

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



SAINT JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Annual Meeting

February 4, 2024

Ocean City, NJ



St. John Lutheran Church
1001 Central Avenue, Ocean City, NJ 08226
(609) 399-0798
Website: stjohnlutheranoc.org
Email: office@stjohnlutheranoc.org

January 2024

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING 2024

Dear Congregation Members,

Our annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, February 4th at 2:00 pm. Due to the outbreaks of the different viruses and the unpredictable shore winter weather, this meeting will be held via Zoom. Please use the Zoom link below to join us. If you do not wish to Zoom in, you may dial in on any phone and follow the prompts. See the phone information below. Printed booklets for the Annual Meeting will be available in the church narthex. The Annual Report will also be posted on the St. John website.

If you do not receive our St. John emails, please visit the website and submit your contact information so that we can keep you informed and send you the meeting link electronically. Hope to see you on Sunday, February 4th at 2:00 pm.

Make sure you use these Zoom links to connect with us:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3246939424?pwd=Y1BOaTBaZkphOEIwV0hURitiSUczdz09>

Meeting ID: 324 693 9424 Passcode: Luther

Or

Dial in - 929-205-6099

Meeting ID: 324 693 9424

Passcode: 460810

Peace,

Karl Yungbans, Council President

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ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
1001 CENNTRAL AVENUE, OCEAN CITY, NEW JERSEY 08226
ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING – VIA ZOOM SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024

AGENDA

1. Meeting called to order by Council President, Karl Yunghans
2. Opening Prayer
3. Report of the Teller (quorum present)
4. Adoption of the Agenda
5. Remarks by Congregation President, Karl Yunghans
6. Report of the Nominating Committee
7. Balloting
8. Approval of Minutes – February 4, 2024
9. Report of the Reverend Kevin V. Hilgendorf
10. Report of the President of Congregation Council
11. Report of the New Jersey Synod Assembly
12. Report of the Standing Committees

Christian Education
Fellowship & Faith
Evangelism & Stewardship
Finance
Property
Social Ministry and WELCA
Worship and Altar Guild

13. Report of Organizations and Other Reports

Fellowship Committee
Audit Committee
Memorial Committee
Designated Fund Descriptions
Ocean City Ecumenical Council

14. Report of the Treasurer
15. Report of the Election
16. Old Business
17. New Business
18. 2024 Proposed Spending Plan
19. Acknowledgements
20. Closing Devotions

2023 CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL AND OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION

President	Karl Yunghans
Vice President	Mike Kern
Secretary	Diane Bechtold
Treasurer	Janice Mruz
Financial Secretary	Rick Adamson

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Judy Bailey	Diane Bechtold	Deb Beuttler	Tasselett Chea
Lee Funk	Mike Kern	Alissa Lee	Andrew Sykes
Karl Yunghans			

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor	The Rev. Kevin V. Hilgendorf
Ministries of Music.....	Julia L. Henrich
Church Administrator.....	Kristen Mulraney
Custodian	Robert Gannon

STANDING COMMITTEE LIAISONS AND OTHER LEADERS

Christian Education	Alissa Lee
Stewardship/Evangelism.....	Glen Stewart
Finance	Andrew Sykes
Memorials	Susy Wilkins
Property	Lee Funk
Social Ministry.....	Deb Beuttler
Staff Support	Executive Board
Worship.....	Judith Bailey
Servant Scheduler	Susy Wilkins
Fellowship Scheduler	Alissa Lee
Synod Assembly Lay Voting Members.....	Karl Yunghans
Ecumenical Council Liaison	Diane Bechtold

OFFICERS OF THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA (WELCA)

Chairperson.....	Deb Beuttler
Secretary/Treasurer	Susy Wilkins
Liaison to Council	Deb Beuttler

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Committee: Janice Mruz, Susy Wilkins, Carol Piechoski

The Committee's task is to seek out individuals to serve on Council to replace those leaving Council and to replace current members of the Nominating Committee. Care is taken to have representation of the entire congregation. According to our Constitution we may have up to 12 members.

Completing 2nd 3-Year Term Feb. 2024 and not eligible for election:

Mike Kern
Lee Funk

Completing 1st 3-year Term in Feb. 2024 and have agreed to a 2nd 3-year term:

Rick Adamson
Judith Bailey
Deb Beuttler

Completing 1st 3-Year Term in Feb. 2025 and eligible for a 2nd 3-year term:

Alissa Lee
Drew Sykes
Diane Bechtold

Completing 1st 3- Year Term in Feb. 2026 and eligible for a 2nd 3-Year Term:

Tasselett Freeman Chea
(1) vacant term with 2 years left, vacated by Alan Lewis

Completing 2nd 3-Year Term in Feb. 2025 and not eligible:

Karl Yunghans

Vacant Council Positions Available:

2 years of (1) first 3-year term
(2) Council Positions available for first 3-year terms for a total of 11 on Council

MINUTES OF THE 2023 ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING – February 5, 2023

Pre-meeting information: Glen Stewart informed the Congregation via Zoom that the meeting would be recorded to ensure accuracy of minutes, discussions and votes.

President Karl Yunghans called the meeting to order at 2:05PM.

Pastor Hilgendorf opened the meeting with prayer.

Report of the Teller: We have a quorum.

Adoption of the Agenda: New Business addition. Motion made as amended (Rick Adamson/Carol Piechoski). Motion approved.

President's Comment: The Church is very busy and that is a wonderful thing. Welcome to new members and looking to welcome more. Would like to concentrate on hiring a Church Administrator and offer up new events.

Report of the Nominating Committee: 3 Council members completing terms. Karl Yunghans (eligible for a new 3 year term), Janice Mruz and Susy Wilkins (ineligible for re-election). 3 open positions.

