

St Mark's Lutheran Church Incorporated

600 Cambridge Street

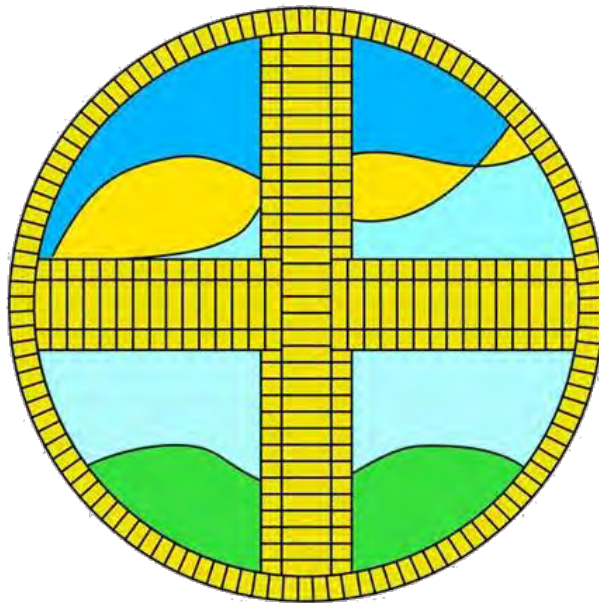
Winnipeg, MB

Annual Congregational Meeting

April 21, 2024

Bulletin of Reports

For the year ending December 31, 2023



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AGENDA FOR AGM APRIL 21, 2024

1. Establishment of a quorum
2. Opening Devotion
3. Approval of AGM Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes
 - a) Minutes of 2023 AGM (for information only)
 - b) Special Congregational Meeting – December 10, 2023
5. Secretary's Report: Approval of Congregational Council actions in 2023

That the actions taken by the Congregation Council in 2023 be approved as presented.

6. Questions regarding Pastor's Report
7. Questions regarding Congregational Council Chair's Report
8. Questions regarding Submitted Reports
 - a) Program Committees
 - i. Adult Education
 - ii. Congregational Care and Community Outreach
 - iii. Property
 - iv. Social Ministry
 - v. Children's Education
 - vi. Worship
 - vii. Youth and Young Adult
 - b) Other Reports
 - i. Lutheran Urban Ministry
 - ii. Urban Meals
 - iii. MNO Synod Office

9. Finance / Treasurer's Report
10. Audit Committee Report
11. Report of the Nominating Committee

12. Elections

- a) Congregational Council
- b) LUM AGM Representative

13. Enabling Motion regarding Approval of Minutes

**That the Congregational Council be given authority to approve the minutes of the
congregational annual meeting held on April 21, 2024**

14. Motion to Adjourn

Minutes of St. Mark's 2023 Annual Congregation General Meeting

For information only. Approved by Congregational Council: CC-2023-05-26

Date: April 23, 2023	Location: St. Mark's and Zoom Virtual Meeting
Time Started: 11:31 AM	Time Ended: 12:32 PM

1. Quorum confirmed with 60 members attending.
2. Opening Devotion
3. Approval of AGM Agenda
MSC CM-2023-01 That the agenda be approved as presented.
4. Approval of Minutes
 - a) Minutes of 2022 AGM (for information only)
 - b) Special Congregational Meeting – December 10, 2022
MSC CM-2023-02 That the minutes of the December 11, 2022 Congregational Meeting be approved as presented.
5. Secretary's Report - Approval of Congregational Council actions in 2022
MSC CM-2023-03 That the actions taken by the Congregational Council in 2022 be approved as presented.
6. Pastor's Report
7. Congregational Council Chair's Report
8. a) Program Committees
 - Adult Education
 - Fellowship
 - Inreach / Outreach
 - Property
 - Social Ministry
 - Sunday School
 - Worship
 - Youth
- b) Other Reports

- i. Lutheran Urban Ministry
- ii. Urban Meals
- iii. MNO Synod Office
- iv. Ministry to Shut-ins

9. Finance / Treasurer's Report

PowerPoint Presentation included the following: how much has changed from 3 years ago; a significant change being \$3 of every \$4 of general offering is now via PAD or eTransfers, and only \$1 is from traditional offering envelopes; timing of general offerings has changed as under \$20,000 was received in the beginning of 2022 and a record \$57,000 was received in December; and, Operating income in 2022 was less than 2021 but despite the decline in general offerings, an Operating Profit in 2022 was realized of approx \$4900 mostly attributed to the period in which St. Mark's did not have a full-time pastor.

An update on the 2023 First Quarter Financial Position included the following: despite a General Offering downward trend since 2017, General Offering is up 6.1% from the First Quarter of 2022; An Operating Loss of \$22,000 in the First Quarter of 2023 is partially attributed to the extraordinary expense of approx \$5500 for a floor sink in the Parish Hall storeroom; and, if the downward trend in general offering is maintained, a year end deficit of \$30,000 is anticipated.

The Congregation was advised regular updates on St. Mark's financial outlook will be provided throughout the year.

10. Audit Committee Report

MSC CM-2023-04 That the Congregational Council be given authority to approve the Audit Committee Report on the 2022 Financial Statements.

11. Nominating Committee Report

Nathan Cook, Tom Lewis, Jodi Pappel-Reider and Cole Parsons are the nominees for the four vacant positions on the Congregational Council.

Ed Mann is the nominee to represent St. Mark's Lutheran Church at the Lutheran Urban Ministry (LUM) Annual General Meeting.

12. Elections

a) Congregational Council

The Chair declared Nathan Cook, Tom Lewis, Jodi Pappel-Reider and Cole Parsons elected by acclamation.

b) LUM AGM Representative

MSC CM-2023-05 That Ed Mann be appointed as delegate to the 2023 Annual General Meeting of Lutheran Urban Ministry (LUM).

13. Property Committee Special Report

Kurt Simonsen provided an overview of remedial work required as a result of significant ice damage on the east side of the building: insurance will cover the damage to the attic above the parish hall and to the east exterior wall, including removal of asbestos; work will likely commence in May and continue throughout the summer with expected intrusions to the parish hall; and, in addition to the insurance deductible cost of \$10,000, an additional expense of approx \$25,000 - \$30,000 will be incurred for betterments such as insulation and to address electrical issues.

14. St. Mark's Congregational Survey

The presentation of results included the following: survey response was good as 122 members responded, 77 of which considered themselves to be active; on-line worship is a post pandemic reality as 42% of those identifying as active members participate on-line, and 35% of those identifying as inactive also participate on-line; what was clear from those indicating what they liked about and wanted from St. Mark's is that the wants and likes require volunteers; presently a small number of volunteers carry a heavy load and to help St. Mark's excel will require a bigger pool of volunteers; and, recommendations from the survey, including an action plan and restructuring of Committees will be forthcoming.

15. Enabling Motion re Approval of Minutes

MSC CM-2023-06 That the Congregational Council be given authority to approve the minutes of the congregational annual general meeting of April 23, 2023.

16. Presentation to Brenda Catchpole, Sarah Harrington, Brian Lorch, and Wade Quehe, departing Council Members, in grateful recognition for their contribution on Congregational Council.

Adjournment and Closing Devotion.

Minutes of St. Mark's Congregational Budget Meeting

December 10, 2023

Purpose of Meeting: St Mark's Congregational Budget Meeting	
Date: December 10, 2023	Location: St. Mark's and Zoom Virtual Meeting
Time Started: 11:38 AM	Time Ended: 12:10 PM

Minutes

1. Quorum confirmed with 54 members attending.

2. Opening remarks and Prayer.

3. Approval of Agenda

MSC CM-2023-08 That the agenda be approved as presented.

2022 FINANCIAL UPDATE AND 2023 BUDGET OVERVIEW PRESENTATION

4. 2022 Financial Update

- Will we ever be normal again? What is normal? It's been so long.
- In 2021, we had a large operating surplus and no longer carried a mortgage.
- In 2022, we hoped to transition to pre-Covid spending with a new Pastor and the resumption of things in-person.
- Considering 97% of all income sources is General Offering, the downward giving trend which became most obvious in 2022 and actually began in 2017 before Covid, is very concerning.

5. Approval of 2023 Budget

- Anticipated 2023 expenditures are significantly higher than 2022 expenditures, which expenditures include the following; a full complement of salaries including a 3% increase in salaries wages; ramped up program committee spending; increased cost of utilities and insurance; and additional expenses attributed to tasks previously done by volunteers which are now undertaken by staff and outside contractors.
- Is it possible to run on an anticipated operating deficit of \$39,000 based on rising costs and declined giving? Historically, Council presents a balanced budget which in the current situation would require drastic cuts. Do we consider drawing on savings to fund the deficit? And, should we?
- Council's recommendation is to use the accumulated reserve to maintain current programming for 2023 and to launch an intentional program to reach out to members to gather input on ministry and mission goals. The Congregation was strongly encouraged to share their dreams, hopes and visions in relation to what God has given us in terms of our talents and stewardship.
- Accordingly, 2023 will be a year of discernment about Mission and Ministry to understand the changes of a decrease in volunteers, church attendance and decreased

general offering. A special Stewardship Committee will canvas the congregation Jan - March 2023, which results will be compiled by the April Annual General meeting.

- e. It was noted that these are universal challenges affecting the global church and not isolated to St. Mark's.

Questions and comments ensued from Congregational Members including the need to reach out to the congregation for input as without such there will be no other choice but to cut expenses and programs; the importance of children's education and the recognition that parents are very busy with many demands; the necessity to bring members back to church; and, concerns regarding the depletion of the surplus with expensive capital projects that could arise, such as replacement of a roof or boiler.

MSC CM-2023-09 That the 2023 Budget be approved as presented.

- 6. Appointments to the Audit Committee

MSC CM-2023-10 That Andy Dale and Cole Parsons be appointed to the Audit Committee.

MSC CM-2023-11 That the Congregational Council be granted authority to appoint one additional member to the Audit Committee.

- 7. Closing prayer.

Secretary's Report

The following are substantive motions passed by St. Mark's Congregational Council in the year 2023 A.D.:

MSC CC-2023-04 That monthly remittances be made to the MNO Synod representing 1/12 th of 75 % of the budgeted commitment for 2023.

MSC CC-2023-05 That Rhonda Lorch be appointed bookkeeper effective May 1, 2023 on a voluntary basis.

MSC CC-2023-06 That the Property Committee be given authority to obtain three quotes from insulation contractors on mitigation options and associated costs.

MSC CC-2023-07 That Sila Kisoso be appointed by Council to the Social Ministry Committee.

MSC CC-2023-08 That St. Mark's donate the interest earned on its Social Ministry Investment Fund in 2022 to Main Street Project.

MSC CC-2023-09 That St. Mark's dedicate its midweek Lenten offerings to Lutheran Urban Ministry.

MSC CC-2023-12 That David Sachvie be appointed to the Audit Committee.

MSC CC-2023-13 That the "Terms of Reference - Nominations Committee" be amended to include the appointment of a Lutheran Urban Ministry (LUM) delegate, as follows:

- Under the Section "Purpose:", add the words "as well as any other committees, programs and /or ministries tasked to it" after the words "council and its program committees", and before the words "are composed of persons".
- Renumber Section "D Membership" to "E Membership"
- Add a new Section:
D Nominations - Other
 1. By March 1, submit a nominee to be the Lutheran Urban Ministry (LUM) AGM delegate to the parish office for inclusion in the bulletin of reports for the next annual general meeting of the congregation.

MSC CC-2023-14 That St. Mark's Reconciliation Action Plan be approved as presented.

MSC CC-2023-15 That Verle-Ann Irvine be re-appointed Financial Secretary.

MSC CC-2023-18 That the Designated Funds Policy be amended as follows:

- (a) that the Youth Activities Fund be closed out and the balance be transferred to the Youth Gathering Fund.
- (b) that Youth Gathering Fund be renamed Youth Fund
- (c) that the Youth Fund be described as "Holds funds raised by the Youth Committee for the purpose of defraying the cost to youth of (i) attending national and synodical youth gathering events and (ii) participation in events organized by the St. Mark's Youth Committee. Monies in this fund are over and above what has been set aside in the church budget for youth programming.

MSC CC-2023-19 That Council authorize the payment of the \$10,000 insurance deductible in order to commence repairs associated with the claim.

- MSC CC-2023-20 That the purchase of a Cricut Cutting Machine be approved to a maximum of \$400, and be allocated from the Sunday School Offering Fund.
- MSC CC-2023-22 That the Contract for Da Boy Next Door Lawn Service be approved for the 2023-2024 Season.
- MSC CC-2023-24 That Lynda Joyal, Signe Jewett, Tom Lewis and Cole Parsons be granted signing authority on St. Mark's bank accounts effective May 20, 2023.
- MSC CC-2023-25 That Nathan Cook be approved and granted permission to be the Primary Home Team Leader for Clay 2023.
- MSC CC-2023-27 That Lynda Joyal be authorized to sign the 2022 Charitable Return.
- MSC CC-2023-28 That the Finance Policy be amended by
(i) replacing Section 5(d) with "The Office Administrator shall support the work of the bookkeeper as requested.

