

ANNUAL REPORT

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 20 22



















gsChurch Council Report

Rev. Mary Suomala Folkerds & President Tom Staiger



Tom Staiger Council President

2020 was about changing everything in our model to adapt to Covid and to stay on mission.

2021 was about when, how, and what to start and restart in person at Good Shepherd.

2022 was about understanding the importance of connection and community again.



Rev. Mary Suomala Folkerds Lead Pastor

One of our Council members asked at a recent Council meeting: "Do you remember how good it felt to start worshiping TOGETHER again?" Each Council member talked about how meaningful it was to be part of this worshiping community more fully in 2022. Then they spoke of the beauty AND challenge of committing to their church family in the "new normal."

This past year has been a year to march fully into the new normal. In 2022, the

focus of Good Shepherd was how to fully live into life and worship as a community of Christ-followers.

It has been important for the staff of Good Shepherd to stay connected to one another. Because of a generous gift from a church member, seven members of Good Shepherd's staff got to attend a mission conference in Atlanta in April. We navigated the interstate system in and around Atlanta in a rented minivan and learned from amazing speakers at the conference. And most importantly, we got to worship together with thousands of other Christians from many different denominations in a stadium.

The power of this event strengthened our church staff so that we could continue to joyfully throw ourselves into leading the ministries of this church.

"Do you remember how good it felt to start worshiping TOGETHER again?"

We lived into the three goals that we shared in 2022:

- 1. We continued to invite people into this faith family as we grew in membership and community involvement.
- 2. In July, we welcomed a Pastor of Adult Faith Formation to our team, Rev. Meggie Bjertness. She has been getting to know the congregation. Her ongoing work is helping adults of all ages grow in faith through small group ministry. Her presence on our team helps all of us move away from the idea of just offering a variety of activities to an INTENTIONAL MAP of faith development through life.
- 3. The Council set out a goal to "address debt, set bigger mission goals, and invite the congregation to greater stewardship." We have made a great dent in a more debt-free future by refinancing our mortgage and securing a lower interest rate. With mortgage debt reduction funds available and pledges (paid and upcoming), nearly \$514,000 of our \$800,000 Capital Campaign goal is in place! That is in addition to meeting the goals of our General Fund (which fuels the daily ministry of this congregation).

Our hopes for 2023:

- 1. Be a community that is known for being on mission!

 Not only to become a more connected community but
 to be a community of people who participate in God's
 mission to heal our community and world by seeking
 God's kingdom come—on earth as it is in heaven.
- 2. Be ready for new ways of doing ministry. Reducing our debt is a good thing to do—it makes us more nimble and ready to serve God in new ways. Many churches in our community are struggling with declining membership and declining offerings. At Good Shepherd, our mission opportunities are growing! According to county demographic surveys, more than 70% of our community does not regularly attend any church. How can we invite others to be part of our mission? How can we partner with struggling congregations and encourage them in mission? What big risks will God ask us to take?
- 3. Be a community that has strong ties to each other, and not just to the congregation. Through the BeFrienders program and small groups, we want to show how God shows up through the challenge, encouragement, and prayers of one another.

God's Peace.

Rev. Mary Suomala Folkerds Lead Pastor

Pastor Many

Tom Staiger Council President

Tom Starger



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Office Hours

Monday-Thursday, 10:00 am-4:00 pm Friday, 10:00 am-2:00 pm

The church building is open and phones are answered during these times.



Pastor Mary Suomala Folkerds Lead Pastor PastorMary@ktgs.org



Pastor Taylor Wilson Pastor of Worship & Mission PastorTaylor@ktqs.org



Pastor Meggie Bjertness Pastor of Adult Faith Formation PastorMeggie@ktgs.org



Deacon Julie Wilson Director of Kids Ministry Julie@ktgs.org



Linda Bartholome Congregation Engagement Director Linda@ktgs.org



Diana Wright Youth Director Diana@ktgs.org



Ryan Schatz Technical Director Ryan@ktqs.org



Karen **Skarpness** Data Systems & Finance Manager Karen@ktgs.org



Stephanie Maier Marketing Administrator (part-time) Stephanie@ktgs.org

ADDITIONAL STAFF:

Joan Engeseth, BeFrienders Coordinator

Kathy Kassenborg, Financial Secretary

Matt Endreson, Choir Director

Tom Hanson & Casey Bartz, Traditional Worship Accompanists

Myrna Hanson, Adult Bell Choir Director

Joe Lindquist, Ring & Sing Director

Jake Curry, Chef for Wednesday Meals (At Your Service Catering)

David Wirth, Dave Weidner, & At Your Service Cleaning, Custodians

A Note from the Editor

by Stephanie Maier, Marketing Administrator

If life can ever feel "normal" then 2022 was it for me. Good Shepherd continues to be #FORFargoMoorhead, and we continue to find ways to be "On Mission" with each other, our community, and our world. The enclosed pages highlight the facts and figures of a year of generosity and goals reached. You will also find "gsFaith Stories" that happen every day because of the people who call Good Shepherd home. Enjoy their stories. And if we can ask a favor, think of how YOU want to get more involved in 2023. God bless!

gsFaith Story: Welcome to Good Shepherd by Lori Miones



Roger and I grew up in Christian homes. We went to church regularly and raised our family to do the same. Now that our children are grown, we have time to share. We love being greeters and being able to welcome people to the place we love.

My daughter and I teach Wednesday night Church School. I have also helped with Vacation Bible School. Being a retired Kindergarten teacher, I continue to love being around children. Good Shepherd has such a welcoming, nurturing environment; we are so happy to be part of our church family!

Capital Campaign & Stewardship: ON MISSION

Capital Campaign Launched in 2022

Our mission at Good Shepherd is to Gather, Grow, and Go so that ALL may know the Good Shepherd! We are focusing on how to stay on mission at home, at work or school, in the community, and at church! Following Jesus our Good Shepherd is something we do every day and everywhere.

