

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America



# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP YEHIEL CURRY

Dear friends in Christ,

As Lutherans, we are set free to love our neighbors and seek justice. In Colossians 2, we read: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (6-7).

I am abounding in thankfulness for you, church. You are an integral part of this mission as we envision a world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. The ministries of congregations including yours, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together today and every day so more people may know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love. From providing food to people experiencing hunger, to helping train the next generation of leaders that will lead this church, your support is at work here at home and around the world.

Your generosity to each of the three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has made it possible for us to do this work

together. Your financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices are so valued.

As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to continue to walk in Christ, remembering you are rooted and established in faith, and free to love and serve your neighbors. Thank you, church, for the ways you connect with and support our siblings across the ELCA and in our communities.

In Christ,



The Rev. Yehiel Curry  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

—Colossians 2:6-7

2025 ANNUAL MEETING SHEPHERD OF THE BAY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
February 1, 2026

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# Shepherd of the Bay 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes

January 23, 2025

**1. Welcome** – Tara Torkelson, Council Member

**2. Call to Order** – Tara Torkelson at 10:25am

**3. Opening Prayer** – Pr. James Honig

**4. Approval of the Minutes of 2023 Annual Meeting held on January 28, 2024**

Motion to approve by Jeanne Aurelius, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim Grasse. Motion carried.

**5. Approval of Consent Agenda (Staff and SOTB Ministry Reports)**

Motion to approve by Judy Jackson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jane Burrell. Motion carried.

**6. Reflection and Report from Pastor Honig**

Pastor Jim expressed gratitude for congregational grit, courage, and determination as it pivots to a lay-led, pastor supported ministry. Emphasis on dedication to reading and praying the scripture together and listening for God's presence among us.

Pastor is Looking forward to "smoother sailing" as he recovers from his medical issues.

He offered thanks to Greg Beem for his ministry, and welcomed Randy Manges, the new organist, as he joins Judy Jackson and the outstanding music program.

Commended staff members Lynda Pietruszka and Carol Omernick for their invaluable service.

**7. Presentation and Approval of 2025 Budget- Grace Rossman**

Grace reported that the budget is on good footing.

Several low earning accounts were consolidated into a money market account earning 4.5%

The Memorial Fund reflects the receipt of \$120,000 from the Jan Mielke Estate in December

2023. A final disbursement of \$80,000 was received in January 2025 and will appear in next year's balance sheet.

The proposed budget for 2025 includes a 5% staff increase and an increase in the Caring for Building and Grounds fund.

97 intention cards were received for a total of about \$325,000 pledged. A generous response to the December appeal letter helped close out the year on a positive footing.

Grace is anticipating a need for an income of about \$540,000 this year.

Motion to approve 2025 Budget as presented, by Cathy Mangan, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sue West. Motion Carried

**8. Recognition and Thanks to Outgoing Council Members**

**Vicki Amundson, Trish Pierson, and Micky Swanson**

**9. Election of New Council Members**

**Mark Beecher, Jeff Johnson, and Jane Mohit**

Motion to approve by Sue Daubner, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Don Howard. Motion Carried.

**10. Approval of Committee Members as Required by the Congregational Constitution**

**Endowment Fund-Les Keeper, Dave Burkhardt, and Grace Rossman**

Motion to approve by Jeanne Aurelius, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jeff Johnson. Motion carried.

**Finance Committee, Audit Committee, and Scholarship Committee**

Finance and Audit Committees- Les Keeper, Dick Burris, and Scott Schultz

Scholarship Committee – Holly Thomas

Motion to approve by Judy Jackson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Vicki Amundson. Motion carried.

**Closing Prayer**

**Adjournment at 11:20 am**

Respectfully Submitted by Micky Swanson

# Pastor's Report

Dear, dear Siblings in Christ at Shepherd of the Bay,

I was sitting at one of those conferences for church leaders this past October. I can't say that it was a particularly good conferences as conferences go. But there were a few nuggets. And here is one of them: "Figure out what you're good at and lean into that." What's behind that is the truth that no congregation can do everything well. But every congregation has assets and strengths that are part of God's good and perfect gifts, given for the sake of mission and ministry. As I reflect on the ministry here at Shepherd of the Bay, that last year has been a year of leaning into the things we are good at.

## **We are good at worship.**

Each week, our members and friends come to worship expecting to meet God and to be supported by this community. Each week, they come expecting quality worship leadership, music, and preaching. And thanks to an excellent team, we are able to provide a high level of excellence in our worship life. For years now, Judy Jackson has provided outstanding worship leadership from the piano and as director of the Sanctuary Choir. This past year, we added another pillar of strength when Randy Manges joined our team as principal organist. In a short time, Randy has become a cherished and integral part of our team. We are also so grateful for the addition of Mike Mitterman at the A/V desk, capably running the weekly slide show and curating our sound system. So many volunteers commit so much time and effort to our worship life: choir members and other musicians, altar guild, ushers, the flower people, lectors, communion assistants, coffee fellowship hosts and hostesses, and the list goes on and on. Thank you to all of you!!

Our worship life also includes other services besides Sunday morning. We once again enjoyed informal Lenten worship in the fellowship hall around tables. Each week between Ash Wednesday and Holy Week, we gathered for dinner and then stayed at our tables for worship, praying, singing, reading and reflecting on Scripture, and holding conversations about important things.

Another aspect of our worship life is helping families to celebrate resurrection as they mourn the death of loved ones. We really come together as a community to support families. We had fewer of our church members die this year than in years past, but as I look at the records of our ministry we did quite a few funerals and memorial services for people who were not members of the congregation, but had some connection to Shepherd of the Bay. I'm so grateful to be part of a community that is welcoming, inviting, and generous in providing support even for people who are not part of our congregation.

## **We are good at helping people grow in their faith.**

One the highlights of every week for me is the Tuesday morning bible class. We have enjoyed a surge in attendance over this past year, which makes my heart smile. The members engage in the lessons for the coming week, getting curious about what they see and hear, what they wonder about, and how it might apply to their own faith life. As leader of the class, I'm able to offer insights that come from more than 40 years of intense study of the word. Together we experience the moment of the Spirit leading us to greater trust and faith. During the summer, we spent that time diving into the history of the Christian Church in America. While that kind of study is not so focused on faith formation, it does help us to understand this moment in time, and to see that we are part of a much larger story of God's work in the world.

Of course, Tuesday morning is not the only opportunity to engage in bible study. There are women's bible studies and a men's faith and fellowship group, all designed to provide both insight and support for growing and maturing in our walk of faith.

You can look at Lynda's report to see the many, many ways she engages our children, youth, and families in helping them to grow in faith and service. We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated and capable servant for our ministry with children and families.

You may not think of stewardship as part of our ministry of helping people grow in their faith. But I actually think it is. Throughout the year, we encourage our members to be generous with their time, talent, and treasure. That conversation is always focused for a few weeks with our fall giving campaign. In that campaign, we always remind people of God's good gifts in their own lives and of their call to be generous in returning their resources to support the ministry. That is an exercise in helping each of us to grow in our faith.

## We are good at relationship building and caring for each other.

The past three years of the Thriving Congregations have given us the opportunity to be involved in some pretty intensive training and work. The inaugural phase of that work came to a conclusion in 2025. In that work, we were striving to thicken the relational fabric of the congregation and to thin the walls between church and community. Our work to build that relational fabric has been a great blessing. Each week, we gather after church for a time of conversation and refreshment. I'm so impressed each week by the robust conversation and community building that happens in that time. Each first Sunday of the month we gather for a congregational potluck. I continue to be amazed by the strong participation month after month after month. Clearly, this time has become important to us. There is something mystical and magical when we break bread together. And there is something deeply symbolic in each of us bringing a gift to share and then enjoying the fruit of that labor together.

One other recommendation that came out of our Thriving Congregations process was to add a staff member to our team who would coordinate our care for each other. In answering that call, Amy Hennings became part of our team as our Congregation Care Coordinator. Amy is a tremendously gifted individual who brings a deep and broad array of gifts to her work and to our congregation's ministry. In a short time, she has helped to bring focus to some of our needs and has already begun putting pieces in place to address those needs.

We continue to enjoy the blessing of a handful of members who regularly share communion with our homebound members. While I continue to visit our homebound folks, our lay eucharistic ministers add another layer of care and connection for those who are unable to attend worship.

## We are good at community outreach.

At a worship service this past fall, with the help of Carol Omernick, we put together a slide show to summarize all the ways that this congregation is involved in ministry to the community and larger world. We had nearly 20 slides that demonstrated the multiple ministries that we engage in outside our walls (and I learned later that I forgot a few!!).

As I mentioned above, part of our calling is to thin the walls between church and the world, so that we bear witness to Christ's love both in what we do and what we say. A couple of those ways really stand out to me in the past year. The Mental Health Fair held last spring made a huge impact. We invited representatives of dozens of community service agencies to share their work, and more than 200 members and friends attended that fair. In addition, more than 150 of them stayed for an inspirational talk by Tasha Schuh. My heart was full at the tremendous gift this was to the community and the tremendous energy of that entire evening.

I was also able to participate in a multi-generational trip to help with recovery and rebuilding in western North Carolina. While the work we did was important and it demonstrated poignantly the love of Christ for all, and especially for the struggling, it was also a master class in the value of working together across the generations and across denominational barriers. What a great trip that was. And once again, folks from Shepherd of the Bay continued their mission work in Guatemala. This was the 10th trip that folks from Shepherd of the Bay have participated in, and another contingent will be traveling again this spring.

A second Thriving Congregations Research/Action Team was formed and completed their work in the past year. They laid the foundations for some bold plans to partner with other organizations in 2026 to bear witness to God's goodness in some very concrete ways. Watch in the coming year as those plans for partnership with the Door County Housing Partnership and United Way of Door County unfold.

Before I end my report, I want to express my gratitude to the Congregation Council. They are your elected leaders, and they are really good at what they do. Each month we gather and prayerfully address the financial, administrative and long term plans for the ministry at Shepherd of the Bay. Your leaders spend a lot of time and energy in making sure that we are a Thriving Congregation.

