

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

ST. LAWRENCE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
LIBERTYVILLE, IL



125 W. Church St.
Libertyville, IL 60048



St. Lawrence
Episcopal Church

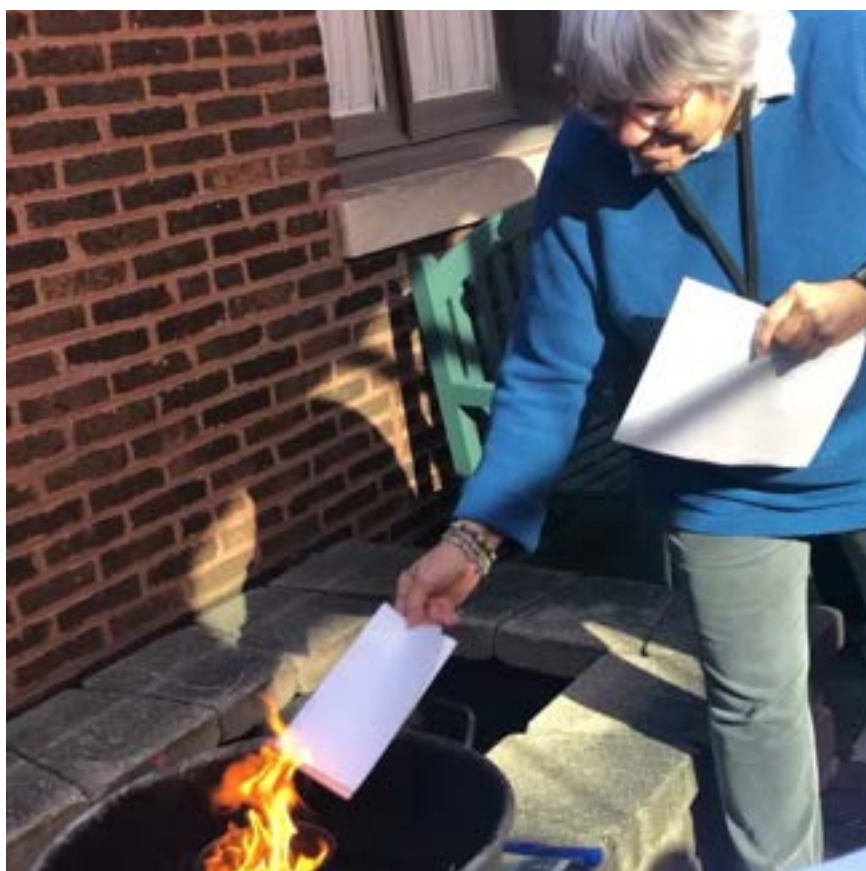
Annual Meeting Agenda

January 28, 2024

- 1) Welcome and Call to Order
- 2) Opening Prayer
- 3) Approval of Prior Minutes
- 4) Rector's Address to the Annual Meeting
- 5) Warden's Report (Deborah DeManno)
- 6) Financial Report for 2023 and Presentation of 2024 budget
- 7) Update from the St. Lawrence Foundation
- 8) Recognition of Outgoing Vestry Members and Key Volunteers
- 9) Election and Commissioning of 2024 Vestry Members
- 10) Dismissal

A YEAR OF GOOD NEWS!

In 2023, the good news kept coming. Due to a combination of favorable circumstances, we were able to pay off the \$1.8 million note on our mortgage in November, several months earlier than expected. We marked this enormous occasion with a ceremonial bonfire in which we burned a copy of the mortgage note and celebrated this huge step on our path to financial independence. The balance on the remaining mortgage note is currently just over \$600,000 and we expect to pay it off in full in 2028.