(ii) adding Section 5(e) which shall read "The Treasurer shall oversee the issuance and cancellation of credit cards."
- MSC CC-2023-29 That the Terms of Reference for Program Committees be adopted as written.
- MSC CC-2023-30 That the Staff Job Descriptions be adopted as written.
- MSC CC-2023-31 That Lynda Joyal, Brian Lorch and Cole Parsons be appointed to the Finance Committee.
- MSC CC-2023-32 That Kris Wegert and Inga Skundberg be appointed to the Governance Committee.
- MSC CC-2023-33 That the ZOOM Subscription be renewed annually.
- MSC CC-2023-34 As per the 2023 budget, summer office hours be reduced to 18 hours per week, effective June 12 to September 1, 2023.
- MSC CC-2023-35 That Council approve the extension of Haiden Werboweski's Sunday School Ministry Coordinator contract to December 31, 2023.
- MSC CC-2023-38 That the Audit Committee Report on the 2022 Financial Statements be accepted and the 2022 Financial Statements be approved.
- MSC CC-2023-39 That both the "National Indigenous Peoples Day" on June 2, and the "National Day for Truth and Reconciliation" on September 30 be considered as an opportunity for staff directed learning and that Governance Committee undertake a review of such a process to observance, including compensation for said days in conjunction with St. Mark's Personnel Policy, and any other policies and procedures if applicable, and report back to Council on any action/recommendations.
- MSC CC-2023-40 That Wade Quehe and James Golas be appointed to the Social Subcommittee.
- MSC CC-2023-41 That Wei An Lau's contract as Youth Leader be extended to June 30, 2024.

- MSC CC-2023-42 That Inga Skundberg be authorized to sign cheques on St. Mark's bank accounts, and Tom Lewis be removed as signing authority.
- MSC CC-2023-43 That Signe Jewett be appointed to the Governance Committee.
- MSC CC-2023-44 That Rhonda Lorch and Allen Harrington be appointed to the Scholarship Committee for 2023.
- MSC CC-2023-45 That the 2023-24 rental rate for The Village Green Dancers be \$72 for 4 hours and \$100 for 8 hours, the flat fee of \$20 for kitchen use will remain same; and, that Archimedes Math School be \$57 per session.
- MSC CC-2023-46 That the Executive Committee be authorized to act on behalf of Council during the period of June 29 - September 6, 2023 for the purpose of:
- i) Appointments to Committees
 - ii) Review Terms of Reference of the Mutual Ministry Committee.
- MSC CC-2023-47 That an expenditure of up to \$3500 for Human Resource consultation and costs be authorized.
- MSC CC-2023-48 That the June 28, 2023 Council Motion (Minute CC-2023-47) be amended by deleting the amount "\$3500" and substituting the amount "\$4500", and therefore an expenditure of up to \$4500 for Human Resource consultation and costs be authorized.
- MSC CC-2023-51 That St. Mark's staff be advised of Section 7.1 titled "Professional Development Support" of St. Mark's Personnel Policy so that staff are aware that upon approval by Council, those who chose to attend reconciliation activities, indigenous learning (such as workshops, seminars or conferences), or any course that is applicable to the work of St. Mark's, may do so and be supported financially and with time away from work.
- MSC CC-2023-52 That an announcement be made during each service regarding a new protocol of collecting offerings inasmuch as the original practice of passing the plate during offering time has been discontinued.
- MSC CC-2023-53 That Henry Harrington, Meadow Reider, and Erik Wegert be approved for confirmation.
- MSC CC-2023-54 That the facility use schedule be revised as presented.
- MSC CC-2023-55 That Annette and Lawrence Gargol be appointed as Co-leaders to the Youth and Young Adult Committee.
- MSC CC-2023-56 That the July 4, 2023 Council Motion (Min CC-2023-48) allocated for human resources and legal costs be amended by changing the amount approved from \$4500 to \$7400, and that Council also approve the release of \$3600 set aside in Miscellaneous Obligations for this purpose.
- MSC CC-2023-57 That compensation for Nathan Cook and Wei-an Lau, in the combined amount of \$310.00, for meals, admissions, and expenses related to CLAY and the bus trip, be approved from funds raised and allocated for CLAY.

- MSC CC-2023-58 That \$1500 be reserved for CLAY 2025, and that the fund balance remaining after payment of CLAY 2023 related expenses and receipts be divided equally between 11 youth attendees (excluding the leaders).
- MSC CC-2023-59 That up to \$200 be approved as honorariums for each of the assisting Youth Leaders.
- MSC CC-2023-62 That the Finance Committee be authorized to remit \$3,500 to the MNO Synod at this time, and the balance of our commitment be revisited closer to year-end.
- MSC CC-2023-63 That Siri Kristenson be approved for confirmation.
- MSC CC-2023-64 That up to \$20,000 for replacement of the heat pump, insulation for the sanctuary wall not covered by insurance, and the remittance of the second half of the insurance deductible be authorized.
- MSC CC-2023-67 That a special congregational meeting be held on Sunday, December 10, 2023, following the regular Sunday worship service for the purpose of:
- (a) approval of the proposed 2024 budget; and,
 - (b) appointments to the Audit Committee.
- MSC CC-2023-68 That the 2024 Budget as presented be recommended to the Congregation for approval.
- MSC CC-2023-69 That the Finance Committee be authorized to make remittances to the MNO Synod and Lutheran Urban Ministry prior to the 2023 Year End, provided such remittances will:
- (a) not result in an operating deficit in excess of \$39,000; and,
 - (b) not exceed the amounts allocated to each organization in the 2023 budget.
- MSC CC-2023-70 That Wei-An Lau be awarded the Houston Scholarship for \$300 for 2023.
- MSC CC-2023-71 That the amendments to the Personnel Policy Handbook be approved as presented.
- MSC CC-2023-72 That the church office be closed December 25-29, 2023, January 1-5, 2024, and reopen on January 8, 2024.
- MSC CC-2023-73 That the Executive Committee be authorized to appoint the Nominating Committee.
- MSC CC-2023-74 That the Office Administrator Job Description be adopted as presented.
- MSC CC-2023-75 That the Office Administrator position for St. Mark's Lutheran Church be offered to John Himes effective January 9, 2024, at the rate of \$21 per hour for 15 hours per week, reduced in the summer to 12 hours per week.

Pastor's Report

What Does a Pastor Do?

Will you therefore preach and teach in accordance with the holy scriptures and these creeds and confessions? Will you be diligent in your study of the holy scriptures and faithful in your use of the means of grace? Will you pray for God's people, nourish them with the word and sacraments, and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living? Will you give faithful witness in the world through word and deed, that God's love may be known in all that you do?

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

[Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, Book of Occasional Services]

As pastors work without a defined schedule, I maintain a few forms of time keeping for my personal awareness. On a weekly basis, I look to my days as divided into three blocks (morning, afternoon, and evening) and try my best to only work two of three blocks on the days that I am "in office".

Some weeks look like this:

	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
AM	O					O	
PM	F					F	
EVE	F					F	

And others, like a week in Lent, look like this:

	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
AM	O					O	
PM	F					F	
EVE	F					F	

This kind of time-keeping helps me see when I need to take time to rest. But also when I'm not using my time of rest properly and need to make space in later weeks to recover energy that I have spent in advance.

The second kind of time keeping informs my monthly council reports and helps me organize all my thoughts about the life and ministry of a vibrant place like St Marks. I have maintained this custom hourly spreadsheet for years and it has become an **invaluable** practice as I navigate the vocation of ordained ministry and the living organism that is family life.

The chart below is similar to the one I provide council each month. It is to give you a sense of how my time in 2023 has been divided. Each category is an umbrella term for the kinds of work I do as your Pastor.

Congregational Care consists of activities like one-to-one in person/phone/text; home visits; pastoral emergency; home phone calls.

Worship consists of things like Sunday's service; midweek worship; liturgy prep; prayers; PPT creation, etc.

Congregational Ministry is any meeting of committees of the congregation, council, or executive/participation in ministry-specific activities.

Administration is the category for my office responsibilities and staff supervisory responsibilities.

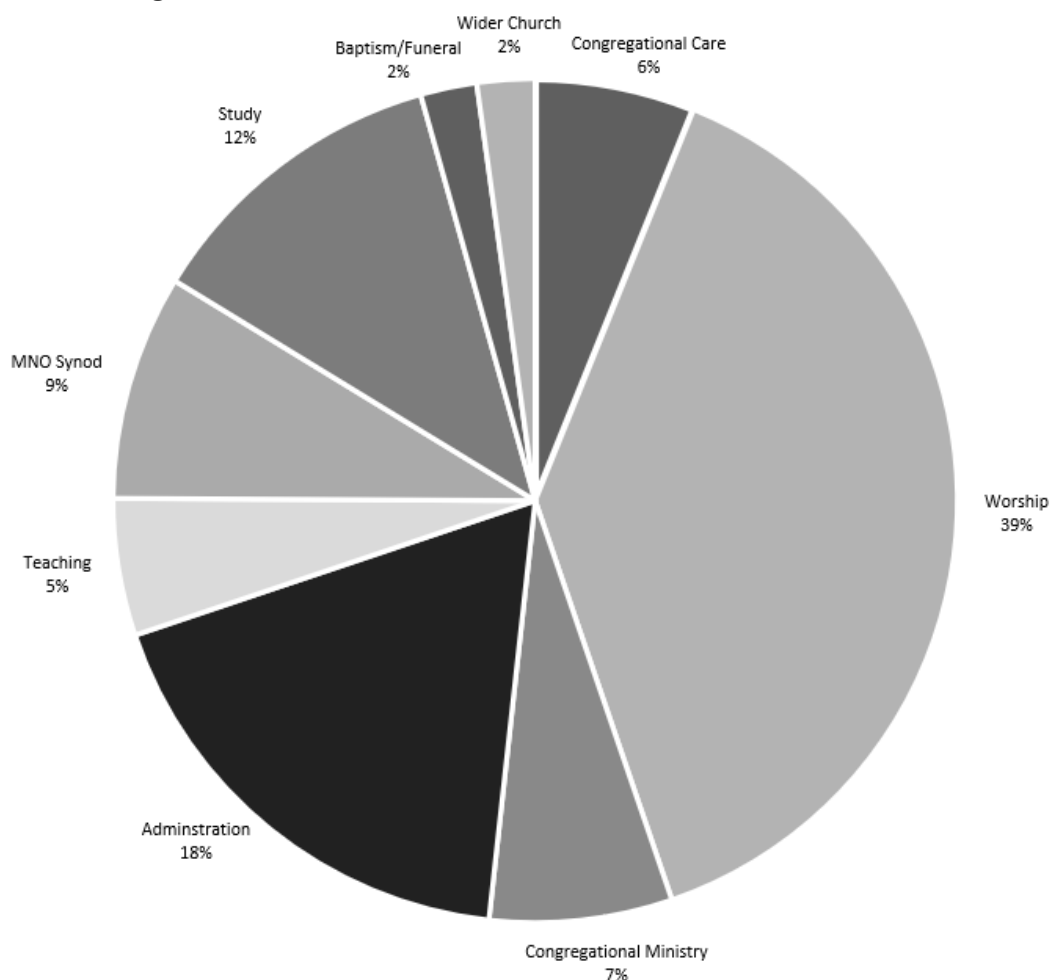
Teaching consists of Bible studies; confirmation; group gatherings for learning.

MNO Synod is any meeting or gathering called for the Synod or Diocese of Rupertsland (Anglican) that I am asked to attend.

Study consists of my reading; Continuing Education; sermon prep/writing; research related to my work.

Baptism/Funeral is the umbrella term for any extra provision of care related to specific life events: prep meetings, graveside support, etc.

Wider Church is any meeting of committees, colleagues, events of interfaith or ecumenical nature, including the ELCIC.



On average, I try to maintain an even distribution of time allotted to generationally specific work, with 20%-30% to work in Children & Youth ministries; 20% to work in Adult ministries; and 20% of my time to Senior ministries, with the remainder of time divided intergenerationally and/or not generationally specific.

The record-keeping also informs the Statistics information I share with you in this report:

SYNOD GUIDELINES		YEAR ACTUAL
Days of the Year	365	365
Workdays (5-day work week)	259	217
Days Off	094	76
Statutory Holidays	011	09
Vacation Days (includes days off)	028	26
Study Days (includes days off)	014	14
Sick Leave	023	23

PASTORAL ACTS

Baptisms	03	Confirmations	05
Weddings	01	Funerals	03

CONGREGATION ACTIVITIES

Worship Services	57	Communion Services	47
Baptismal Counselling	05	Wedding Counselling	05
Visitation/Family Prayer	38	Council Meetings	10
Meetings	35	"Home" Communion	07
Confirmation Classes	18	Other Events	21
Hospital Visits	10	Staff Meetings	11

WIDER CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES

MNO Meetings/Events	26	Mentorship & Collegiality	24
Other Meetings/Events	08	MNO Synod Leadership Conference	😊

While it looks like fancy shading and numbers, it does paint a picture of a healthy, vibrant, diverse, and active congregation. There is a whole heck of a lot going on at St Mark's and I'm not even getting to all of it! You are all keeping me happily busy.

Okay, But What Does a Pastor Do?