I also want to mention the exceptional service of Carol Omernick in the office. She is so good at managing so many details and making sure the weekly bulletins and monthly newsletter are high quality publications. She often goes above and beyond what's in her job description. She has a deep care both for our members and for the larger community, and it shows in the quality of the work she does. We are blessed to have her on our team.

As we turn look forward to another year of ministry, I'm grateful for the past almost 9 years that I have been privileged to be in ministry with you as your pastor. God has blessed us together and we trust in God's continued guidance and provision in the years to come.

Together for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus,  
Pr. Jim Honig

## Council President's Letter

Serving as the Council President this past year has been a joyful undertaking for me. The dedicated council members, staff and you, the congregation, continue to create an inclusive, involved and caring community within the walls of Shepherd of Bay and within the greater Door County Community.

During 2025, I witnessed a very strong and involved congregation that accomplished so much this year. A few highlights include:

- Multigenerational mission trip to North Carolina to assist with hurricane recovery efforts.
- A robust Thriving Congregation team whose efforts led to the creation of the Congregational Care Coordinator as well as helped build stronger connections both within the congregation and into the greater community.
- Klaud's pantry continued support of local needs and our small but mighty community garden.
- Community engagement through support of local parades, Bridges social event for J1 visa summer workers, and bus transportation for many groups.
- Monthly potluck lunches, Lenten informal services with meals, bible study, men's group and communion provision to those not able to attend in person.
- SOTB has opened the use of our beautiful facility to the community for music performances, AA meetings, a local girl scout troop, homeowners' association meetings, exercises classes, and we are an official Red Cross warming center.
- A community and school focused mental health event.
- Continued strong youth programs.
- We continued to welcome new members to SOTB and most become involved fairly quickly with the wonderful opportunities that are available here.

There is so much to be grateful for as we continue to demonstrate our faith on a daily basis. We pray for those who have been affected by national and world events.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Council President. Continue to be engaged with SOTB and each other for you are the greatest asset of this church.

Tara Torkelson

# Children, Youth, and Family Ministry

## Lynda Pietruszka

For the year of faith formation 2025, I would like to lift up in the highest regard, all the volunteers who made this ministry possible! I am truly humbled by the amount of people who shared their time and talents with our kids across the ages, this past year. God provided generously, and for that I am truly grateful! Looking forward to the new year, as we partner with our new Congregational Care Coordinator, building intergenerational relationships together with our church family and wider community. Thank you all, and God Bless!

### **Sunday School and Third Sundays, "Pancakes and Praise"**

September through May, each third Sunday, following Communion, children AND families join us upstairs for a pancake breakfast followed by a time of faith formation for the entire family! Pancakes and Praise Sundays have been very successful, averaging five families in regular attendance. The other Sundays in the month, Sunday School for children ages 4-grade 6, follows the Children's message, and is located in the conference room, first floor. We have averaged four children in attendance.

### **Little Lambs Bible Story Hour**

Each Wednesday morning, October through May, from 9:30-10:45 a.m., infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their care-providers are invited for a time of free play, Bible stories, art, music, games, and more! This year, we have five families who are members of other churches in the community, and two families from Shepherd of the Bay, who attend regularly.

### **Wonderful Wednesdays**

Every first and third Wednesday, from October through May, Gibraltar school students in Kindergarten through sixth grade are transported by the Shepherd of the Bay van, for a time of fun and fellowship, Bible stories, art, music, special guests, games, snacks, service, and more. The first half of 2025, the average attendance has been 16 children. We have had five new children join this year. Two of those five children attend other churches on Sunday morning.

### **Summer Wonderful Wednesdays**

Children ages four through grade six, spent five Wonderful Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at SOTB for a full day of fun, Bible Stories, music, arts and crafts, games, free play, water splash fun, movies, special guests, and two field trips! We partnered with the Sister Bay Historical Society for one of the trips, and Debbie Clement, Children's book author and butterfly expert, at Peninsula State Park. The summer of 2025, we averaged twenty-two children, with half from Shepherd of the Bay, and the other half, either vacation visitors, or coming from other churches.

### **Confirmation**

The first three Wednesdays of each month, Pastor Jim and Lynda Pietruszka alternate instruction for five students: Avery Burress, Ethan Olson, Anthony Torcivia, Kinsley Buchner, and Erik Wolfe. The remainder of the month provides opportunities for retreats, fellowship, field trips, service and outreach. Students are encouraged to attend the Synod Youth retreat, "Journey with Jesus", and Confirmation camp, in the summer. Kenzie Thomas and Addison Schauske received their Reaffirmation of Baptism, and were Confirmed in May of 2025.

### **High School Youth**

Students in grades nine through twelve gather on a schedule they collectively create, for fun, fellowship, devotion, reflection, and planning for the next big event, mission trip, fund raising, or service opportunity. In 2025, we had six students, we recognize as our high school youth group. In May of 2025, we celebrated the Graduation of Addison Schauske. Our youth participated in the 30 Hour Famine, raising awareness of the persistent problem of lead poisoning in some neighborhoods in Milwaukee, and raising funds to purchase Lead kits. They also served on a mission team, through the Fuller Institute, hurricane recovery in North Carolina.

### **Nursery**

The Nursery is used for gathering and play for the Wednesday Little Lambs group. The nursery is also open Sunday mornings and during special events. The nursery is a space for parents and care providers to spend time with their little ones during worship. There are age appropriate toys available, as well as a changing table, and a rocking chair for nursing mothers. Currently we have one family who visits the nursery on Sunday. They are invited to give input if staffing is needed. Currently there are no volunteers or paid staff for the nursery.

### **Playground**

On the east side of the Sanctuary, we provide a year round "Playground" for small children, attending worship with their families. We also provide activity bags for young children, and kits for elementary age children, which follow the order of worship.

## **Highlights of Faith Formation in 2025**

- Synod wide youth gatherings: “Journey with Jesus”, Snow tubing at Kewaunee Park, BYG (Building Youth Groups) retreat, and Junior High Blast weekend retreat.
- Easter Sunday Resurrection Gardens
- Children’s Community Garden
- 30 Hour Famine
- Ellison Bay Days in the Park, Children’s activity tent, sponsored by SOTB, and our church van participating in the parade.
- Vacation Bible School
- Bridges J-1 Night at Shepherd of the Bay
- The Children’s Christmas program, “A Christmas Star”
- The Great Cereal Box Domino Challenge for the food pantry
- The Dorothy Peterson Pencil Award to Ruth Ann Hjelle
- The intergenerational event of cookie baking and Christmas caroling at Scandia.

## **Outreach and Service**

- Ellison Bay Day in the Park, Children’s Activity Tent
- The Great Cereal Box Challenge for the Door County Food Coalition
- Card Ministry
- Lenten Meal preparation
- Partnership with Hephatha Lutheran Church raising awareness and funds for the Lead poisoning problems in Milwaukee
- Bridges J-1 SOTB host night in the craft garage, and offering transportation with the church van.
- Homes for Dollars, sending quilts and other soft items to supply folks in NC in the hurricane recovery area.

## **Milestone Ministry**

- Back to school back pack blessing
- Early Readers
- Bible Sunday for Confirmation students, and grades 3-4
- Baptism of Reese Johnson
- Baptism and Birthday cards

## **Fundraising**

- Going Bananas, Banana Bread Sale
- Easter Bake Sale
- Lenten Meals
- Peninsula Bike Challenge aid station
- HeyHey 5K aid station
- 30 Hour Famine for Lead Kits

## **Youth Director Training/Experiences**

- Mental Health and Wellness Fair Committee
- Mental Health First Aid Course through the National Council for Mental Well-being
- Care Giving Conference through the ADRC
- Synod Youth cohort group
- Connecting with youth by attending events at Gibraltar School
- Vacation Bible School volunteer
- Chriskindlmarket children’s activity center volunteer

## **Ongoing**

- Stephen Ministry
- Safety training, policy and procedures manual
- Intergenerational/Congregational Care partnerships
- Updating Communications/program planning
- “Shepherding” families in need
- Cleaning and organizing classrooms and supplies

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL REPORT

Shepherd of the Bay joined the six churches of Northern Door County the week of June 9-13, 2025 to have a Vacation Bible School (VBS) taking place at the First Baptist Church in Sister Bay. We welcomed 121 children, ranging from preschool to 6th grade. Registration takes place mainly online, making it easy for many kids who don't have a church home to get involved. This opens the door for new friendships and experiences, inviting them into a welcoming community.

The theme for VBS 2025 was "No Lion - God Cares for You," based on the story of Daniel and the Lions, as well as the story of Esther and the Dry Bones in Ezekiel 37.

The central teaching points were:

1. All the Bible stories were drawn from the time when God's people, the Jews, were in exile. During this time, there were strong pressures of the Jews to abandon their faith and blend in with their unbelieving neighbors. The stories emphasize both God's care and the blessings that flow from faithfulness.
2. We cannot save ourselves. God saves us through Jesus' death and resurrection .
3. Being holy is being willing to actively love our neighbors, just as Jesus actively loved us. .

As always, Shepherd of the Bay had a good turnout of adults, volunteers, and children. The Craft Committee is led by Kristi Appel and Carol Omernick. Bruce Foster edited the skits and curriculum, and Lynne Buchner directed the skits. We had many adults help with being tribal teachers, craft helpers, set up and taking down of the craft booths and tents, snack helpers, picnic lunch helpers, and clean up crew. Thanks to everyone who supported this wonderful program.

Carol Omernick & Kristi Appel

# Music Ministry

## A View from the Music Corner Annual Report 2025

Hello, Shepherd of the Bay family. It is my pleasure to give you a small insight into the activities and contributions of your church's musicians, both choral and instrumental. We have been a very busy musical family in 2025. Here are some of the highlights.

