

BETHLEHEM
Building

LUTHERAN
Lasting

CHURCH
Community



that follows Jesus

2024 Annual Report



BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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BLC Annual Meeting Minutes

October 29, 2023 at 10:15AM

There being a quorum of 67 members present, President Liana Coffaro opened the meeting at 10:30 AM and offered an opening prayer.

2022 Minutes – the minutes from the prior year meeting were included in the annual report. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as submitted and carried unanimously.

Council Members – the current roster of Council members was presented. There are currently three open positions. Nominees for the 2024 Council were Glenda Lockard for a second term, Liana Coffaro for a second term and Todd Schaeber for a first term. There were no nominations from the floor. With no objection to a voice vote, the slate was approved unanimously.

Pastors' Remarks – Why are we here and what are we doing? The vision of Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus arose from the 100th anniversary celebration in which we heard about how our forebearers built a community and remained rooted. Pastor Amy expressed how exciting it has been to see what Jesus has called us to do; loving God, loving our neighbor, and focusing how we demonstrate that in our world today. Pastor Hoffman remarked that the world seems intent on dissidence and challenges us to put on the imagery of love. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, who pushed against the world's division. The work that we do is always considering our vision.

2024 Priorities

- Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus – continue living into the vision
- Strengthen support for youth and families – stress 2024 National Youth Gathering and families with young children
- Building Revitalization – repair stained glass windows, lower level upgrades (moisture issues), sanctuary refresh
- Expansion of our understanding of community – how can we partner with others who need to use our facility

Spending plan

- 2023 results had been reviewed in the Quarterly Dialogue of October 22, 2023, and Treasurer Glenda Lockard presented the 2024 spending plan. Operations expenses are in excess of anticipated spending, but the gap can be closed by our reserves, investments and rental income.
- There will be a required expenditure in 2024 from the Capital reserve of \$30,000 for stained glass window repair and \$10,000 for moisture abatement in the basement. A fundraiser is proposed to replenish the funds from the reserve.
- Question: What is the gap between the spending plan and anticipated giving? Answer: approximately \$19,000

- Question: How much is in the Capital Reserve as opposed to how much is needed for all expected expenditures? Answer: In round number we need \$150,000, and after the \$40,000 expenditure we will have \$87,000. It is expected that the surplus of \$29,000 from 2023 will go into the Capital Reserve.
- There were two votes – one for the 2024 spending plan and one for the Capital expenditures. Ballots were distributed – blue for the Capital expenditure and purple for the spending plan. No motion was required.

Waiting for the ballots to be counted The pastors acknowledged and thanked Council members who would be leaving at the end of the year. Mark Hirsch had stepped in to fill an unfinished term, and acted as liaison to property management. Andy Gates was completing a second term. Andy had served as Vice President of Council, helped move financial policy to implementation, assisted in formulating the Finance Committee and served as a consistent, strong voice to the congregation regarding stewardship.

Ballot results

- Approval of the Capital expenditure – 65 “yes”, 2 “abstained”
- Approval of the spending plan – 62 “yes”, 2 “no”, 3 “abstained”

The business of the meeting being concluded, as motion was made and seconded to adjourn and approved.

Respectfully submitted.

Antoinette Thompson, Council Secretary

COUNCIL NOMINEES FOR 2024



Koosje Jeanotte - Hi! I am Koosje (Vokes) Jeanotte, and I have been a member of BLC for as long as I can remember... about 38 years! Now, my husband Aaron and I are raising our twins, Vivian and Roxanne, in the same church community!

BLC has always been my home away from home. It has been the place where I have celebrated life's greatest joys and grieved through some of its most challenging moments.

Growing up, I was part of every children's choir and eventually joined the Chancel Choir. I have awesome memories of Sunday School in the basement and Confirmation Classes upstairs across from the choir room, just waiting for my time with the LYO in that very cool room downstairs!

One aspect of the church community I haven't been a part of yet is the council. Now, as a parent, I feel called to contribute to strengthening our relationships with families, especially those with young children. Some of my most cherished memories were created here, and I want to help ensure the same for the next generation.