¹⁸ *Forget what happened long ago! Don't think about the past.*

¹⁹ *I am creating something new. There it is! Do you see it? [Isaiah 43:18-19a]*

This year I don't really want to itemize all the things that have happened – because other reports have shared that, and, quite honestly, the monthly minutes and reports of council and all the ministry committees give account of everything that has happened this year. There is some excellent reading there, and I would encourage you to read it.

It could be that I am writing this report in the midst of the Lenten rush to Holy Week, or that I have been absorbing some of what Bishop Jason has been saying in the lead up to Synod Convention this year, but I don't know that only looking back on what 'has been' is necessarily going to help us with what is coming. And I am a little fixated on what is coming. But I do want to say that there has been a whole lot of good this past year at St Marks, not to mention we welcomed thirteen new members into the congregation this year alone! God has been very busy in the midst of this congregation, around this congregation, and working through this congregation! And the people say, Amen! Thank you, God!

There has been so much life and activity in this building, and not just on Sundays, and not just from rental groups! There are over 400 people in 178 households who call St Marks the place where they are members, and at least 60 households with an untold number of people who are not officially members who are connected to this congregation in some meaningful way. God is working, and we are proving ourselves to be stubborn.

20% of that membership is here with regularity on Sundays for worship.

20% of those who are here on Sundays are partnering in the ministry work by assisting with worship (leading, reading, tech team, singing, communion prep, acolyte, decorating, etc.)

20% of those who are here on Sundays are partnering in the ministry work of St Marks outside of worship (Vision/Mission; Council; Programs; Events; etc.)

at least 20% of our budget **more** is what we need to adjust for what was lost last year and increase our benevolence appropriately this year.

at least 20% **more** is what we need of people partnering in the ministry work to keep some of the programs that we value for the mission and ministry of St Marks vibrant.

And it can't be the same people who are already giving everything that they can. By my count, and with realistic expectations - there's either 200 people out there who are choosing to not partner in any of the above, or who aren't actually connected to this congregation in a way that is meaningful anymore. I say this with utmost pastoral care and compassion: we cannot continue at pace sustainably. And the ministry will suffer if we aren't better stewards of what we have and need. God is working, and we need to open ourselves to what is at work.

My focus this year has been on the incredible work those groups of 20% have been doing and continue to dream and hope. There is SO much hope! This is a congregation that lives and breathes connection, inclusion, welcome, hospitality, community, and fun – and so much of that happens without staff or committees – but not all of it. We need some people to be in positions of organizational leadership and decision-making to help us keep track of God's mission for us, to help us remember to stay true to our

Vision, Mission, and Values, to stay true to the life of ministry for St Marks, the ELCIC church on Cambridge and Corydon in River Heights. Some of the people who have been doing this work are very tired and NEED to rest, deserve to rest, and I will protect their rest. Others need to step in.

As we move into the new year, I'm going to be asking people some tough questions. Some are faith related. Some are church membership related. We're going to engage with the other faith community leaders of River Heights – ecumenically and interfaith. We're going to investigate options for collaboration and community engagement. We're going to deep dive into furthering the continuity plan for the younger members of our church from Sunday School through Confirmation to Youth & Young Adult Ministry in collaboration with the leaders at Faith, Good Shepherd, Messiah, St Luke's Zion, and maybe more churches. We're going to continue considering possible staffing options that are cooperative and sustainable. We're going to try some things and fail gloriously. We're going to experiment and discover unexpected blessing. Because God is working.

To get you going, here are some of the kinds of questions I want to talk about:

1. What **keeps you** at St Mark's?
2. What do you **take with you** from St Mark's into your life where you live, work, and play?
3. If we could **only do three things** as a congregation – what would you choose as ministry priorities?
4. What does St Mark's **offer** River Heights, and does locating ourselves at the corner of Cambridge and Corydon matter?
5. What is God asking you to **share** with the people of St Mark's?

All these conversations are to remind us about what God is calling out from within each of us, as members of this organism, in the one body, with Christ as its head. And the people sing:

Gracious Spirit, heed our pleading
Fashion us all anew
It's your leading that we're needing
Help us to follow you
Come, come
Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Thank-you's

*⁴I thank my God always for you, because of God's grace that was given to you in Christ Jesus.
[1 Corinthians 1:4]*

Thank you to each and every one of you! For journeying with me, for sharing your lives with me, for inviting me in and asking me to pray with and for you. For winking at me as I extend a piece of bread to you or placing your hand over your heart to share the peace with me from across the sanctuary. For laughing at the corny comment in my sermon. For asking questions and seeking accompaniment for solutions. For praying **for me** and my family. For emailing or calling or texting when you need something, and even when you don't.

It has all meant the world! And has mattered more than you could have ever imagined at critical moments in my ministry with and for you.

To Council: I am grateful for the experiences of upholding the vision, mission, and values together. It has not always been my experience that I look forward to Council meetings, and I do here. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, ponderings, and passions with me as we work together. A heartfelt thank you also to the outgoing members of Council: Kris, Inga, and Signe. Your commitment to the congregation in your service on Council has been seen and felt and will be missed tremendously. I am excited to see what new things you will be engaging in after a much-deserved rest.

To the staff and ministry partners who keep this ship afloat. There are so many of you who mostly quietly tend to the daily matters of being a congregation with a physical space to manage. I am in awe of how all the different parts come together. Thank you to the team: Wei-An (Senior Youth Leader); John (Office Admin); and Melissa (Director of Music Ministry) for all the ways you uphold ministry in this congregation and for the willingness to go with me into new ways and new visions and new collaborations. You are all incredible! A special thank you to Rhonda for stepping in to help in the Office in the second half of this year – you helped make a number of things much more manageable for the staff and many of the members! And to Brenda for assisting me with the hiring process again this year. We are all grateful for everything! A big thank you to Haiden (Sunday School Coordinator) for everything you have given to the children and families of this congregation in your time and leadership with us. We are sad to see you leave us at the end of May this year, but fully understand the desire to return to your home congregation. We wish you every blessing and pray that you continue to offer your ministry gifts wherever you go!

To all you who give of yourselves in many and various ways to the life and ministry of St Marks: Thank you. What you are doing is living faithfully into God's ministry in the world, and I am most grateful for that commitment. More than I am for the fruit that it bears – because I know God will take care of the fruit. Every time we risk something for the sake of God and Gospel, we are a little bit more invested in active faith, active ministry, active discipleship, and an openness to what incredible things God can do with just a little bit. So, thank you.

To every single person who comes through the doors of St Marks – even if only once this year. You have brought a part of yourself, your God-called-and-claimed self, into this beautiful mishmash of people of all walks of life. You have enriched us with your presence in whatever way you have shared it. Thank you for doing that.

To my family – for sharing me with you. A Pastor's hours are not confined to the usual business day and a Pastor's attention is often split between the vocation of family member and a vocation of called ministry. I so love the way my family keeps adapted and learning how to do this thing together. I am deeply grateful to the people of St Marks for honouring and respecting the healthy boundaries that my family and I have established for ourselves and for checking in with us so compassionately from time to time in every season of the church year. And I am so, so, so grateful to all of you for caring for Paul and Perrin and me this past year.

Like any good annual report, I feel I should end with something catchy, but this will have to do:

This past year there have been highs and lows and everything in between. Not everything has been perfect, and not everyone has been happy – but some things have been sublime, and some things have been transcendent. There have been a few bumps and some of us a little more worried than others, but life and ministry and worship have happened. Though the world keeps changing, though we keep

changing, we're presently discovering that God is still here and we're living into the reality that God provides abundance and incredible things with whatever we bring to the table whenever we show up to the table, each and every time we listen to God's invitation to come.

May God bless us and keep us;
may God's face shine on us and be gracious to us;
may God look upon us with favour and grant us peace,

Rev. Zsófi B. Schmiedge 

Parish Records 2023

Baptisms:

- GLENN, Jacob Gene – February 12, 2023
 - Child of Alana Adams and Joshua Glenn
- TWEED, Zacharay Richard Wray – July 9, 2023
 - Child of Dylan & Michelle Tweed
- DESAUTELS, Brielle – August 6, 2023
 - Child of
- REIDER, Meadow – October 29, 2023
 - Child of Jodi Pappel-Reider and Shale Reider

Confirmation: October 29, 2023

- HARRINGTON, Henry
- KRISTENSON, Siri
- REIDER, Meadow
- WEGERT, Erik

Marriages

- ADAMS, Alana and *GLENN, Joshua – October 14, 2023

Funerals & Memorials:

*Denotes non-member

- TALNICOFF, Jane – January 28, 2023
(Funeral Service January 30, 2023, by Rev. Ron Long)
- JUTTNER, Alma – October 30, 2022
(Memorial Service – May 3, 2023, by Rev. Zsófi Schmiedge)
- BERG, Mel – May 4, 2023
(Graveside Service – for Mel & June - August 16, 2023 by Rev. Zsófi Schmiedge)
- PALMER, William – April 12, 2023
(Memorial Service – June 8, 2023)
- WOOD, James – May 12, 2023
(Funeral Service – Neil Bardal May 20, 2023)
- TOUPIN, Gerald - September 20, 2023
(Funeral Service – Desjardins Oct 11, 2023)
- ADAMS, Adeline – Sep 22, 2023
(Funeral Service w/ Graveside – Sep 28, 2023 – by Rev. Zsófi Schmiedge)

MEMBERSHIP

TRANSFER IN:

- BROWNELL, Theresa
May 28, 2023 – Affirmation of Faith
- LANGNER, Jeremy
November 1, 2023 – Transfer from Prince of Peace
- CHARLESON, Ken & MAZUR, Mary
CHARLESON, Anna; CHARLESON, Jessica;
CHARLESON, Sarah; & CHARLESON, Daniel
December 17, 2023 – Affirmation of Faith
- SCHIEFELBEIN-GUERRERO, Kyle
December 17, 2023 – Transfer from Christ Ascension ELCA, Philadelphia, PA, USA

Transfer Out:

- n/a

Membership as of December 31, 2023

Baptized:	429	Confirmed:	396
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Director of Music Ministry's Report

My role at St. Mark's is to lift up values such as community and justice, and expressions of faith such as praise, doubt, grief, and wonder through music. I use music to invite the participation of our members in large and small ways. I select all the music, decide how it will be presented, arrange rehearsals, and contribute to the bulletin, PowerPoint, and prep of our tech crew each week. It's a lot of organizing, a wealth of emails, and a large dose of creative effort.



I'm passionate about what I do. I dig into our scriptures, resources, and world events each week and am constantly inspired at the ways that music and poetry can make the connection. When we carry a flower on All Saints Sunday some of us come with sadness, others with love, others with tender remembrance and the right music holds space for all of these experiences at once.

It invites us to feel deeply. These little opportunities are constantly present for me and it's important to me to create inspiring moments for our people. It's also a gift to have so many members who want to contribute their time and talents to this ministry. Did you know that our choir rehearses roughly six weeks for each anthem?

In recent years, the pandemic created both obstacles and opportunities. It took a tremendous amount of work to bring us so successfully online and to keep our music program so participatory and vibrant. While it was both a stimulating and successful professional high point, I felt I needed some time to recover as we shifted back into full-time in person worship. And yet here we are with in-person live-streamed worship every Sunday and I'm grateful to receive steady feedback and appreciation from worshippers and participants on both sides of the camera. We reach a lot of people each week and it's worth doing very well.



Our adult choir rehearses weekly, our youth, young people, and instrumentalists contribute special pieces regularly, our band delights us frequently, our chamber ensemble heightens special services, Cambridge Coffeehouse is back in full swing, our Ascension Festival of

Choirs invites roughly a dozen congregations in the city to celebrate music ministry together... The list goes on. Our music program is vibrant and well here and it's my privilege to direct it.

Submitted by

Melissa Gingrich

Congregational Council Chair's Report

Pastoral Leadership, Worship and Music

Pastor Zsofi has had one complete year of leadership in our midst and has taken us through all the seasons of worship. She has observed and absorbed our flow as a congregation and where fitting challenges us to new thoughts and ideas. She is still getting to know us individually as relationship building takes time and there are still some members returning in person for the first time in a few years, feeling safer in the post pandemic era.

Pastor Zsofi and Music Director, Melissa Gingrich work wonderfully as a team curating innovative and creative orders of service. Melissa masterfully blends traditional and contemporary music and incorporates the musical gifts and performances of many of our members.

Our Online presence through You Tube (378 Subscribers) is a valuable resource for those unable to attend church in person. A quick check of the views for a few services through out the year to give you a sense of its utilization: April 9, Easter Sunday, 139, Thanksgiving, 80, combined Christmas Eve Services, 247. and even a random summer Sunday service showed 38 views. Our production team can be very proud of the efforts and work put into this venue. Thank you to all who contribute their talents here. I am very happy to say that we have even seen a few new individuals attend in-person as a result of first finding and watching us online.

Church Staff

Council is grateful to our dedicated and hard-working staff:

Wei-An Lau continues as Youth leader providing steady leadership to our young people. Congratulations Wei-An on your award of the Houston Scholarship this fall.

Haiden Werebowski , Childrens Ministry Coordinator managed our Sunday School activity with creativity and enthusiasm for our young ones. The Sunday School Pageant was presented live after a few years of virtual production.

