

BETHLEHEM
Building
LUTHERAN
Lasting
CHURCH
Community

that follows Jesus

2023 Annual Report



BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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BLC Annual Meeting Minutes

October 31, 2022 at 10:15AM

General: BLC's annual meeting was held to approve past year's minutes, review 2022 spending plan, approve 2023 spending plan, review Investment in Ministries Fund and elect new Council members. The meeting was conducted by Liana Thibault, Council Secretary, who stood in for Council President Lisa Meetze.

Quorum established – 62 members present

Opening Prayer given by Pastor Hoffman

Prior Minutes – minutes of the October 30, 2021 were presented for approval. A motion was made and seconded to approve and it was carried on a voice vote. Minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting of May 15, 2022 were presented for approval. A motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved on a voice vote.

Nominees for Council Members – Dale Schumacher and Julie Owen were presented for election to Council. There were no nominations made from the floor. A motion was made and seconded to approve the slate, and was carried on a voice vote. Liana gave special thanks to Margie Gaul and Brian Edwards who were both finishing two consecutive terms on Council. She also thanked Mark Hirsch for stepping in to fulfill a partial term vacancy.

Time Capsule – Pastor Amy explained that as part of the 100th anniversary celebration, a prior time capsule had been opened, and now a new one was being established for future generations. The capsule will contain the schedule of events of the 100th anniversary, the History Booklet which had been created, the group photo taken of the congregation with a key to identify who is pictured, an anniversary DVD, a copy of the sermon from May of 2022 which introduced “Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus”, Last year's annual report, and article from the “Democrat and Chronicle” highlighting BLC's anniversary celebration and a description of the pandemic years. The box will be locked and put away for future generations to open. Pastor Amy dedicated the box with a prayer.

2022 Financial results – Glenda Lockard re-capped the detailed information which had been presented at the Quarterly Forum held on October 23, 2022.

- Actual receipts, including contributions and special receipts was \$388,257. Contributions were \$14,021 lower than forecasted.
- Expenses were \$13,192 lower than expected, mostly due to staffing in the areas of administration and ministerial support and LYO leadership.
- At the beginning of the fiscal year, we had net assets of \$96,029, which included \$30,000 left over from the PPP loan. That amount went into the “Sharing our Blessings” donations which had been approved by the congregation. At the end of the fiscal year the net assets were \$52,190.

- All in all, we ended up where we expected to be.
- Our financial picture is still strong' we have \$97K in capital reserves and \$30,000 in the IMF.
- Changes that are needed are to increase giving, reduce spending and utilize the rental property asset effectively.

2023 proposed spending plan

- The first draft of the spending plan presented a deficit which was unacceptable, so Council made some changes. The areas of spending with the most discretion were salaries, Synod contributions and Missions donations.
- Synod contributions are reduced from 15% of congregational giving to 14%
- Missions and Social Concerns' budget was amended from a flat dollar amount to 6% of congregational giving.
- Salaries include pastoral, office support and music.
- Pastors both stated that their priorities are (a) preserving the current music program (b) fulfilling office staffing and (c) returning the pastoral staff back to the tasks that they are uniquely qualified to do.
- Office staff will be divided into two arenas – administrative and ministry support.
- The proposal for pastoral staffing is to go from 1.5 pastors to 1.25 pastors effective January 1, 2023. Pastor Amy will be full time, and Pastor Hoffman will be 25% time.
- The 2023 proposed spending plan of for \$405,462 with a deficit of \$19,462. All ministries other than Missions, Synod and salaries remain the same. It is expected that other incomes beside congregational giving – dividends and rental income – will bring the actual deficit down to \$15,812.
- The proposed spending plan was approved on a paper ballot – 61 “Yes” and 1 “No”.

Investment in Ministries Fund update – while the ballots on the spending plan were being tallied, Mark Gaul gave an update on the endowment that was established with congregational approval to support ministries outside our walls. Members of the IMF Committee are Mark Gaul, John and Paulette Constanza, John Panko and Roger Kolker.