One way to stay On Mission is to reduce the church's debt. In 2007, Good Shepherd relocated from mid-Moorhead to our current location. Visionary leaders built the church in the middle of open fields. Those fields have become our neighborhoods, and we have been steadily growing with them. Throughout this growth, we continue to pay our monthly church mortgage; however, we still



had a remaining balance of \$1.3 million. With the refinancing of our mortgage to a lower rate in the summer of 2022, the church leadership has been dreaming about the impact we could make in our community, if we weren't spending \$100,000 a year to service our debt.

By reducing our debt, we will make a significant difference with our mission partners—locally with Churches United, Habitat for Humanity, campus ministries, and globally through Lutheran World Relief. Less debt means we are able to make a bigger impact locally and globally.

Capital Campaign Goal

We want to raise an additional \$800,000 to help us stay On Mission at Good Shepherd.

- + \$600,000 would go toward making a big dent in our \$1.3 million mortgage.
- + \$200,000 would go into updating our worship space so that it is inviting for those who are worshiping in the building and for those who worship online from home. Our 15-year-old sanctuary needs updated speakers, lights, and screens. This investment will make it easier for all who worship here to see, hear, and engage.

Giving to Good Shepherd

We invite you to schedule your recurring gift today!

Thank you for your trust and support as we continue to Gather, Grow, and Go for God's kingdom. To give electronically, visit KnowTheGoodShepherd.org/giving or text your gift amount to 84321. Checks can be payable to "Good Shepherd" and mailed or dropped off at the Church Office, 4000 28th St S, Moorhead, MN 56560.





gsWorship & Mission Rev. Taylor Wilson, Pastor of Worship & Mission



Rev. Taylor Wilson Pastor of Worship & Mission

In 2022, we experienced a season of growth in more ways than one. Our various worship ministries not only grew numerically, but also grew closer to each other. When this happens, God is not only worshiped, but friendships are formed, and the delivery is bold and beautiful. The Handbells, Choir, gsKIDS Ring + Sing, and Contemporary Worship teams flourished, and the congregation has benefited greatly from each individual's commitment to the overall mission. Thank you for

your musical leadership at Good Shepherd: Matt Endreson, Myrna Hanson, and Joe Lindquist!

We also experienced some hardships, as our main Traditional Accompanist, Casey Bartz, was diagnosed with cancer at the beginning of Lent. While our main concern was with his short-term and long-term health, there were also ministry-related realities that came with the diagnosis. Dawn Papenfuss stepped in for the remainder of Lent, with Tom Hanson taking over as our regular accompanist for the remainder of the year. I'm pleased to announce that not only is Tom staying on as our organist, but he'll be joined by Casey as our choir accompanist! I'm excited to hear their beautiful music in the year ahead.

We hosted our first "Night of Thanks" in November, showcasing the various worship groups at Good Shepherd. We've also continued to host special events, like Beer and Hymns, out in the community. While these events might be outside-the-box, they're on mission with our call to Gather, Grow, and Go so that ALL may know the Good Shepherd. The relationships that have been formed, with God and each other, are encouraging.

We also seek ways to be the Church outside the building in everyday life. Through our podcast, "Life in FM," and social content on various platforms, we continue to meet people where they are in life. Like, share, and BE the Church!









If you would like to share your musical talents with Good Shepherd, email Rev. Taylor Wilson, Pastor of Worship & Mission, at PastorTaylor@ktas.org.

Worship by the Numbers

Good Shepherd is available on-demand!

947

Instagram followers @gsMoorhead

264

Twitter followers @gsMoorhead

18

Episodes produced "Life in FM" Podcast



text recipients

and Record

emails reaistered



YouTube subscribers @MoorheadGoodShepherd

15,041

2,248 hours watched

Top Videos

Easter Worship (Contemp.) Wed. Christmas Program

26,000

total website visits

300

most visits in a single day (Easter Sunday 2022)

18,000

unique/new website visitors

4,769

Facebook page likes @qsMoorhead

805

post shares

3,398

comments



average people/month for worship with 800+ attending in April & December

average people/month for **Sunday Worship**

average people/month for

people/Wednesday for





BeFriendee, Eris Mae Johnson (front) shares her sense of humor with friend, Janis Eidsness, & her BeFriender, Dorothy Suomala.

BeFrienders

A Listening Presence at Good Shepherd



BeFrienders is a listening ministry of care at Good Shepherd. Members are trained to assist homebound members of our congregation—they listen, visit, send encouragement, and offer social interaction. BeFrienders alongside faithfully walk their BeFriendee's during this phase of life.

Eris Mae Johnson will be turning 100 on February 24, 2023. Dorothy Suomala has enjoyed a friendship with her for many years and, when the BeFrienders program began, it was a natural way to continue.

Eris Mae's daughter, Susan, passed away this past summer, and the longtime friends talked about how this loss affected her. Susan was very creative in decorating and creating a nice environment in Eris Mae's room for each season. This was a tangible loss. This fall, Dorothy Suomala recruited her good friend, Janis Eidsness, and decided to decorate her room at Bethany in Fargo. They brought in school memorabilia and added colored leaf displays to her shelves.

At a recent visit, they took down the Christmas displays and put up more colorful items for the winter months. This created opportunities for conversation about times past and reflections on how she is currently doing. Eris Mae appreciates hearing about Good Shepherd activities and inquires about her friends. Dorothy shares, "I am thankful to be this link for her with Good Shepherd as her BeFriender."

If you or someone you know would like a visit or would like to join the BeFriender Team, email GoodShep@ktgs.org.



qsAdult Faith Formation Rev. Meggie Bjertness, Pastor of Adult Faith Formation



Rev. Meggie **Biertness** Pastor of Adult Faith **Formation**

I am so grateful to be here! I began my call in late July 2022. Since then, I have been delighted by the warm welcome, mission mindset, and committed community of this church.