FROM THE RECTOR

If I had to summarize the whirlwind that was 2023 at St. Lawrence in one word, it would be: GROWTH! Our average Sunday attendance skyrocketed this year, growing by a whopping 24%. Behind that number lie even more exciting truths: throughout the year we welcomed new members and deepened existing relationships. Week after week, we grinned at the antics of tumbling toddlers in the soft space. We watched with pride as more people got plugged into the dizzying array of ministries we offer and found meaningful ways to serve in the community. This year, we have grown deeper into who God is calling us to be and become more truly ourselves

Growth is not easy. It takes patience, perseverance, a lot of hard work, and more grace than we can usually imagine. In 2023, we bravely tried a lot of things. Some of them worked, some of them didn't go according to plan. What matters is that we learned from everything. We went all out on fundraising, hosting our first ever plant sale and reviving our presence at Dog Days of Summer. In doing so, we raised a lot of money and learned some vital lessons about our capacity for this work. We experimented with several new formats for social events, because we heard again and again that people longed to spend time together. Over the summer, we gathered in parishioners' backyards for food and fellowship. Throughout the year, we ate chili, knit prayer shawls, blew bubbles at the farmers' market, and gathered for summer office hours at Independence Grove.

Meanwhile, the vestry, finance committee, and staff did an unbelievable amount of behind the scenes work on documenting and streamlining our financial processes to ensure that our growth builds on a solid foundation. The building and grounds committee worked tirelessly to take care of our property and attend to deferred maintenance on our beloved building.

What does 2024 hold for St. Lawrence? Ultimately, only the Holy Spirit can tell us that, but here's what we think is on the agenda:

- Launching a capital campaign with the goal of increasing our capacity for ministry.
- Continuing to recruit new lay leaders and equip existing leaders with the skills they need to thrive in ministry
- Reimagining our music program in ways that reduce burnout and create new ways of worshipping together
- Expanding our adult formation offerings, focusing on in person and Sunday morning meeting opportunities

In Christ,



The Rev. Kristin L. Saylor, Rector



FROM THE WARDENS

St. Lawrence began 2023 on more solid footing financially, thanks to the two generous gifts and a successful Annual Stewardship campaign in 2022. The Wardens hoped in 2023 to focus primarily on assessing and addressing repairs to the building and planning for larger capital projects. Yet, as the year unfolded, we realized the improved financial picture also required a strategic reassessment of how to best manage finances in support of our mission and vision today and for future growth. We believe this lays a good foundation for the work of a capital campaign in 2024.

FINANCES:

We have transitioned from drowning under the weight of two mortgages and listing the building for sale to having some money to spend on the building AND save for emergencies or deficits until the mortgage is retired in 2028. In 2023, aided by discussions and meetings internally with Kristin, the Finance Committee, the Treasurer(s), and Bookkeeper, and externally with our relationship manager at Libertyville Bank and Trust (LBT), we accomplished the following:

- Restarted in-person quarterly meetings between the Wardens and LBT to improve communication, which had slowed during the pandemic;
- Changed the numbers and types of bank accounts to align with how we manage our cash flow now, resulting in earning higher interest rates and a reduction in and reimbursement of excessive bank fees;
- Communicated with the Cub Scouts over a dormant account from a previously sponsored Scout pack, resulting in a \$9000 donation of the funds to the church;
- Reviewed all of the internal roles and responsibilities for financial processes, resulting in a better understanding of how we track income and pay expenses. This enabled a reduction in the volunteer treasurer's workload by transferring certain tasks to the paid bookkeeper;
- Retired one mortgage (\$1.8M note) in November 2023 due to the earlier than expected third \$200K donation to the mortgage. This resulted in a reduction in our monthly mortgage payment and in the projected operating annual deficit – the details of which you will hear about in the Treasurer's report.
- Still in progress - obtaining a church credit card suitable for a not-for-profit organization and not linked to any one individual's credit rating.



BUILDING REPAIR, MAINTENANCE, AND IMPROVEMENTS:

Much of the care of our campus continues to rely on the knowledge and loving care of many members of the congregation led by our Brian Bowers, the Vestry liaison for Building and Grounds. Susie Brock provides key administrative support by tracking the regular inspections and maintenance on mechanical systems and equipment and calling in service providers to prevent small repairs from becoming big problems.