- Future plans are to host an “end of life” planning seminar sometime in the first quarter of 2023.
- Gift-giving opportunities can be found on the BLC website by selecting the link to IMF
- Sometime next year we should be in a position to make the first distribution.

Question – A member of the congregation asked how many “giving units” there are in the church. The answer is that we believe there to be between 225 and 230.

Liana adjourned the meeting at 11:15 AM, and Pastor Amy closed the gathering with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Antoinette Thompson, Council member for Liana Thibault, Council Secretary

COUNCIL NOMINEES FOR 2024

Glenda Lockard (Re-elect) - My husband Mark and I have been members of BLC for the past 17 years. We raised our two daughters in the faith here, and have been involved in various ministries over the years. I was privileged to serve on the Church Council for 6 years, helping develop and implement the team ministry concept. I've served in various roles - working with the CMT, Stewardship Committee, Ministry of Yarn, Money Tellers, Sunday School music, and served as Council Secretary. I look forward to the opportunity to serve on Council again, and promise to do my best to faithfully carry out the duties and responsibilities entrusted to me. Yours in Christ, Glenda



Liana Coffaro (Re-elect) - Liana grew up in the Albany, NY area and permanently moved Rochester after graduation from St. John Fisher College. Since joining BLC in 2016, Liana has been involved with the LYFE Committee and LYO, planning fundraisers, lock-ins and other events. She married her husband Eric in May 2023 at BLC, and they currently live in Brighton. She works for the SFG Wealth Management at Northwestern Mutual as the Director of Investment Operations. In her free time she enjoys playing tennis, hiking, reading, and doing crossword puzzles and brain-teasers.

Todd Schaeber (1st Term) & his wife Sara returned to Fairport 19 years ago after moving to West Irondequoit for a number of years after previously being married at BLC 26 years ago. Todd is employed by Eli Lilly and Sara is a beloved Spanish teacher at FHS. Their greatest joy in life are their two daughters, Abigail who is a freshman at Loyola Maryland, and Emerson who is a sophomore at FHS. Their second greatest joy are their 3 dogs Minnie, Sir Archie, and Toto. Although Todd has no musical talent of his own to offer BLC, he does truly appreciate the many musical gifts the congregation shares each Sunday at BLC. Most importantly, Todd is very happy for the opportunity to give back to BLC by serving on Council.



Co-Pastors Report

The last year has been one **focused on the vision of Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus**. This vision has shaped our work with Church Council throughout the year, it has been emphasized in our preaching throughout the fall, and it has concentrated our daily work.

In each of our monthly co-pastor reports to Council, we have highlighted one way that we have been working toward this vision or one way that we see this vision being lived out within the Bethlehem community. We share these portions of our co-Pastors reports with you so that you can see our focus and attention.

In addition, over the last year we have **grown our capacity to care for our congregation and community**. In addition to the **Caregiver's Support Group** that Pastor Hoffman has been facilitating, she also began facilitating a **Grief Support group** in the spring. Both of these groups meet twice a month and extend care beyond our immediate congregation to others in the community. In addition, after a pandemic-induced suspension of our **Eucharistic Ministry**, we were able to train (and re-train) eight Eucharistic Ministers for the ministry of extending the communion table beyond our walls and into the homes of those who cannot worship in person. Our **Fellowship, Food and Faith** gatherings on the 2nd Sunday of the month are yet another way that we are offering worship, as well as connection and community to the congregation.

We are **richly blessed by our staff team** who embrace this vision and bring it to life in their daily work! **Sarah Morrissette, Communications and Administrative Support**, implements much of our communication (including email, website, social media, church calendar and more!) and is instrumental in our ongoing website updates. **Mark Finke, Ministry and Volunteer Support Coordinator**, brings expertise in helping us connect people and develop a plan for revitalizing our facility so that we can be better stewards of this resource to support our own ministry and the community around us! Along with **Raelynn Clare, Organist and Music Director**, and **Jim Jefferis, Chancel Choir Director**, our staff team is skilled, dedicated and committed to helping you share your gifts and helping us build community.