I hope to bring fresh perspectives to the council while supporting the valuable work already in place and continuing to build on it.



Sandy Joyce - I have been a member of BLC twice. My family first joined in 1996 when we moved to Fairport. Mike and I have been married for a long time and have 3 sons who grew up at BLC. Our boys have given us 3 great daughters in laws (whom we sometimes like better than our boys) and 7 grandchildren. I am currently counting down my last days of work as a nurse in the labor and delivery unit at URMC and looking forward to retirement in December.

Mike and I re-joined BLC about 4 years ago after moving back into the area. We are both members of the adult choir and I love that having an

excellent music program is a priority here. I look forward to the opportunity to serve the congregation on the council once again.



Kathy Schneemann - I am a lifelong Lutheran. I have held dozens of positions in the church. My husband Joe and I moved here from Long Island 10 years ago. We have been BLC members for about 8 years. We have a son and daughter and 3 beautiful grandchildren.

It is my pleasure to serve our church.



Antoinette "Toni" Thompson (Re-elect) - Toni grew up in Wayland and moved to Rochester when she graduated from SUNY Buffalo. Her working career was in the insurance industry. Toni has been a member of BLC since 2016.

Prior to joining BLC, Toni and her husband, Jerry, attended First Congregational United Church of Christ for 30 years, where they were active participants. Toni served on the Missions Committee, the Worship Committee and was a member of Council. She also managed the annual antique show twice and the annual rummage sale five times.

Since joining BLC Toni has actively participated in several ministries - glass washing, assisting minister, communion assistant, Second Sunday Dinner Ministry, providing bread for communion and grief mailings. Prior to the pandemic she sat on Missions and Social Concerns Committee, Worship Committee and CORE Ministry Team. For the past two years she has served as Council Secretary.

Co-Pastors Report for 2024

Over the last year, we have continued to focus on the vision of **Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus**. This vision shapes our work with Church Council throughout the year and has been an ongoing focus for our work as staff and 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. At the end of this annual report, we have shared these portions of our co-Pastors reports with you so that you can see our focus and attention over the last year.

As a congregation, we continue to be served with **richly gifted staff** who bring so much to their ministry. In May, we **marked Jim Jefferis' retirement as Chancel Choir Director** and celebrated his ministry among us over nearly 16 years. Of the many contributions to our music ministry, one of the most enduring and perhaps most significant was the choice he made early in the pandemic in 2020 to learn the technology to allow our Chancel Choir to continue rehearsing and recording "virtual" anthems that enriched our worship over the many months that we worshipped remotely. This action was essential in keeping a sense of connection amongst our Chancel Choir, which also helped to keep a sense of connection within our church community.

In June, we **gave thanks for Mark Finke's ministry as Volunteer and Ministry Support Coordinator**. Over the course of the 17 months that Mark filled this position he was essential in helping us to revitalize our facility for the ways in which it is used now! Mark's vision for what could emerge from this effort, and his leadership and determination to move this task forward at a brisk pace is the reason we have been able to enter into a long-term usage agreement with Acton Studios for this program year!

The increased use of our facility over the last year has made it clear that having more flexible and dedicated cleaning is essential and so we were pleased to learn about the Sexton employed by St. Paul's, Pittsford and the possibility that they may be looking for additional hours of work. In September we **welcomed Will Kunkle as our Sexton!** We are pleased that Will was willing to step into this position and are delighted at the difference they are already making!

We have been excited to **welcome both Patty Chaffee to the role of Director of Family Faith Formation and Chrisanne Gates as our new Chancel Choir Director** this year. While their names and faces may not be new to us, we are grateful for their willingness to step into these positions and share their gifts as well as their leadership and energy as we continue embracing our vision!

Raelynn Clare and Sarah Morrissette continue to serve BLC with a level of excellence and creativity that is a true gift to our community! We are blessed by exceptional staff!