Nominations for open terms: Karl Yunghans (3 year term), Al Lewis (3 year term) and Freeman Chea (3 year term). Nominations from the floor, none. Nominations closed. Vote by show of hands – Karl Yunghans – approved. Alan Lewis – approved. Freeman Chea – approved. Vote for Nominating committee – Janice Mruz, Susy Wilkins and Carol Piechoski – approved.

Approval of minutes: Motion by Mike and Wendy Kern – motion approved.

Pastor's Report: Daylight Savings Time remains! Thanks for our virtual ministry (You Tube and Zoom) which allows participation in meetings and worship from all over the country! Expecting visitors (local and online) to attend our upcoming Ash Wednesday Imposition of Ashes.

President Yunghans mentioned the need to foster participation. It is good to have different members taking responsibility for different events at the Church (Dinners, Craft Fair, Rummage Sale etc.).

Committee Reports:

Report of the NJ Synod Assembly: Pastor Kevin and Karl Yunghans attended meeting via Zoom which included displaying the quilt that was put together for the Bishop's challenge. St John's quilt square was prominent in the display. Thanks to all who supported St. John for the Bishop's Challenge!

Congregations responded positively in dismantling racism and supporting African Americans in Ministry. Pastor summarized Bishop Bartholomew's Synod message: Speak the truth, name the sin, face it and fix it! 28 Churches in NJ are calling Pastors, 18 have interim or supply Pastors.

Christian Ed: Doing well, reporting highest numbers in class in many years. No High School students. VBS very successful (20 participants per day). This year VBS will be Super Heroes of the Bible. Thanks to all the volunteers! ELCA National Gathering in 2024 New Orleans. We will need to partner with another congregation if we have interested youth.

Fellowship and Faith: Glen Stewart spoke on our Tuesday, 6:30 PM Zoom meetings. We have a faithful core group that have lively discussions including friends from Pennsylvania and Nevada! We are currently discussing and article on "The Virtual Church." The Covid pandemic forced our involvement but

now that it is here, where do we go with it? Fellowship and Faith is a great opportunity to learn, share and put into practice the lessons our faith teaches us, especially with friends, neighbors and communities! Come join us!

Evangelism/Stewardship: We've covered many topics in the last year. Aiding Bellor Venus Chea in transitioning from refugee to American citizen. Also promoting our Cedar Fund which is to help us grow our ministry in the future. The fund is to help support a full or part time ministry. We have initiated the "Last Hurrah" seminars which address end of life issues (medical, financial, legal, spiritual, funeral needs, long term healthcare etc.).

Finance – Taxes have been submitted. We are doing well but expenses are down. ELCA reports are yet to be done. Rick and Janice to complete and send off. Mike Kern offered thanks for all of Janice and Susy's hard work (financial and secretarial). Wells Fargo handles investments. 2022 was a tough investment year.

Property: We have been blessed by support for all the work that has been achieved at the Church. Maintaining the building is the largest financial burden we have but the family is supportive!

Social Ministry: Hope to combine Social Ministry and WELCA to streamline organizations and committees. WELCA contributed \$750 to hurricane relief and \$1200 to the Christmas missions. Most participants work both committees.

Worship and Worship: Worship is central, that is done with Pastor Kevin and Julia leading us every Sunday. Worship does not happen by itself. We need participants and helpers as Lay Assistants, Communion Assistants, Readers, Ushers, Sacristy helpers, Altar Guild etc.

Fellowship: Returned but only offering snacks and coffee the first Sunday of the month.

Audit: Thanks to the committee for 2 solid days of financial auditing. 3 years were completed with no real exceptions.

Memorials: Gifts received as memorials have had thank you cards sent out.

Designated Funds: Looking to combine or streamline some of the available funds. Recommendations to be made to Council. Kitchen Fund was merged with the Capital Funds. Seminarian Fund was donated to the Bishop's Challenge for African American Seminarian.

Treasurer's Report: Money has come in and gone out. The Cedar Fund and Capital Fund is growing. We are running in the black. Family is supporting current mission and ministry but must grow for the future.

Report of the Election: See Nominations.

Old Business – None

New Business – Opportunity to take advantage of Federal funds for a utility upgrade which includes New Boilers, new lighting, air conditioning units for \$57,000 paid back in utility bills over the next 60 months. Original replacement cost is \$239,000. Rebate \$183,000. Church would pay 0% interest. \$950 added to utilities. Should get a 15% percent reduction in utility costs. Motion to accept by Judy

Bailey/Janet Yunghans. Motion approved to sign preliminary contract, review requirements and sign final contracts when satisfied.

2023 Proposed Spending Plan: Motion to accept Judy Bailey/Lee Funk. Discussion – changes include bringing Pastor in for Bible Study, internet expenses and Church management system have gone up. Mission gift was 8% for 2022. Committing \$11,000 to Synod. Motion approved.

Acknowledgements: President Yunghans thanked everyone for participating this year. Janice Mruz thanked everyone for supporting her!

Pastor Kevin closed with devotions. Thanks to those who have served on Council and thanks to those who have committed to serving this year!

Reorganizational Meeting Monday, February 6, 2023 at 6:00PM

Respectfully submitted by,

Rick Adamson
Council Secretary

INTERIM PASTOR'S REPORT

Happy Sunday! I do not get tired of this greeting! Repetition makes it grow and most respond with smiles and laughter! Lately I have extended this Happy to Monday through Saturday!

Let us pray:

Ever Renewing One, each morning is an opportunity to start over, to begin anew, and claim the promise of your repeated and infinite invitations of grace and forgiveness and love.

Help us to see this opportunity and to learn to live into it. Amen.