We continue to imagine how we might **better support families, children and youth in faith formation** and will be exploring how to best do this work. As our new confirmation program with St. Paul's, Pittsford shows, we are open and eager to building partnerships with other congregations to identify a critical mass and build ministry opportunities across congregations.

Over the last year, **Pastor Amy served as an offsite internship supervisor** to a pastoral intern serving as Vicar at St. Timothy, Genesee. This was a rich experience to accompany a seminarian in their pastoral formation and through the first call process. Lisa Frauens completed her internship in June and was ordained on July 29, 2023. Pastor Amy was honored to preach at her ordination service.

Pastor Hoffman continues in her doctoral studies in human development at the University of Rochester's Warner School of Education. Our faith teaches that we belong to Christ through baptism, but research tells us that a growing number of people feel disconnected and alone. She is studying the "loneliness epidemic" (as named by U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy) and exploring how to cultivate experiences of greater social connection that meets basic human needs for belonging and relationship.

We are grateful to serve as co-pastors and appreciate the gift of partnership with each other and with the Bethlehem community! We continue to live through a time of significant change in the ways that people around us practice their faith and will continue to discern how to faithfully follow Jesus within the church in a time of rapid cultural change. We do this work ever mindful that Jesus calls us to lay all our notions about what church is at the foot of his cross, trusting that he will bring new life.

We are in good hands . . . God's hands!



Pastor Abigail Hoffman



Pastor Amy Walter-Peterson

Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus through the year . . .

November 2022

One concrete way that we are ***Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus*** is through the work of BLC's Hunger Activists who participated in our Wednesday evening produce distribution at the Pines of Perinton, organized by Mission and Social Concerns. Here is the season in numbers:

- Estimated pounds of fresh produce given away? 160 bushels of fruits and veggies
- Estimated hours of conversation? 140 of BLC fellowship PLUS 140 more hours of conversation with each other and neighbors from the Pines
- Hours of time and energy shared? 300 hours with picking up, packing and giving away veggies
- Time building relationships with our neighbors? PRICELESS!

January 2023

One concrete way that we invested in ***Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus*** is through the interfaith prayer service that Bethlehem hosted on Sunday, December 4. The service was planned by the Perinton Pastoral Association after learning of racial and religious vandalism

that took place over Thanksgiving weekend in Perinton, including at the Church of the Resurrection on Mason Road. We responded by standing together - United in Love. In addition, on Sunday, December 11, a guest column signed by Bethlehem's co-Pastors along with members of the Perinton Pastoral Association was printed in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle. Activities like these are one way that we strength our community connections and respond to Jesus' command to love our neighbor.

We have spent time planning for our **Council retreat** on January 22. We hope we'll use part of that time to further develop our understanding of this vision (***Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus***). We are also focused on developing roles/expectations of Council members as important leaders of that vision.

February 2023

One concrete way that we invested in ***Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus*** is participating in conversation about refugee resettlement in the Rochester area. We were pleased to welcome Colleen Knauf, Founder of Saints Place, on January 29, 2023 and also the Rev. Eric Shafer, Pastor-in-Residence, for Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (lirs.org) on February 5, 2023. Both of these presentations had good congregational engagement.

March 2023

One concrete way that we are investing in ***Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus*** is through our Going Deeper conversations each Sunday morning during this Lent. During this time we are exploring the big questions being raised by our Lenten series and also inviting reflection on Sunday scripture readings and sharing with participants.

In addition to the many BLC groups that meet on-site, several outside groups use our space for meetings as well. These groups represent just a small sample of community groups that draw upon the resource of our facility. In the last month, the following groups met at BLC:

- BSA Troop 2019
- Girl Scout Troop 60184
- BSA Troop 208
- Former Peace Corp Volunteers

April 2023

One concrete way that we are investing in ***Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus*** is by inviting people to connect more deeply to their faith through engaging in ministry leadership at Bethlehem. Mark Finke, transitional Volunteer and Ministry Support Coordinator, has already begun to meet with key ministry leaders to learn about their roles and to identify ways to support their leadership. He's also begun to reach out to our usher corps and hopes to re-formulate 3-4 usher teams. We are also in the process of checking in with households who have participated in Worship for Kids this year. We want to hear how that experience has been for parents and children.