Robert Kudajczyk carefully tended to our custodial needs and took on the grass cutting during the summer.

The Office Administrator position went through a major transition at the beginning of the summer. For 6 months, while Council assessed the needs and resources for this position, Rhonda Lorch kindly volunteered her time and talents in keeping the administration of office duties functioning and running smoothly. Interviews conducted in December resulted in the recommendation to hire John Himes as Office Administrator for 15 hrs/wk to begin January 8, 2024.

In the fall, the Personnel Policy Handbook was reviewed, updated, and was approved by Council. The Provincial Government approved a new Statutory holiday, Truth and Reconciliation Day being September 30.

Stewardship Surve

As a tool to assess the congregation's attendance, participation, and views of a post pandemic church, the 2023 Member Survey was conducted, and the final report was completed. Brian Lorch created a power point presentation for the AGM of the basic results that was shared with St Mark's members. A joint meeting of old and new council members was held on April 27 to discuss the content and comments of the survey to help guide Council in decision making in 2023-24. One of the most evident themes of comments was the effect of the COVID pandemic and general health issues of members as factors in attendance. The live stream services are very much appreciated by those still unable to come in for whatever reasons. Through this discussion, it was determined that these issues should be addressed in the coming year in response to concerns raised.

- 1) Sunday School

- 2) Look for new and innovative ways to engage members.
- 3) Youth engagement and retention into adulthood

Committee Activity

In tandem with the survey was an in-depth look at volunteer and staff structure. In response to what was learned through the survey and current trends in volunteer service, revised Terms of Reference's for most St Mark's Program Committees were approved and implemented. The entire Terms of Reference documents can be accessed through the Website, but the small brochure titled Where Should I Volunteer provides a concise version of what each committee is responsible for. You will notice a few major shifts, such as the Congregational Care and Community Outreach Committee to replace Inreach and Outreach as well as incorporate the former Fellowship Committee, a new Youth and Young Adult Committee and a new Childrens Ministry Committee.

An All-Committees Meeting was held on August 17 to review the changes made to the committee structure, share plans for the coming year for each committee, receive a budget update, and discuss the next steps in promoting the Where Should I Volunteer summary.

Property Major Event

Early in the year it became apparent that our attic was sorely deficient in proper to code insulation. The east wall in the hall was damaged from ice damming. Further examination indicated that the west wall was also not insulated properly causing some additional damming and that in fact there was no insulation installed in the choir loft wall of the sanctuary. God Bless our Property Chair, Kurt Simonsen, who navigated the myriad of meetings with building contractors and insurance agents on St Mark's behalf. The complication of having some asbestos contamination in the existing insulation added another layer of work needed to correct the issue. Timing was right in that facility use was impacted minimally. Our renters were able to continue use in the spring and the summer months allowed a quieter time of use so that construction moved easily. The kitchen was closed for a couple of months but back in business by the fall and resumption of coffee hour and month end potlucks.

Youth and Young Adult Event

St Mark's youth were on the road for the Youth Gathering held in Waterloo, the first in five years due to postponement and cancellations during the pandemic years. The youth had a wonderful first-time experience at a CLAY gathering. (as did Pastor Z as an assistant leader for MNO). It will bring excitement to the next occasion, the location of which has not yet been announced but it will be in western Canada. The youth have some great plans for events through the coming year and I look forward to witnessing their growth in spirituality at St Mark's.

Great Gratitude to all our various Committee members who have contributed in service to being Christ's hands and feet in this world. Most of their work has been accounted for in the reports submitted for this AGM. Some wonderful activities and events have been hosted, meals and food shared, service for others contributed.

There are some committees existing currently only as shells as we are lacking the human resources to function. This means that some of what has traditionally been done has not been addressed in the last while. Does this mean they are no longer relevant, important enough? I don't think so. A few explanations can be considered; as discussed before, the trends of how people give their time, families torn between outside activities and decisions to attend church on Sunday morning and aging population of congregations. Are we living out our mission and values that we have had as our longstanding guide? Council has tried to address concerns of participation and will continue to monitor and adapt.

Council

At the AGM in April 2023, the turnover of Council comprised of bidding adieu to two very long serving members Sarah Harrington and Brian Lorch as well as Wade Quehe and Brenda Catchpole, and Mary Ann Tymm. We welcomed new members Cole Parsons, Nathan Cook, Jodi Pappel- Reider and Tom Lewis. They joined remaining council members. Lynda Joyal (Treasurer) and Inga Skundberg (Secretary) and myself. The complete set of motions made by Council is recorded in the Secretary's Report. Currently there is one seat unfilled at the Council table.

The MNO Synod office provided two workshops of leadership training, one for Council members and the other for Council Chairs. Both offered valuable information to becoming comfortable with the governance structure of our church. This resource will be offered annually going forward as orientation.

Thank you very much Cole, Vice Chair, for assuming the Chair for the month of September while I was on vacation. Council gathered in a social atmosphere to celebrate Christmas at Original Joe's.

It has been a privilege to serve as Council Chair. Thank you for your confidence in my ability.

Sincerely,

Signe Jewett

Romans 12; 6-8

God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophecy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you. If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. If your gift is to encourage others, do it. If you have money share it generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Program Committee Reports

Adult Education

The Adult Study Group once again organized two five-week studies in the year 2023.

The organizing group consisted of Ron Long, Norm Fullerton, Dean Parsons, Marijus Timmerman and Pastor Zsofi Schmiedge. Thanks go to Brian Lorch who took care of the copying and announcement needs.

The group convened two formal planning sessions.

The first study sessions took place on Wednesdays between the dates of January 11 and February 8, beginning at 1:00pm. These sessions continued a study of the New Testament, again using the video series presented by Professor David Brakke, Ph.D., M.Div. entitled *Understanding the New Testament*. The topics discussed were: Interpreting Abraham in Hebrews & James, Churches in Crisis, New Leaders in the Pastoral Epistles, Revelation: Envisioning God's Reality, The Quest for Unity in the New Testament.

The second study took place on Wednesdays, beginning at 1:00pm, between the dates November 7 and December 5. These sessions began the study of the Old Testament featuring a video presentation from *Understanding the Old Testament* by Professor Robert D. Miller (PhD in Biblical and Near Eastern Studies). The topics discussed in these session were: The Old Testament as Literature, The Genesis Creation Story, What God Intended for Adam and Eve, When Things Went Wrong in the Garden of Eden, The Music of the Psalms.

The sessions of each study attracted an average of twelve participants. The video presentations were interesting and thought provoking while the ensuing discussions revealed a keen and deep desire by the participants to learn and understand the spirit and history of our beliefs.

Respectfully submitted by Marijus Timmerman on behalf of the Adult Study Group

Children's Ministry

Sunday school in 2023 seemed to have passed like a whirlwind. After taking a short holiday break Sunday school returned in the new year on January 8th. This year we have had an average of 7-10 kids each week participating in our activities. On any given Sunday the Sunday school students, our amazing volunteers and I gather to learn about our gospel lesson. We spend time hearing the story and having meaningful conversation where many questions are asked. After these conversations we spend some time making some art or a craft that serves to remind the kids and their families about the lesson of the week. The current group of students really enjoy this time and are continuously surprising me with how creative they are. One of the favourite crafts from this past year that they still ask to do again was when we learned about Jesus being our shepherd in John 10:1-10. To remember the lesson we made sheep, but what made this activity unique was that we assembled a large assortment of craft supplies. We then encouraged everyone to look at what was available and figure out how they wanted to make their own sheep. By the end we had cotton ball sheep, yarn sheep, paper sheep, some were 3D, others flat. Some could stand and others could not. Each sheep was unique just like each one of the kids.

Another highlight this year was of course the Sunday school Christmas pageant. This year the pageant was a comedy that shared the Christmas story from the perspective of the innkeeper. A bit thank you to Ed and Fred Mann for helping with props. We had borrowed a large door frame from Kelvin High School and they made sure it traveled safely between the school and the church.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank all those who made Sunday school possible this year. The Sunday school committee, Alanna, Linda, Kim and Alisha, thank you for your guidance and encouragement. Sunday school teachers and assistants, Tanya, Cyan, and Ava, thank you for helping the kids learn, and for teaching when needed. Having a team to take on this work makes all the difference.

Peace be with you,

Haiden Werboweski
Sunday School Ministry Coordinator

Congregational Care and Community Outreach & Fellowship

Teresa Brownell began as member and assisted with advertising the fall Cambridge Coffeehouse to maximize attendance / fundraising opportunities and indicated some creative ideas but without an operating team and a personal situation rising, there were no other activities initiated. Judy and Ron Long continued in outreach to members and arranged for rides to Sunday services for some with mobility limitations.

James Golas and Wade Quehe lead the Social Committee and submit the following summary:

After a hiatus during Covid, we're up and running with coffee time after church on Sundays and potlucks on the last Sunday of most months. Wade and James have taken on hosting the potlucks, but we need more volunteers to sign up to host coffee time. If no one volunteers, there isn't any coffee, and sometimes regular volunteers are scrambling at the last minute because no one else has signed up.

Property Committee

The Property Committee is responsible for maintaining and servicing the building, its equipment, and grounds in a manner consistent with the values of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. The St. Mark's Property Committee consists of Kurt Simonsen (Chair 2023), Fred Mann, Ed Mann, and Perry Kohli. Arnie Schlippert, Paul MacDonald and Rob Hammerling serve as members at large.

The Property Committee has several scheduled monthly duties which were completed in 2022.

The following summarizes the additional Property Committee work for the Calendar Year 2023:

- Coordination of all elements associated with the repair of the water damage in the Parish Hall resulting from ice damage to the Parish Hall roof. This was a major construction project which required the following:
 - an insurance claim
 - asbestos removal
 - decommissioning and reconstruction of all damaged areas

The total cost for the project was \$126,000 of which St. Mark's was responsible for the \$10,000 deductible.

- Installation of additional insulation in the Parish Hall (to R50) and the installation of insulation of the south Sanctuary wall
- Design and installation of a new floor-sink in the Parish Hall closet
- Repairs to the on-demand hot water tank
- Installation of a new boiler water supply pump
- Repair of fresh-air-intake dampers in the Parish Hall
- Dishwasher repair
- Contracting of weed control and lawn fertilizer services
- Installation of new countertops in the washrooms

Special thanks to all the members of the Property Committee for their hard work in 2023.

Respectfully submitted.

Kurt Simonsen, Property Committee Chair

Social Ministry Committee

1. February 2023

In February, the Social Ministry Committee recommended that Council approve the following motions.

Council approved the following:

MSC CC-2023-07 That Sila Kisoso be appointed by Council to the Social Ministry Committee.

MSC CC-2023-08 That St. Mark's donate the interest earned on its Social Ministry Investment Fund in 2022 to Main Street Project.

MSC CC-2023-09 That St. Mark's dedicate its midweek Lenten offerings to Lutheran Urban Ministry.

MSC CC-2023-14 That St. Mark's Reconciliation Action Plan be approved as presented.

2. Meals at the Urban

The Committee acknowledges the continued work of a small group of committed volunteers who provide bagged sandwich lunches to the Urban once a month. Thank you!

3 The Angel Tree

The Urban's Christmas gift bags initiative for folks attending their programs was supported by the St Mark's Angel Tree. Rhonda Gorham advised they needed about 40 gifts for the kids who attend – about half for kids under 10 years old and half for those between 11 and 14. We were asked to provide colouring books and crayons or markers for the younger group and drawing pads or sketchbooks with markers or pencil crayons for the older ones.

The cards with instructions for the gifts were scooped off the tree on the first Sunday they were there, and despite the tight timeline set by the Urban, we were able to deliver 40 wrapped gifts during the first week of December.

4. Christmas Hamper Program

The Christmas Hamper Program in 2023 was very successful and ran very smoothly. We were able to support 7 Christmas Cheer Board households, including one of 13 people and one of 15 people, and 5 families from our own community including Syrian new Canadians Hammoud and Hanaa Jumaa and family, and Ahmad and Khadija Al Khattab and family. The total number of people supported in those 12 households was 57.

We had a carryover of funds from the previous year of about \$2600, we collected \$1300 this year and we had \$400 of Sobey's gift cards that had been earmarked for hampers and that were in the safe for a couple of years. In total we had about \$4300 for the program and we spent about \$4000 leaving a \$300 carryover for next year. The folks from the St Mark's community were supported with gift cards rather than hampers.

5. Reconciliation Action Plan Taskforce Report

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Task Force under that able leadership of Jennifer Moroz, worked on the following initiatives in 2023.

Coffee on the Lawn: On June 25th we held a coffee time outside on the lawn after the service for those interested in discussing concerns or comments about reconciliation initiatives. 8 people attended and there were a few concerns raised about painting the residential school history as too black or laying too much blame on our own generation. "Settler" terminology is also problematic for at least one person. The session lasted about 30 minutes and led to some healthy debate and a learning experience for some. It also gave the Task Force some idea of the number of people in our congregation who are actively interested in the RAP.

Education via E-News: In August, September and October there were educational articles placed in the E-News regarding such issues as the treatment of Indigenous peoples in Canadian legislation, the history of Orange Shirt Day and the history of Sharing Circles. In January there was a link to a KAIROS webinar regarding the Sixties Scoop.