Word in Season 2023, Oct-Dec

On October 22nd St. John welcomed guest preacher, Andrea Oslikova. Our sermon time focused on the Holy Gospel—and reflected on the work, mission, and direction of United Lutheran Seminary.

Bible Studies were held twice this year. Throughout Lent our studies focused on the Ten Commandments. Before Advent, our Bible Study was called *Salvation Now* from the Gospel of John. I would like to thank Diane Bechtold and Rick Adamson for streaming the bible studies which permitted the public to access the sessions via You Tube.

Let us continue to learn and live into Happy Sunday!

Amen love to +Christ. Interim Pastor Kevin

STATE OF THE CHURCH REPORT

Average Weekly Attendance: January thru May 2023 -- weekly average was 47
June thru December 2023 – weekly average was 53

Baptism:

Allison Rose Ludy, December 3, 2023
Josie Rae Nelson, December 17th, 2023

Confirmations: None

Marriages:

Tyler Aaron Schroeder and Rebecca Andrea Schneider, August 19, 2023

New Members:

Jeffrey and Valerie Berdahl
Joseph and Shirley Hagan
Peter and Jan Sollazzo
The Ludy Family – Jason and Erin and children Andrew and Allison
Karl Wirth

Renewed Membership: Marcus Dobberfuhl

Transfers:

Bob and Janet Oberg
Alan & Robin Lewis

Memorial, Graveside Services and Hospice Visits:

+James Piston
+Noel Wirth
+Velma K. Pawling
+Brenda Green
+John Impagliazzo

In Memory of:

+Noel Wirth, September 22, 2023
+Joan E. Glenz, September 26, 2023
+Velma K. Pawling, October 3, 2023
+David B. Regar, November 23, 2023
+Brenda Green, December 12, 2023

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

This morning, as I pondered what to write in the President's message to the congregation, I made plans to attend the *Waves of Hope* gathering at Grace Lutheran Church in Somers Point. *Waves of Hope* is an opportunity for congregational leaders in the South Shore Mission Cluster to work together during the year 2024. So, you may be wondering – *what does this seminar have to do with the President's message for 2023?* Let me explain my experience after attending the event!

But first! The year 2023 at St. John was a year of growth. We received new members, hired a church administrator, made major capital improvements and continued our mission support locally as well as our commitment to the New Jersey Synod. Please read the detailed reports submitted by our committee chairs to understand the full scope of our achievements in 2023.

Over the years, serving on Church Council and acting as President, I have always felt that change is necessary in order to move forward both within the physical church as well as spiritually. St. John needs to adapt to our present environment while planning ahead for our future. The Cedar Fund we have established is an example of planning ahead. New members bring change with them and I always try to make a point to speak with them and ask them why they chose St. John as their church home. Their answer is simple, "The people of the congregation made us feel welcomed!" Jesus, no matter how uncomfortable the situation, always made people feel welcomed in his presence. We ask all congregational members (even if we don't always agree) to participate and work with others sharing your time, talents and treasures to further accomplish the missions of St. John.

Now that I have returned from Waves of Hope, I'd like to share my experience. The main topic was called "Dwelling in the Word" (Acts 16:6-15). We broke down into groups and discussed this particular scripture. Looking at my notes, I have written down the important points that were brought up by each group. Here is the list we created:

1. The Holy Spirit directs us in a path he wanted to lead them. We sometimes have great plans that get redirected.
2. Let God guide you and keep moving.
3. Do not complain and show hospitality.
4. Listen to people and work with neighbors.

These topics lead us to a lively discussion about faith and our role as faith leaders in the church. I urge you to read Acts 16:6-15 and explore how the Holy Spirit guides you down a particular path. We are all on this journey together in 2024, and hopefully many more years to come.

Peace!

Karl Yunghans

NEW JERSEY SYNOD ASSEMBLY REPORT

On Saturday, May 13, 2023, the Rev. Kevin V. Hilgendorf and close to 400 people from across the synod gathered at Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton for a day of worship, learning, fellowship, and inspiration. The agenda was crafted around the 4 parts of our Lutheran worship: gather, word, meal, and sending. Thanks to the voting members and visitors for coming with a spirit of joy in being together so we were able to live our theme and *Lead with Love*.

Elections: The following people were elected to serve in leadership positions in the synod:

Vice-president - Arundel Clarke

Secretary – The Rev. Blake Scalet

Synod Council – The Rev. Jose Escalara (Delaware Mission District), The Rev. Pamela Werner (Shore Mission District), The Rev. Miles Hopgood (Middle Mission District), Patricia Espejo (Gateway Mission District), The Rev. Lisa Holliday (Northern Mission District), Robert Bowden (Western Mission District), Grant Lefchak (Youth).

Resolution: The assembly adopted one resolution designating the synod as a Stigma-Free Zone in regard to mental illness and encouraging congregations to do the same. Resources from NAMI on what this means can be found at [nami.org/Get-Involved/Pledge-to-Be-StigmaFree](https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Pledge-to-Be-StigmaFree) the full resolution can be found on the assembly page.

2024 Spending Plan: The assembly unanimously adopted the 2024 spending plan which can be found on the website.

The Assembly Offering, designated for Lutheran Disaster Response, totaled \$3,676.00. THANK YOU!!

In addition to the above items of business, we celebrated with rostered ministers new to the synod, recently retired leaders, and with congregations celebrating significant anniversaries.

The Rev. Dr. Christa Compton led the assembly in a reading of God's Holy Darkness followed by table discussions on bias and discrimination in our language. The Rev. Sara Lilja led the assembly in an active listening Bible study on 1 Corinthians 13.

The Rev. Amy Reumann, Senior Director of Witness in Society for the ELCA, served as our churchwide representative. Pastor Reumann highlighted the work we do together across the whole church and thanked the NJ Synod for its part in it.