May 2023

One concrete way that we have invested in ***Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus*** is by trying something new with faith formation for children over the last year. In worship, you've experienced the moment when Raelynn begins playing *Jesus Loves You* and children and their leaders make their way to Worship for Kids. When we checked in with the households over the last month who have had kids involved, the feedback has been universally positive. More than once we heard, "I love it!" Worship for Kids has provided us the best of both worlds. Children get to learn about worship by being in worship – they are helping their parents find the hymns in the hymnal and singing them; they are learning the Lord's Prayer and other responses in the liturgy. Parents get to focus on the Word without feeling like they have to keep children quiet, still and occupied. With this pattern in place, we are focused on developing a nursery option for the coming program year that communicates there's ***a place for you*** to households with children younger than three.

June 2023

One concrete way that we have invested in ***Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus*** is holding worship outdoors on June 4, to remind ourselves and those who saw us at the amphitheater that being the church is not just about what happens at 48 Perrin Street. Being church is about what happens when we follow Jesus, this time loving God with our heart, soul, mind and strength (as Jesus commanded) outdoors, where we had occasion to hear the creation story in the midst of God’s good creation, and the commandment to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” out in the world full of people Jesus showed us how to love.

July 2023

One concrete way that we have invested in ***Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus*** is by completing a walk-through of our entire facility with Mark Finke, Volunteer and Ministry Support Coordinator. Together we have begun to develop a plan for how we adapt our facility so that it more closely reflects our current uses and needs. For instance, we have several groups, including council, who would benefit from having a dedicated space for hybrid meetings. We now have two support groups who meet in the building and would benefit from a comfortable small group meeting space. When we have funerals or weddings or book groups, we’d like to have a “living room” setting for those groups to gather in. These are just some examples of ways that internal groups use our facility differently than five years ago. In addition, we continue to increase the number of outside groups that use our facility and would like for even more community groups to be able to share our space. The plan we are developing is intended to help us be good stewards of our facility and space.

August 2023

Over the last year, we have begun to share with council the ways that we are ***Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus*** by highlighting some element of our work that is helping us to embrace this vision more fully. We plan to continue to focus on this vision by moving beyond staff and council to the wider congregation as part of our fall worship and including it again as an emphasis in our stewardship emphasis and financial appeal. We want to invite the congregation to begin to identify the ways that this vision gives meaning and shape to Bethlehem’s ministry and for this vision to begin to be claimed and understood more widely.

September 2023

If you have been in worship in September, you have heard us team preach and lift up the theme of ***Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus*** by focusing on the ways that God calls us into community TOGETHER with Christ. We have highlighted that theme through our start of school blessing for school-aged children, and we continue to focus on it by inviting the congregation to reflect on that ways that we engage in ministry together. October will include a more intentional focus on our annual financial appeal.


BLC VISION, MISSION AND COMMITMENT

VISION: *Where we are headed*


BLC exists to equip every child of God to follow Jesus.

MISSION: *What we do*


Following Jesus means we:

 **WORSHIP** the Living God: **Worship glorifies God and gathers us together where we are transformed by word as well as baptism and communion and prepared to serve.**


Worship is the heart of our congregational life from which everything flows. Worship provides an experience of the living God that deepens our faith and calls us to action in daily life. Worship shapes us with beautiful music, well-prepared leadership and thoughtful preaching. Worship stretches us to experience the living God in new ways but is always grounded in forming community and witnessing to an authentic Lutheran understanding of faith in Jesus Christ. Worship is energetic, thoughtful, intentional, and full of joyful noise.