Season of Creation: As suggested by the RAP Task Force, several Indigenous elements were incorporated into our services for the Season of Creation by Pastor Zsofi and the Worship Committee. Several positive comments were communicated to me by parishioners about these services. These efforts were much appreciated.

Orange Shirt Sunday: Judging from the number of orange shirts worn in the service, there seemed to be very good support for setting aside a Sunday for our congregation to commemorate Orange Shirt Day. Parishioners were encouraged through E-News announcements to attend and to purchase a shirt from an Indigenous supplier.

Indigenous Book Study: In January the RAP Task Force is hosting a book study on the novel "The Break" by Katherena Vermette. Vermette is a Metis author from Winnipeg. A discussion session will be held during the last week of January.

Capacity Building Project: The Task Force had intended to conduct a fundraising campaign in October to assist with the Synod's plans to refurbish the St. John's Lutheran Church parsonage so that it could be used as a counselling centre by Epiphany Indigenous Anglican Church for its Healing Ministry. However, communications from the Synod in September indicated that the Synod's plan had encountered difficulties, and the prospects/timelines are now unclear. While a fundraising campaign was put on hold, when our Task Force was approached to recommend a "cause" for the November 25th Coffee House to support, we did suggest Epiphany's Healing Ministry, and this was welcomed by Melissa Gingrich. I arranged for Rev. Vince Solomon of Epiphany Indigenous Anglican Church to speak at the event and arranged advertising at two Anglican churches in the area. In my view the event was a

great success as it was well attended and we raised \$1000.00 for the cause. We are very grateful for the efforts of everyone involved in the Coffee House.

Sharing Circles: Congregational members were invited to attend either Sharing Circles at the Urban or Epiphany Indigenous Anglican Church with a Task Force member during November in an effort to build relationships with our Indigenous neighbours. Unfortunately, this opportunity was not widely taken up. Three people attended Sharing Circles and two people attended an Epiphany service.

6. Committee update

Rhonda Lorch has stepped down from her role as Chair of the Social Ministry Committee at the end of 2023 leaving Stephen Sauer and Sila Kisoso on the Committee. They would happily welcome new members who have a social ministry passion!

As a Committee, we would like to thank the Council and Pastor Zsofi for the many ways that social ministry and reconciliation in particular, were supported in the past year. It is such a joy to see St Mark's undertaking initiatives in our wider community that make us God's hands and feet in the world.

Respectfully submitted,
Rhonda Lorch

Action Plan for Reconciliation with Indigenous Canadians

A Roadmap for St Mark's Lutheran Church

Objective

The overall objective of this Reconciliation Action Plan is to inspire and enable St. Mark's members to put into action the words spoken in our welcoming statement at the beginning of each worship service: "We strive to follow Christ's example through reconciliation and racial equity." More specifically, this plan's focus is reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours.

Components

Recognizing that reconciliation is a complex, long-term undertaking, Social Ministry has adopted a measured approach to creating an action plan that is broken down into defined components over a specific time-period. This plan outlines three components or 'building blocks' that are intended to be implemented over a two-year term, after which the results and feedback will be evaluated to determine the next plan.

1. Building Education and Engagement

This strategy involves providing educational opportunities and resources to congregational members that will increase understanding of the need for reconciliation, that will develop comfort in dealing with the topic, and that will encourage individuals to engage in initiatives that support reconciliation.

Actions to support this strategy include:

- Promoting the council's endorsement of the focus on Indigenous reconciliation and describing what that focus means for our congregation

- Collaborating with our pastor, other committees and programs to identify ways to include reconciliation efforts in their work
- Hosting a Circle for Reconciliation series
- Hosting one or two annual Indigenous book or film studies
- Continuing to build our resource library on the St. Mark's Social Ministry webpage
- Featuring monthly Indigenous topics/events in the St. Mark's E-News

2. Building Relationships

Building strong and honourable relationships with Indigenous Canadians is at the heart of the St Mark's Reconciliation Action Plan and is an important foundation for other reconciliation strategies. This component involves inviting St Mark's members to interact on a personal level with members of the Indigenous community by participating with existing and potentially new partners in their work with the Indigenous community and/or participating in activities with Indigenous community members.

Actions to support this strategy include:

- Inviting St Mark's members on organized group trips to The Urban and Epiphany Indigenous Anglican Church
- Supporting programming at The Urban with volunteers (eg. women's drop in, sharing circles, worship services, meals)

3. Building Capacity

Our synodical and national church partners are involved in or developing reconciliation efforts in which St Mark's may be able to participate. This strategy involves identifying potential partners, understanding what supports the partners need to ensure their efforts are successful and finding ways and means for St Mark's to support their work.

Understanding that more information will need to be gathered and analyzed, the following actions have been identified so far:

- Researching ways to support the counselling program of Epiphany Indigenous Anglican Church, potentially through collaboration with the MNO Synod and the Diocese of Rupertsland
- Determining how St Mark's can be involved in the eventual initiatives through a number of means – governance, fundraising, volunteer opportunities etc.

Implementation

The Plan is intended to be led by a Reconciliation Task Group that consists of at least three congregational members led by one or more Social Ministry Committee members.

Worship and Music Committee

Members of the Worship and Music Committee: Pastor Zsofi Schmiedge, Melissa Gingrich and Sarah Harrington

Highlights

- Lent - opted to not livestream Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services to lessen the need for tech support.
- Liturgical Arts Group - this ad hoc group accomplished much during the year...two new sets of hand-painted paraments (Thank you to Monica Bailey for her exquisite artistry, and Rhonda Lorch for her sewing wizardry), a large white banner (Thank you to Wendy Kublik for her vision and execution of this), and many memorable visual displays. Thank you also to Laurel-Anne Parsons and Sarah Harrington for their assistance in helping this group.
- Holy Humour Sunday - this hilarious celebration was introduced on the Sunday following Easter...backwards, upside down, jokes, strange sounds, and lots of laughs!
- Bulletins - a simple bulletin was re-introduced in small quantities that includes an order of service, prayer list, and the duty roster.
- Ascension Festival - significant decline in participation from other congregations, which is likely a sign of how the pandemic affected many church choirs.
- Summer Sermon Series - we continued to use some of this resource created by the ELCIC. This helps to take the burden off of arranging pulpit supply, and is also a good way to support our wider church.
- Season of Creation - collaborated with the St. Mark's Reconciliation Task Force to incorporate themes of reconciliation into the liturgy.
- Post-CLAY service - St. Mark's had a large representation at the youth gathering and we were fortunate to hear what were highlights for them, as well as be treated to some pretty awesome music!

Did You Know?

- We tried a variety of different communion wines during the year, but ultimately decided that our old standby was the overwhelming favourite!
- We ceased passing the offering plate during service, mostly due to the low number of physical contributions. The plate is now located at the entrance to the sanctuary.
- We changed the reference of our scriptures from "lessons" to "readings."
- The Worship and Music Committee has downsized their group to be more of an executive (pastor, director of music, and worship chair) that delegates to working groups as tasks are needed.

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to Pastor Zsofi and Melissa Gingrich for their creative abilities that bring much meaning to our worship services.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Harrington (Worship and Music Committee Chair)

Youth & Young Adult Ministry Committee

Members (since): co-chairs Annette Gargol /Lawrence Gargol (Sept 2023), Wei-An Lau/Youth Leader (July 2022), Rachel Martens (July 2022), Brenda Catchpole (Sept 2023), and Pastor Zsófi Schmiedge/ex-officio.

Youth Sub-Committee members: Wei-An Lau, Rachel Martens, and Nathan Cook (July 2022).

A very sincere thank you is extended to outgoing committee members: chair Jennifer Polet (2018); members Ming-Ka Chan and Sean Kohli (2020). Their contribution to the Youth Committee is very much appreciated.

Meetings were held on January 25th, May 29th and November 17th.

The Youth Group continues to be active throughout the year with regular fellowship and fundraising activities as listed below. Excellent planning and leadership continues to be provided by Senior Leader Wei-An Lau, along with Assisting Leaders Rachel Martens and Nathan Cook. The 2023 CLAY Gathering in Waterloo and the MNO Pre-CLAY Bus Trip was attended by eleven St. Mark's youth, Wei-An and Nathan Cook as leaders, and Pastor Zsófi as a Synod resource person. The youth have begun to fundraise for travel to CLAY2025 although it's announcement remains pending. The st.marksyouthgroup Instagram account continues to provide photos and information on youth events.

2023 Youth Events

Feb	Snow Maze at A Maze In Corn Festival Du Voyageur	Aug	August 10-13 CLAY 'Ashes and Embers, Waterloo ON
March	Soup And Bread for Lenten Service Synod Event at Faith Enigma Escape Room	Sept	Urban to serve coffee, tea, and snacks and also to learn about the work being done there
April	Games Night Palm Sunday Dramatic Reading Easter Pancake Brunch Quiz Night	Oct	A Maze In Corn / Haunted Forest post- CLAY service at St. Mark's post-CLAY service at Faith Confirmation Sunday participation Luther Village Thanksgiving Retreat Pumpkin Carving
May	Synod Event at Messiah Singing In Ascension Festival Siloam Mission Volunteering	Nov	Siloam Mission post-CLAY service at Messiah
June	Pride Parade Year End Picnic Human Rights Museum Visit	Dec	synod event at Fort Whyte Alive Cookies baking, decoration and deliveries to member shut-ins.
July	pre-CLAY synod event at Assiniboine park		

<u>2023 Youth Fundraisers</u>	\$963.73	Spring Glenlea Plant Sale
	\$598.51	Easter Brunch
	\$386.63	Quiz Night
	\$290.00	Gift Baskets
	\$516.15	Sobey's gift card sale
	\$ 88.60	Shelmerdine's Festive Plant Sale

Following Council's ratification of a new Terms of Reference for the committee in the summer, the committee's focus has expanded from being a Youth Committee to becoming the Youth & Young Adult Ministry Committee, with new subcommittees indicated for Confirmation, Youth Group, and Young Adults. New committee members including co-chairs joined in fall 2023. Initial planning for the expanded focus started at that time and is ongoing.

A meeting in September with currently active young adults confirmed their interest in young adult community building but also indicated individuals' lack of time & energy to undertake new responsibilities. An idea has been developed to plan and host a Dinner & Conversation event which would facilitate

community building while not requiring any extra effort from participants beyond simply showing up. A pilot event was planned for early in 2024.

In the spring St. Mark's was able to again gift a quilt to the single high school graduate congregation member in recognition of this transition to next steps in life. Thank you to Rhonda Lorch for her quilting contributions to this tradition of the past few years. With the upcoming very large class of 2024, the committee is assessing how we might recognize graduating members.

Confirmation began a new format in September. Expanding slightly, St Mark's joined with Faith, Good Shepherd, Messiah, and St Luke's Zion to offer a 3-year program of two 8-week terms per year. Classes are simultaneously in-person / on zoom and the congregations' pastors take turns teaching the one-hour classes, leading the zoom group, or hosting in churches. The classes are recorded and shared which provides students as many opportunities as possible to engage with the material. Confirmation now starts in grade seven as a three-year program. This fall seven St. Mark's students started the confirmation program. Five members affirmed their baptism through confirmation this year including one at a different congregation. We look forward to celebrating with one confirmand who is finishing the program in fall 2024.

Thank you to all Committee Members for their participation and contributions. Additional gratitude is extended to both Jennifer Polet and Judy Grossman who have continued to manage & provide support to youth fundraising activities during this time of transition.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Gargol, Co-Chair
Lawrence Gargol, Co-Chair

Other Reports

Ministry to Shut-Ins

Communion Ministry to Shut-ins: There are some 30 members who are not able to attend public worship service. There are a number of members that are able to attend worship by watching St. Marks on-line worship service and participate in Holy Communion as well as the 11AM worship service from Messiah Lutheran Church, Fargo. We provide Holy Communion to some 20 members who are confined to various health care facilities or still manage in their own residence on a monthly basis. The following people who participate in Communion Ministry to shut-ins are: Ed Mann, Marjus Timmerman, Norm Fullerton, Lawrence Gargol, Ron and Judy Long, and Pastor Zsofi. Submitted by Ron Long.

Saturday Breakfast Meetings

St Marks Saturday Breakfast Meetings: On Oct 28 we had our first Saturday breakfast meeting since COVID 2019. There were some 20 people who attended to share in a light breakfast and Sila Kisoso did a presentation on the humanitarian ministry of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. There are some 750 million people who do not have enough food to feed their families. They also work together with the Canadian Lutheran World Relief organization in assisting people who do not have the basic necessities of life. Then on December 2 Robert Granke did a presentation on “Churches involvement with Gaza and the West Bank” and the effects of the Israel/Hamas war that started on Oct 7. The humanitarian needs are extremely great especially for some 2 million people in Gaza whose homes, hospitals, schools and their infrastructure have been destroyed. The following people have been involved in providing breakfast, set up and presentation of topics: Ed Mann, Fred Mann, Chris Hlady, Elsie Beavis, Dean Parsons, Inga Skundberg, Ron and Judy Long. Report submitted by Ron Long

Urban Ministry

The three teams of meal creators have been functioning well. Jean and Norm Fullerton, Ron and Judy Long and Ed Mann have been taking turns in preparing a sandwich meal for the Urban on the 2nd Thursday of each month. To date, groceries have been quite reasonable because the Urban had a grant that allowed them to purchase the baloney meat slices and the cheese slices for the meal teams. This has tremendously assisted in keeping the costs down for our teams.