In addition to a number of staffing changes over the last year, we also began a partnership with St. Paul's, Pittsford to conduct confirmation ministry jointly with them. The success of this initial experiment grew into a joint outdoor worship in June and joint VBS in August. We will continue

to seek ways to build our partnership and strengthen connections with St. Paul's, as well as other organizations we partner with in the coming year.

We remain grateful for the partnership we share in ministry. We both support the congregation through preaching, worship leadership, pastoral care, and occasional adult educational opportunities. Pastor Amy provides particular leadership to the Council on a monthly basis, and Pastor Hoffman participates quarterly. Pastor Amy provides support to the Personnel committee (a welcome addition with so many staff changes this past year!) and to the Mission and Social Concerns committee. She also leads a monthly book study for Women's Fellowship. Pastor Hoffman facilitates two bi-weekly support groups: one for grief and the other for caregivers. We consult regularly with each other – for discernment, problem-solving, logistics, and prayerful support – and appreciate the model for ministry that reflects our conviction that none of us can do God's work alone.

As we look to the year ahead we continue to be energized by the existing goals that have shaped our ministry since 2022, but we will be focusing them in some new ways for the coming year.

1. **Building Lasting Community that Follows Jesus** means building stronger connections and support with peer groups and continuing to provide intergenerational support through life transitions.
2. **Strengthen support for Youth and Family Ministry** in order to increase the visibility of children, youth, and young adults in the Bethlehem community, grow connections between youth and their families, and fully integrate people of all ages in the life and ministry of the congregation.
3. **Building Revitalization** includes completing exploration of various options in order to make recommendations to the congregation for Sanctuary refresh in 2025 and updating our nursery and its adjoined restroom into a caregiver's room suitable for both children and adults requiring assistance.
4. **Expanding our understanding of community** by continuing to develop reciprocal relationships and partnerships between Bethlehem and the various groups and individuals who use our facility and the wider community.

We now have between us over twenty years of experience as pastoral leaders at Bethlehem. That is both a gift and a source of sorrow in years, like the past one, when we have presided at the funerals of 12 beloved saints who have fulfilled their baptismal journeys and now dwell in the eternal mystery of God. We give thanks for the opportunity to serve in a community that continues to seek ways to love one another well in the midst of both joy and sorrow.

Thank you for your partnership in this work of building lasting community that follows Jesus!



Pastor Abigail Hoffman



Pastor Amy Walter-Peterson

The following areas were identified as priority areas as we communicated with the congregation at our 2023 Annual Meeting. Each month we highlighted one (or more!) of these areas in our reports to the Church Council. We share them with you here so you can see the ways that we have lived into these goals over the last year!

- Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus – continue living into this vision
- Strengthen support for Youth and Family Ministry, specifically:
 - National Youth Gathering
 - Families with young children
- Building Revitalization
 - Stained Glass Windows – in process
 - Lower-level upgrades – completed
 - Sanctuary Refresh – in process
- Expanding our understanding of community – focus on recognizing, supporting and equipping.
 - Learning Links, Scouts, musicians, etc.



November 2023 - For the first time, we invited the three scout troops who use our space to participate with us in one of our service activities. Girl Scouts (Cadet Troop #60184) collected 25 hats and 23 pairs of gloves to donate to Saints Place as part of our collection!

January 2024 – Learning Links has begun to use our facility for their Wednesday evening tutoring program and are scheduled to continue to use this space at least through March. Pastor Amy has been in conversation with the board chair for Learning Links as well as their interim director to talk about how we continue to build this partnership and the possibility of developing a long-term plan to support Learning Links at Bethlehem.

February 2024 – While we have marked Scout Sunday for several years, this year marked one of the most robust celebrations in recent memory. BSA Troop 2019 shared highlights and thanked BLC for our ongoing partnership. Autumn Schoenfeld from Troop 2019 served as the lector in worship, and other members of the troop assisted with ushering. In addition, Girl Scout Troop 60184 shared treats and also offered pictures of their partnership with Bethlehem in collecting gloves to share with Saints Place this past fall. Mark Finke’s connections with the various troop leaders who use our facility has provided an entree for ongoing conversation about how we might continue to partner with these groups. We continue to think about how we invite troop members and their families to connect more deeply with our community.