 **GROW** in Faith and Discipleship: **We cultivate multiple ways to learn about and deepen faith for people of all ages and life stages, as well as those with varied faith experiences.**


We provide opportunities for people to grow, learn, be challenged by and be invigorated in their faith in Jesus Christ and God's free gift of grace made known in him. We reach out to people who are new to or curious about Lutheran Christianity and welcome and integrate them into congregational life. At the same time, we seek for all members to continually develop in their journey with Christ. Age-appropriate and intergenerational learning experiences are provided throughout the week, and encouraged for all according to their interest. Parents understand that they serve as role models and primary teachers for their children about the faith. They are encouraged and supported in this vocation by being actively engaged in their own faith development. The foundation for faith development is Biblical and consistent with Lutheran Confessions.

 **LIVE** Our Faith in Daily Life: **We develop multiple points of connection between faith and daily life that extends beyond worship.**

God sends us into the world and equips us for action – in our community, in our schools, at our work, in our homes and everywhere we live. Serving, learning, sharing, growing and inviting others to join with us in all we do is vital to who we are as Christians. We witness to our faith through our words and actions and encourage members to humbly minister in their daily lives in ways that serve real and known needs. In all our life, we seek to steward God's abundance.

 **CARE** for One Another: **We build and foster intergenerational relationships within the BLC family to cultivate a faith community in which each person is valued as a fellow child of God.**

Relationships matter for us. We know and love one another. We value one another even when we don't agree. We share our joys and concerns. We pray for one another. We encourage each other to share our gifts with the church and community. Building relationships, growing new friendships and expressing care and support for one another are the work of the entire congregation.

 **SERVE** Our Neighbor: **We reach out to the world for the purpose of serving our neighbors near and far, especially those who are marginalized and easily forgotten.**

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to be the hands and feet of Christ in our world today. We do this as part of a wider church as well as through our own congregationally based ministries. We give permission to members to start ministries consistent with the teachings and traditions of our faith. We listen for the Spirit's guidance, the congregation's discernment and our neighbor's needs to identify the life cycle of each ministry. In doing this we are attentive to the gifts and passions of congregational members and allow ministries to grow, adapt or end. We seek partnerships with others for the purpose of service. In all our ministry, we seek to manifest the gifts of the Spirit for the sake of our neighbors.

COMMITMENT: *How we do the work*

Called by the Holy Spirit, trusting in the grace and love of God, each of us will:

Cultivate a safe environment that enables us to take risks and step outside our comfort zone.

We know that we have been given the gifts of God's forgiveness and grace and are called to share them with others. We understand that people often react or don't act at all because of fear. We want to create a church that believes a glorious failure is better than a mild success. We accept the changes that come as we find new ways to show and share God's love in this time and place. We extend grace to all and believe that we are all trying our best.

Meet people where they are at all ages and stages of life.

We believe that BLC should reflect the gifts, experiences, faith stories and cultures of diverse ages and multiple generations. We desire to create an environment that encourages us to intentionally work, play, and worship alongside one another. We need to be aware of who's missing and intentionally create spaces where we can learn from each other and share life together.

Recognize our God-given talents and put them to work in the world.

We believe that we all have gifts to share. We strive to use those gifts in the ministry of BLC and throughout God's Kingdom. We value everyone's contribution and understand that there are many different ways for us to respond to God's gracious love, including through our daily actions as parents, family members, friends and employees; our commitments as citizens and community members; our efforts in social service and volunteerism; our voices offered in public witness for justice; and more.

Teach, encourage and learn from one another.

We take joy and comfort in the Word of the Lord. We know that a deep understanding of God's Word prepares us to be witnesses in speech and in action of God's rich mercy in Jesus Christ. We are curious about the perspectives of others and seek to find new voices to expand our understanding. We learn through many different means, such as Sunday School and Adult Education programs, book studies and discussion groups, personal daily devotionals, and conversation with family or friends.

Understand that we are in a relationship with the wider church.