Joy continued to radiate from the Choir Loft, where the Sanctuary Choir sang anthems for every service of the year, while welcoming returning singers in the summer months (Choir-lite season) and bidding farewell to our travelers in the Fall and winter months (Regular choir season). One of the unique aspects of our choral family is the ever-changing tapestry of voices, like a colorful choral kaleidoscope. We live by the motto:

**EVERYBODY IS WELCOME HERE!** So whoever is in town on any particular Sunday and wants to sing with the choir is encouraged to join in the fun, grab some music and don a colorful choir robe! **ALL GOD'S CHILDREN GOTTA PLACE IN THE CHOIR!**

Some of these choir members occasionally stepped away from the Choir Loft and into the role of featured singers during the year:

Mary Perdue, Sue Szabo, Sharon Johnson, Sandy Reisenauer, Cathy and Scott Henry, Jeanne Aurelius, Cheryl Furlick, Ruth Ann Hjelle, Judi and Jim Nelson, Barb and Bill Meyer, Erik Torkelson, Cheryl Becht, Pat and John Skogsbakken, Joe Megan, Lynn Zamora and Marcia Eischen. Celebrating the musical offerings of the next generation, who sang beautifully for the Children's Christmas Program and then again for the Christmas Eve Family Service: Lila Canard and REL Luedcke. Likewise, some of the musical members of Shepherd shared their instrumental talents with our church community: Charlotte Bogda and Alicia Doudna, violin; Erik Torkelson, soprano saxophone; Jim Honig, trumpet; John Skogsbakken, guitar. Guest musicians who have contributed music for our worship services include: Erik and Ellen Caruso Olson, oboe and viola (from Peninsula Music Festival); Paul Bellino, Bradley Ward and Daniel Schwalbach, trombones (from Peninsula Music Festival); Mara McClain, cello and Allyson Fleck, viola (Executive Director, representing musicians from Midsummer's Music concerts); Mike Fordney and Kent Moraga, french horns (guests from the community).

Along with welcoming our new Principal Organist, Randall Manges, to our Shepherd of the Bay community, our church hosted a number of instrumental performances throughout the year: Jonathan Bass, piano; several concert events presented by Midsummer's Music; and a presentation of piano and vocal music by Colin & Friends. Our two Steinways in the sanctuary (9-foot PMF solo piano and the 7-foot choir piano) and the Mason & Hamlin in the choir rehearsal room were attended to by the very capable Peter J. Nehlsen of Washington Island. Fun Fact! Peter has yet to present a bill to the church for his services after many, many years! We are grateful for his generosity to our church!

Some of my duties as Sanctuary Choir Director and Principal Pianist throughout the year have been: selecting and rehearsing choral anthems for weekly Sunday and special worship services at Shepherd; contributing special music and hymns on Sunday mornings; playing for Sunday Chapel Services at Serenity Spring/Scandia Village with Pastor Jim Honig; writing a weekly email to the Sanctuary Choir members; contributing a monthly column for the Parish Door Newsletter; and, occasionally, playing and conducting the choir for a funeral service for some of our beloved saints, most recently for our much-loved soprano, Sharon Cobb, who was also my favorite page turner in many two-piano concerts!

My heart is filled with a grateful spirit for the gifts of music, colleagues, church and community that have been bestowed on me in the capacity of my position at Shepherd. Worthwhile music never takes place in a void, but needs to find a release and celebration in collaboration with fellow musicians and friends. I have found such friends in the choir loft, in the sanctuary, in small group gatherings and in the joy of membership at Shepherd of the Bay. Thank you for the opportunity of sharing the music with all of you.

Judith Jackson, Sanctuary Choir Director and Principal Pianist

Soli Deo Gloria

## Annual Report: Organ & Handbell Choir

In the past year more than 150 different organ works were offered in worship services. These pieces were selected to amplify the readings for the day, seasonal themes, and local observations. Collaborations with parishioners, staff, Peninsula Music Festival personnel, and Midsummer Music personnel have graced our services. The SOTB organ continues to be a musical beacon in the broader Door County community.

The organ has been tuned twice this year: prior to Easter Sunday and Christmas Eve. Due to humidity issues tuning will need to be revisited in the next few weeks. I am attempting to come closer to understanding and resolving these issues with the help of Greg Beem, Tom Tuttle, and Dobson Organ Builders.

The Handbell Choir was reconstituted in October and numbers eleven ringers. The group rehearses each Thursday from 5:30 to 6:30 and new participants are always welcome. Extensive musical experience is not a prerequisite. Our goal is to play in worship about once every five weeks. Repertoire consists of hymn tune arrangements, piano and guitar arrangements, and short transcriptions of chamber and orchestral music which adapt successfully to handbells.

My tenure as organist at SOTB began in mid January, 2025 and I have enjoyed my work here very much as a result of the warmth of the congregation and excellence of the organ. I am grateful to have the opportunity to serve God in the midst of this congregation.

Randall Manges, Organist and Handbell Choir Director

## **Worship and Music Committee**

SOTB's Worship and Music Committee meets monthly, working with Pastor Jim and staff to help accomplish the many behind-the-scenes tasks related to our worship services. The committee is chaired by Jane Mohit. Members of the committee coordinate ushers, communion assistants, readers, weekly flowers and special flowers for Easter and Pentecost, changing of the banners, and making sure everything is in place for worship each week. A big word of appreciation goes out to ALL who make this possible, including committee members Sharon Pluff, Cheryl Becht, Scott Henry, Sue Daubner, Jane Mohit, Judith Jackson, Carol Omernick, Jim Honig, and Lynda Pietruszka.

This committee welcomes anyone with interest, to join. Reach out to the church office with your contact info and we'll advise you of our next meeting.

# **Women of the ELCA**

## **2025 WELCA Quilting Group**

A small, dedicated, and productive group of quilters continued to work year-round, making quilts for those in need of comfort and warmth. Working in the fellowship hall on Thursday mornings, or from home, nearly 70 quilts were assembled and sent out. The Guatemala Mission group carried 10 quilts in their luggage. Lynda sent off a shipment of quilts to a ministry in North Carolina. The rest were delivered to a Lutheran World Relief drop-off site, where they eventually were to be distributed within the U.S and throughout the world.

In October, around 60 quilts adorned the pews of the sanctuary for a Blessing of the Quilts. Many compliments were received regarding the simple beauty of the display. One visitor was inspired to donate a huge amount of quilting fabric and supplies from an estate. The group is thankful for the wonderful response to help fund the shipping costs.

All are welcome to join on Thursdays at 9:30. Sewing skills are not necessary. There are many simple tasks in producing a quilt. If you can tie your shoes, you qualify. The conversation is always lively, and there are snacks! Donations of fabric and sheets are encouraged.

Quilts are available for anyone in need of warmth or comfort, just inform a quilter.

For more information contact Sue Szabo at 920-740-8227.

Submitted by Micky Swanson

## **WELCA Prayer Chain**

The WELCA Prayer Chain continues to serve all the members and friends of SOTB for prayer requests.

To send a Prayer Request:

**1. Send an email to Cheri Boock at [cheriboock@gmail.com](mailto:cheriboock@gmail.com)**

2. State the request with wording that you want for the request. Make sure you have received permission from the person in need of the request.

3. The request will be sent when received by Cheri.

4. The Prayer Chain members always are glad to receive a report of how the person is doing as they are sending out their prayers, so if you request a prayer for someone, please let us know how that person is doing.

If you want to be included as a recipient of the Prayer Chain, and pray for those in need, contact Cheri Boock at 920-854-5493 or cell 920-421-1210 or the above email.

## **WELCA Book Group**

Sharon Cobb was the person most responsible for organizing of the WELCA Shepherd of the Bay book club. For many years we met in members' homes to discuss the books selected by those who attended the meetings. Some months before the time of COVID, we began meeting in the church parlor, which was considered more centrally located and easier for winter access.

When the church was closed during the COVID months, we held our meetings by Zoom.

Membership is open to really anyone in the congregation who enjoys reading and likes to discuss books with other readers. It has traditionally been attended by women since it has been under the umbrella of WELCA.

We like to select books for at least the upcoming six months, and then we have the flexibility to add more recently published books later in the year. From January - November we meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday morning of the month in the Church parlor from 9:30 until about 11 am. Coffee/tea is served as well. The title of the month's book is published in the weekly church bulletin calendar. Please contact Gretchen Farwell (920-246-9127) if you would like further information about the group and/or would like to see the current list of books to be discussed. All are welcome!

Gretchen Farwell

# Building and Grounds Report

The following report covers the projects and maintenance activities during 2025.

Thank you to all those who supported the various activities and projects listed below.

Carrena Reisen for keeping the building clean.

Steve Nuey for keeping our parking lot, driveways clear of snow and ice.

Les Keepper for keeping our sidewalks clear of snow and ice.

Garden Club for keeping our grounds beautifully maintained.

Glen Rossman for keeping the lawn mowers tuned up.

Dick Burress for maintaining the bus.

Our building suppliers that help us keep the building and grounds in good condition; A&A Fire & Security, Action Electric, Camera Corner, Culligan, Eagle Mechanical Inc, Ferrellgas, Going Garbage, Hartmann Signs, Septic Maintenance Service, May Sports Center, Riesterer & Schnell Inc, Spectrum, TruGreen, Vans Fire & Safety, Warner-Wexel LLC, Wil-Kil Pest Control.

## Grounds

**Garden Club** – Thank you Scott Thies for leading the weekly ground keeping efforts with our volunteers. Thank you also for the weekly volunteers that keep our grounds maintained. We continue to receive many positive comments about the grounds from our members and visitors. Tru-Green continued their lawn service for Weed, fertilizer and pest control. Thank you, Karl Omernick, for trimming the trees around the front of the building.

## 2025 Building Repairs and Improvements

**AV Maintenance** – There was no significant maintenance required.

**HVAC Systems** – Bi-annual maintenance continued. Exhaust fan failures in 2 furnaces were repaired. The sanctuary humidifier was repaired and back in working order on March 10<sup>th</sup>. The Fellowship Hall AC unit and 30-amp breaker were replaced in June.

**Pest Control** – Quarterly maintenance continued.

**Fire Protection** – Annual inspection and maintenance of the extinguishers, fire door and alarms continued. This year we added the annual inspection of the emergency lighting and Exit signs to this service also.

**Sanctuary Ceiling Light Insulation** – A second layer of R30 (8") insulation was added to the sanctuary ceiling resulting in a total R60 for this area. This combined with the covering of all the recessed lights last winter should significantly reduce heating and cooling costs going forward.