March 2024 - We are grateful that David Wideman has agreed to serve as a male adult leader participating in the National Youth Gathering this summer! He and Patty Chaffee will accompany four young men from BLC: Tor Cardinal, Michael Chaffee, Nathan Chaffee and Evan Sousa. They are beginning to come together for some formation activities prior to the gathering and will be attempting to partner with another congregation in Cortland for some of these activities. They will also be doing some fundraising activities in the month of April (and perhaps beyond). Because the group is small and we've had a very slow start, they have a goal of raising \$2500 from the congregation and beyond. These funds will help to replenish moneys for youth ministry that were previously set aside to support activities like this. Our hope is that the group can prioritize building connections and cultivate investment from the congregation in terms of prayerful support and enthusiasm about the faith development of youth since the congregation has already been so faithful in financial support. [After March, Leah Erdley also registered and attended the National Youth Gathering with the group from BLC!]

April 2024 - Our April meeting will include time with Cass McCrory who will facilitate a discussion aimed at identifying our next best step as we continue to live into our vision. We have invited BLC staff to be part of this conversation, as well as some key leaders within the BLC community. There is also an invite to the congregation to participate in this portion of the council meeting.

Please come to the meeting prepared to talk about:

1. Where you have witnessed building lasting community that follows Jesus at BLC over the last year?
2. One place where you would commit time and energy to help us move closer to this vision.

Our goal for this time with Cass is to emerge with *at least one* actionable and time-specific goal for our next step in moving toward our vision that has ownership among council, other key leaders, and staff.

May 2024 -- As a result of our April Council meeting, staff created a tracker of all of the ideas/next steps that emerged from our discussion. This tracker has now been placed in Box/BLC Council/2024 Council/Building Lasting Community Tracker.xlsx. You will see that that there are several items where staff have identified a next step. (If you have an update for an item that you identified, feel free to update that!) It would be helpful for Council to review this document and for us to discuss next steps in May.

June 2024 – With Mark Finke's pending departure, we asked Dale Schumacher to follow-up on a new request for facility use by Acton Studios. Dale shares that Acton Studios is a learner-driven organization, offering a single-purpose educational program to homeschool families. It is a not-for-profit (501 (c) 3). Acton Studios would like to use two education rooms. They will have approximately 12 students (and several adults), and meet three to four days per week for 39 weeks. The program basically follows the same months as the public schools. This request reflects a new type of ongoing facility-use: three-four days/week; extended hours each day; 39 weeks for the year. This is an exciting opportunity that fits with our vision of Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus but it also represents an ongoing and increased need for cleaning (and potentially maintenance). Acton Studios is eager to announce their location for the coming

school year. With Council support for moving ahead, we would work to develop a specific contract with Acton Studios for facility use for the coming year to bring to the July meeting.

July 2024 – Using a Lease Agreement modeled on one developed by Fairport United Methodist Church in partnership with a preschool that uses their space, we will bring a DRAFT Lease Agreement with Acton Studios for Council approval. This Lease Agreement will outline the technical aspects of our space agreement additional details can be communicated in person or through specific memos. Acton Studios is a not-for-profit (501 (c) 3) and they would like to use two of the courtyard education rooms. They will have approximately 12 students (and several adults), and meet three to four days per week for 39 weeks. The program basically follows the same months as the public schools. This request reflects a new type of ongoing facility-use: three-four days/week; extended hours each day; 39 weeks for the year. This is an exciting opportunity that fits with our vision of Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus but it also represents an ongoing and increased need for cleaning (and potentially maintenance).

August 2024 – We have signed a property use agreement with Acton Studios! They have begun preparing space for the start of their school year. We're excited to see how this partnership develops.