As Pastor of Adult Faith Formation, my vision is to help our church live even deeper into the "Grow" part of our mission by establishing small groups for people to connect and share life together. I dream of a church where people feel comfortable talking about faith, feel comfortable flipping through

a Bible, know how they listen for the voice of God, and have the resources to answer the tough questions of life.

Some highlights of 2022 included:

- + Getting settled into my office and getting to know colleagues and parishioners
- + Buying a house in Moorhead with my husband, Ben, and our dog, Buford
- + Sharing in preaching, leading worship, music, and pastoral care
- + Working with Joan Engeseth to recruit new BeFrienders
- + Restarting the 55+ Adult Christians Together (ACT) & the 20s/30s Bridge group (both groups meet monthly)
- + Hosting Advent gsConnect Groups and other Bible Study groups
- + Identifying needs in the community and potential leaders in the church
- + Praying about other special interest groups and Connect Groups that may take shape

In the coming year, I hope we can begin:

- + On-going small groups where people connect with each other about faith and life
- + Lent gsConnect Groups to dive deeper into our Lent Sermon Series on Spiritual Practices
- + A Paper Arts Ministry
- + A Young Parents Group
- + Bible Studies & Book Studies
- + Other groups and ministries where people connect with each other and God and grow in faith

gsFaith Story: Connect with God & Others Excerpt from Pastor Meggie's Sermon, "What's Next? Come and See," delivered January 2023

I recently met a gentleman who has been part of the same small group for 30 years. Six couples met monthly for 30 years. As you might imagine, his group has been through a lot. One of them got divorced and remarried. Many of them had children and later became empty-nesters. Each of them buried parents, siblings, spouses, or children. Two battled cancer. One lost the fight.

At the end of our conversation, he told me that he never would have made it without his small group. Twelve years into meeting together, he lost a son. During this time, other faith practices were nearly impossible. It was his small group that expressed God's love by being the listening ear he needed when the world felt bleak and confusing.

"I dream of a church full of Christ-like Servant Leaders, who follow Jesus so closely that you can't tell where the fabric of their personality ends and the fabric of Jesus' personality begins."—Rev. Meggie







qsKids & Youth Ministry

Deacon Julie Wilson, Director of Kids Ministry Diana Wright, Youth Director



Dcn. Julie Wilson Director of Kids Ministry

What a wonderful year of teaching kids to love, know, and praise Jesus!

- + 53 students participated in their First Communion milestone they received a special blessing and communion during worship
- + 49 third graders received new Bibles with a special cover made by Barb Spilde
- + 27 students attended LutherCrest Bible Camp in Alexandria, MN



Diana Wright Youth Director

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

- + 2 weeks of VBS
- + 225 students registered
- + Talented volunteers shared their talents and faith as leaders
- + 1,026 items collected for the Dorothy Day Food Pantry

Church School

- + 348 Church School students, age 3 to grade 5, registered
- + 50+ leaders
- + 2 sessions, Wednesday evenings & Sunday mornings











Youth

We had a wonderful time teaming up with the Olivet Lutheran Church youth for our mission trip to Duluth, MN, this summer! We helped with Rhubarbfest, the biggest yearly fundraiser for CHUM (the local homeless shelter/nonprofit). We also took time to explore, see the local attractions, get to know each other better, and grow in faith through Bible studies.

- + 160 registered for Confirmation
- + 19 volunteer leaders for small groups
- + 37 confirmed (October 2022)
- + 14 different Youth Group sessions offered—trivia, escape rooms, bonfires, glow-in-the-dark capture the flag, and a trip to the amusement park, Thunder Road
- + 158 cards decorated and delivered for youth men staying at the New Life Center
- + 3 trips—Andes Tower Hills Ski Trip, Duluth Mission Trip, & the Synod Middle School Trip to Luther Crest
- 1 broken leg on the ski trip (Youth Director's)



+ 1 Baby Wright on the way (due June 2023)

Thank you for the many people who give of their talents, encouragement, prayers, and also financial gifts to help children grow in faith.

\$4,181.81 collected by Noisy Offerings for local & global organizations—collected the first Sunday & Wednesday of each month!



gsEngagement *Linda Bartholome, Congregation Engagement Director*



Linda Bartholome Congregation Engagement Director

2022 was a year of wonderful fellowship and reconnecting. It is a privilege for me to work with people of ALL ages and walks of life at Good Shepherd. There is never one day that is the same, which is what I LOVE!

A few highlights from 2022

- + 100+ members participated in the Feed My Starving Children mobile food pack event at Scheel's Arena last February
- + 6 teams prepared Lenten noon lunches
 - + 46 baptisms
 - + 15 weddings/vow renewals (on and off-site)
 - + 5 New Member Connection gatherings and 156 new members joined our church family in 2022 that's double from 2021!
 - + 14 front desk volunteers
- + 2 parades—Greater Moorhead Parade (September; we received 3rd place!) & the Concordia Homecoming Parade (October)
- + 1 very successful Giving Tree—thank you to our Helping Hands for delivering carloads of Christmas gifts to Churches United, Micah's Mission, & Bright Sky Apartments. Gift cards from Target, Walmart, and grocery stores will be used to help our neighbors throughout the year. Thank you for your generosity!
- + Altar Care team provides decor and communion prep.
- + Adult Christians Together (ACT, 55+) began meeting again in September—potluck, speaker, musical guest, & fellowship—come be a part of this FUN group!
- + Countless Volunteers—hospitality & fellowship happen every Sunday through coffee fellowship and Wednesdays with meals prepared by Chef Jake Curry and his wonderful crew! We could not do this without YOU sharing your time & talents!

Thank you for an incredible 2022! I am looking forward to helping you find your passion(s) and the many ways you can be connected at Good Shepherd in a God-filled 2023!

We invite you to be a worship volunteer—communion assistant, greeter, usher, reader, & hospitality team member!
Email Linda@ktgs.org today!