Major improvements in 2023 related to the building include:

- Replaced the old light fixtures with energy efficient LED lights in meeting rooms, offices, and lower level (VGM) using the ComEd Rebate program at a total cost to St. Lawrence of just under \$8200;
- Joined a Community Purchasing Alliance with @12 other Northern Illinois not-for-profit organizations (including the Diocese of Chicago) for a negotiated fixed electricity supply rate for 07/2023-12/2026. This will prevent supply rate spikes, especially in the summer during our peak electricity use, enabling better budgeting;
- Replaced the shifting and cracked external retaining wall on the east side of the property;
- Repaired roofs to stop leaks followed by repair and painting of drywall;
- Planted 3 new trees in the Church St. yard.

Projects for 2024 – in addition to usual repair and maintenance

- Replace the screw-in lamps in the sanctuary not covered by the ComEd rebate project – this requires a creative solution(s) to prevent damage to the wood floor in the narthex from bringing in a rental lift;
- Repairs of cracked glass panes and replacement of rotted wood frames in specific windows in church rooms and lower level (VGM) classrooms;
- Repair and paint damaged drywall in stairwell and dry valve room;
- Obtain estimates on major systems nearing the end of typical lifespans for potential inclusion in capital campaign
 - HVAC in sanctuary (20 years old)
 - Boilers and water heater



Held over from 2023:

- Restoration and repair of the 100+ year old stained-glass window on the south wall of narthex: preliminary estimates from 4 firms range widely in the scope of repairs needed and potential costs (\$21,000 - \$113,000). The window will be discussed as part of the capital campaign considerations.
- Because Village Green Montessori paid for locks and security systems to meet their needs, we did not update the security cameras or lock systems on the church doors. As long as the external doors are maintained in proper working order and key access is controlled, we saw no issues at this time.

Finally, among the many things I have learned as Warden, *Expect Your Plans to Change* is in the top three. The unimaginable news in November of Kyra Smith's illness resulted in Jason Smith stepping down as Warden. Jason brought to our warden partnership valuable knowledge in engineering and finance. More importantly, Jason's humor, energy, enthusiasm, and compassion brought great joy to our work. I am grateful for the 9 months we worked together. Much of what we accomplished in 2023 stems from Jason asking if a current practice was the best approach for St. Lawrence today. I'm also thankful to members of the Vestry and former Wardens who offered to help me since Jason stepped down. My 2-year term as Warden was to end at this Annual Meeting, but Kristin has asked me to extend my term by one year and I readily agreed. I eagerly look forward to partnering with Jenny Speers in 2024.

Deborah DeManno, Warden



Deborah DeManno
Warden



Jason Smith
Warden



LITURGICAL LIFE

In 2023, we celebrated:

- 1 baptism
- 11 services at a local retirement community
- 1 Bishop's Visitation with 3 receptions
- 63 shared Daily Offices (morning prayer and compline)
- 65 total in person Eucharists!



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

We are thrilled to share that, after months of hard work, several parish meetings, and many small group listening sessions, the capital campaign committee and vestry have unanimously agreed to hire Leslie Pendleton as our campaign consultant.

In our listening sessions, we heard your stories of how St. Lawrence has shaped your lives over the years, what matters most to you about this incredible parish, and what your hopes and dreams are for that future. Among the many things we heard, a few key themes stood out:

- A desire to increase our capacity for youth and family ministry
- A desire to better use our building as a resource for our community and to increase our presence in Libertyville
- A general sense of volunteer exhaustion, here expressed as a desire to hire more staff to take pressure off of the congregation

We have brought these themes to our consultant and are now in the process of translating what we heard from you into a tentative project list that will lead into a feasibility study this year.



THE HOPE FOOD PANTRY



The Hope Food Pantry continues to feed more and more families. In 2023, our average number of families served increased to 76 from 50 in 2022. November and December of 2023 saw us serving over 100 families regularly. We are adapting to the higher numbers as best we can so that we may serve everyone in two hours. We purchased more carts and have 10-12 volunteers every pantry now compared to 5-6 volunteers just a couple years ago. We have also streamlined product choices and are prepacking the bags with household items in an effort to serve every neighbor who shows up from 8 AM to 10 AM.