We know that we cannot be church alone and we support the ELCA vision of fostering unity among the children of God for the sake of the world. We desire to develop our relationship with the Upstate Synod, the church-wide organization, and global partners. We understand that each congregation has a variety of gifts and we seek to use BLC's unique gifts in cooperation and support of the wider church. This means facilitating the ecumenical and interreligious work of congregations, synods and church-wide ministries, supporting the reception of our full communion agreements, and accompanying others, including our interreligious partners.

Provide and allocate resources to fulfill our vision and mission.

We recognize that we are called to be faithful stewards of the tangible gifts God has so abundantly given to us, including financial resources. We strive to practice generosity in our daily life and in the life of the congregation. We understand that we should use all that God has entrusted to our care - our time, our talents and our treasures - to love God and our neighbors.

The Vision and Commitment statements were developed through the conversations held at the Council and Core Ministry Team Retreat held in November 2015, congregational potluck dinners in January and April 2016 and Cottage Meetings in January/February 2016. The Mission reflects the Purpose statements that were adopted in 2013. Collectively, the Vision, Mission and Commitments below give us clear direction about where we are going, what we are doing and how we will carry out ministry together.

Compiled: September 2017

Parish Register

	<u>Total Membership as of</u> <i>9/30/2022</i>	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
<u>Members Received</u>		572	563
Baptism			
McKinley Alyse Pries		1	0
	Subtotal	1	0
Affirmation of Faith/Transfer In			
Lynn and Eric Meady, Evan, Charlotte, Logan, Lucas		6	2
Caroline and Sean Reese, Madilyn		3	2
Rory and Fred Schoenfeld		2	2
David and Patricia Olson		2	2
Volker Hausin		1	1
Doris Hausin		1	1
	Subtotal	15	10
Affirmation of Faith/Confirmation			
Sydney Oliverio		0	1
Trysta Reafler		0	1
Autumn Schoenfeld		0	1
Emerson Schaeber		0	1
Abby Teasdale		0	1
Nathan Chaffee		0	1
Leah Erdley		0	1
Charlotte Finkbeiner		0	1
Lily Weidner		0	1
Olivia Weidner		0	1
	Subtotal	0	10
	Total Members Received	16	20
 <u>Members Removed</u>			
Deaths			
Betty Harper d. 11/21/2021 (omitted from 2022 report)		1	1
Steven French d. 10/14/2022		1	1
Philip Embury d. 11/2/2022		1	1
Diane Weltzer d. 1/5/2022		1	1
Bob Lohr d. 1/20/2023		1	1
Linnea Donahower d. 5/17/2023		1	1
Concetta "Connie" Helbig d. 8/23/2023		1	1
	Subtotal	7	7
Transfer Out			
Bob and Chrissy Null		2	2
	Subtotal	2	2
Statistical Adjustments*			
	Subtotal	137	179
	Total Members Removed	146	188
	TOTAL Membership as of <i>9/30/2023</i>	442	395

*In August 2023 we reviewed our membership roster to identify our current active members defined by at least annual participation in worship and a gift of record to support the congregation.

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT
Liana Coffaro, Council President

Coming out of Bethlehem's 100th Anniversary celebration a vision for Bethlehem's future emerged: Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus. Council has been leaning into and using this as a guiding philosophy behind our work.

In my first year as Council President, I was looking for ways we could operate differently than we had in the past. Council kicked off the year with a retreat focused on building trust. The goal was to learn more about each other, foster a high trust environment among ourselves and extend that to the congregation. Additionally, this year we've redesigned how we meet as a group and how our work is done. Our Officers are no longer regularly holding separate meetings from the rest of Council, and instead we are having discussions and making decisions as one body. This is in a trial period but has been successful so far in sharing our work more evenly between members and keeping all of us involved in the work of the church. This year we also resumed sharing snacks and breaking bread together! While necessary during Covid, this fellowship was something that I've missed the last two years and am glad we can now be united by once again.