Ruby's Pop-up Pantry

We continued hosting Ruby's Pop-Up Pantry on the third Thursday of every month. Ruby's Pantry is for anyone looking to extend their monthly grocery budget. This program is not government–funded, and each donation is used to cover operational costs such as trucking, gas, and warehouse staff. It takes about 75-100 volunteers each month to make this ministry happen. There are tasks for each and every one of you! In 2022, we sorted and distributed over 209,000 pounds of food! We partnered with Churches United for the Homeless, First Congregational United Church of Christ, and MSUM and Concordia Food Pantries to ensure any extra food each month found a home. In addition to our wonderful church volunteers, we had groups donate their time throughout the year to make this ministry happen! Thank you for your ongoing love and support!







gsFaith Story: Sisters Who Serve by Renee Lentz & Diane Thiel

Sisters Renee Lentz and Diane Thiel have a shared history at Good Shepherd that dates back further than most. They were toddlers when their parents joined the church as charter members in the early 1950's and still enjoy attending worship together.



Their mother role-modeled volunteering, and the sisters continue following in her footsteps. On the Wednesday before Ruby's Pantry, they work together setting up tables and counting boxes. While Diane is still working, Renee volunteers all day Thursday at Ruby's Pantry checking in all the volunteers, helping where needed, and counting the money collected throughout the evening. Renee also works one day each week and one Sunday morning every month in the church office. Renee and Diane feel fortunate to be able to give of their time and be part of this church community. Seeing each other every Wednesday gives them an opportunity to strengthen their relationship.

gsFaith Story: Service is Family Business by Karlye Retzer and Family



have been member of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd since was in 1st grade. My husband, Matt, and I were married at the church. Currently, all four of our children are actively involved

at church. As a family we have been a part of the Children's Ministry Team, Moms' Group, serving at funerals, and serving at Ruby's Pantry. Our kids have always considered church their second home. They look forward to any opportunity they have to volunteer at church. Our church offers so many ways families can spend time together—either in fellowship, Bible studies, or volunteering. It has been a blessing for our family to watch our kids grow up in the church, learn to serve others, and to have serving hearts.

Children's Dental Services (CDS) Ministry

We have been working with our friends from Children's Dental Services for almost two years and are blessed to host this group each month. CDS is a community-based dental care serving over 37,000 patients each year out of two fullservice clinics in Minneapolis and through portable dental services in most Minnesota counties. A total of 156 patients over the course of 30 dates of service were provided in 2022.



"Good Shepherd Church is compassionate, flexible, warm, and accepting partner Children's Dental Services that is living out its mission

by extending critically needed oral health services to the most vulnerable Moorhead residents. Children's Dental Services' partnership with Good Shepherd strengthens the community and improves the lives, health, and well-being of children and families. We look forward to our continuing partnership with you!" — Sarah Wovcha, CDS Exec. Dir.

Helping Hands (Linda Bartholome, staff liaison)

Every Tuesday morning at 9:30am, our Helping Hands gentlemen meet for devotions, fellowship, and lively discussion on how they can support their church family. Their ongoing support is incredible, and it's great to be part of a group that is engaged in the life of the church. Not only do they support the ministry through monetary gifts, but they share their many gifts by donating their time and talents.

- + Preparing boxes and helping sort and distribute food for our once-a-month Ruby's Pop-up Pantry
- + Lawn mowing, sprinkler system maintenance, and snow removal
- + Painting and helping with many projects around the
- + Purchasing or donating to the following:
 - + NEW shop door, KaiVac machine, pallet jack, and wood storage shed by the campfire
 - + Support of our LAMP Team—Thank you Barb and Karen Spilde for your ongoing work bringing Bible School to our Thompson, Manitoba friends!
 - + Radio Fund
 - + Parking Lot Fund
 - + Good Shepherd Youth

We are grateful for the guys who host the annual Helping Hands Pancake Feed in January, which supports many ministries at Good Shepherd. Our last event for the year was celebrating our Helping Hands and their spouses/significant others. Staff served a wonderful meal in appreciation for all their hard work. The group is an incredible blessing to their church family—keep up the great work!





Women's Ministry (Linda Bartholome, staff liaison)

There are many ways the women of Good Shepherd have been engaged this past year.

Women meet for Bible study monthly with Dorothy Suomala leading the group. The Gather magazine is the resource for their study. The magazine is a mix of articles, theological reflections, devotions, and stories of comfort and challenge that help leaders grow in faith and engage in ministry and action.

We have two quilters groups—our Tuesday morning quilters and our once-a-month Wednesday afternoon guilters. Each

group has a slightly different ministry; however, they have the same focus: providing a gift of hope to others. Our Tuesday group made 55+ quilts that were donated to Lutheran World Relief, and our afternoon quilters created 77 lap quilts for our homebound members—and beyond! Thank you, ladies, for these beautiful gifts!

We have a group of women who serve at Crossroads Lutheran Campus Ministry at MSUM on the second Thursday of each month. Friendships have been made, and the group from MSUM have also volunteered with our Ruby's Pop-up Pantry. We also have the opportunity to worship together on Sunday mornings, as we see some familiar faces from Crossroads.

Pastor Jessica Miller from Neighborhood Church in Fargo was our speaker at our December women's brunch. She shared a little history about Neighborhood Church and shared stories about the wonderful people she connects with in the community. With the many donations from our women through gift cards and offering, over \$1,500 was raised in support of this important ministry. We were also blessed with the musical gifts of Susan Clambey who shared one of her compositions and led us in singing Christmas carols. Our hope is that we will have more opportunities available in 2023.

The Women of the ELCA checking account balance at the end of 2022 was \$1,005.09. Revenue received mainly comes through monthly offering and contributions from members.







gsFaith Story: The Birthday Voice

by Leah Rice



Back in late 2021, I gladly accepted the invite from one of our Good Shepherd staff to begin making phone calls to all members celebrating a birthday.