We now have a database of all our food pantry neighbors and they sign in each time with a unique number. We are still working out the kinks with the technology, but feel confident this will result in an easy registration process and provide helpful data and reporting capabilities.

Sourcing food has been harder this year as Northern Illinois Food Bank struggled to keep up with the rising demand for food from all its pantries. We picked up over 17,000 lbs of food from Sunset, Jewel, Aldi and Walmart and ordered over 77,000 lbs of product from NIFB. Costco, Garden Fresh and donations from our congregation and local businesses were significant sources of food as well.

Thank you to all who have donated bags, food and money to the pantry. This is what makes our ministry sustainable. And of course, I absolutely love our dedicated volunteers who show up in all weather and deal with whatever crazy situations may arise with patience and humor. There is a mutual trust and respect between our volunteers and our neighbors in need and this has led to many beautiful moments together over the years. Come experience it for yourself!

Betsy Barnett
Director
The HOPE Food Pantry



YOUTH FORMATION

Our Better Together confirmation program continued into its second year in the fall of 2023.

A confirmation date with Bishop Clark for all four parishes is scheduled for May 4th at Trinity, Highland Park!

Meanwhile, our Sunday School program continued to grow and thrive, attracting a number of new families and teachers this year.



ADULT FORMATION

In the Spring of 2023, we offered three Better Together formation opportunities, beginning with Gordon Lathrop's liturgical text, *The Assembly*, moving on to a deep dive into practices of prayer in Lent, and finishing with an exploration of Christena Cleveland's *God is a Black Woman*.

In the Fall of 2023, we moved to a new Better Together model called Christianity 101, which is held concurrently with youth confirmation and is designed for adults who are new to the Episcopal Church and/or are exploring the possibility of confirmation or reception themselves. This series has been a huge success and will continue into 2024.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

St. Lawrence continued to be a vibrant community presence this year, offering:

- 10 Thursdays of Farmers' Market Open Play
- Many evenings spent in fellowship at the Independence Grove Beer Garden for Summer Office Hours
- Hundreds of seedlings sold at our first ever plant sale
- Increased visibility thanks to our successful t-shirt fundraiser
- Hundreds of dogs blessed at Dog Days of Libertyville
- Buckets of snow-cones and mountains of cotton candy sold at Dog Days of Libertyville
- Untold pounds of candy given out to Libertyville trick or treaters
- 400 cups of hot cocoa distributed at the Libertyville tree lighting
- \$2362.08 raised by Holy Crafters at the St. Lawrence Fall and Holiday Bazaars
- 11 volunteers participating in our Prison Pen Pal Ministry, ably overseen by Deacon Hal



SOCIAL EVENTS

We also had a lot of fun together!

- 5 total summer Backyard Hangouts and Fridays with Friends
- Monthly gatherings of Creating in the Nave
- 15 entrants in fall chili cookoff
- Monthly fellowship lunches held by our Young Episcopal Seniors
- Our first ever Bike Blessing and Community Ride
- 1 wildly successful Parents' Night Out



BETTER TOGETHER



WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

We continued to lean into our partnerships with St. Gregory's, Deerfield; Trinity, Highland Park; and St. Elisabeth's, Glencoe, focusing on:

- Welcoming an extended family from Venezuela, providing housing, food, and social service support to 9 adults and 5 children. The families are now well on their way to resettling in the United States. Their work with the immigration system continues; the children are comfortably enrolled in school; and healthcare, grocery shopping and transportation have become routine. As 2023 closes they are making the transition into self-supported housing.
- A fully collaborative Holy Week, featuring services at each parish
- Shared Lent and Advent devotionals
- Collaborative youth confirmation, intergenerational formation, and adult formation
- 2 combined vestry visioning sessions



BUDGET REPORT 2023

2023 turned out to have a number of pleasant surprises. Total income for 2023 was \$18,126 higher than planned. This is primarily due to an unplanned gift from the Boy Scouts as well as unplanned interest income earned on our cash in the bank.