A meal involves purchasing buns, bananas, margarine, mayo, peanut butter, jam, and juice for 80 meal bags. Delivery takes place on Thursday afternoon.

At the AGM this fall a recap was given on the Christmas gift program that took place in 2022. During that Christmas 75 gift bags were handed out to women, 75 to men and 100 gift bags to children and grandchildren of the Urban ministry's attendees. The children's bags were age appropriate and had the names of the recipients included. It was indicated by Rhonda that the Christmas of 2023 would have similar numbers.

Rhonda (coordinator of the LUM) mentioned that the grant for the cheese and meat has been spent. While we still have some cheese in the freezer, the teams will need to purchase meat for the sandwiches. Ongoing financial support from our congregational members would be gratefully received and can be sent to the church indicating that the money is for the Urban meal program.

Rhonda also mentioned that members who would like to attend any of the sharing circles held on Wednesday, men's lunch and sharing circle starts at noon, ladies' dessert and coffee sharing circle starts at 2:00 p.m. A worship service is held every Sunday afternoon starting at 1:30 and all are welcome.

MNO Synod



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA
**MANITOBA/NORTHWESTERN
ONTARIO SYNOD**
*Empowered by God, shepherding the church,
serving the world.*

MNO SYNOD REPORT TO CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETINGS JAN 2024

Grace, mercy, and peace to you in the name of Christ our Saviour.

God continues to nurture, support, and care for our church while also calling us to active participation in what God is doing in the world. For this, I am thankful. I am also continually grateful for the ways in which our congregations and members partner in ministry to live out our baptisms in faithful and life-giving ways, and to make the MNO Synod what it is. Thank you to our lay and rostered leaders who urge us to follow Christ's leading

The following is a snapshot of some of the work that the synod office staff have been doing to further the ministry priorities that Synod Council developed in 2018 and refined in 2022. To see our priorities, go to:

<https://elcic.box.com/v/2022-MNO-Ministry-Priorities>



- + Participation in the ELCIC summer preaching series
- + Regular Youth and Young Adult gatherings. Ongoing presence at UofM partnered with the Spiritual Care Dept. and St. John's College
- + Bus trip and participation at CLAY
- + Sharing faith formation resources through e-news and social media
- + "Faith in Context" seminars to engage members in reflection on social justice issues through a theological lens
- + Small group ministry leader training material recorded and in production to become training resource
- + Devotions and reflections shared through social media for young adults



- + Presence and participation at the ELCA Global Mission Gathering celebrating the EELC (Cameroon)
- + Connecting with deacons across the church to expand network of support and resources
- + Training workshops for youth leaders to strengthen, support, and network
- + Weekly hybrid meetings with actively serving clergy for information, discussion, and support. Bi-weekly meetings with retirees
- + Improved communication through newsletter, social media, redesigned website and email
- + Curated faith formation resources for congregational leaders
- + Worked with congregations dissolving and/or contemplating shared ministries
- + Synod Council visits to each congregation

- + Canadian Mission Committee renamed to Community Ministry Committee
- + Promotion of National Indigenous Peoples Day
- + Coordination of First Call Program for new pastors that includes all ELCIC synods. 2023 was in-person
- + Growing relationship with the Diocese of Rupert's Land, including joint events and some shared committee work
- + Community Ecumenical Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- + Distribution of grants to encourage congregations and groups to share the gospel beyond their own walls
- + Joint letters on social justice issues with ministry partners and advocacy group
- + Working with congregations to explore shared ministry opportunities



- + Increased collaboration between congregations and pastors
- + Training seminars for congregational councils, chairs, and treasurers
- + Visioning workshops with congregational councils to explore purpose and identity
- + Streamlined MNO granting process to make better use of resources. Updated process is coming soon.
- + Provided SOGIE training for Synod Council and committees
- + Small group ministry to offer a new way of growing in faith and building relationships



In addition to the work that addresses our priorities, I want to expand on a few things from the previous year, and some plans for the year to come.

Blessings

Synod Council and staff remain committed to following our purpose as the church - to grow in faith and grow as disciples. In our work we hear countless stories of where this is happening across our synod and we are truly blessed to see how God is at work in the MNO Synod.

A top priority to address discipleship and spiritual formation has been **Small Group Ministry**. SGM is something we see in many other faith traditions and is frequently lifted up to help churches grow healthier. Through regular group connection, our members engage in relationship building, connection, and faithful conversation. SGM compliments Sunday morning attendance, and is proven to be effective at introducing new people to the congregation. We have offered several trainings and heard back from groups about the impact the experience has had. We are finalizing a video-based training module that will allow small group leaders to receive training and support on their own schedule, and to make it easier for congregations to expand their use of small group ministry without adding more tasks to leadership. I strongly encourage you to consider this ministry model to build our spiritual formation and community connections.

MNO ordained our first pastor who completed training through the **Alternate Route to Ordination** - a program designed to raise up local leaders in specific circumstances where a regular pastoral call is unlikely. Congratulation to Rev. Heather Parrot-Howdle and Erikson Lutheran Church.

We are seeing congregations slowly returning to stability and predictability after the last nearly 4 years of Covid. Congregations who are adapting to their changed circumstances and embracing a 'new normal' rather than focusing on the past tend to have less anxiety.

Challenges

Despite a return to more stability, there are congregations who have not been able to continue. Please pray with me as we remember and celebrate the faithful ministry of these congregations who closed their doors: Bethesda Lutheran Church, Kenora, ON; Immanuel Lutheran, Baldur, MB; Glenboro Lutheran, Glenboro, MB.

Ordained leadership continues to be concerning. MNO does not produce many of our own candidates for ministry and fewer pastors and deacons are able to move to MNO for various reasons. In addition, congregations are less able to pay the minimum required compensation for full-time ministry. Our supply roster is stretched thin and many of our retired ministers are finding themselves in part-time employment and/or interim ministry. I am deeply grateful for their ongoing ministry, but the current situation is not sustainable and does not help our congregations beyond meeting immediate needs. I strongly encourage your congregations and leadership to talk about how we can organize in ways that will move us from maintenance to healthy ministry.

This was a very difficult year financially for the Synod office. Many congregations cut or did not forward their benevolence dollars in full. The synod office has no way of increasing revenue beyond the generosity of congregations, so I strongly encourage your congregations to support the ministry of the synod office staff when making budgeting decisions. We appreciate your faithful generosity and look forward to serving our congregations and ministries.

Thank you for your continued prayers. We appreciate and need them in our ministry. Please continue to pray for:

Synod Council

Dallas Kostna
Dan Brunet
Rev. Courtenay Reedman Parker
Martin Kruse
Sandra Tymchyshyn
Sylvia Nilsson-Barkman
Michelle McConomy
Haiden Werboweski
Rev. Jennifer Marlor
Rev. Michael Kurtz

Staff

Donna Jackson
Deacon Michelle Collins
Bishop Jason Zinko

Synod Committees, and partners

Looking Ahead

This part of the report is identical to last year. Our focus as the synod office in 2024 will continue to be *Discipleship*.

I believe this is the most important goal to which our congregations and members could strive. This is, after all, Christ's call to us: to be and make disciples. This means committing ourselves to growing in our own faith through regular spiritual practices, gathering with others who share our faith, speaking about our faith to others, and inviting others into this gift that God has made known to us.

My belief is that most of what causes anxiety and worry in our churches would go away if we paid attention to discipleship above all else. I think we would be more open to reorganizing in healthier ways if our sole focus was discipleship. God's never-ending faithfulness to us would not be so easily overshadowed by our fear of scarcity if we were devoted to discipleship.

I know that there are countless ways to engage in spiritual practices, learning, conversation, and training throughout the year. Between our pastors and deacons, synod office, and partner organizations, you can find ways of diving deeper into your faith this year. Please take advantage of those opportunities. If you really don't know where to start, please talk to your pastor, deacon, or congregational council. Synod office staff will also develop and provide programming and resources to help our members engage in discipleship in 2024 and beyond.

The ministry we do together could not happen without our faithful and dedicated rostered and lay leaders. I am especially thankful for those who have given so much of themselves to lead in congregations without a called pastor or deacon. This is not easy work, but it is ministry that continues to feed and grow the faith of the congregation. We have many people who lend their time, skills, and passion to committees, projects, and ministries across the synod. We could not do this ministry without you. I am so grateful that you have responded to God's gift of grace through your service to our congregations and synod.

We can only be the MNO Synod when we work together as the body of Christ. Your gifts and your partnership allow us to share the Gospel and point to Christ in all we do.

Yours in Christ's Service,



Bishop Jason Zinko
Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Finance Committee Report

While there is some hesitancy in declaring 2023 a normal year in the life of the congregation, we are thankful that there were no disruptions to in-person worship and that we were blessed to have full-time spiritual leadership in place January through to December.

The transition back to normalcy came with significant financial adjustments, the most notable being an increase in staffing expenses. Consequently, the congregation budgeted for a significant operating deficit of \$38,000 with the hope that general offerings would begin to rebound. In that regard, we are pleased to report that the 2023 operating deficit was indeed less than anticipated. More details as to how this came to be are reported below.

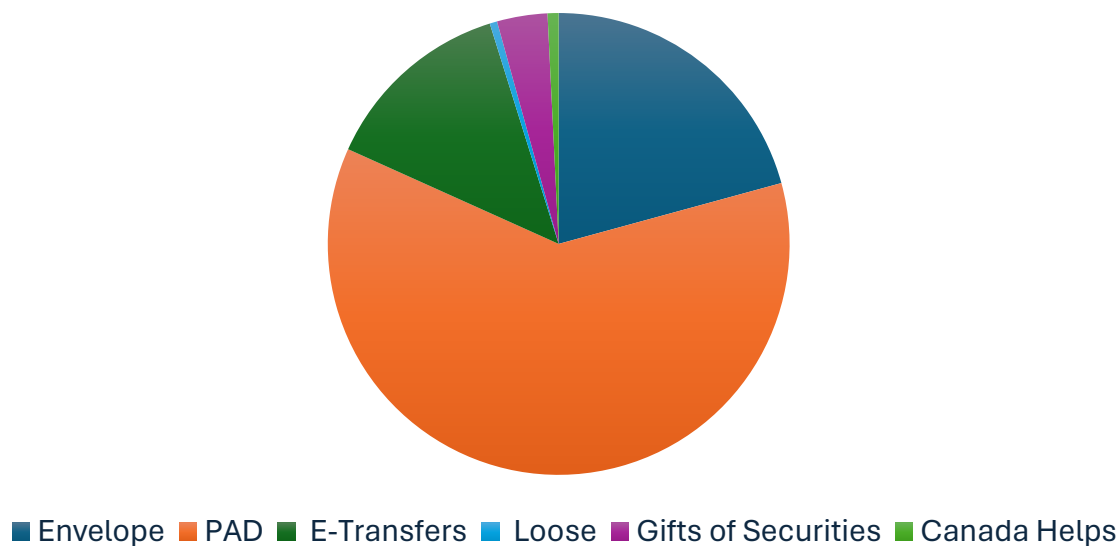
Year-end financial statements are available elsewhere in the Annual Meeting Bulletin of Reports. At the time of writing of this report, the Audit Committee had not yet completed its review of the 2023 financials. While we have confidence that the information contained in the following report is reasonably representative of the congregation's finances, there may be some minor modifications once the Audit Committee has completed its work.

General Offerings

General offerings, that is offerings given to support the operating budget of the congregation, received in 2023 were just over \$285,000 representing a very modest decline of about \$3,500 compared with 2022.

The trend towards giving via means other than traditional envelopes continued. As the chart below shows, almost three-quarters of offerings are received by members using electronic transfers or the Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) program.