Our “Go and...!” evangelism team shared stories and ideas for congregations to engage their communities with God’s love in Jesus Christ. The team is available to come to your congregation. Resources from Go and ...! can be found on the website.

Our house band led us in robust singing throughout the assembly. The band included Peter Melz and Pastors Jay Unzaga, Kathryn Irwin, Carmine Pernini, and Raymond Kolison. Thank you for making such beautiful music!

Displays from our mission teams and ministry partners filled the West Gallery offering information and opportunities to become involved in our ministries.

We thank all of those who helped make this assembly such a joy-filled time of being church together. The livestream of our whole day is on the synod website. The NJ Synod Assembly 2024 is scheduled for Saturday, May 11, 2024 at Grounds for Sculpture – mark your calendar.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Christian Education

CHAIRPERSON: Alissa Lee

LIAISON TO CONGREGATION COUNCIL: Alissa Lee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Alissa Lee, Janice Mruz, Sonya Adamson, Julia Henrich, & Pastor Kevin

COMMITTEE FUNCTION – MISSION STATEMENT: To educate our members in the Christian faith. We encourage our members to grow their faith and increase their knowledge of God's Love and Jesus' teachings.

We have approximately 14 students who attend Sunday School. The students' ages range from 4 years old to 12 years old. We offer three classes: PK-2nd Graders, 3rd-6th Graders, and 7th-8th Graders. Sunday School is in session from September through May at 8:30am on the third floor.

We also offer Vacation Bible School for one week during the summer for students in Kindergarten – 5th Grade. Our **Hero Hotline** Vacation Bible School, that took place the week of July 31st, 2023 – August 3rd, 2023, was a great success! We had 17 kids join us for a week of fun. We learned about Biblical Heroes in the Bible stories we read each day. We learned more about how to be a Hero for God through crafts, music, science experiments, and yummy snack crafts. The Bible verse that followed us through the week of VBS was: **"So let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up."** **(Romans 14:19)** This verse teaches us that we can all work together to ensure peace, help others, and encourage those around us. Special thanks to Janice Mruz, Sheri Apple, Diane Bechtold, Deb Beutler, Apple Sykes, Barb Piston, Carol Piechoski, Sharon Doyle, Julia Henrich, & Pastor Kevin for being Hero Helpers and for working together to make VBS so much fun for the kids!

Thank you to all who help make our Sunday School and Vacation Bible School a great success! New members are **ALWAYS** welcome to join us in educating our youth in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School.

SUBMITTED BY: Alissa Lee

FELLOWSHIP & FAITH COMMITTEE

Exploring our Gospel heritage in Lutheranism, and engaging participants in understanding the faith (past, present and future).

“Fellowship and Faith” is our Adult Forum which replaced “St John 101” during the pandemic. The need to see and hear each other expressing our concerns and hope during that time fostered our online meetings. It was a great comfort to be able to be in community (digitally) again, and now our discussions continue weekly on Zoom.

Throughout this past year the group has had lively discussions based on a number of thought-provoking and meaningful studies, including:

- *500 Years of God’s Word in Common Language* (based on the 500th anniversary of Luther’s translation of the New Testament)
- *The Virtual Church: ELCA Communities Grapple with the Future of Digital Worship*
- *Do You See God in Me? How Lutherans Engage in Difficult Conversations*
- *Civic Life and Faith*, an ELCA sponsored study where we wrestled with questions like:
 - How is God's invitation to discipleship lived out in democracy?
 - How do Christians address controversial civic issues?
 - What are Lutheran views on civic life?
 - What's faith-based living got to do with civic life?

Our group meets weekly on Tuesday nights at 6:30PM by Zoom, and we invite all to join as they are able. Here’s the Zoom meeting information:

Meeting ID: 324 693 9424

Passcode: Luther

Everyone is welcome to join in the conversation or just sit back and listen. As always it is our goal to grow in faith as we bond personally with one another in Fellowship.

Peace,

Rick Adamson and Glen Stewart

EVANGELISM-STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Rick Adamson, Judith Bailey, Diane Bechtold, Freeman Chea, Pastor Kevin, Glen Stewart, and Susan Wilkins

We continued to feel an extended Evangelism/Stewardship Committee, meeting on a regular basis, would best suit our congregation's needs. Sharing commonality between evangelism and stewardship, the committees continued to meet together. As Church Council committees, summaries of our meetings and recommendations are presented at Council meetings, and we meet via ZOOM once a month.

The positive effect of estate planning on the mission of St. John, now and in the future, has started to bear fruit through our endowment fund, known as The Cedar Fund. The Fund was established following approval and initial seed money provided by Council. Through a special pew envelope, as well as reminders of a springtime seed card and progress "thermometer," we have received over \$60,000 in generous donations from members, with an ultimate goal of \$500,000. That may take time to accomplish; however, if we reach that milestone, we will be able to provide funding for the ongoing mission and ministry of St. John, including defraying the cost of a permanent pastor, without the need to touch the principal.

In conjunction with the Cedar Fund, we continued a series of popular seminars about legacy concerns entitled, "The Last Hurrah." We had guest speakers periodically deliver information about planning for the end of days with topics that included financial, medical, funeral, spiritual, and memory care concerns. In 2024, we plan to hold sessions on long term care and legal legacy issues.

This year, we welcomed eight new members to the congregation in June (Thanks Be to God!), and later in the summer we welcomed Pastor Bridget Gautieri to worship with us before she embarked on her journey from Calvary Lutheran Church in Cranford, NJ to become the Coordinator of the ELCA Wittenberg Center in Germany. After that encounter, Council saw fit to support her all-important mission. Pastor Bridget has sent us periodic newsletters to keep us updated on her ministry, as well as promising to return to St. John as a guest preacher in the future.