Expenses for 2023 were \$54,550 lower than budgeted. This is primarily due to the unplanned reduction in our mortgage payment due to the first of the two mortgages being paid off mid-year, combined with lower than planned health benefit expenses due to Kristin moving to Kyle's plan mid-year.

The net effect for the year is that we spent \$43,692 more than we took in vs. a plan to spend \$116,367 more than we took in for a favorable variance of \$72,676.

Net change to our investment portfolio due to dividends, interest and market appreciation/depreciation is an increase of \$13,897

Total cash in the bank at year-end of \$721,549 includes \$31,862 in prepaid 2023 income (not impacting the 2023 income statement).

Income Statement			
Operating Budget Results 2023			
	Actual	Budget	Good/ (Bad)
Revenue			
Offerings	380,280	386,031	(5,751)
Other Income	70,604	46,904	23,700
Community Fundraising	4,177	4,000	177
Total Income	455,061	436,935	18,126
Expenses			
Fixed	300,511	321,083	20,572
Required Expenses	60,529	56,192	(4,337)
Ministry Team Expenses	9,669	12,210	2,541
Total Mortgage	128,044	163,818	35,774
Total Expenses	498,753	553,302	54,550
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(43,692)	(116,367)	72,676



Balance Sheet		
As of December 31, 2023		
		Assets
Cash and Money Market	\$ 301,549	
Investment	\$ 118,254	
Other Liquid Assets	\$ 429,183	
Total Liquid Assets		\$ 848,986
Original Building	\$ 1,360,000	
Building Expansion	\$ 3,383,814	
New Classroom/Kitchen	\$ 69,560	
Permanent Sign	\$ 35,449	
Total Fixed Assets		\$ 4,848,823
Total Assets		\$ 5,697,808
		Liabilities
Pre-paid pledge and bldg use		\$ 31,862
VGM Security Deposit		\$ 1,000
Withholdings		\$ 1,563
Transmittal		\$ (48)
\$1,000,000 Note	\$ 625,265	
\$1,800,000 Note	\$ -	
Total Mortgage		\$ 625,265
Restricted Funds		\$ 1,252,958
Fund Principal		\$ 3,785,208
Total Liabilities		\$ 5,697,808

Jeanne Lasheff, Treasurer



Stewardship Campaign Results

	2022	2023	2024
Total Pledged	\$342,597	\$358,831	\$346,661
Total Pledges	75	78	77
Average Pledge	\$4,638	\$4,643	\$4,502
Median Pledge	\$2,600	\$2,600	\$2,700
New Pledgers	3 (10)	4 (6)	2 (5)



THANK YOU

Our life together would not be possible without the tireless effort of our many, dedicated volunteers. It is an honor to say thank you and farewell to the following people, who are stepping down from their ministry roles:

Jason Smith (warden)

Ellen Jennings and John Cecilia (vestry)

Jeanne Lasheff (treasurer)

Tom & Sarah Simpson (Care of our Landscaping and Grounds)

Betsy Swank (Education for Ministry - EfM)





Our Mission:

Growing relationships, serving in community,
empowered through worship.

Our Vision:

A vibrant, engaged community feeding those who hunger in body, mind
or spirit, celebrating God's love and offering a spiritual home for all.

Our Promise:

Wherever you are in your spiritual journey,
St. Lawrence welcomes you. We celebrate diversity and,
following Jesus' example embrace ALL God's children.

As a community, we cherish your uniqueness as God has made you:
across cultural backgrounds, skin color, citizenship/immigration status,
political views, age, gender identity/expression/attraction, marital and
economic status, and physical and cognitive abilities.

Whoever you are, whomever you love,
wherever you are from, WE WELCOME YOU!





St. Lawrence

Episcopal Church

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