**Community Garden** – The Community vegetable garden was fully used for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

**Rear Entrance off Humbug Rd** – Some of the shrubbery at the end of the driveway near Humbug Rd was removed providing better visibility for everyone exiting onto Humbug Rd.

**New Phone System** – Quantum Technologies installed new phones and service. The new service provides automatic call forwarding to staff.

**WiFi** – Quantum Technologies installed new WiFi service throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the building.

**Security** – WiFi cameras were purchased to monitor the entrances and grounds. Martin Security installed new programmable timer controls on the main entrance doors, Klaud's Pantry door and the 1<sup>st</sup> floor hallway door outside the conference room. The locked/unlocked times of each of these doors can now be individually programmed for the various daily activities using the building.

**Stained Glass Windows** – Two companies were asked to evaluate the 6 stained glass windows. Both found some issues that will need attention in the future. After their move from the original building none of the windows have their original structural supports. As a result, 2 of the panels on the west side are starting to sag. They are not in immediate need of repair but will continue to slowly sag over time.

**Sidewalk Repairs** – Two sidewalk squares (east side of steeple and entrance to Klaud's Pantry) were mud jacked eliminating trip hazards.

**Interior Painting** – The Congregational Care office was painted. Some touch-up painting was done in 2 of the Sunday School rooms.

## Members Volunteer Involvement in 2025

Buildings and Grounds Committee – Dick Burress, Carol & Karl Omernick, Scott Thies, Don Provo, Tom Tuttle, Russ Zage

Garden Club – Dick Burress, Cal Pierson, Lynda Pietruszka, Don Provo, Adan Rice, Glen Rossman, Tim and Margaret

Schoewe, Scott Thies, Tom Tuttle, Bill Wegehaupt, and Tim West - approximately 500man-hrs.

AV Operators - Scott Eckdahl, Tom Tuttle

Submitted by Thomas Tuttle - Chair Buildings and Grounds

# Annual Report for Outreach Committee 2025

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10

Thank you to everyone who has served individually and/or in the various outreach activities offered by Shepherd of the Bay (including those offered through Youth and Family Ministry and the Congregational Care Coordinator. Your gifts of time and talent are appreciated!

**Bridges:** Shepherd of the Bay hosted a Bridges event the end of August, along with members of The Orchard Church. 150 people attended and 26 volunteers from our Church provided a variety of activities for the students to choose from.

**Habitat for Humanity/Housing Partnership:** Volunteers from Shepherd of the Bay organized and provided meals for Habitat Humanity/Housing Partnership home build in Sister Bay. Twenty-six meals were provided by various churches, businesses, and individuals. Two people from our church worked on a regular basis to build the home, which was completed in early fall.

## **Bus Ministry:**

Residents from Serenity Springs of Scandia Village were transported to the Peninsula Music Festival four times by members of our church.

Members of our church drove the van for Bridges Events throughout the summer.

Free transportation for the Sister Bay Historical Society was provided for two days of Christkindlmarkt this year and for the Chris Hecht Fundraiser. The drivers received around \$168 in tips, which were given to Klaud’s Pantry.

## **Mental Wellness Speaker, Meal, and Fair**

Between Gibraltar middle and high school students/teachers and a church presentation, about 500 people heard Tasha Schuh’s inspirational message of resilience. We served a meal to about 150 people and leftover soups were put in the pantry. The few leftover desserts were used for coffee hour. All the food was donated or purchased with a Thrivent card. Around \$3,400 in donations were received prior to the event to help cover costs for Tasha and advertising. 40 vendors provided educational information on a variety of topics.

## **Highway Clean Up**

Shepherd of the Bay participates in the Wisconsin Adopt-A-Highway Program. Trash is removed from the sides of Highway 57 south of Sister Bay from Highway Q to Grove Road. This is accomplished in late spring with about eight volunteers, who work 1.5-2 hours collecting about ten large bags of cans, bottles, and miscellany.

## **Prayer Chain**

A group of people pray for individuals in our congregation and community upon request.

People from our congregation are also helping out neighbors and members of our congregation on a regular basis.

See below for individual reports on Klaud’s Pantry, Guatemala Mission, and Stephen Ministry.

Submitted with gratitude and praise to God.

Jane Burress/Church Council

# Klaud's Food Pantry

## Klaud's Pantry 2025 Annual Report

2025 was a very eventful year for Klaud's pantry. In September, Edee Madsen moved away and a new committee was formed to replace her. She left big shoes to fill and we all wonder how she did so much by herself for many years. When the committee saw how much work Edee did basically by herself, it truly is incredible. The new committee will continue her work and build on the strong foundation she left us.

The Pantry has been blessed with many donations of both food and money. The Church of Atonement in Fish Creek donated \$2500.00 which was used to purchase a new and larger refrigerator/freezer. A donation from a community member allowed the purchase of new shelving for the pantry which has given us the ability to stock more food for our patrons.

Our Girl Scout Troop #4488 held a food drive which provided so much food that we temporarily needed to stock some in the conference room. We have also received many generous donations from our congregation and the Door County Food Coalition.

The students at Gibraltar School also held a very successful food drive to help us stock our shelves. So many people have helped coordinate these events and we can't express our thanks enough to them for all of their assistance and concern.

In addition, we found out that there was a student debt of over \$7,000.00 for unpaid lunches at Gibraltar School. Due to the incredible generosity of many people, Klaud's Food Pantry was able to pay the debt so that all of the students started 2026 without needing to worry about how to pay for their lunches. This is God's work at its finest!

With the abundance of food, we were able to offer food bags for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners to our neighbors in need. Piggly Wiggly happily donated Turkeys and Hams for the dinners as well.

In addition, we made Christmas stockings for men, women and children which were very well received.

We have a long list of donors to say "Thank You" to, and we are grateful for each and every donation and person who helped supply our needs.

In 2026, our goal is to increase awareness about Klaud's Food Pantry in the community to let people know we are available to assist with their needs. We have become aware that Klaud's is the northernmost food pantry in Door County (Not counting the one on Washington Island), and that many folks north of us do not know about the food pantry.

We are extremely grateful to all of the volunteers who are so willing to give of their time and talents to meet the needs of our neighbors.

As always, we are in need of finances and food, especially fresh fruit and vegetables, milk, eggs, cheese, butter and meat. In addition, we have found a great need for personal care items such as shampoo, deodorant, soap and feminine care products.

If you have not seen the pantry lately, please stop by and take a look. I know you will be as excited as the committee members are to have such a great selection of food to offer.

Please keep the food pantry in your prayers so that we may continue to do the best we can to serve "Our Lord".

Respectfully submitted by

Barbara Zage, Committee Chairperson

# Guatemala Mission Trip

We partnered with Peace Lutheran Church in Antigo, WI, to send a team of 14 people to Guatemala. The members of Shepherd of the Bay traveling from May 23-31, 2025 included Nora Zacek, Laney Zacek, Jill Lhost, and Carol Omernick.

The programs at Manos de Jesus in Guatemala focus on building relationships within the community to strengthen family ties and foster a deeper connection with God.

Our main project was to paint a community building that Manos de Jesus uses for one of their Education and Nutrition program sites. They want to replicate the program they have on their main campus in Chichi to their other 3 sites in the Guatemalan mountains. We spent 2 days painting the inside of the classrooms of the concrete building. The teachers at the site were so happy to have a bright and happy place for the kids to learn.

We also helped at a second site, Xepocol, with a soccer program and meal. At this site we were able to bring shoes and water bottles to the 33 kids in the program. In the mountains of Guatemala, shoes are a necessity in life, but also a luxury. We also provided shoes for the four teachers involved in the educational program. The teachers alternate between teaching soccer and providing tutoring and education. A devotional time is included during each session. One of the teachers shared with us that she had needed a new pair of shoes. She prayed this week to God to help her find the money to buy a new pair of shoes. And here we stood, in front of her, with a new pair of shoes. She said we were an answer to her prayers. Her faith was strengthened, and she would share that with the kids she was teaching. God listens to us, He knows our needs, and He provides for us.

We also contributed by assisting in the tutoring center. We helped with elementary and middle school students in English, Math, Art, PE, and Computer coding.

We purchased 100 Spanish youth Bibles, 10 Soccer Balls,

We visited the families of children attending the soccer camp as well as our sponsor families, bringing along blankets made by our WELCA quilters, food, and other essential items.

A crucial aspect of building connections with the people of Guatemala is learning about their culture. We took a tour around the city of Chichicastenango, where Manos de Jesus is located, to gain insight into Mayan culture and traditions. Chichicastenango is one of the largest centers of idol worship in Guatemala, underscoring our mission to share the love of Jesus in this significant area.

To support our mission, we continue to fundraise through events such as a water station at the Door County Half Marathon and a freezie pop station at the Door County Triathlon. We have also hosted two Lenten Meals.

*Think about it ... Pray about it ... Join us!*

Nora Zacek and Carol Omernick

## Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry continues to serve in an informal setting. We currently have four Stephen Ministers who meet one-on-one with individuals to listen, talk, and offer encouragement.

Stephen Ministry is a confidential ministry. The identity of those receiving care and everything they discuss with a Stephen Minister remain private. The Stephen Minister takes on the role of “prayer giver” however, God, is the “cure giver”. The Stephen Minister is not a therapist, but an active listener, and can provide resources for those experiencing grief after the loss of a loved one, coping with illness, serving as a caregiver, or facing other challenging life situations.

We are looking forward to working more with Amy Hennings, Congregational Care Coordinator to see how Stephen Ministry might partner or benefit that ministry, while identifying potential care receivers. We will continue to educate the congregation to become familiar with Stephen Ministry, making it approachable, as we build a culture of “It’s ok to ask for help”.

We are always looking to identify those who might be called to train to become Stephen Ministers.  
Lynda Pietruszka & Carol Omernick

**Christ caring for people through people, a ministry of help, hope, and healing.**

***Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2***

## Thriving Congregations

The Thriving Congregation Program that started in 2022, came to its conclusion with three major activities in 2025.