In September we joined the ELCA in celebrating 10 years of "God's Work, Our Hands" Sundays as members of our congregation cleaned up and planted fall flowers in a courtyard at Tapestries, the memory care unit at The Shores in Ocean City. The plants, dirt, decorations and lunch were provided by Thrivent as part of an Action Team. This service project was part of our new and growing partnership with The Shores as our congregation supports a much needed elder care ministry in the community. We also supported other outreach ministries using Thrivent Action Team funds, including Vacation Bible School, The Branches Outreach Center, and as part of the "Feed the Northeast" program, our congregation collected 750 food items (well over our goal of 500!) to feed the hungry in our community. Since we surpassed our goal, Thrivent donated \$500 to the Ocean City Food Cupboard to continue that vital ministry.

All of us, the family of St. John, gathering, praying, sharing, and acting to live out our mission statement are the Church. Let us pray, let us be thankful for what God has given us . . . His Grace! Let His Grace inspire us to share His love with our neighbors. Amen.

"Saved by grace through faith, to share God's love"

Peace, Rick Adamson and Glen Stewart

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

CHAIRPERSON: TBD

LIAISON TO COUNCIL CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL: Andrew Sykes

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Janice Mruz, Treasurer, Susy Wilkins, Assistant Treasurer, Karl Yunghans, Council President, Mike Kern, Council Vice President, Rick Adamson, Financial Secretary, and Andrew Sykes, Council Liaison

MISSION STATEMENT: *We will annually develop a spending plan to be presented to the congregation and council. Along with the Treasurer and Council, we will monitor all congregational spending and maintain the expenditures in accordance with the spending plan.*

TREASURER'S REPORT:

2022 tax filings and forms were completed on time. Financial Reports were provided by Rick and myself to Council on a monthly basis throughout the year. The ELCA Annual Congregational Report, Forms A & C were completed on time.

In the 2023 Budget, a part-time position was proposed to assist with various administrative and clerical tasks. In May the Council hired a part-time church administrator, Kristen Mulraney for 8 hrs. per week at a rate of \$20/hr. Melissa Adamson continued to assist with the bulletin throughout the year at a rate of \$18/hr.

The audits for years 20, 21, 22 were completed by mid-February of last year. An audit report is included in the 2023 Annual Report.

Justin Odell continues to handle our investments with Wells Fargo, and the committee again wants to thank him for his help and guidance throughout this year.

Lastly, please take note that we are in need of a Finance Chairman. As Treasurer, I keep the Council informed of our financials on a month to month basis. However, I cannot also serve as chairman as it is a conflict. In the past, the committee met about 4 times a year either in-person or through emails or zoom. If you have an interest, please contact a member of the Church Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Mruz, Treasurer

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Chairperson - Lee Funk

Liaison to Congregational Council - Mike Kern

Committee members - Mike Kern, Karl Yunghans, Rick Adamson and Lee Funk

Mission Statement - To maintain the worship space, to oversee the upkeep, safety and appearance of the building and grounds.

Achievements in 2023

- Replaced lights and fixtures outside and an outdoor sign.
- New emergency light and signs replaced.
- Installed new toilet downstairs
- Replaced 6 air conditioners with heat in the sanctuary and one in the downstairs lounge.
- Replaced weather stripping on alley doors.
- Set up a new pest control contract with Erlich.
- Replaced all of the lighting in the building with energy saving bulbs.
- Set up new timers on the outside lights.
- Replaced panic bars on the sanctuary doors.
- In the process of replacing the fire door in the sanctuary.
- Installed new WIFI fire alarm system.
- Replaced the carpet in the downstairs office hallways.
- Replaced the carpet in the fellowship room.
- Installed new boilers and heating system in the church,
- Installed new thermostats.
- Set up a new maintenance contract for the air conditioners.

We partnered with AC electric to have the work done for \$240,000 which will cost the church \$52,000 with no interest. Payments will be \$870.00 per month for 5 years. In 2024, we will be energy efficient and state of the art ready for the future.

We cannot thank the members enough for their help, support and financial contributions this past year. With all of the church family working together we will grow the mission and ministry of St. John.

SUBMITTED BY: Lee Funk

SOCIAL MINISTRY AND THE WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA (WELCA)

CHAIRPERSON AND LIASON TO COUNCIL: Deborah Beuttler

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: the ladies and men of St. John Lutheran Church

According to the bylaws set forth in the Constitution of St. John Lutheran Church. The Social Ministry/WELCA Committee will be responsible for the ongoing outreach of our family of faith reaching out with our resources to help the poor and comfort those in need.

We are grateful to the church council and our very supportive church family for their ongoing support of our events. Our committee members continue to send greeting cards to homebound members throughout the year.

For Mother's Day we sold 28 copies of the Atlantic City Rescue Mission Soup Cookbook. It includes recipes from the professional chefs locally who volunteer at the Mission. If you are interested, we have a few left available in the downstairs lobby. Mmmm Good!

In early September, we held our 2nd Annual Community Craft Show which highlighted community crafters. The proceeds were donated to the Community Food Bank, the Ocean City Ecumenical Council, to use funds where needed and to the new flooring in the downstairs areas. This event has become so successful that we have decided to continue it in September 2024! Any crafters interested, please contact Janet Yunghans or our church administrator, Kristen Mulraney.

In the fall, we hosted memorial gatherings for three of our WELCA ladies' families, Noel Wirth, Velma Pawling and Brenda Green in Fellowship Hall. All three were very active long time members here at St. John and in our WELCA group for many, many years. It was an honor for us to do this and to visit with their families during this very sad time.