September 2024 – continuing to live into this vision. Building *lasting* community means, in part, being in relationship with our current communities! Starting September 8, we have begun praying for 5 children, youth and adults each Sunday morning as part of the Prayers of the People. We are engaged in significant pastoral care in the month of September – two funerals, a wedding and other significant acute needs – in addition to ongoing support and encouragement of people within the BLC community. We have been onboarding two new staff members – Will and Chris – and working to build a mutually supportive staff environment. We are also working to connect intentionally with current facility users. We're excited that Girl Scout Troup 60184 will be a partner with us in the Seafarer's Christmas-at-Sea project that Mission and Social Concerns will begin!


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>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
<i>Total Membership as of 9/30/2023</i>	442	395
<u>Members Received</u>		
Baptism		
Zainab (Zaii) Ali Muya, 7/14/2024	1	0
Subtotal	1	0
Affirmation of Faith/Transfer In		
Subtotal	0	0
Affirmation of Faith/Confirmation¹		
Zainab (Zaii) Ali Muya, 7/14/2024	0	1
Subtotal	0	1
Total Members Received	1	1
<u>Members Removed</u>		
Deaths		
Charles "Chick" Forney, 10/8/2023	1	1
Gerald "Jerry" Thompason, 11/4/2023	1	1
Mary Stephens, 12/28/2023	1	1
Erich Helbig, 2/7/2024	1	1
Jan Brederson, 2/13/2024	0	0
Donald Groff, 3/4/2024	1	1
Dale Raymond, 4/5/2024	1	1
Karen Bigenwald, 7/27/2924	1	1
Ed Bangel, 8/3/2024	1	1
Clifford "Cliff" Donahower, 8/28/2024	1	1
Maurice "Morey" Rasbeck, 9/10/2024	1	1
Cathy Anderson, 9/18/2024	1	1
Subtotal	11	11
Transfer Out		
Christopher Hancock, 10/29/2023	0	0
Barb and Scott Gonyeo, 12/20/2023	2	2
Fran Howell, April 2024	1	1
Subtotal	3	3
Statistical Adjustmentsⁱⁱ		
Subtotal	2	2
Total Members Removed	16	16
TOTAL Membership as of 9/30/2024	427	380

¹ In 2024, we moved Affirmation of Baptism (Confirmation) to the fall of the year.

¹ Each year we review our current 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

At the end of 2023 Council developed and shared these goals with the congregation for the 2023-2024 year.

- Building Lasting Community that follows Jesus.
- Strengthen support for Youth and Family Ministry.
- Building Revitalization.
- Expanding our understanding of community.

We have made visible progress in all of these areas! It's reflected in further partnerships with St. Paul's of Pittsford, sending a group to the National Youth Gathering, stained-glass window repair and room updates, and leasing space to a local homeschooling group for the 2024-25 schoolyear, to name a few.

This year Council continued the meeting structures we tried out last year consisting of longer vision-focused meetings once a quarter and no regularly scheduled Officer meetings. This has allowed us to be more efficient, share projects more evenly among Council members, and spend dedicated time living into our goals and vision in addition to our regular monthly responsibilities.

During our April Council meeting, we invited an outside consultant and members of the congregation to join our discussion on goal setting and executing next steps. We brainstormed several objectives to implement in partnership with Staff and congregation members. There is still a lot of work to be done on these tasks and we'll use this to shape our goals for the coming year.

BLC had some outdated policy documents that Council reviewed this year. We approved revisions to our Facility Use Policy that better aligns with how our building is being used today. We also approved a charter to reestablish a Personnel Committee which is actively reviewing personnel documents and policies. Additionally, we clarified and affirmed our Council Member Duties and annual responsibilities and tasks, to help recruit future council members.

Throughout this year staffing was a big priority for us, hiring a Family Faith Formation Coordinator, Chancel Choir Director, and Sexton. We are continuing to search for a new Volunteer & Ministry Support Coordinator to support our mission and work.

I feel blessed to be a part of such a vibrant, generous, and faith-filled congregation and continue to look forward to serving our community as we do God's work to Build a Lasting Community that follows Jesus.