The Thriving Congregation team and the Church Council meet in January and February to review, discuss, and approve the recommendations of the Senior Care research action team. That team was led by Pat Skogsbakken, and the members were Dick Burress, Carolyn Hitzeman, RuthAnn Hjelle, Nancy Megan, and Sue Provo. The recommendation was to hire a part time Congressional Care Coordination. A recruitment process, followed by an interview process, led to hiring Amy Hennings later in the year. Amy is well underway of making a difference in the life of our congregation.

A research action team was formed to address the second topical area- Community Engagement. That team consisted of Vicki Amundson, MJ Brukardt, Marcia Eischen, Jim Honig, and Jill Lhost. After meeting with over 40 community leaders, and much discussion and discernment, they made two recommendations. One was to support the Housing Partnership and Habitat for Humanity organizations by providing landscaping for 2 homes in 2026. The second was to work with the United Way’s pilot program “Thriving in Door County”. This program will provide financial, social and educational support of up to 250 families in Door County. Their focus is on ALICE families. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. Both of these initiatives will require financial and volunteer support. The Thriving Congregation Team and the Church Council approved these recommendations.

And lastly, the Thriving Congregation Program came to a Grace-filled conclusion in October. The team met at the home of Les and Julia Keeper for a potluck dinner, and we reminisced about this three year long journey we have made as a church, a team, and as individuals. Our work is now concluded but we will use the techniques we have learned in new ways in the future.

We would like to thank the team who stayed together the whole three years, and all of those who participated in the various activities, or prayed for us, or who urged us on in one form or another. Our last request is for each of us to continue to prayerfully pay attention and find ways, big and small, to thicken the relationships within the church and to thin the walls with our communities.

Vicki Amundson for the Thriving Congregation Team.

**Congregation Care Coordinator - Amy Hennings ([sotbcare@gmail.com](mailto:sotbcare@gmail.com))**  
**2025 Annual Report Reporting Period: October–November**

Focus: Congregational Care, Needs Assessment, and Community Connection

**1. Listening, Relationship-Building, and Care Coordination**

- Met or spoke by phone with dozens of congregation members from their 20s to 90's in age to gather information regarding congregational needs and additional meetings are scheduled continuing to be scheduled.
- Attended bi-weekly meetings with the pastor to review care needs and track visitation for vulnerable congregants.
- Conducted in-person visits with several different congregation members, some at very high risk.
- Met with parishioners for individual listening conversations and coffee meetings; additional coffee/tea listening sessions will be scheduled for December.

**2. Assessment and Data Collection**

- Created and launched a Congregational Needs and Skills Survey. Surveys are still coming in and being completed slowly but steadily. Created a spreadsheet to track both needs and also skills people are willing to share or help with others.
- Survey distributed in multiple formats: paper copies, online link via newsletters, QR code, worship services, bulletin, and church website.
- Continued gathering qualitative data through weekly one-on-one conversations with congregation members.
- Documenting existing community resources to better connect members with services that meet their needs.
- Reviewed the Thriving Congregations interviews and data as well. There are overlaps in identified needs including the need for grief support and other supportive services.

**3. Key Needs Identified**

Through survey responses, listening sessions, and ongoing conversations, two primary areas of need have emerged:

**A. Support for Vulnerable Congregation Members**

Identified needs include:

- Food or grocery delivery and shopping assistance
- Transportation to church and medical appointments
- Home safety support
- Assistance following discharge from health facilities
- Support for members with limited family or social networks

Actions taken:

- Met with Scandia Village's social services team to learn about services and request release-of-information permissions so the church can better assist parishioners.
- Contacted ADRC and SAIL to learn more about available services. Scheduling additional meetings with them.
- Recommendation: conduct background checks where possible if volunteers are entering members' homes.
- Met with Klaud's Pantry volunteers/leaders to review potential needs and started delivering some of the Klaud's Pantry groceries to homebound members in need.

**B. Grief and Caregiver Support**

- Ongoing need for grief support; Door of Life offers a grief support group, though feedback from members has been mixed. Located a location mental health practitioner willing to provide grief counseling support groups at our location.
- Strong need for caregiver support and respite ("breaks"). Working on developing a volunteer group for this and additional resources in our community that offer this.

- Door County Medical provides a monthly caregiver support group in Sister Bay; however, additional or more accessible options are needed.
- Exploring services in northern Door County and considering development of in-house church-based support for caregiver needs.

#### 4. Intergenerational and Social Connection

- Clear desire for more social and intergenerational activities.
- Planned and scheduled activities include:
  - Cookie making, baking, and decorating after worship on December 14
  - Caroling visits on December 17 for homebound members or those requesting a visit
- Planning a congregational game night in February 4<sup>th</sup> 5:30pm – 7:30pm; the Torcivia family has offered to donate ten pizzas to our event.
- Met with the quilting group to learn their history and current needs; the group is seeking additional sewers, individuals to knot quilts, and opportunities to mentor younger members interested in sewing or quilting.

#### 5. Education and Resource Sharing

- Exploring monthly speaker or information sessions open to the congregation and wider community.
- Proposed first session: Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> – Time TBA – late afternoon or early evening
  - Topic: *“How to Make Your Groceries Go Farther”* (shopping tips, coupon stacking, meal planning)
  - Will include information about Klaud’s Pantry and the Door County Food Coalition – May have representative to come speak as well
  - Barb Z. and Carol O. have offered to assist with planning, additional members are also welcome
- Registered and attended the ADRC Conference on November 13 with Carol and Lynda.

#### 6. Communication

- Wrote newsletter articles for October, November, December, and January.
- Posted updates on the SOTB Facebook page, with plans for additional posts as needed to communicate key information.
- Shared information with pastor to disseminate in his weekly newsletter as needed.

#### 7. Volunteers and Engagement

- Several members have stepped forward to assist. Creating volunteer groups for grocery/food pantry delivery/meal delivery. Next creating a health/wellness volunteer group for medical emergencies and speaking engagements on living well.
- Ongoing efforts to match volunteers’ skills and interests with congregational needs.

#### 8. Funding and Sustainability

- Met with Pr. Jim to discuss writing grants to help fund this position and explore additional grant opportunities. Potential ELCA grant in the coming year and potential United Way grants on wellness.

#### 9. Next Steps

- Continue survey analysis and follow-up with congregants.
- Expand partnerships with community service providers.
- Develop caregiver and grief support options.
- Launch additional intergenerational and social activities.
- Continue documentation and reporting to support long-term sustainability.
- Explore funding opportunities to continue to support the good work and meet the needs of the congregation and community.

SHEPHERD OF THE BAY CHURCH REPORT OF MEMBERSHIP

	<u>BAPTIZED</u>	<u>CONFIRMED</u>
A. MEMBERSHIP AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2024	500	336
B. Members received by:		
Baptism	1	0
Affirmation of Faith	12	8
Transfer	0	0
Confirmation	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
	15	10
Sub Total	515	346
C. Members removed by:		
Death	5	5
Transfer/Moved	14	14
Other	0	0
Statistical Adjustment	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
	29	29
D. MEMBERSHIP: DECEMBER 31, 2025	486	317

WORSHIP | LIFE OF SHEPHERD OF THE BAY | UTHFRAN

Sunday Worship Services = 50

## Weekday Worship Services = 0

- In person services = 50

Other Services = 8

- Online services =50

## Average Weekend Attendance

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
258*	207*	223*	197*	179*	128***	108***	103***	110***	111***	103***
231**	195**	200**	179**	161**	88****	58****	23****	33****	37****	37****

*\*Includes weekday services - Lent (2019 Lent & Vespers)*

### **\*\*\* In-person worship including drive in services**

**\*\*Does Not include weekday services.**

\*\*\*\*On line (YouTube) first 7 days after posting

## STATISTICAL REPORT FOR SHEPHERD OF THE BAY LUTHERAN

## Baptized members:

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
713	706	684	680	660	644	583	555	528	509	500	486

### Confirmed members:

574      553      528      519      498      481      434      400      362.      348      336      317

## PASTORAL ACTS FOR 2025

	<u>MEMBERS</u>	<u>NON-MEMBERS</u>
Baptisms	1	0
Confirmation	2	0
Weddings	0	0
Funerals	5	2

**Shepherd of the Bay  
Endowment Report  
12/31/2025**

The endowment committee tasked itself with updating the policy and procedure documents and to introduce the congregation to the potential our endowment offers. The endowment committee also redesigned the brochure and conducted an informational workshop in collaboration with a gifting officer from the regional ELCA office.

The endowment transfers 5% of its value annually to the operations of the church. This calculation uses the average of the ending values of the last 12 quarters at 5%. We have seen growth in the fund, and this was reflected in the amount paid for operations in 2025, up from \$12,000 to \$13,851. Growth came as gifts to the fund as well as positive market activity. The fund is managed by Thrivent Financial.

Members of the committee are Dave Brukardt, Les Keepper, Pastor Jim Honig, and Grace Rossman.

Note the bottom Year to Date table that reports the entire year's activity. Fees are less than 1%.



