	(3,056.04)
Total Cash	\$	371,713.31	\$728,641.46	\$	5,373.92	\$	10,843.41	\$	1,116,568.10
Minus total Restricted Accounts	\$	67,742.77					\$10,843.41	\$	78,586.18
Available Cash		\$303,970.54	\$728,641.46		\$5,373.92		\$0.00	\$	1,037,981.92

	Month Cash Flow per Fund						
	G	eneral Fund	G & M Fund	Youth		Drama	All Funds
Available Cash & Inv Previous Month **	\$	290,944.00	\$ 735,588.12	\$ 6,393.92	\$	-	\$ 1,032,926.04
Revenue - Current Month		\$70,977.26			\$	_	\$ 70,977.26
Expenses - Current Month	\$	57,950.72			\$	-	\$ 57,950.72
Net Gain/Loss	\$	13,026.54	(\$6,946.66)	(\$1,020.00)	\$	-	\$ 5,059.88
							\$ -
AvailableCash & Inv. @ Month End	\$	303,970.54	\$ 728,641.46	\$ 5,373.92	\$	-	\$ 1,037,985.92

Recap of Cash & Invest All Funds:	Balance	Balance		
	12/31/2022	This Month		
Checking account :				
General Fund	\$126,916.82	\$123,727.70		
G & M	\$763,473.92	(\$81,406.40)		
Youth Fund	\$5,696.74	\$5,373.92		
Drama	\$11,133.81	\$10,843.41		
Checking Account:	\$907,221.29	\$58,538.63		
G&M UBS CD Purchase	\$0.00	\$710,884.32		
General Fund Petty Cash	\$56.28	\$41.81		
Yr End - GF Contributions Receivable	\$5,103.00	\$2,060.00		
Yr End - Memorials Receivable	\$500.00	\$0.00		
Genl - Premier MM Reserve	\$49,619.92	\$50,964.41		
Genl - MIF MM Reserve	\$2,042.04	\$1,048.03		
Genl - Premier MM Investment	\$193,867.36	\$193,867.36		
G & M - Premier MM	\$127,842.68	\$99,163.54		
	\$373,372.00	\$345,043.34		
Total Cash & Investments	\$1,286,252.57	\$1,116,568.10		

General Fund - Cash Available						
		Balance 12/31/2022	Balance This Month			
Total Cash	\$	377,605.42		\$371,709.31		
	\$	377,605.42	\$	371,709.31		
Less: Restricted Funds	\$	70,508.41		\$67,742.77		
General Fund Balance (Shortage)	\$	307.097.01	\$	303.966.54		

Saint Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church Proposed 2024 Budget General Operations Fund

2024 Proposed

2024 Froposed								
Accounts		Budget	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2022 Actual			
INCOME								
CONTRIBUTIONS								
GENERAL CONTRIBUTION	ONS							
General Fund Contributio	ns	\$530,100	\$521,404	\$525,350	\$654,159			
Holiday Contributions		\$16,700	\$14,391	\$24,000	\$15,123			
Total GENERAL CONTRI	IBUTIONS	\$546,800	\$535,795	\$549,350	\$669,282			
OTHER INCOME								
Building Use		\$27,000	\$22,851	\$22,700	\$22,458			
Miscellaneous Receipts		\$5,815	\$6,986	\$5,510	\$7,052			
Total OTHER INCOME		\$32,815	\$29,837	\$28,210	\$29,510			
Total INCOME		\$579,615	\$565,632	\$577,560	\$698,792			
EXPENSES								
NOAH TEAM								
PERSONNEL		\$442,363	\$352,619	\$485,327	\$341,256			
COMMUNICATIONS		\$6,750	\$4,832	\$6,750	\$2,927			
OFFICE OPERATIONS		\$16,200	\$15,496	\$16,775	\$26,946			
TECHNOLOGY		\$3,150	\$2,650	\$3,300	\$2,450			
PROPERTY		\$151,790	\$133,229	\$148,565	\$127,571			
STEWARDSHIP		\$6,200	\$6,363	\$4,900	\$4,831			
RESERVE ACCURAL (Pay	back for HVAC)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,535			
OTHER PROGRAMS		\$3,700	\$1,452	\$1,400	\$448			
Total NOAH TEAM		\$630,153	\$516,642	\$667,017	\$511,965			
PETER TEAM								
BENEVOLENCE		\$26,000	\$24,000	\$24,500	\$23,500			
SOCIAL MINISTRY		\$2,500	\$754	\$1,200	\$73			
WORSHIP & MUSIC		\$30,600	\$14,247	\$15,700	\$20,136			
HOSPITALITY		\$4,000	\$2,643	\$2,000	\$2,185			
Total PETER TEAM		\$63,100	\$41,644	\$43,400	\$45,894			
MOSES TEAM								
CHRISTIAN ED		\$13,000	\$10,474	\$12,000	\$5,803			
Total MOSES TEAM		\$13,000	\$10,474	\$12,000	\$5,803			
Total EXPENSES		\$706,253	\$568,759	\$722,417	\$563,663			
I	ncome minus Expense	(\$126,638)	(\$3,127)	(\$144,857)	\$135,129			