We finished the year with our Christmas Missions. This year included ELCA Good Gifts, The Branches Outreach (a new mission for us), Seafarers and our continued support for our Ukraine Refugee, Bellor Venus Chea. Some good things came about from Covid as Seafarers setup accounts with Amazon making it easy to donate at a touch of a button! Our monetary totals collected for just this past Christmas season are: Good Gifts, \$32.00; The Branches Outreach, \$45.00, Seafarers, \$524.22 (does not include items donated through Amazon) and Bellor, \$595.00. St. John also partnered with Thrivent and received Action Team Seed Money which we purchased \$250 worth of personal care items and collected over 100 nice used clothing items donated for the Branches Outreach! Please visit our website under missions for more information about any of these charities.

Respectfully Submitted, Deborah Beuttler, Chair and Janice Mruz, Co-Chair

WELCA FISCAL YEAR 2023 FINANCIAL REPORT

	INCOME	DISBURSEMENTS
Year End Interest	\$ 0.16	
Thank Offering Collection	\$ 330.58	
ELCA Women's Mission		\$ 330.58
Atlantic City Rescue Mission Cookbooks		\$ 640.00
Cookbooks Sold	\$ 600.00	
Rummage Sale Proceeds	\$ 1,578.95	
On Eagles Wings		\$ 1,000.00
ELCA Disaster Relief		\$ 580.00
Noel Wirth Luncheon		\$ 359.92
St. John-(Donations in Memory of Noel Wirth and Velma Pawling)		\$ 100.00
TOTALS	\$ 2,509.69	\$ 3,010.50
BALANCE AS OF 12/31/23	\$ 865.91	

WORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

CHAIRPERSON: Judith Bailey

LIAISON TO CONGREGATION COUNCIL: Judith Bailey

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Richard Adamson, Sonya Adamson, Judith Bailey, Mary Bullock, Ada Henrich, Julia Henrich, Pastor Kevin

Worship is the center of all we do as children of God. Under the leadership of Pastor Kevin, the Worship Committee and Julia, our parish musician, the services of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving are planned for each season of the liturgical year.

Liturgy is defined as “the work of the people.” During the past year we have had the privilege and opportunity to worship (work) using 9 different settings for our worship. Some were familiar; some were new, but we always offered our praise to God.

Worship Committee meets regularly to ensure that all parts of the service follow the theme of the day as well as the theme of the season. Julia works hard to be sure that the choir anthem follows the theme set by the lessons for the day, the hymns, and of course, Pastor Kevin’s inspiring and thought-provoking sermon.

Many people work together to make worship happen. Each service is live-streamed on our website. A big thank you to Glen Stewart for his expertise to be sure that broadcast happens. A group of 6 willingly and enthusiastically serve as lay assistants. Many folks help to change banners and altar paraments, and be sure the altar is ready for the next service. This is a most important ministry here at St. John.

Pastor Kevin is always there to remind us of the importance of worship. Under his leadership we have been able to grow in our faith and love for God and each other.

Our worship will continue to change. We pray that God will always guide and direct us as we plan and offer our praise to Christ, our Lord and Savior.

O COME, LET US WORSHIP!!

SUBMITTED BY: Judith Bailey

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON: Alissa Lee

LIAISON TO CONGREGATION COUNCIL: Alissa Lee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Judith Bailey, Rick Adamson, Janet Yunghans, Karl Yunghans, Susy Wilkins, Carol Piechoski, Glen Stewart, Tracie Balk, Sharon Freed, and Alissa Lee.

COMMITTEE FUNCTION – MISSION STATEMENT: To give the members and visitors of St. John an opportunity to socialize and discuss the Word of God over a cup of coffee and a delicious snack. Also, a treat that our youngest members look forward to each week.

We have Fellowship on the first Sunday of every month. The congregation enjoys socializing after service while enjoying delicious snacks and coffee.

Thank you to all the members of Fellowship who provide much appreciated treats for our congregation to enjoy. New members are always welcome to help us provide fellowship for our church family and visitors.

SUBMITTED BY: Alissa Lee

YEAR END AUDIT REPORTS FOR 2020, 2021 & 2022

Audit Committee: Richard Deaney, Judy Funk, Alan Lewis, also in attendance were Janice Mruz, Treasurer and Rick Adamson, Financial Secretary

We performed the audit as per the Financial Review Procedures. The following discrepancies were noted during the audit:

Report for 2020, 2021 & 2022:

Category Discrepancies:

- (1) One item was placed in the current envelope and should have been in HVAC category. Total deposit not affected. Category only error. (2020)
- (2) One item was placed in the current category, should have been in Capital. Total deposit not affected. Category only error. (2020)

Upon review of cancelled checks, two checks were found to have only one signature instead of the required two signatures and one check was signed by the payee. (2020)

All investment accounts were reviewed for the three years and found to be in order.

All insurance policies for the three years, including property, umbrella and worker's compensation were reviewed and found to be in order and having proper coverage.

All payments were made on time.

None of these discrepancies were material in nature. No discrepancies were found in years 2021 and 2022.

Audit includes records of Congregation Treasurer and Financial Secretary. Funds audited included current, earmark, capital and member contributions. Verification was made of checking accounts, investments, and member contributions. Congregational Reports to the ELCA were filed on time. Taxes for 2020, 2021 and 2022 were paid and filed on time.

A Committee needs to be appointed for the audit for fiscal year 2023.

MEMORIALS RECEIVED

+Ivan Bailey
+Brenda Green
+John Impagliazzo
+Velma Pawling
+James Piston
+Noel Wirth

DESCRIPTION OF DESIGNATED FUNDS

Cedar Fund

This fund was created from our 100th year anniversary in 2019 to be a placeholder for funds for the future and hopefully the calling of a pastor. These funds are unrestricted.