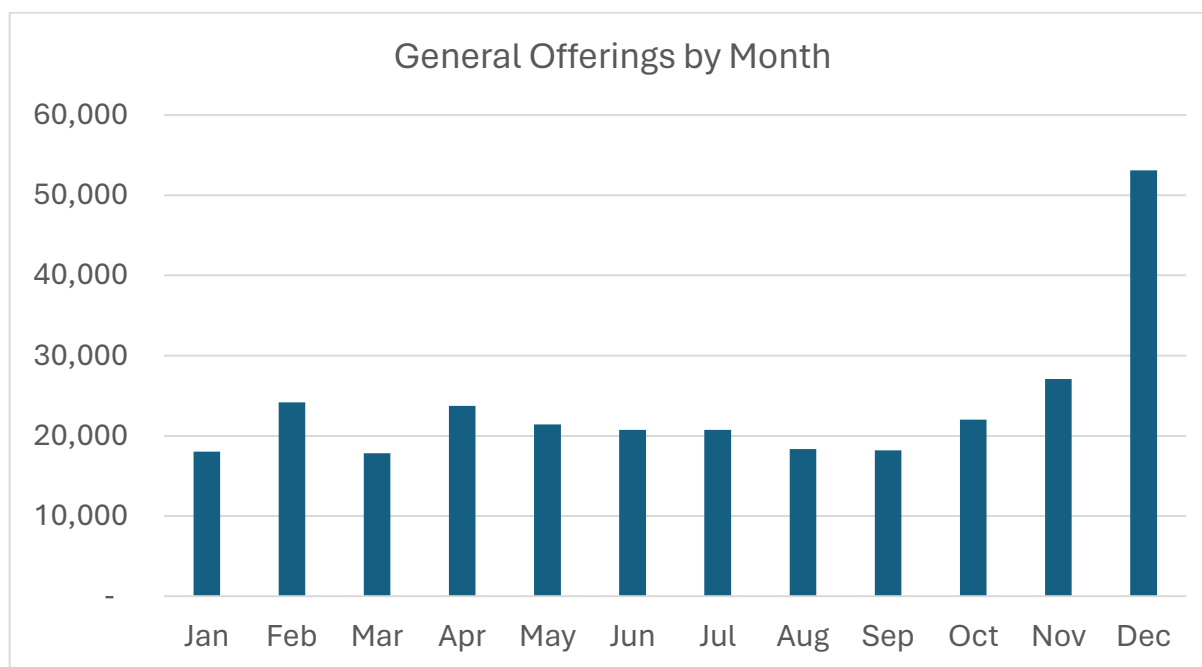
General Offerings by Method of Giving



General Offerings Received by Month

While church treasurers and finance committees might wish for a more even flow of offering funds throughout the year, monthly giving patterns in most churches including St. Mark's rely on a surge in

giving in the final few weeks of the year. 2023 was no exception as almost 20% of all general offerings were received in December.



Other Income

Other income in 2023 amounted to just over \$10,000. Of this, \$3,000 was interest earned on unencumbered investments with the balance coming from facility rentals.

The bulk of our rental income comes from what we call recurring use. Three groups rented our space on a regular basis in 2023: Archimedes Math, Village Green Dancers and the Sisters of the Holy Rock. Unfortunately, the Sisters discontinued use of our building in May.

How we used your offerings in 2023

By far the largest expense is related to our staff. Personnel costs (i.e., salaries, wages, benefits, etc.) account for 57% of our expenses. Increased personnel costs in 2023 reflect the presence of spiritual leadership for the entire year. Overall personnel costs would have been higher if not for the office administrator's position being vacant for the last half of 2023.

The proportion of our spending devoted to mission partner support declined in 2023 to just under 10%. The most significant decrease came in support to the MNO Synod. In 2023, we remitted \$30,000 to the synod compared to \$40,000 in 2022.

Expenses related to the building (e.g., utilities, maintenance, etc.) increased substantially in 2023. Much of the increase can be tied to major work in the attic of the parish hall to repair damage caused by severe ice damming on the eastern side of building and to expenditures on our HVAC system. While much of the repair costs to the attic were covered by insurance, there was a \$10,000 deductible to be paid as well as the cost of upgrades/betterments not covered by insurance.

Administration expenses include such things as office supplies, equipment leases (phone system, photocopier), postage, software licenses, etc.). These amounted to just under 3.4% of expenditures.

Programming expenses – that is expenditures made by our various program committees (i.e., Worship, Social Ministry, Community Care, Youth, Sunday School, Adult Education) account for about 5% of overall expenditures. The increase in spending from \$11,660 to \$16,000 is mostly the result of our support of youth attending the national youth gathering (CLAY).

The percentage shown for programming expenditure is, in some regard, a misleading number. Much of the Personnel budget (pastor, music director, youth leader, Sunday school ministry coordinator) supports the congregation's programs.

Governance includes our annual convention fee paid to the MNO Synod and funds expended on staff and volunteer recognition.

Other Human Resource Costs include expenditures for supply pastors and musicians, payroll services, and bookkeeping services. In the interest of transparency, we note that a significant proportion of Other HR costs are related to the termination of our former office administrator including a severance settlement and associated legal fees. We note also that the net financial impact of the termination was zero largely due to the generous offer of a member who volunteered her time to cover basic administrative tasks.

Year over Year Comparison of Expenditures

Expense	2022	%	2023	%
Programming	11,618	4.0	16,101	5.1
Governance	2,653	0.9	1,479	0.5
Administration	11,880	4.1	10,703	3.4
Property	34,655	11.8	66,865	21.0
Personnel	169,836	58.1	180,852	56.8
Other HR	17,995	6.2	11,076	3.5
Mission Partner Support	41,833	14.3	31,411	9.9
TOTAL	292,491	100	318,487	100.0

Year-End Operating Deficit

Preliminary results indicate we finished 2023 with an operating deficit of just over \$23,000. The deficit, which was about \$15,000 less than anticipated, was financed by drawing down previously accumulated cash reserves.

Designated Giving

You will note from the Statement of Fund Balances included in the overall Financial Statements that just over \$57,000 was received in 2023 for designated purposes beyond what we plan for in our operating budget. Almost \$40,000 of this total represents fundraising and registration and travel fees related to CLAY 2023.

The balance of designated giving or special offerings falls into: (1) donations received by St. Mark's that are forwarded in their entirety to an external recipient; and (2) donations received to support special programs operated by St. Mark's.

Gifts Designated to External Agencies

The following amounts were forwarded to external agencies in 2022:

Luther Village	\$105
Lutheran Urban Ministry	\$2,355
Canadian Lutheran World Relief	\$4,893
Cambridge Coffee House donation to LUM	\$1,000

Gifts Designated to Special Programs of St. Mark's

- Memorial Fund

Memorial Fund balance at the beginning of 2023 was \$7,796. Donations during the year were \$440. No expenditures were made from the Memorial Fund this year.

- Urban Meals

Donations to the Urban Meal Program in 2023 totaled \$1,695 while expenditures were \$976. Expenditures represent reimbursement to members for grocery supplies purchased to prepare meals / bag lunches. The Urban Meals Fund ended the year with a balance of just over \$2,100.

- Christmas Hampers

The opening balance of the Hamper fund was just over \$3,400 to which \$1,300 was added in the November campaign. A larger number of families than usual was supported this year with a total of \$4,432 being spent. A much smaller surplus of \$300 is being carried forward to support the hamper program in 2024.

Endowment Funds

St. Mark's manages two endowment funds: Hagglund Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Social Ministry Endowment Fund. A third endowment fund, the Houston Memorial Scholarship Fund is managed by a local law firm.

Interest earned by the two scholarship funds is used to award scholarships to students beginning or continuing in post-secondary programs. In 2023, only one application was received. A total of \$300 was awarded from the Houston Scholarship fund. All the interest earned by the Hagglund Fund (\$687) will be held in reserve for use in subsequent years.

Interest earned by the Social Ministry Fund is donated annually to a charitable cause recommended to the Congregational Council by the Social Ministry Committee. In 2023, \$400 was disbursed to Winnipeg's Main Street Project.

Finance Committee Activity in 2023

The Finance Committee is a committee of the congregational council charged with the responsibility of overseeing the financial record keeping of the congregation.

Committee activity in 2023 included:

- Quarterly financial updates to the council.
- Updating info regarding a designated representative for our account with Canada Revenue Agency
- To eliminate any possibility of mishandling of funds, discontinued the practice of paying invoices by e-transfer.
- Updated the Finance Policy with regard to protocols around staff VISA cards.

- Completed and submitted the annual charitable return to Canada Revenue Agency
- Extensive cleanup of financial documents stored on Google Drive
- As per a recommendation from our bank, mutual fund investment accounts with TD Bank were transferred to our TD Direct Investing account.
- Submitted recommendations to council on revisions to the Facility Use Fee Schedule.
- Distributed year-to-date individual giving reports to members in October.
- Designed / ordered new generic offering envelopes.
- Recommended to council that the practice of passing of the offering plate be discontinued.
- Creation of a draft budget for presentation to the council in October.
- As per the council's direction, met in late December to make final decisions on year-end disbursements to mission partners.

Financial Secretary / Bookkeeper

The committee is grateful to volunteers who fill important financial support roles.

We are thankful for Verle-Ann Irvine's willingness to serve as our Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary is responsible for entering information about offerings into our Church Watch software. It is that software that generates your income tax receipt for charitable donations.

Also, we greatly appreciate the willingness of Rhonda Lorch to serve as our financial bookkeeper. In addition to entering financial transactions into our accounting software, Rhonda also managed the monthly PAD program as well as the payroll function.

Finance Committee Membership

Serving on the Finance Committee in 2023 were Lynda Joyal, Cole Parsons, and Brian Lorch.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee

Brian Lorch

Chair



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023 Auditor's Report

To the Members of

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
600 Cambridge Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3M 3G9

We have audited the financial records of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church for the year ending December 31, 2023. Our audit procedures included the following:

- Verification on a sample basis that receipts issued to individual congregation members were accurate with income as per the statements.
- We traced, on a sample basis the income reflected by the weekly offering summaries to the bank deposit books.
- We verified, on a sample basis, various cheques drawn by St. Mark's were accurate to the invoices billed to St. Mark's.
- We reviewed the bank balances as per the balance sheet to the bank statements.
- We verified the insurance on the church was paid for, and current.

Our findings indicate the transactions are recorded correctly and they accurately reflect the financial status of the congregation.

Thank you to Brian Lorch and Lynda Joyal their assistance in locating all the necessary documents. Their help was greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted, your 2023 Auditing Committee.

Andy Dale and Caroline Mann

Nominations Committee Report

Council Vacancies

Three members of Council will be leaving this year. Signe Jewett has completed two terms with no eligibility to renew, Inga Skundberg has completed her 1st term but will not seek another and Kris Wegert has resigned his seat just 1yr short of the second term completion. There was one empty seat through the year. The Nominations Committee therefore was looking for four candidates to fill the council table.

The following persons have been approached by the committee and have agreed to be nominated for positions on the congregational council for three-year terms:

Nels Kristenson
Marijus Timmerman

LUM AGM Representative

Ed Mann has agreed to serve as representative to the Lutheran Urban Mission AGM to be held later this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Signe Jewett

Blair Graff

Sarah Harrington

March 26, 2024

Appendix A: Financial Statements

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

2023 Financial Statements

January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

*600 Cambridge Street Winnipeg, MB
R3M 3G9*

Balance Sheet

	As of Dec. 31, 2023	As of Dec. 31, 2022
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalent		
TD Bank	21,192.05	71,331.05
Visa Deposit Account	0.00	735.96
Total Cash and Cash Equivalent	21,192.05	72,067.01
GST Receivable	3,711.24	1,331.15
Total Current Assets	24,903.29	73,398.16
Non-current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment		
Original cost	1,917,133.16	1,917,133.16
Depreciation	-1,238,947.58	-1,143,090.92
Total Property, plant and equipment	678,185.58	774,042.24
TD Direct Investing	68,056.24	55,464.01
TD Bond Fund - Unrestricted ¹	30,960.13	30,960.13
TD Bond Fund - Scholarships ¹	30,960.13	30,960.13
TD Bond Fund - Social Ministry ¹	29,871.27	29,871.27
Total Non Current Assets	838,033.35	921,297.78
Total Assets	862,936.64	994,695.94
Liabilities and Equity		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable (A/P)		
Payworks	58.32	59.18
Total Accounts Payable (A/P)	58.32	59.18
Credit Card	404.30	735.96
Miscellaneous Obligations	0.00	3,600.00
ELCIC - GSI	146.82	2,684.35
Memorial Fund	8,236.76	7,796.76
Youth Gathering	1,726.92	4,991.65
Youth Activities	0.00	2,185.53
Community Garden Project	949.37	949.37
Canadian Lutheran World Relief	0.00	60.00
Urban Mijnisty	0.00	110.00
Lutheran Urban Mission Meals	2,157.98	1,439.64

Sunday School Offerings	1,700.90	1,924.23
Music Ministry/Instruments	759.85	259.85
Christmas Hampers	300.11	3,432.98
Canada Lutheran Subscription	149.87	65.47
Focus on Mission	0.00	0.00
Coffee House	212.22	312.91
Education	233.50	233.50
Hagglund Endowment Interest	1,462.28	774.86
Social Ministry Interest	552.96	403.09
Total Current Liabilities	19,052.16	32,019.33
Non-current Liabilities		
Capital Works Fund	1,976.14	1,935.18
Total Non-current Liabilities	1,976.14	1,935.18
Total Liabilities	21,028.30	33,954.51
Equity		
Endowment Fund - Hagglund Scholarship	23,611.34	23,611.34
Endowment Fund - Social Ministry	29,871.27	29,871.27
Opening Balance Equity	986,309.35	986,309.35
Adjusted Retained Earnings	-79,050.53	11,893.54
Profit (loss) for the year	-118,833.09	-90,944.07
Total Equity	841,908.34	960,741.43
Total Liabilities and Equity	862,936.64	994,695.94

Notes:

(1) St Marks initially measures financial assets at fair value adjusted by the amount of transaction costs directly attributable to the investment. Assets are not subsequently tested or measured for impairment against market values as such impairments in financial instruments is discretionary as per guidelines. Unrealized Capital gains/losses on investments resulting from market fluctuations have not been realized in operating income. As these funds are unrealized until the assets are sold the fluctuations in asset values do not reflect any additional costs to the church and as such, have not been included in financial statements.