Most people express surprise (and delight) in getting my call. Several have asked, "How in the world did you know it was my birthday?" When I called Ron Baker, his daughter

Sharon Nelson answered. She was there because her father had passed away during the night. It was a sad day for her family, but I hope I was able to offer some comfort.

My relationship with God and my Good Shepherd family has been strengthened through making these birthday calls. Several people have said, "you made my day!" And that makes my day! I feel it's one little thing I can do for someone else. (God has asked us to help one another!) It makes me feel good that I can do it right from where I sit all day at home. Because of a bad leg, I can't be out and about doing ministry.

"I have been told by many people that my mom has reached out to them and wished them a happy birthday. They thought it was very cool that she does that on behalf of Good Shepherd. She really enjoys doing it and does it with much enthusiasm. It's been good for her!" —Mark Rice, Leah's son

gsFaith Story: Making a Big Church Small by Jim & Andrea Rud

We moved from a very small church in Nevada to Good Shepherd, joining in August 2022.

We have been thrilled with the opportunities for service here. We've been involved with Ruby's Pantry, Bible Study, Helping Hands, the Pancake Feed, the ACT group, the chili cookoff, serving the students at MSUM, acting as greeters, and serving coffee hour on Sundays. All of these opportunities have allowed us to



not only serve, but also to get to know many of our fellow members of Good Shepherd. We feel blessed to be a part of this ministry.

gsPrayer Ministry

2,462 Birthday Prayers + regular emails to 50+ prayer warriors = prayers for YOU! Share your prayers at KnowTheGoodShepherd.org/live or email GoodShep@ktgs.org.

gsFaith Story: A Chosen Family

by Shandi Hopkins, & Ann & Larry Anderson



Shandi Shares

Family isn't always the people connected to you through bloodlines or marriage. Family is your closest friends who love you just as fiercely as a true sibling. Family is sometimes introduced to you through a third-party

mutual connection, where you become forcefully adopted into the fold, and you are loved even more fiercely than you could ever imagine.

Losing grandparents earth-side has been difficult. Gaining adopted grandparents has been the adventure of a lifetime. I am forever grateful to Michele Jenson for introducing me to Larry and Ann who not only love and care for me, but have extended that love and adoration to my pre-existing family as well. Ann and Larry, I'm so blessed to have you in my life.

Ann Comments

After getting to know each other through her singing in the worship band, Shandi approached us and asked if we would consider being her adoptive grandparents. Without hesitation we said, "yes!" Family connections are very important to Shandi and to us. We bonded over Shandi's Chocolate Zucchini Cake and have been family ever since!

We will always be there to support Shandi in whatever she does, and she supports us as well. We've enjoyed seeing each other at church, Beer & Hymns, or grabbing a bite to eat. An additional benefit is being included in her brother, Tad and Kristen's family. It has been a joy to watch this beautiful, smart, funny, and talented young woman grow.







gsFaith Story: Faith When Life Gets Rough by Mark Hamre aka Tank McNamara



In the fall of 2021, Kristywas diagnosed with breast cancer. This brought five surgeries and countless days of healing.

Then, the day before her double mastectomy, her father passed away from complications from a

heart attack. It felt like our faith was being tested in a new way every week. We were struggling with how to navigate through everything while trying to keep some sort of normalcy for our girls.

In the end, it was our faith that guided us through everything, and church has always been a place of comfort for us. We found that volunteering and continuing to participate in church activities helped us keep that sense of normalcy that we needed, and it provided a safe space for our girls where they could put their fears and grief aside and just be kids. We are so grateful for our church family and all that they have done for us.





Baptisms *Celebrating*

- **†** Cameron Charlotte Bartz, Jan. 16
- **†** Tatum Colleen Bergeson, Jan. 16
- **†** Unique Simone Chasingbear, Jan. 19
- **†** Carter Boyd Hoffman, Jan. 30
- **†** Haisley Ann Lynnes, Feb. 6
- **†** Asher Scott Larson, Feb. 20
- **†** Sawyer Stone Schwartz, Feb. 20
- **†** Cooper Sean Kunkel, Mar. 6
- **†** Blake Thomas Cossette, Mar. 20
- **†** Theo James Longtin, Mar. 20
- **†** Jackson Roger Genereaux, Apr. 3
- **†** Grayson Robert Arendes, Apr. 3
- **†** Emery Rose Mertens, Apr. 3
- **t** Leighnee Kathryn Hill, May 1
- **†** Josie Lou Hoag, May 11
- **†** Calvin Ren Bauers, May 15
- **†** Theo Ryan Hopkins, May 15
- t Ivylee Pearl Hull, May 15
- **†** Elsie Noelle Stark, May 15
- **†** Emma Louise Capasso, May 16
- **†** Blakely Kay Driscoll, Jun. 5
- **†** Nolan Ryan Haun, Jun. 5
- **†** Emme Elizabeth Moses, Jun. 19
- **†** Liv Marie Tadych, Jun. 19
- **†** Jack Gary Scholand, Jun. 25
- **†** Anders Manvil David Jacobs, Jun. 25
- **†** Everett Andrew Keith Jacobs, Jun. 25
- + Avery Ann Wrenn, Jul. 16
- **†** Hayden Leon Sells, Jul. 23
- **†** Emery Ann Schlotfeldt, Aug. 7
- **†** Jackson Jeffrey Olson, Aug. 21
- **†** Benjamin Steven Kadrie, Aug. 21
- **†** Nyah Joyce Wagner, Aug. 21
- **†** Hugh Bernard Miller, Aug. 28
- **†** Molly May Andreasen, Sep. 10
- **†** Joseph Craig (JC) Kappes, Sep. 18
- **†** Nolan Steven Driscoll, Oct. 16
- **†** Morgan Marie Juhl, Oct. 16
- **†** Zavier Lee Kashmark, Oct. 16
- † Iris Adeline Young, Oct. 26
- + Asher Daniel Hovde, Nov. 6
- **†** Reese Jo Syverson, Nov. 20
- **†** Jonah Darren Tweeter, Nov. 20
- **†** Jebediah Alex Hagen, Nov. 23
- **†** William Kayden Uzzle, Dec. 4
- **†** Benjamin Curtiss Lambert, Dec. 18