Deaney Memorial

This memorial is to provide services for people who are disabled with special emphasis on the developmentally disabled.

Kyle-Breneiser Music Fund

This fund is to provide music scholarships for members of St. John, as well as the enrichment of our music program.

McFaul Memorial

This memorial is to provide a yearly pledge to St. John in the form of interest which it earns each year. It is designated for operating funds.

Parsonage Investment Fund

This fund is to use the interest earned each year to supplement the Pastor's housing allowance.

Payne Medical Emergency Fund

This fund is to be utilized as an interest free loan for terminally ill patients, their care and medications. The loan is to be paid back out of the patient's insurance proceeds.

Board Designated Fund

This fund is to be utilized should the operating account for St. John fall below a level in which it cannot pay the bills to operating the church. These funds are unrestricted.

Capital Improvement Fund

This fund is to be utilized to fund capital improvement projects for the building.

Lynn Ann Baker Fund

This fund is to assist with the emergency medical expenses of children at St. John whose parents are having financial difficulty paying for said expenses.

Pastoral Assistance Fund

This fund is to be used for pastoral assistance.

THE OCEAN CITY ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

The Ocean City Ecumenical Council (OCEC) continues their mission to provide food and clothing to people in need. Their work is sustained by donations of non-perishable food items and clothing as well as monetary donations from the Ocean City community at large. Members represent various churches in Ocean City. This year Barb Piston joined Diane Bechtold as delegates from St. John. Elaine Wilson and Carol Piechoski serve as active emeritus members having previously served as president of the OCEC.

Thank you to St. John members for your overwhelming generosity in support of Feed the Northeast project by donating monetary gifts and 749 food items in October. In addition to these items OCEC received \$500 from Thrivent. An additional \$512 was donated as part of the shared proceeds from the Craft Show held this fall at St. John. Thanks also to all who supported the OCEC letter-writing campaign in support of the renewed Farm Bill (PL 115-334) now extended through September 2024.

OCEC welcomes volunteers at the Food Cupboard and/or Clothes Closet. Talk to Carol, Elaine, Barb or Diane for more information.

SUBMITTED BY: Diane Bechtold

St. John Council Liaison to OCEC

2023 EARMARK FUND TRANSACTIONS

FUND	BALANCE as of 1/1/23	INCOME	DISBURSEMENTS	BALANCE as of 12/31/23
CAPITAL	\$ 14,502.54	\$ 11,522.00	\$ (14,533.50)	\$ 11,491.04
YOUTH FAITH & MISSION	\$ 5,395.92			\$ 5,395.92
MISSION OUTREACH	\$ 508.88	\$ 208.43		\$ 717.31
CEDAR FUND	\$ 25,501.35	\$ 19,585.62	\$ (103.54)	\$ 44,983.43
ELCA Disaster Relief	\$ -	\$ 790.00	\$ (790.00)	\$ -
Craft Show		\$ 1,521.98	\$ (1,521.98)	\$ -
Men's Prayer Group	\$ 114.27		\$ (114.27)	\$ -
Music Account	\$ 5,779.72			\$ 5,779.72
Lynn Baker Fund	\$ 693.00			\$ 693.00
Pastor's Discre. Fund	\$ 245.00			\$ 245.00
Pastor's Gift	\$ 365.00	\$ 430.00	\$ (415.00)	\$ 380.00
Mission-Refugee Chea	\$ 878.00	\$ 7,005.00	\$ (7,556.00)	\$ 327.00
Hope Pregnancy	\$ 25.00		\$ (25.00)	\$ -
VBS Program	\$ 20.00			\$ 20.00
Family Promise	\$ -			\$ -
AC Rescue Mission	\$ 260.00	\$ 375.00	\$ (635.00)	\$ -
Seafarers		\$ 524.22		
ELCA Good Gifts	\$ 220.00	\$ 32.00	\$ (220.00)	\$ 32.00
Branches		\$ 45.00		\$ 45.00
VBS Missions	\$ -	\$ 447.50	\$ (447.50)	\$ -
Food Drive		\$ 120.00	\$ (20.00)	\$ 100.00
Other*	\$ 113.75		\$ (113.75)	\$ -
Interest*	\$ 9.11		\$ (9.11)	\$ -
TOTALS	\$ 54,631.54	\$ 42,606.75	\$ (26,504.65)	\$ 70,209.42

*reallocated to Mission Outreach

2023 DESIGNATED AND UNRESTRICTED FUNDS YEAR END REPORT

WELLS FARGO INVESTMENTS

	2022 Year Ending Value	Total Income for 2023	2023 Year Ending Value
Payne Medical	\$ 2,342.84	\$ 839.37	\$ 3,182.21
McFaul	\$ 18,822.34	\$ 1,302.92	\$ 20,125.26
Board Designated Fund	\$ 13,339.91	\$ (22.87)	\$ 13,317.04
Parsonage	\$ 19,763.42	\$ 2,222.18	\$ 21,985.60
Pastoral Assistance	\$ 3,877.28	\$ 1,387.90	\$ 5,265.18
Kyle-Breneiser Music	\$ 66,022.96	\$ 7,988.69	\$ 74,011.65
Deaney Memorial	\$ 14,356.95	\$ (5,786.36)	\$ 8,570.59
			\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 138,525.70	\$ 7,931.83	\$ 146,457.53

GIVING ANALYSIS

2023 Operating Income

	2023		2022
Special Envelopes	\$ 3,970.00	\$	3,182.00
Envelopes	\$ 107,648.00	\$	114,701.77
Plate	\$ 6,505.00	\$	5,612.00
Use of Facilities	\$ 6,640.00	\$	6,390.00
Thrivent	\$ 1,830.00	\$	1,011.00
Memorials	\$ 2,872.00	\$	350.00
Amazon Smile	\$ 27.67	\$	34.62
Other Income	\$ 11,096.92	\$	16,338.21
TOTAL Operating Income	\$ 140,589.59	\$	147,619.60

*Special Envelopes are all the non-weekly regular giving envelopes collectively for the year.