Asset	Stated Value as of December 31, 2023	Market Value as of December 31, 2023
TD Bond Fund - unrestricted	\$30,960.13	\$26,603.73
TD Bond Fund - scholarships	\$30,960.13	\$26,603.73
TD Bond Fund – Social Ministry	\$29,871.27	\$27,138.82

Schedule of Receipts

	2023	2022
General Receipts		
Offering Income – General Offering	285,427.50	289,002.89
Offering Income – Other Offering	304.40	-
Interest Income, & Conf Fees, other fees	3,067.54	1,186.26
Grants	-	-
Rental Income	6,791.00	7,121.00
Gain / Loss on Investments	145.37	35.77
Total General Receipts	295,735.81	297,345.92
Directed Offerings		
Canada Lutheran	84.40	166.60
Canadian Lutheran World Relief	4,893.00	2,220.00
Capital Improvements	2,500.00	-
Christmas Hampers	1,300.00	3,420.00
Coffee House	2,001.75	-
Community Garden Project	-	-
Hagglund Scholarship Interest	687.42	732.11
Luther Urban Mission	2,355.00	1,840.00
Luther Urban Mission Meals	1,695.00	475.00
Luther Village	105.00	565.00
Memorial Fund	440.00	550.00
Music Ministry	500.00	-
Social Ministry Fund - interest	549.87	402.99
Sunday School Offerings	105.15	400.00
Youth Activites	29.00	2,000.00
Youth Gathering	39,945.66	10,980.99
Total Directed Offerings	57,191.25	23,752.69
Total Receipts	352,927.06	321,098.61

Schedule of Disbursements

	2023	2022
Support of Ministry in our Parish:		
Pastor and staff salaries / benefits / other HR costs	191,913.90	187,830.45
Services in our Parish:		
Worship, Education, Outreach, Stewardship, Youth, Congregational Events, Conventions, Conferences	17,819.87	14,270.94
Office, Postage, Building, Property Maintenance, Repair, Insurance, Utilities, Furnishings	77,567.93	46,535.37
Mission Partner Support		
MNO Synod, Lutheran Urban Ministry, RIC	31,410.54	41,832.73
Total Operating Expenses	318,712.24	290,469.49
Disbursements from Funds		
Canadian Lutheran Magazine	-	164.35
Canadian Lutheran World Relief	4,953.00	2,160.00
Capital Works	2,459.04	-
Christmas Hampers	4,432.87	1,928.74
Coffee House	2,102.44	-
Community Garden Project	-	-
Education	-	-
Focus on Mission	-	150.00
Hagglund Scholarship Grants	-	200.00
Lutheran Urban Mission	2,465.00	1,730.00
Lutheran Urban Mission Meals	976.66	1,088.41
Luther Village	105.00	565.00
Memorial Fund	-	8,599.11
Music Ministry	-	2,263.95
Social Ministry Fund grants	400.00	515.00
Sunday School Offerings	328.48	-
Youth Activities	2,214.53	-
Youth Gathering	43,210.39	10,374.74
Total Designated /Special Gifts	63,647.41	29,739.30
Total Disbursements	382,359.65	320,208.79

Detailed Operating Statement

	2023	2022
INCOME		
General Offerings		
Envelope Offerings	59,236.18	60,853.72
PAD Offerings	174,041.00	175,118.69
Electronic Transfers	38,385.00	42,060.00
Loose Offerings	1,488.04	5,568.40
Gifts of Securities	10,078.10	3,305.82
From Other Charitable Organizations	2,199.18	2,096.26
Total General Offerings	285,427.50	289,002.89
Gain/Loss - Investments	145.37	35.77
Interest Income	3,067.54	987.16
Other Income		
Facility Rentals	6,791.00	7,121.00
Miscellaneous Income	304.40	199.10
Total Other Income	7,095.40	7,320.10
Total Income	295,735.81	297,345.92
EXPENSES		
Programming		
Worship Committee		
Resource Materials and Music	1,198.25	721.88
Communion Supplies	497.63	306.98
Flowers and Decorations	1,136.51	487.38
Licences and Subscriptions	2,792.96	2,334.80
Equipment Maintenance	1,367.83	987.67
Equipment Purchase	210.30	674.04
Total Worship Committee	7,203.48	5,512.75
Confirmation Ministry		
Confirmation Resources	-	295.16
Confirmation Hospitality	419.10	-
Confirmation Sunday Expenses	169.72	163.41
Thanksgiving Retreat	300.00	-
Total Confirmation Ministry	888.82	458.57
Children's Ministry		
Curriculum Supplies	188.08	181.27
Splash Program	3.68	110.68
Grade 5 Bibles	-	393.34

Special Events	302.94	-
Total Children's Ministry	494.70	685.29
Adult Education		
Curriculum Materials	(55.34)	-
Total Adult Education	(55.34)	-
Inreach/Outreach		
Canada Lutheran Cong Subscription	-	18.56
Supplies	398.00	696.71
Postage	25.76	45.78
Total Inreach/Outreach	423.76	761.05
Youth Committee		-
Assistant Youth Leader Honorium	325.00	500.00
Local Programming	858.61	518.72
Event Expenses - Leaders	-	64.32
Total Youth Committee	1,183.61	1,083.04
Fellowship		
Congregational Events	76.38	1,144.49
Coffee Hour Kitchen Supplies	694.21	471.74
Total Fellowship	770.59	1,616.23
Social Ministry		
Local Programming	41.75	1,500.00
Local Emergency Relief	-	-
Total Social Ministry	41.75	1,500.00
Total Programming	10,951.37	11,616.93
Synodical / National Events		
Synod Convention Fee	722.50	819.39
CLAY Gathering	5,000.00	-
Other Events	756.00	291.40
Total Synodical/National Events	6,478.50	1,110.79
Council/Governance		
Council Meeting Expenses	-	174.82
Staff / Volunteer recognition	390.00	1,366.89
Total Council/Governance	390.00	1,541.71
Administration Expenses		
Office Expenses		
Stationery and Miscellaneous Supplies	1,086.05	953.83
Postage	573.07	775.80

Photocopier lease	1,400.56	1,420.36
Photocopier Operating Expenses	634.50	347.95
Software Expenses	1,605.93	1,612.76
Office Equipment Purchases	-	164.24
Other Admin Expenses	45.16	1,329.70
Total Office Expenses	5,345.27	6,604.64
Technology - Internet Services	1,148.87	1,787.83
Bank charges		
Monthly Plan Fee	144.00	-
EFT Billing	621.10	662.16
Other bank fees	796.06	733.61
Total Bank charges	1,561.16	1,395.77
Telephone Expenses		
Telephone Lease	1,385.04	1,385.04
Telephone Monthly Bill	885.57	1,070.62
Telephone Service Plan	377.44	200.72
Total Telephone Expenses	2,648.05	2,656.38
Total Administration Expenses	10,703.35	12,444.62
Property Expenses		
Utilities		
Gas	7,074.03	5,560.00
Electricity	7,775.59	6,539.09
Water	1,170.26	385.98
Alarm	468.46	1,087.98
Total Utilities	16,488.34	13,573.05
Furnishings & Equipment		
Computer Hardware & Accessories	-	1,787.22
Furnishings	602.24	1,224.42
Total Furnishings & Equipment	602.24	3,011.64
Insurance and Taxes		
Insurance	11,283.69	8,722.66
Property Taxes	1,545.90	1,206.80

Total Insurance and Taxes	12,829.59	9,929.46
Property Committee		
Interior Maintenance and Repair	19,565.37	3,276.01
Custodial Supplies	1,648.89	777.76
Miscellaneous Interior Property Expense	10,000.00	339.90
Snow Clearance	3,454.09	3,830.14
Lawn Care	1,748.09	550.00
Misc. Outdoor Property Expense	527.97	742.32
Professional fees	-	25.00
Total Property Committee	36,944.41	9,541.13
Total Property Expenses	66,864.58	36,055.28
Personnel Expenses		
Staff Expenses		
Mileage	740.99	256.62
Parking Expenses	2.50	-
Pastor's Book Allowance	226.46	129.62
Pastor's Miscellaneous	167.69	80.71
Director of Music - Cont Education	-	408.00
Total Staff Expenses	1,137.64	874.95
Payroll Expenses		
Wages	144,121.91	136,909.40
Benefits	24,794.43	21,775.36
CPP Employer Paid	6,946.96	6,424.53
EI Employer Paid	2,905.18	2,889.83
Payworks Fees	931.66	962.46
Total Payroll Expenses	179,700.14	168,961.58
Total Personnel Expenses	180,837.78	169,836.53
Other HR Costs		
Supply Pastor	450.00	3,510.00
Supply Musicians	750.00	650.00
VPP Record Checks	56.70	144.42
Bookkeeping Services	800.00	2,600.00
Miscellaneous HR Costs	9,019.42	11,090.32
Total Other HR Costs	11,076.12	17,994.74

Mission Partner Support		
MNO Synod	30,000.00	40,000.00
Lutheran Urban Mission	1,275.00	1,700.00
Other Partners	135.54	132.73
Total Mission Partner Support	31,410.54	41,832.73
Total Operating Expenses	318,712.24	292,433.33
 Operating Surplus (Deficit)	 (22,976.43)	 4,912.59
 Depreciation Expense	 95,856.66	 95,856.66
 NET INCOME (LOSS)	 (118,833.09)	 (90,944.07)

Statement of Fund Balances

	Opening Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	Closing Balance
Canada Lutheran	65.47	84.40	-	149.87
Canadian Lutheran World Relief	60.00	4,893.00	4,953.00	-
Capital Works	1,935.18	2,500.00	2,459.04	1,976.14
Christmas Hampers	3,432.98	1,300.00	4,432.87	300.11
Coffee House	312.91	2,001.75	2,102.44	212.22
Community Garden	949.37	-	-	949.37
Education	233.50	-	-	233.50
Focus on Mission	-	-	-	-
Hagglund Endowment Interest	774.86	687.42	-	1,462.28
Lutheran Urban Mission	110.00	2,355.00	2,465.00	-
Lutheran Urban Mission Meals	1,439.64	1,695.00	976.66	2,157.98
Luther Village (incl Bike-a-thon)	-	105.00	105.00	-
Memorial Fund	7,796.76	440.00	-	8,236.76
Music Ministry / Instruments	259.85	500.00	-	759.85
Social Ministry Interest	403.09	549.87	400.00	552.96
Sunday School Offerings	1,924.23	105.15	328.48	1,700.90
Youth Activities ¹	2,185.53	29.00	2,214.53	-
Youth Fund (formerly Youth Gathering Fund)	4,991.65	39,945.66	43,210.39	1,726.92
TOTAL	26,875.02	57,191.25	63,647.41	20,418.86

(1) In 2023, the balance of the Youth Activities fund was transferred to the Youth Gathering Fund. The name of the fund was changed to Youth Fund.

Retained Earnings

	2023	2022
Opening Retained Earnings	(79,050.53)	11,893.54
Transfer to Endowment Fund - Social Ministry	-	-
Adjustment to Book Value of Investments	-	-
Adjusted Opening Retained Earnings	(79,050.53)	11,893.54
Net income (loss)	(118,833.09)	(90,944.07)
Mortgage principal pymts		-
Current Earnings	(118,833.09)	(90,944.07)
Ending Retained Earnings	(197,883.62)	(79,050.53)
Opening Haglund Fund Balance	23,611.34	23,611.34
Ending Haglund Fund Balance	23,611.34	23,611.34
Opening Social Ministry Fund Balance	29,871.27	29,871.27
Ending Haglund Fund Balance	29,871.27	29,871.27

Unencumbered Cash

	As at 12 / 31/2023	As at 12 / 31/2022
Liquid Assets		
Current Account - TD Bank	21,192.05	71,331.05
GST Receivable	3,711.24	1,331.15
Visa Deposit Account	0.00	735.96
TD Direct Investing - Savings Acct	68,056.24	55,464.01
TD Direct Investing - Bond Fund - Mkt Value	26,603.73	25,761.13
Total Unencumbered Liquid Assets	119,563.26	154,623.30
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	462.62	4,395.14
Benefits Payable	146.82	2,684.35
Canada Lutheran	149.87	65.47
Canadian Lutheran World Relief	0.00	60.00
Capital Works Fund	1,976.14	1,935.18
Christmas Hampers	300.11	3,432.98
Coffee House	212.22	312.91
Community Garden	949.37	949.37
Education	233.50	233.50
Hagglund Endowment Interest	1,462.28	774.86
Luther Urban Ministry	0.00	110.00
Lutheran Urban Mission Meals	2,157.98	1,439.64
Memorial Fund	8,236.76	7,796.76
Music Ministry / Instruments	759.85	259.85
Social Ministry Interest	552.96	403.09
Sunday School Offerings	1,700.90	1,924.23
Youth Activities	0.00	2,185.53
Youth Gathering	1,726.92	4,991.65
Total Current Liabilities	21,028.30	33,954.51
Unecumbered Cash Reserve	98,534.96	120,668.79