**Trust and Investment Services**  
4321 N. Ballard Rd, Appleton, WI 54919-0001  
Thrive!com/trust • 877-225-8345

**Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church**  
Statement Period: 12/1/25 - 12/31/25

**Administrator:**  
Carol Blank, CTPA  
Senior Financial  
Management  
Officer  
920-628-3937

	<b>Beginning Balance (12/1/25)</b>	<b>Total Additions/ Contributions</b>	<b>Total Withdrawals/ Distributions</b>	<b>Dividend &amp; Interest Income Earned</b>	<b>Total Fees Charged</b>	<b>Capital Gains/ Losses</b>	<b>Ending Balance (12/31/25)</b>
<b>Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church</b>							
<b>Undesignated</b>	\$ 193,957.14	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,045.12	\$ 191.53	\$ (2,078.73)	\$ 195,731.99
<b>George Lings - Youth Ministry</b>	\$ 51,575.29	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,075.64	\$ 50.93	\$ (552.76)	\$ 52,047.25
<b>George Lings - Parish Nurse</b>	\$ 10,221.74	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 213.18	\$ 10.09	\$ (109.55)	\$ 10,315.28
<b>George Lings - Home Missions</b>	\$ 2,516.29	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 52.48	\$ 2.48	\$ (26.97)	\$ 2,539.31
<b>Bruce Foster - Missions</b>	\$ 37,157.77	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 774.95	\$ 36.69	\$ (398.24)	\$ 37,497.80
<b>Building &amp; Grounds</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Scholarship Fund</b>	\$ 137,882.87	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,875.65	\$ 136.16	\$ (1,477.75)	\$ 139,144.61
<b>Music</b>	\$ 17,602.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 367.11	\$ 17.38	\$ (188.65)	\$ 17,763.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 450,913.61</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 9,404.14</b>	<b>\$ 445.28</b>	<b>\$ (4,832.65)</b>	<b>\$ 455,039.82</b>

	<b>Total Additions/ Contributions</b>	<b>Total Withdrawals/ Distributions</b>	<b>Dividend &amp; Interest Income Earned</b>	<b>Total Fees Charged</b>
<b>Year To Date</b>				
<b>Undesignated</b>	\$ 101,484.55	\$ 1,483.05	\$ 5,707.08	\$ 1,562.48
<b>George Lings - Youth Ministry</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,681.28	\$ 553.51
<b>George Lings - Parish Nurse</b>	\$ -	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 365.42	\$ 134.68
<b>George Lings - Home Missions</b>	\$ -	\$ 9,351.00	\$ 182.41	\$ 104.87
<b>Bruce Foster - Missions</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,211.29	\$ 388.78
<b>Building &amp; Grounds</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Scholarship Fund</b>	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 4,510.89	\$ 1,492.25
<b>Music</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 573.82	\$ 188.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 101,484.55</b>	<b>\$ 15,334.05</b>	<b>\$ 14,232.18</b>	<b>\$ 4,435.48</b>

**Statement of Financial Position**  
**Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church**  
As of December 31, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL
<b>Assets</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
<b>Bank Accounts</b>	
1010 Nicolet Checking (3445)	30,024.93
1120 Nicolet MM (7510)	187,070.06
1130 Nicolet Bank CD	154,916.54
<b>Total for Bank Accounts</b>	<b>\$372,011.53</b>
Other Current Assets	
1161 RBC MM (deleted)	0.00
1165 Endowment Fund	455,485.10
<b>Total for Other Current Assets</b>	<b>\$455,485.10</b>
<b>Total for Current Assets</b>	<b>\$827,496.63</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
1710 Church Bldg - Original Cost	1,100,000.00
1711 Office Equipment	5,257.03
1712 Bell Tower Addition - 2000	287,254.67
1713 Air Conditioning - 2002	62,025.00
1714 Dobson Organ	462,807.00
1715 Building Expansion - 2004	1,446,361.65
1716 Roof Improvement - 2011	26,614.22
1720 Bus Barn - 2018	67,920.12
1750 Asphalt Parking Lot - 2000	41,698.00
1780 Appraisal Increase - 1999	524,100.00
<b>Total for Fixed Assets</b>	<b>\$4,024,037.69</b>
<b>Total for Assets</b>	<b>\$4,851,534.32</b>
<b>Liabilities and Equity</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
<b>Accounts Payable</b>	
2000 Accounts Payable	4,529.69
<b>Total for Accounts Payable</b>	<b>\$4,529.69</b>
Credit Cards	\$6,672.60
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>	
2010 Payroll Deductions Payable	\$352.89
2200 Accrued Benevolence	
2210 Missions	11,847.27

**Statement of Financial Position**  
**Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church**  
As of December 31, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL
<b>Total for 2200 Accrued Benevolence</b>	<b>\$11,847.27</b>
2300 Accrued Expenses	1,182.12
2360 Accrued Pastor Sabbatical	1,086.51
2361 Pastor Discretionary Fund	19,728.36
2366 Thrivent Donations	13,082.86
2373 Accrued Transportation	19,728.36
<b>Total for 2300 Accrued Expenses</b>	<b>\$35,079.85</b>
2400 Miscellaneous Receipts	82,939.80
2405 Bequests	2,610.00
2420 Prepaid Offering	2,610.00
<b>Total for 2400 Miscellaneous Receipts</b>	<b>\$85,549.80</b>
3100 Unrestricted Funds	845.07
3110 Family Ministry Fund	100,857.23
3120 Major Maint	109,543.64
3130 Memorials Fund	3,665.69
3140 Samaritan Fund	23,252.10
<b>Total for 3100 Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>\$238,163.73</b>
3300 Restricted Funds	14,943.53
3315 Guatemala Trip	123.27
3325 Music Fund	1,314.55
3335 Congregational Coordinator Fund	9,769.09
3340 Sabbatical Fund	309.58
3355 Vespers meal	230.00
3360 Youth Deposits	16,092.05
3365 Youth Fund	1,165.16
3370 Youth Fund Raisers	2,037.00
3375 Youth Summer Scholarships	2,500.00
<b>Total for 3300 Restricted Funds</b>	<b>\$48,484.23</b>
<b>Total for Other Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$419,477.77</b>
<b>Total for Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$430,680.06</b>
<b>Total for Liabilities</b>	<b>\$430,680.06</b>
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	86,888.07
5010 Retained Earnings	4,248,077.15
Net Income	85,889.04
<b>Total for Equity</b>	<b>\$4,420,854.26</b>
<b>Total for Liabilities and Equity</b>	<b>\$4,851,534.32</b>

# Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church

## Budget vs. Actuals: 2025 Budget - FY25 P&L

January - December 2025

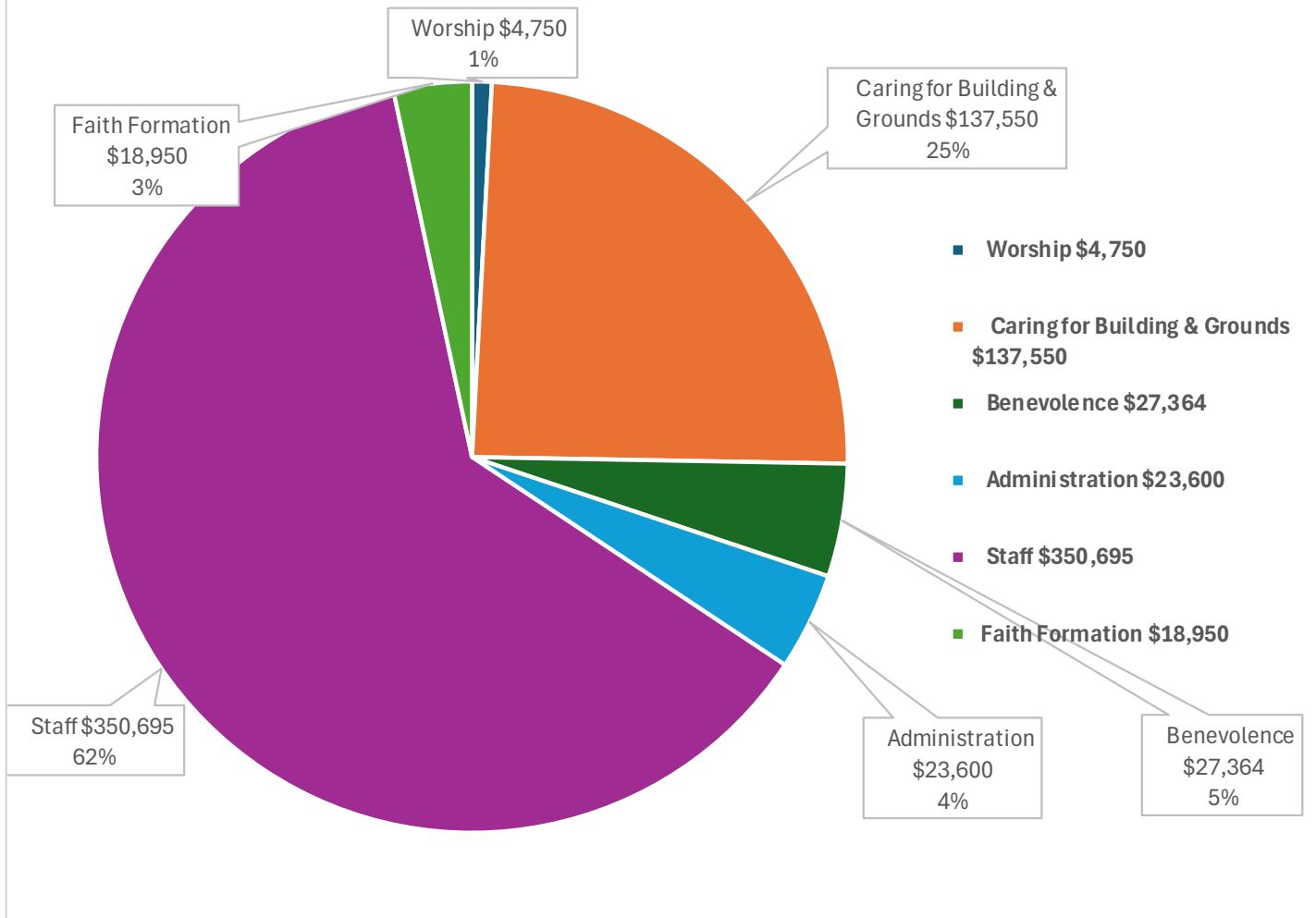
		TOTAL		
		ACTUAL	BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Revenue				
6100 Regular Offering		0.00		
6110 Envelope and Checks		452,711.56	504,000.00	89.82 %
6120 Loose		11,798.95	16,000.00	73.74 %
<b>Total 6100 Regular Offering</b>		<b>464,510.51</b>	<b>520,000.00</b>	<b>89.33 %</b>
6200 Additional Giving/Income				
6206 Endowment Income		13,903.10	12,000.00	115.86 %
6290 Misc Income		24,256.59		
6400 Interest Income		9,496.41	7,000.00	135.66 %
6510 Rental		2,126.50	1,500.00	141.77 %
6520 Weddings		906.50		
<b>Total 6200 Additional Giving/Income</b>		<b>50,689.10</b>	<b>20,500.00</b>	<b>247.26 %</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>\$515,199.61</b>	<b>\$540,500.00</b>	<b>95.32 %</b>
GROSS PROFIT				
		<b>\$515,199.61</b>	<b>\$540,500.00</b>	<b>95.32 %</b>
Expenditures				
7100 Worship				
7110 Altar Supply		184.52	600.00	30.75 %
7120 Flowers		1,070.02	500.00	214.00 %
7130 Worship Supply		2,477.86	2,500.00	99.11 %
7150 Instrument Maintenance			600.00	
7170 Music Supply		721.73	600.00	120.29 %
<b>Total 7100 Worship</b>		<b>4,454.13</b>	<b>4,800.00</b>	<b>92.79 %</b>
7400 Caring for Building & Grounds				
7405 Electric		15,342.70	13,000.00	118.02 %
7410 Fuel		10,810.80	15,000.00	72.07 %
7415 Garbage		1,214.19	1,200.00	101.18 %
7420 Grounds		1,828.94	4,000.00	45.72 %
7421 Snow Plowing		3,095.00	3,300.00	93.79 %
7425 Holding Tank		6,246.83	5,000.00	124.94 %
7430 Insurance		21,390.00	19,142.00	111.74 %
7435 Kitchen Supplies		4,800.39	2,400.00	200.02 %
7440 Custodian		3,281.00	4,000.00	82.03 %
7450 Major Maint Reserve		35,000.04	35,000.00	100.00 %
7455 Mech Maint		7,510.88	5,000.00	150.22 %
7460 Normal Maint & Repairs		9,702.72	10,200.00	95.12 %
7465 Consumable Supplies		707.23	1,200.00	58.94 %
7470 Misc Expenses		68.03	0.00	
7475 Van - Operating Expense		644.64	600.00	107.44 %
7480 Van - Insurance		2,961.00	2,630.00	112.59 %
7485 Van - Maintenance		750.79	1,000.00	75.08 %
<b>Total 7400 Caring for Building &amp; Grounds</b>		<b>125,355.18</b>	<b>122,672.00</b>	<b>102.19 %</b>
7600 Benevolence				
7610 ELCA		25,596.00	25,596.00	100.00 %