SUMMARY

OPERATING ACCOUNT BANK ENDING BALANCE AS OF 12/31/23

\$ 144,229.95

OPERATING ACCOUNT:

2023 Income	\$ 140,589.59
2023 Expenditures	\$ <u>(141,106.98)</u>

DIFFERENCE	\$ <u>(517.39)</u>
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2024 PROPOSED SPENDING PLAN

	PROPOSED Jan - Dec 24	ACTUAL Jan - Dec 23	PROPOSED Jan - Dec 23	ACTUAL Jan - Dec 22
ADMINISTRATION				
Internet Expenses	1,600.00	2,133.58	1,600.00	2,164.87
Copier Service & Supplies	324.00	313.79	310.00	302.34
Other Administrative Expense	200.00	0.00	200.00	152.50
Church Administrator-Salary*	14,560.00	4,520.00	5,200.00	0.00
Payroll Tax	-		559.00	
Office Supplies	500.00	384.01	500.00	377.17
Conventions and Meetings	200.00	688.75	100.00	100.00
Postage	300.00	248.37	350.00	519.82
Telephone	3,500.00	3,231.07	3,200.00	3,193.69
Total ADMINISTRATION	21,184.00	11,519.57	12,019.00	6,810.39
EVANGELISM	200.00	0.00	200.00	94.55
FINANCE				
Annual Report Certificate	85.00	30.50	85.00	30.50
Payroll Processing Fee	562.00	562.00	552.00	512.80
Fees and Expenses	350.00	322.29	450.00	60.29
Finance and Accounting Systems	649.00	649.00	649.00	539.00
Total FINANCE	1,646.00	1,563.79	1,736.00	1,142.59
MINISTRY				
Ministry Books	-	16.69	-	-
Interim Pastor Part-time	31,525.00	31,525.00	31,500.00	33,325.00
Additional Sundays & Services	4,000.00	1,200.00	4,800.00	
Interim Pastor Mileage & Tolls	3,500.00	3,221.25	3,500.00	3,111.08
Total MINISTRY	39,025.00	35,962.94	39,800.00	36,436.08
MISSION SUPPORT**	12,300.00	11,540.00	11,000.00	14,403.50
PARISH EDUCATION				
Pastor's Mileage	1,200.00	1,068.75		0.00
Confirmation/Communion	50.00		50.00	
Bible Study-Pastor	5,000.00	4,200.00	7,700.00	0.00
Adult Education	100.00		100.00	
Vacation Bible School	550.00	339.38	550.00	660.59
Sunday School	400.00	302.16	450.00	682.29
Total PARISH EDUCATION	7,300.00	5,910.29	8,850.00	1,342.88

2024 PROPOSED SPENDING PLAN

	PROPOSED Jan - Dec 24	ACTUAL Jan - Dec 23	PROPOSED Jan - Dec 23	ACTUAL Jan - Dec 22
PROPERTY				
Equipment Repair & Maintenance	2,500.00	1,021.60	5,000.00	5,630.00
Building Repair and Maintenance	3,000.00	3,225.02	4,000.00	1,248.70
Fire and Security	5,000.00	7,554.24	3,000.00	3,841.30
Instrument Maintenance/Sound Sys	1,000.00	759.29	1,000.00	
Energy HVAC System Loan Paymen	10,582.68	-	-	-
Insurance - Workers' Comp	1,270.00	1,241.00	1,241.00	1,595.84
Insurance - Umbrella	352.00	352.00	352.00	352.10
Insurance - Property	11,445.00	9,747.00	9,747.00	7,121.50
Electric Utility	6,500.00	5,399.10	6,500.00	5,989.10
Gas Utility	9,720.00	10,011.31	12,648.00	8,699.85
Water and Sewer Utility	1,500.00	755.66	2,500.00	2,085.82
Snow Removal	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	45.83
Sexton	9,500.00	9,300.00	9,000.00	9,000.50
Miscellaneous Supplies	2,500.00	2,149.55	1,500.00	938.71
Total PROPERTY	65,869.68	51,515.77	57,488.00	37,164.15
SOCIAL MINISTRY				
General	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00
Total SOCIAL MINISTRY	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00
STEWARDSHIP				
Stewardship Other Expenses	500.00	90.05	500.00	0.00
Giving Envelopes	230.00	248.51	230.00	413.79
Total STEWARDSHIP	730.00	338.56	730.00	413.79
WORSHIP AND MUSIC				
Altar & Candle Supplies	500.00	269.95	1,000.00	345.98
Bulletins	550.00	432.53	550.00	602.61
Choir and Music Supplies	650.00	605.39	750.00	574.08
Director Salary	19,200.00	19,200.00	19,200.00	19,200.00
Devotional Materials	300.00	378.75	216.00	276.27
Director FICA	1,500.00	1,468.80	1,500.00	1,468.80
Flowers	200.00	164.18	100.00	60.00
Misc Worship Events	350.00	236.46	200.00	255.40
Total WORSHIP AND MUSIC	23,250.00	22,756.06	23,516.00	22,783.14
YOUTH	100.00		100.00	
TOTAL	171,754.68	141,106.98	155,589.00	120,591.07

*Administrator: 8 hrs/wk@\$20=\$8320
14 hrs/wk@\$20=\$14,560

**Mission Support-recommendation from Synod