Departed Saints

Remembering

- **†** The Hernandez Pinto Family
- **†** Andy Quenette
- **†** Elsie Skarpness
- **†** Delores Swanson
- **†** Maxine Schmidt
- **†** Dorothy Roes
- **†** Bruce Anderson
- **†** Dorothy Granrud
- **†** Marilyn Mattson
- **†** Roland Enkers
- **†** Iola Peterson
- **†** Sue Johnson
- **†** Karen Longtine
- **†** Roger Hansen
- **†** Bernie Barnett
- **†** Gerry Engelstad
- **†** Jerry Bielde
- **†** Kenneth Olson
- **†** Ruby Hokana
- **†** Darrel Jensen
- **†** Ronald Baker
- **†** Robert Hogetvedt
- **†** Receia Kollie

New Members

Received February 2022

- + Nathan & Courtney Buth, Lily, Stella, & Grayson
- + Joey Dufault & Meg Teiken
- + Paul Escoto
- + Ron & Tomi Fike
- + Adam & Hanna Fischer, Alex, & Aris
- + Eric Lagge
- + Kristi Voeller
- + Ken Yliniemi

Received May 2022

- + Ryan & Rachel Haun, Nolan
- + Brad & Jami Kline, Logan, Mason, & Nolan
- + Chuck & Kim Masten
- + Josh Schwartz & Shannon Burgard
- + Scott & Leslie Schwartz, Sawyer

Received July 2022

- + Cole & Sydney Ehrlin
- + Matt & Greta Francis, Ole, Lars
- + Tom Hanson & Todd Steele
- + Katie Holleman & Greg Newenhouse

- + Joseph (JD) & Kayla Kappes, Joseph (JC)
- + Brady & Ann Karsky, Caleb & Dawson
- + Katie Kemper & Hayden Martineau, Karsyn Jerald
- + Matt & Amanda Lambert, Morgan & Benjamin
- + James & Andrea Rud
- + Danny & Amy Scholand, Jack
- + Jeremy & Shannon Stetz, Olivia & Lexi
- + Ben and Kristen Sullivan, Aedan, Dylan, Reese
- + Pastors Matt & Kathy Valan
- + Amanda Viken & Brandon Moses, Emme Moses

Received October 2022

- + Jon & Ruth Ahrndt
- + Jack Anderson & Lydia Osland
- + Joan & Randy Bartz
- + Ben & Rev. Meggie Bjertness
- + Rev. Corey & Bev Bjertness
- + Jarl & Lavay Borresen
- + Terry & Kristi Brandt, Lindsay, Kallie, & Austin
- + Bobby Cecil & Katelyn Wheeler
- + Adam & Ali Dwyer, Jordyn
- + Joe & Lyn Dwyer
- + Matt & Maggie Ellingson, Cam
- + Jason Green
- + Andrew & Marisa Isensee, Isaiah
- + Josh & Carrie Karch, Kilyn & William
- + Ryan Koenen & Jena Martell, Calli Martell
- + Marlon Mackowick, Elizabeth & Abiaail
- + Jennifer Neznik, Dawson, Ava, & Liam
- + Matthew & Annie Retka, June & Sullivan
- + Megan Vogel

Received December 2022

- + Alex Beckius
- + Everett & Marilyn Bjerke
- + Dan & Stephanie Brauch, Chloe
- + Kevin & Tessa Eide, Ellie
- + Eileen Johnson
- + Justin & Brittney Kingsley, Abigail & Fmmv
- + Seth & Amy Lynne, Asher & Anders
- + Kathie McIntosh
- + Scott & Kirsten Nelson
- + Taylor & Karisa Rodriguez
- + Marian Schroeder+ Chet & Myrna Thompson
- + Jose & Lindsay Zandonadi, Camila, Everly, & Lincoln





Financial Report: Treasurer's Report Karl-Heinz Mertins, 2022 Council Treasurer



Karl-Heinz Mertins Council Treasurer

The members of the congregation of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd "put skin in the game" to live the life of a follower of Jesus Christ in 2022. Many of you offered your unique talents, spiritual gifts, and your presence in order to serve others in practical ways as faithful stewards of God's grace. I would be unfit for treasurer if I didn't also point out the importance of your financial contributions. Those are the propellant that allows us to be Church,

to be the hands and feet of Jesus—to be on mission within the four walls of our building AND beyond, thus impacting the people around us in the F-M area and the world.

Revenue

Despite concerns about inflation, your envelope giving and loose offerings amounted to a total of \$1,047,679 which is 4.4% above the previous year and 2.7% above budget. We finished 2022 on such high note because of a giving spurt in December. Including \$47,800 from the 2021 Budget Surplus, the year-end General Fund revenue was \$19,681 higher than budget, to which we were able to add Fund Transfers of \$147,058 to make a \$97,058 Refinancing Down Payment and satisfy two Promissory Notes totaling \$50,000. A heartfelt THANK YOU goes to each and all of you!

Expenses

On the expenditures side of the ledger, diligent cost control efforts by our staff resulted in savings of 7.4% or \$83,134 against budget. Reaching once more such positive outcome underscores the disciplined business conduct and deep sense of stewardship of our staff members. They were creative in finding cost-effective solutions and uncovering savings potential, while the pristine condition of our building and landscaping was well-maintained. We welcomed Rev. Meggie Bjertness as our third pastor. It is noted that spending on Congregation and Children's Ministry was substantially below budget.

Debt Reduction

A 2022 goal was to reduce our debt to protect the church from looming financial risks. In a first step, way before the fixed interest period of the mortgage ran out in October, we arranged refinancing. Out of three competitive bids, Council selected the one from the ELCA Mission Investment Fund which offered the most favorable rates and terms. Our previous interest rate of 4.25% was reduced to 3.875%, fixed for 7 years, and our monthly payment is now \$1,800 lower!