Accrual Basis Friday, January 23, 2026 08:16 AM GMT-06:00

1/3

TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
7640 Undesignated Outreach	972.54	1,000.00	97.25 %
7650 Mission Payments		1,000.00	
<b>Total 7600 Benevolence</b>	<b>26,568.54</b>	<b>27,596.00</b>	<b>96.28 %</b>
8100 Administration			
8110 Fees & Admin Charges	1,717.04	2,800.00	61.32 %
8130 Office Equipment	5,829.18	6,500.00	89.68 %
8140 Office Supplies	6,241.89	3,200.00	195.06 %
8160 Postage	1,353.52	2,500.00	54.14 %
8170 Telephone	3,497.31	4,000.00	87.43 %
8180 Audit/Accounting	105.49	1,000.00	10.55 %
8185 New Ministries		10,000.00	
<b>Total 8100 Administration</b>	<b>18,744.43</b>	<b>30,000.00</b>	<b>62.48 %</b>
8200 Staff			
8205 Pastor Expense	492.56	500.00	98.51 %
8210 Continuing Ed	275.00	1,500.00	18.33 %
8220 Health Plan	39,824.65	44,853.24	88.79 %
8225 Housing Allow	52,817.04	52,817.00	100.00 %
8230 Pension	14,245.32	14,382.00	99.05 %
8235 Pastor Salary	52,797.08	53,047.00	99.53 %
8240 Social Security Offset	7,989.96	8,232.00	97.06 %
8245 Pastor Travel	4,606.79	5,000.00	92.14 %
8250 Guest Pastor	1,200.00	600.00	200.00 %
8255 Youth Director	46,899.60	46,900.00	100.00 %
8260 Congregational Coordinator	0.00		
8265 Music Salaries	59,000.00	60,000.00	98.33 %
8270 Payroll Taxes	11,515.13	10,043.00	114.66 %
8275 Secretary	33,046.36	34,100.00	96.91 %
8285 Treasurer	2,432.76	2,400.00	101.37 %
8290 Audio Visual Desk	5,500.00		
<b>Total 8200 Staff</b>	<b>332,642.25</b>	<b>334,374.24</b>	<b>99.48 %</b>
8400 Faith Formation & Other Program			
8405 Evangelism	4,630.67	6,500.00	71.24 %
8420 Stewardship	423.72	500.00	84.74 %
8425 Credit Card Processing	1,707.25	2,200.00	77.60 %
8430 Children, Youth, Confirmation	3,247.26	4,000.00	81.18 %
8440 Adult & Family Ministry	377.47	2,000.00	18.87 %
8455 Youth Director Expenses	236.36	500.00	47.27 %
8460 Stephen Ministry	99.17	500.00	19.83 %
8465 Synodical Assembly	885.00	1,200.00	73.75 %
8470 Scholarships	2,500.00	2,000.00	125.00 %
<b>Total 8400 Faith Formation &amp; Other Program</b>	<b>14,106.90</b>	<b>19,400.00</b>	<b>72.72 %</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$521,871.43</b>	<b>\$538,842.24</b>	<b>96.85 %</b>
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$ -6,671.82	\$ 1,657.76	-402.46 %
Other Revenue			
6405 Unrealized Investment Gains	92,560.86		
<b>Total Other Revenue</b>	<b>\$92,560.86</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
NET OTHER REVENUE	<b>\$92,560.86</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
NET REVENUE	<b>\$85,889.04</b>	<b>\$1,657.76</b>	<b>5,181.03 %</b>

## 2026 Operating Budget



# Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church

## Budget Overview: Budget\_FY26\_P&L - FY26 P&L

January - December 2026

	TOTAL
<b>Revenue</b>	
6100 Regular Offering	
6110 Envelope and Checks	523,000.00
6120 Loose	15,000.00
<b>Total 6100 Regular Offering</b>	<b>538,000.00</b>
6200 Additional Giving/Income	0.00
6206 Endowment Income	13,903.10
6400 Interest Income	9,200.39
6510 Rental	2,126.50
<b>Total 6200 Additional Giving/Income</b>	<b>25,229.99</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$563,229.99</b>
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>	<b>\$563,229.99</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
7100 Worship	0.00
7110 Altar Supply	250.00
7120 Flowers	1,000.00
7130 Worship Supply	2,500.00
7170 Music Supply	1,000.00
<b>Total 7100 Worship</b>	<b>4,750.00</b>
7400 Caring for Building & Grounds	0.00
7405 Electric	17,000.00
7410 Fuel	12,000.00
7415 Garbage	1,500.00
7420 Grounds	2,000.00
7421 Snow Plowing	3,500.00
7425 Holding Tank	7,000.00
7430 Insurance	25,000.00
7435 Kitchen Supplies	5,000.00
7440 Custodian	3,500.00
7450 Major Maint Reserve	35,000.00
7455 Mech Maint	10,000.00
7460 Normal Maint & Repairs	10,200.00
7465 Consumable Supplies	1,000.00
7470 Misc Expenses	100.00
7475 Van - Operating Expense	750.00
7480 Van - Insurance	3,000.00
7485 Van - Maintenance	1,000.00
<b>Total 7400 Caring for Building &amp; Grounds</b>	<b>137,550.00</b>
7600 Benevolence	0.00
7610 ELCA	26,364.00
7640 Undesignated Outreach	1,000.00
<b>Total 7600 Benevolence</b>	<b>27,364.00</b>
8100 Administration	0.00

	TOTAL
8110 Fees & Admin Charges	2,800.00
8130 Office Equipment	6,500.00
8140 Office Supplies	6,500.00
8160 Postage	2,200.00
8170 Telephone	3,600.00
8180 Audit/Accounting	2,000.00
<b>Total 8100 Administration</b>	<b>23,600.00</b>
8200 Staff	0.00
8205 Pastor Expense	500.00
8210 Continuing Ed	1,000.00
8220 Health Plan	36,580.00
8225 Housing Allow	52,817.00
8230 Pension	14,650.00
8235 Pastor Salary	54,381.00
8240 Social Security Offset	8,000.00
8245 Pastor Travel	5,000.00
8250 Guest Pastor	3,200.00
8255 Youth Director	48,307.00
8260 Congregational Coordinator	12,000.00
8265 Music Salaries	60,000.00
8270 Payroll Taxes	11,860.00
8275 Secretary	34,000.00
8285 Treasurer	2,400.00
8290 Audio Visual Desk	6,000.00
<b>Total 8200 Staff</b>	<b>350,695.00</b>
8400 Faith Formation & Other Program	
8405 Evangelism	5,500.00
8420 Stewardship	450.00
8425 Credit Card Processing	1,800.00
8430 Children, Youth, Confirmation	4,000.00
8440 Adult & Family Ministry	2,000.00
8455 Youth Director Expenses	500.00
8460 Stephen Ministry	500.00
8465 Synodical Assembly	1,700.00
8470 Scholarships	2,500.00
<b>Total 8400 Faith Formation &amp; Other Program</b>	<b>18,950.00</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$562,909.00</b>
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$320.99
NET REVENUE	\$320.99

# Shepherd of the Bay (SOTB) Congregational Internal Audit Report

## Review of Operations and Compliance

### Executive Summary

This audit report reviews SOTB's operations, financial records, and compliance with relevant regulations. The "Congregational Audit Guide" published by the ELCA was used as a guiding document. The objectives related to this audit appear in Audit Objectives. This congregational internal audit does not represent a complete audit; rather, it is a check on the effectiveness of internal controls, the accuracy of financial statements, and the identification of areas for improvement.

### Audit Objectives

- Verify the general ledger balances are appropriately reconciled to their underlying accounts in a timely and accurate manner.
- Verify assets and liabilities recorded in the congregation's books and records are supported by appropriate independent documentation.
- Determine that donations are properly classified and recorded in line with the donor's intent.
- Review controls governing the congregation's investments and bank accounts are in place and operating as intended.
- Review all necessary insurance policies are in place and in force.
- Review of controls over payroll are in place and operating as intended.
- Verify that an appropriate records retention policy is in place and being complied with.
- Verify that vendors receiving a payment in excess of \$600 annually receive 1099.