Council spent considerable time and energy this year having to manage the rental property. It was a frequent discussion at our meetings, including how, if possible, to use the house for mission work. In particular, Glenda Lockard spent a significant amount of time and energy focused on this, diligently working through a tenant transition. We are looking to take a step back from this as a primary role of Council and began working with a new property manager for our rental properties. I am happy to report that the rental property is in a better position financially at end of the fiscal year than the beginning. We revisited potential changes to our Constitution again. First, as a result of decisions made at the start of the pandemic, we considered limiting the Council's ability to incur debt on behalf of the congregation. Second, decreasing the size of Council as the size of our congregation has changed. In conjunction with feedback from the congregation, we decided to make no changes at this time. This allows Council to operate with as much flexibility as the Constitution can offer and stays in alignment with our goal of sharing the work among members to lighten individuals' workloads while serving on Council. While considering these changes, the Council has heard clearly that the congregation wishes to be consulted and offered opportunities for feedback when significant financial decisions, like incurring debt, are being considered.

Throughout the course of the year, Council reaffirmed the Sanctuary Refresh Committee to examine the flooring and seating in the sanctuary, we appointed an ad-hoc group for a Financial Appeal (you received a letter this month encouraging you to consider how to share your gifts and treasures) and we affirmed the Building Revitalization Plan upon which Mark Finke is thoroughly leading the charge.

I look forward to continuing to serve this congregation and community as we do God's work and Build a Lasting Community that follows Jesus.

Yours in Christ,
Liana Coffaro

CARE OF PROPERTY REPORT

Bob Stolze, Chair

Property Committee and Landscaping Team, October 2023

Bob Stolze, Property Committee Chairman, 585-857-6350

Members: Brian Edwards, David Chaffee, Matt Beutel, Rolf Maxa, John Schmeelk, plus numerous landscape and gardening volunteers.

While I have your attention...

Look around at our beautiful church, and think of the wonderful things that happen here and what it does for our members and our community. Now picture yourself changing a light bulb, hanging a blind, mowing the grass, watering the flowers... Can you see yourself doing even one of these things? We need more hands to help make light work. Call, text, or email Bob Stolze at 585-857-6350, bob.stolze@rochester.rr.com . It's fun! It's satisfying! No skills required!

Property Committee highlights:

- Supporting our sanctuary refresh committee.
- Supporting our church revitalizing activities. This involves all sorts of cleaning up, moving furniture, and other projects to realign our various rooms and spaces for current and future ministry.
- Upgraded hybrid PC
- Replaced a malfunctioning fire alarm panel
- Put our drinking fountains back in service, installed hot/cold water cooler in the Fellowship Hall
- Sealed parking lot
- LED conversion, continued with various rooms and hallways
- In addition, we supported regular maintenance things. Supported annual inspections and servicing on HVAC equipment, elevator, fire alarm, extinguishers, sprinkler system, plumbing.

Plans for the coming year

In addition to regular maintenance, there will be several things being done by the property committee, including

- Repairs to stained glass windows in the sanctuary and one in the Narthex.
- Improve humidity control and ventilation in lower SS wing and Fellowship Hall
- Support revitalizing activities in many ways
- Sanctuary improvements that we know are needed. Fix up the rear corner where the streaming equipment is with a more permanent setup. The carpeting still needs replacing. Improve seating for wheelchairs and other access needs. Implement any other changes to the sanctuary that are decided by the congregation. Possible improvements involving audio and video quality in our online streaming.

CARE

Submitted by GerryAnn Westcott

Care Ministries at Bethlehem have included several separate programs: Barnabas Ministry Fellowship Committee, Greeters & Welcomers, Prayer List & Eucharistic Ministers

Care is the portion of Bethlehem that focuses on the well-being of the members and friends who make up Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Half of Care includes Prayer List, Support Groups, Men's Breakfasts, and Card Ministry. That is each is led by an individual who quietly makes it happen.

The other focus of Care is Fellowship that includes the large social activities that are important for us to know each other. Most obvious is Sunday Fellowship following worship which is supported by many people each taking the responsibility for delivering goodies or hosting as their schedules permit. You are welcome and needed to join in this service to the BLC community.