Capital Campaign: ON MISSION

In a second step we began a Capital Campaign, with the objectives of making a big dent in our \$1.3 million mortgage and updating the 15-year-old technology in the sanctuary. By January 2024, the goal is to raise \$600,000 for mortgage debt reduction plus \$200,000 for improvements to the aging audio, video and lighting systems in the worship space. With mortgage debt reduction funds available and pledges (paid and upcoming), nearly \$514,000 of our \$800,000 Capital Campaign goal is in place! A heartfelt THANK YOU to each and all of you! Please keep putting skin in the game!

Benevolences

Leadership and Council understand that we as a church must not receive and hoard treasures for our own benefit and pleasure. The total benevolence disbursements in 2022 reached 10.0% of envelope giving, or \$101,125 in absolute terms. A heartfelt THANK YOU goes to our Leadership and Council! Indeed, you have put skin in the game!

500+ households donated to Good Shepherd's mission and \$100,000+ was given to partner ministries!

NW MN Synod, Lutheran World Relief,
Churches United, Habitat for Humanity,
Global Missions, Pathways Bible Camp,
Luther Crest Bible Camp, First Link,
MSUM Lutheran Campus Ministry,
Heart of Clay, New Life Center,
Oak Grove, Valley Christian Counseling,
YWCA, Neighborhood Church,
Fraser Ltd, & ELCA Good Gifts

A big thank you to those who already support our mission! We are excited to see what 2023 has in store for Good Shepherd, our community, and our world. We invite you to be ON MISSION with us!

Household Giving

A 2022 goal was to grow in generosity and get more households to contribute, if possible, on a regular basis through our online tools. Even if your commitment starts small, it helps make our income more predictable and



reduces the perennial year-end jitters. For 2022, we had 57% of Member Households give to Good Shepherd (All Funds). Approximately 39% of our Member Households included the General Fund in their contributions. Please keep in mind that the General Fund pays the salaries for Clergy and Staff, and everything else that keeps the door open. Please keep putting skin in the game!

"When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed." -Maya Angelou

Outlook for 2023

For the 2023 budget we took the 2022 actuals of each account line item as a basis and added single digit percent cost increases where appropriate. The 2022 General Fund surplus of \$81,084 will be distributed in 2023 as follows: \$46,000 for general ministry expenses, \$28,718 for Mortgage Debt Reduction/Sanctuary Updates, with the remaining \$6,366 offsetting cash flow deficits from previous years.

To begin a gradual build-up of the Maintenance Reserve Fund, we will earmark a monthly transfer of \$1,000 from the General Fund. Over time, this buffer shall help meet the repair and maintenance needs of an aging building with increasing technology content. Indeed, you have put skin in the game, Good Shepherd Family!

If you are receiving this report at the Annual Meeting, the following pages contain detailed financial information. If you are receiving this via mail, the financial details have been removed for mail purposes. If you would like a report with detailed financials, call the Church Office.

Financial Report: Statistical Report

Karen Skarpness, Data Systems & Finance Manager



Karen Skarpness Data Systems & Finance Manager

As you read this year's Annual Report, you have a chance to hear the stories of individuals who are part of our church family. In a similar way, our ministry "numbers" tell stories of faith, too.

Highlights are noted below.

Membership	Baptized	Confirmed
Membership as of 1–1–2022	2,871	1,796
Members Received in 2022		
By Baptism	46	
Transfer In (New Members)	81	56
Affirmation of Faith (New Members)	60	46
Members Confirmed in 2022 Plus, 6 students who are not yet members were confirmed		31
Formerly Affiliate, now Full Members	2	2
Subtotal of Members Received	189	135
Members Removed in 2022		
By Death	19	19
Transfer of Membership	33	16
By Removal (inactivity)	75	28
Subtotal of Members Removed	127	63
Membership as of 12–31–2022	2,933	1,868
Ministerial Acts		
Baptisms	46	
Affirmation of Faith (New Members)	60	
Affiliate Members	11	
Weddings (on and off-site)	15	
Funerals For members & guests	22	



Financial Report: Trust Fund Endowment A gift for generations to come

The ELCA Foundation provides professional gift planning services and options for our members, including:

- + Gifts made through wills, trusts, or estates
- + Charitable gift annuities and remainder trusts
- + Endowment funds and donor-directed distribution agreements
- + Qualified charitable distributions from your IRA
- + Gifts of cash, securities, and real estate

We now have more exciting opportunities, to create a legacy at Good Shepherd, reduce taxes, and sustainably grow the stewardship of our church!

For more information on these opportunities, contact a committee member or Rev. Keith Pearson, ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planner, at 612.718.4197 or Keith. Pearson@elca.org.

Investments owned as of September 30, 2022:

Three–Year Average Value—2022	\$ 182,754
2020 Total _	\$ 188,024
2021 Total	\$ 195,418
2022 Total	\$ 164,820
Cash in Bell Bank	\$ 3,414
Vanguard—Wellesley and GNMA Funds	\$ 135,871
ELCA Foundation	\$ 25,535

Distributions: Policy is to distribute approximately 5% of the three-year average valuation to organizations that further the stewardship of our Church. **This year, \$9,000 was allocated as follows:**

Good Shepherd Youth	\$ 3,000
Ruby's Pantry	\$ 2,000
Bethesda Lutheran's New Mission: Table of Mercy	\$ 2,000
Good Shepherd Maintenance Reserve Fund	\$ 2,000

Trust Fund Committee:

- + Joe Sumers, Chair
- + Bob Johnson, Treasurer
- + Andy Maier
- + Katherine Halvorson
- + John Holland

Fargo Moorhead Area Foundation (FMAF)

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd (LCGS) Family Members Appreciation (Designated Endowment) Fund (FMADEF)

On September 2, 2020, this fund was established by an anonymous donor to express appreciation for people that had a special impact on their life. The generous investments in this fund are securely administered to provide ongoing support to our church and organizations chosen by our church that provide benefit to families and children in Clay and Cass counties, per the policy to distribute annually 5% of the three-year average valuation of the fund.