### Scope of the Audit

The audit covered the period from January 1, 2025, to December 15, 2025. The Audit Committee conducted the audit on December 17, 2025. Key focus areas included financial transactions, payroll processing, procurement procedures, and compliance with internal policy requirements.

### Methodology

- Review of documentation and financial records
- Interview with SOTB Treasurer, Grace Rossman
- Review of internal controls and procedures
- Analysis of compliance with established guidelines

### Findings

1. Internal Controls: Internal controls were found to be effective; however, a procedure review of collections received during church service (cash) should be revisited to ensure that the proper chain of custody is upheld.
2. Financial Records: Financial records were generally accurate and well-maintained. Spot checks of checks written and recorded in the general ledger were made. A few minor discrepancies were identified in the void checks recording. The List of church assets was almost nonexistent. There are no outstanding mortgages or loans.
3. Payroll: ADP is the payroll service used. 1099s were not reviewed; QuickBooks handles the 1099 output.

## Findings

1. Internal Controls: Internal controls were found to be effective; however, a procedure review of collections received during church service (cash) should be revisited to ensure that the proper chain of custody is upheld.
2. Financial Records: Financial records were generally accurate and well-maintained. Spot checks of checks written and recorded in the general ledger were made. A few minor discrepancies were identified in the void checks recording. The List of church assets was almost nonexistent. There are no outstanding mortgages or loans.
3. Payroll: ADP is the payroll service used. 1099s were not reviewed; QuickBooks handles the 1099 output.
4. Insurance: Insurance policies were reviewed by Jennifer Schmitz of American Family Insurance and found to be adequate. We have had no claims made on any of the insurance policies in 2025.

## Recommendations

- There was no clear understanding of what is considered a church asset. The listed assets on the books were lacking (e.g., missing tractor, van, etc.). There is no depreciation schedule. A depreciation schedule can help with future financial outlays.
- A review of the collection-plate money exchange policy should be conducted, and possible updating and training be considered.
- Donor tracking and record keeping should be a separate role.
- Physical records for years before 2023 are not known due to a change in the Treasurer's position. Records for 2023 and 2024 are kept in the church attic. 2025 records are kept at the Treasurer's home. A specific area needs to be designated for record retention.

## Conclusion

Overall, the audit found that the organization operates effectively and in accordance with most applicable ELCA standards. Addressing the recommendations outlined in this report will help further strengthen internal controls, ensure ongoing compliance, and reduce operational risks.

Prepared by: Audit Committee

Jim Grasse

Lester Keeper

Jill Lhost

Cathy Mangan

Date: 12/18/2025

**2025 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY AMENDMENTS TO THE  
MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR CONGREGATIONS OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®**

*[WITH RATIONALES]*

Prepared by the Office of the Secretary  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
August 2025

Following are amendments to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* that were approved by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Additions are underlined; deletions are ~~struck through~~; all changes are **highlighted**.

Provisions within the *Model Constitution for Congregations* are of two types:

- **Those provisions marked with an asterisk (\*) are required when a congregation amends its governing documents.** They must be used without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner (i.e., neither additions nor deletions are permissible). Such provisions go into effect immediately upon approval by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation, provided that they have been presented to the congregation at least 30 days prior to the meeting.
- **Provisions not marked with an asterisk are non-required provisions.** These provisions represent wording recommended by the Churchwide Assembly. If the congregation chooses to incorporate them into the congregation's constitution exactly as presented here, these provisions require a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation, provided that they have been presented to the congregation at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

If the wording of non-required provisions is altered or amended in any way from the text presented here, the provisions must be approved at one congregation meeting by a majority vote and then must be ratified *unchanged* by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the congregation. (See *Model Constitution for Congregations*, \*C16.04. for more detail.)

For convenience, the rationale that was presented to the Churchwide Assembly for each amendment is provided in italics following the amendment. These rationales are *not* part of the amendments with which they are associated, they are *not* part of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, and they are *not* intended to be incorporated into the constitutions of congregations. They are here only to give context for the amendments.

The Office of the Secretary would like to express gratitude for your faithful attention to your congregation's constitution!

## **Chapter 1.** **NAME AND INCORPORATION**

**C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws and continuing resolutions, the congregation of (insert full legal name) is hereinafter designated as “this congregation.”

*Rationale: Insertion for comprehensiveness.*

## **Chapter 5.** **POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

**\*C5.04.** This congregation or the Congregation Council shall elect from among its the voting members of the congregation laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by this congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the (insert name of synod) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*Rationale: This change allows for lay voting members of the Synod Assembly to be elected either by the congregation or by the Congregation Council. Current language requires election by the congregation.*

## **Chapter 7.** **PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

**\*C7.03.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to relate transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to relate transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the (insert name of synod).

*Rationale: Consistency with 9.71.d. of the ELCA Constitution.*

## **Chapter 9.** **ROSTERED MINISTER**

**\*C9.02.** Only This congregation may call as a pastor only:  
a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or  
b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop,  
may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

*Rationale: Formatting for clarity.*

**\*C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,  
a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:  
.....  
8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

*Rationale: A number of amendments were made by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to this bylaw and to its parallels throughout the constitutions. In the process, the phrase “proclaiming God's love for the world” was omitted from the list of responsibilities of rostered ministers. This amendment restores the phrase.*

\*C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor ~~shall~~may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

*Rationale: It is not always possible for a synod bishop to appoint an interim pastor for every congregation.*

\*C9.15. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.

*Rationale: Provision is being changed to “required.” With the increasing use of exchangeability of rostered ministers with full communion partners, it is advisable that all congregations make allowance for that possibility.*

\*C9.22. ~~Only~~This congregation may call as a deacon only:

- ~~a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America~~or
- ~~a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.~~  
~~may be called as a deacon of this congregation.~~

*Rationale: Editorial reformatting for clarity.*

\*C9.23. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

- ....
- Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, ~~proclaiming God’s love for the world~~, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

*Rationale: A number of amendments were made by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to this bylaw and to its parallels throughout the constitutions. In the process, the phrase “proclaiming God’s love for the world” was omitted from the list of responsibilities of rostered ministers. This amendment restores the phrase.*

## **Chapter 10.** **CONGREGATION MEETING**

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the [senior] pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president<sup>1</sup> of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of ~~[number]~~ [percent] of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

*Rationale: The recommendation is to use a fixed percentage of voting members to request a Congregation Meeting, rather than the option of a given number of voting members.*

## **Chapter 15.** **DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

\*C15.01. Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a

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<sup>1</sup> If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.

member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15–17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary:

- a) ~~private counsel and admonition by the pastor,~~
- b) ~~censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses,~~
- c) ~~written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and~~
- d) ~~written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod.~~

If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by ~~paragraphs~~ a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

*Rationale: Formatting correction and consistency of constitutional language.*

**\*C15.11.** When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president [vice president] of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in ~~\*S14.18~~ ~~\*C9.05~~.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

*Rationale: It is more logical to cross-reference within the Model Constitution, rather than to make reference to the synod constitution.*

## **Chapter 16.** **AMENDMENTS**

**\*C16.02.** An amendment to this constitution, proposed under \*C16.01., shall:

- a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and
- b. be ratified ~~without change unchanged~~ at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

*Rationale: Consistency of constitutional language.*

## **Chapter 20.** **PARISH AUTHORIZATION**

*[\*Required provisions when congregation is part of a parish]*

**\*C20.04.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the pastor as provided in ~~\*S14.18~~ ~~\*C9.05~~.d. ~~of the synod constitution of the synod named in \*C6.01~~. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

*Rationale: It is more logical to cross-reference within the Model Constitution, rather than to make reference to the synod constitution.*

**\*C20.05.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with a minister of Word and Service as provided in ~~\*S14.43~~ ~~\*C9.25~~.d. ~~of the synod constitution of the synod named in \*C6.01~~. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

*Rationale: It is more logical to cross-reference within the Model Constitution, rather than to make reference to the synod constitution.*

# THROUGH YOUR GENEROSITY, GOD IS AT WORK ACROSS THE ELCA.

## MISSION SUPPORT

A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice.

## ELCA WORLD HUNGER

Part of our church's long tradition of meeting human needs, ELCA World Hunger testifies to our hope for and commitment to God's promise of a time when we will hunger and thirst no more. ELCA World Hunger walks alongside communities in more than 60 countries — including the United States — to create unique solutions to hunger and poverty.

## LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

## WHERE NEEDED MOST

Where Needed Most supports the powerful ways we work together around the world — supporting leaders, inspiring young people, fueling ministries and championing global mission. Gifts to Where Needed Most support and sustain the people, congregations, synods and ministries working around the world to realize the hope-filled future God promises.



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

Sign up to hear more stories of impact from the ELCA churchwide organization at [ELCA.org/subscribe](http://ELCA.org/subscribe).

Read about Mission Support and learn more at [LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA](http://LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA).

# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OPENING LITURGY

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

**And also with you.**

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

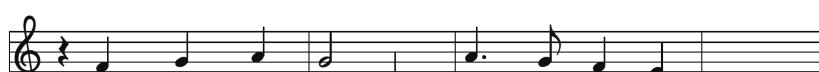
As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

**Amen.**

## Founded on Faith



1 Found - ed on faith, the church— a - live by grace—  
2 Your cross, O Christ, re - news our life each day.  
3 E - quipped by prayer, we live the Spir - it's call.  
4 Grow - ing in grace for God's cre - at - ed earth,  
5 Found - ed on faith, called forth, em - pow'red to serve,



pro - claims the gos - pel here and ev - 'ry place.  
Bap - tized in you, we learn and teach and pray.  
Em - pow'red to serve with gifts, both great and small,  
we yearn for jus - tice, peace, and hu - man worth;  
we share God's end - less love with - out re - serve.



The word of God re - sounds through time and space:  
Fed by your love, with thank - ful hearts, we say:  
we bring the liv - ing hope of God to all.  
a world re - stored; a faith - ful, car - ing church.  
Then let us shout a - loud the liv - ing Word!



Al - le - lu - ia!

*All Creation Sings, 1048*

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