Following the pandemic, this moved to the narthex and has been well attended in this location. Coffee, tea, cocoa, iced tea and/or lemonade are offered depending on the season as well as goodies, usually from Wegmans, but occasionally from our own bakers. Simple Suppers, soup and bread, were revitalized last March on each Wednesday in Lent. New Year's Day gave us an excuse for a chili lunch following worship. We hope that as we all move past the pandemic participation in such meals together will grow.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR FY 2023

Glenda Lockard, Treasurer

Financially, FY2023 was a year to celebrate! Read on for a summary and refer to the charts in the appendix for detailed financial reporting.

Giving: Regular giving increased \$17K over the previous year, and \$14K in gifts to the IMF and Memorial Fund were received.

Operating Expenses: Weekly hours needed to accomplish administrative functions were less than anticipated, so the staffing spending was under plan. A portion of these unspent funds were used to pay for large property expenses without needing to access funds from the capital reserve.

Net Church Operations: Increased giving combined with lower expenses allowed BLC to end FY2023 in a much stronger financial position than we anticipated at the beginning of the year. We expected to be in the red by \$19K but ended up in the black by \$12K. A real cause for celebration!

Other Income: Income from our rental property was significantly down over the last couple of years. We had a tenant who wasn't paying rent for an extended period and had been protected for much of that time by NY State restrictions against evictions due to Covid19. We were able to replace that tenant before the end of the year, and rents were once again being received. In addition, the previous tenant's NY State rental assistance application was approved, and BLC received a check covering a portion of the previous tenant's rental arrears. We ended the year with a total of over \$17K in net income from our rental house and investments.

Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets: BLC ended the year with over \$29K more in unrestricted funds than when we started. Council will transfer that surplus to the Capital Reserve to get the balance in that account more in line with what is needed. Thanks be to God for the generosity of this community!

FY2023 Results

Church Operations Only

	Actual	Budget	b/(w)
Receipts			
Contributions	\$ 401,202	\$ 384,000	\$ 17,202
Special Receipts	3,428	2,000	1,428
Total Receipts	\$ 404,630	\$ 386,000	\$ 18,630
Spending			
Worship & Music	\$ 12,176	\$ 12,999	\$ 823
Christian Education	1,729	1,831	102
LYFE (Formerly Youth)	642	1,000	358
Fellowship	1,975	1,500	(475)
Other Ministries	1,247	1,250	3
Missions & Social Concerns	24,072	23,040	(1,032)
Synod Mission Support	56,168	53,760	(2,408)
Staff Compensation	226,545	245,899	19,354
Care of Property	45,938	37,761	(8,177)
Office & Administrative	22,102	26,422	4,320
Total Expenses	392,594	405,462	12,868
Operations Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 12,036	\$ (19,462)	\$ 31,498



FY2023 Results Total Non-Fixed Assets



	Unrestricted Funds			Restricted Funds				Total
	Church Operations	Rental + Investments	Total	Memorial Fund	Scholarship Fund	Capital Reserve	IMF	
Net Assets on 10/1/2022			\$ 52,190	\$ 9,949	\$ 2,779	\$ 87,119	\$ 30,490	\$ 182,527
Income								
Contributions	401,202		401,202	985			12,529	414,716
Other Receipts	3,428	5,969	9,396				\$ 1,390	10,786
Rents Received		37,271	37,271					37,271
Total YTD Income	404,630	43,240	447,870	985	-	-	13,918	462,774
Expenses								
Inside Our Walls	312,354	65	312,419					312,419
Outside Our Walls	80,240		80,240					80,240
Investment Property		25,754	25,754					25,754
Total YTD Expenses	392,594	25,819	418,413	-	-	-	-	418,413
Surplus/(Deficit)	12,036	17,422	29,458					
Net Assets on 09/30/2023			\$ 81,648	\$ 10,934	\$ 2,779	\$ 87,119	\$ 44,409	\$ 226,888