Until the three-year average valuation of the fund can be calculated, the following donations, distributions, and values have been made:

Date	Distribution to LCGS	Value of Fund at FMAF
Sept. 2, 2020	\$1,000.00	\$25,000.00
Sept. 2, 2021	\$2,000.00	\$56,526.00
Sept. 2, 2022	\$4,860.00	\$94,478.07

In accordance with distribution guidelines in the Designated Endowed Fund Agreement, 75% is distributed to Good Shepherd ministry areas, and 25% supports Community Outreach Efforts.

The following are the distributions for total grant monies received in 2022:

- + \$2,250 for Good Shepherd's Church School & Confirmation to purchase "Orange Curriculum": "Orange" is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to influence those who influence the next generation. Orange provides resources and training for churches and organizations that create learning environments for parents, kids, and teenagers.
- + \$1,395 for Good Shepherd Technology to serve our congregation and the surrounding community with the accessibility and connections that technology makes possible, including online Worship, live-streaming of funerals, and interactive emails.
- + **\$500 for the Great Plains Food Bank:** The Great Plains Food Bank's mission is to end hunger together.
- + \$465 for the "Neighborhood Church": This ministry in Fargo, ND, seeks to "follow the way of Jesus to feed people, fight hunger, dispel isolation, promote mental health, create community rooted in God's presence, and love one another as we have been loved."
- + \$250 for School Supplies for Students in Need: Our church is located less than 1.5 miles from the Reinertsen Elementary School in Moorhead, MN. We provided students in need with school supplies, so that they could fully participate with their classmates and maximize successful learning.

If you would like to make a gift to this fund in appreciation of your family or friends, please mail your donation (along with tribute details) to the Fargo Moorhead Area Foundation, 409 7th St S, Fargo ND 58103, with "LCGS FMADEF" in the Memo, or give securely online at AreaFoundation.org. For more information, please contact Greg Diehl, Director of Gift Planning & Donor Services (greg@areafoundation.org) or Eric Wilkie, FMAF Executive Director (eric@areafoundation.org), or call them at 701,234,0756.



Northwestern Minnesota Synod Report from Bishop Bill Tesch

Is This as Good as it Gets?

Excerpts from readings and prayers for January 29 (4th Sunday after Epiphany, 2023):

"The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God....²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world..., to reduce to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no one might boast in the presence of God." 1 Corinthians 1:18, 28-29

"Cultivate humility in your church. In gatherings of every size, teach us to boast only in the cross. Shape your church to be people of kindness, generosity, and justice. Merciful God, receive our prayer."

Beloved in Christ of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod,

In the 1997 movie by the same name, a mentally ill character played by Jack Nicholson, wonders aloud to a waiting room full of fellow sufferers, "Maybe this is as good as it gets." Over this last year, I've heard many of you lay and rostered leaders wonder the same thing about our life together as the church in this early part of the 21st century as we continue to deal with the lingering effects of the pandemic and the many years of gradual decline in church attendance leading up to it. Although this may not be everyone's reality, we all live among beloved neighbors for whom it is. For many of you, this means, among other things, that you are having to make some hard decisions at this year's annual meetings.

Paul's letters to the Christians in Corinth were written to people who never expected the church to amount to much of anything in this world, and Paul is encouraging them to be good with that. Then, 400 years later, things took an unexpected turn, and for the next 1,400 years or so, the church enjoyed a place of power and prestige in western society. That bygone era yielded mixed results for humankind, for the planet and for the Gospel. But having a big institution with lots of members enjoying great influence over the affairs of this world was never the point; it still isn't.

Consider that being a community of faith that feels its fragility and knows that its place in society is closer to the margins than it is to the center, is a better place from which to practice the way of Jesus – the way of love, service, and humility. There are two things that do not require slick, well-funded programming or big crowds of people, and they happen to be the two most important things: we can share the good news about Jesus Christ, and we can give ourselves, our time, and our possessions to love and serve the neighbors that God has placed among us.

"Will the people come back?" "Will our congregation survive another 5 or 10 years?" These are heartfelt questions that we ask because we cherish these congregations and what they've given us. But these are not Gospel questions. Some Gospel questions might be, "How can we use what we have to grow closer to Jesus?" "With whom can we share the good news, and how will we do it?" "Who needs our love and care, and how will we give it in a Christ-like spirit?" Focusing our life together on these questions costs us nothing – and everything. But what more could there for us be than this, for us who follow Jesus?

Beloved in Christ, thank you for your faithfulness in the Gospel. On behalf of our entire staff, we are grateful for you and for all that you do to share the love of Jesus Christ in the world.

In Christ.

Bishop of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA



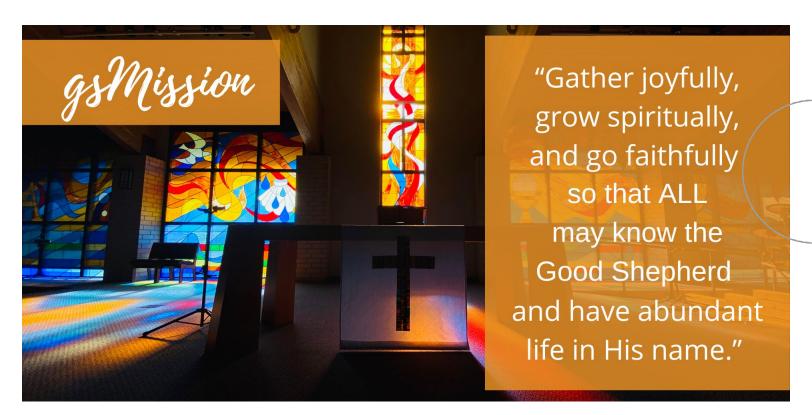


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