Yours in Christ,

Liana Coffaro

CARE OF PROPERTY REPORT

Bob Stolze, Chair

Property Committee, October 2024

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

Members: Matt Beutel, Rolf Maxa, John Schmeelk are on the committee. A number of others are regular contributors and helpers. Thank you all for your valuable service!

While I have your attention...

Look around at our beautiful church, and think of the wonderful things that happen here. All of you contribute to that! This year I've created a "help-out list" of people who don't mind joining in on projects on occasion. It has 50 people on it, inspired by Mark Finke's revitalizing projects earlier this year. If you're on that list, you'll get an occasional email from me asking for help. No obligation, just a chance to help when you have the time and interest in something that needs doing.

A high priority is gardening and landscaping. We've had turnover in that area and are rather shorthanded. Please let us know if you can help with any part of that. We will be having a service do some large scale cutting back of the overgrown bushes and trees around the building, so the main thing is maintaining the gardens. Also, we are always looking for folks who can mow the lawns, a 90-minute job done weekly.

To join the list, just 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 for this past year:

- The biggest property related win this past year has been the church revitalization projects, led by Mark Finke as our volunteer coordinator. He gathered people and accomplished great things in organizing and rearranging spaces, and painting a lot of areas. The work room was moved over and a large new conference room created which has become our most important meeting space. The property committee supported him and worked alongside. We are very grateful for his leadership, on a scale that could not have been accomplished otherwise.
- We are in the process of having our two stained glass windows on the west wall in the sanctuary rebuilt. They had settled with age and were warped with some cracking of the edge panes. These are the last windows that needed this work, and we should be done with age-related repairs for 50 years or more. We are taking this opportunity to replace the storm windows on those same two windows. One was cracked and the other discolored. The new windows will be clearer and much more durable. All the work on those windows will be completed by early November.
- We finished our installation of a new fire alarm panel. They last about 20 years.
- Installed dehumidifiers in the lower west wing and Fellowship Hall. That should finish solving our issues with dampness in those areas.
- In addition, we supported regular maintenance things. Supported annual inspections and servicing on HVAC equipment, elevator, fire alarm, extinguishers, sprinkler system, plumbing.
- We finished a bit below our budget for 2024. We base our budgeting on recent history, and this year we were fortunate that unplanned repairs were not out of line.

FAITH FORMATION

Patty Chaffee, Family Faith Formation Coordinator

I am very excited to be serving as the Coordinator of Family Faith Formation for BLC. I began my job in July, requesting to begin over the summer, since most of the fall planning takes place then. I have been participating in weekly staff meetings with the pastors and Sarah Morrissette, contributing to the Between Sundays blog and STAR when applicable, and planning worship with the pastors, Chris Gates, and Raelynn Clare. Also, in July I feel very fortunate to have traveled with 5 youth to the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans with congregation member Dave Wideman. What an amazing experience to share with 16,000 other Lutheran youth and adults!

We have had a great start this fall with Worship for Kids, bi-weekly LYO meetings, and a new program just for 3rd-5th graders called JOY (Jesus, Others, You). This monthly program focuses on hands-on service projects and the connections we discover when we serve others and Jesus. Confirmation has also started in partnership with St. Paul's and we presented bibles to our new Confirmands as well as our youngest Worship for Kids children on October 20th.

I am trying to look with new eyes at who needs connection, through the lens of family faith formation. I have been reflecting on this quote from BLC's website: "Relationships matter. For over 100 years, our relationships with God and one another have formed us into a community of people who follow Jesus. Through worship, service and learning, we nurture relationships that are grounded in faith and overflowing with grace as we follow Jesus to love and serve in the world. There's a place for you here!". A question I am curious about is where are there opportunities for us at BLC to nurture stronger relationships with our families, children and youth? I hope you will bring me ideas you may have or places you see opportunities for our children, youth and families.

FELLOWSHIP

GerryAnn Westcott

Fellowship continued this past year with Sunday Fellowship (coffee hours) being held in the narthex. Goodies are purchased most weeks from Wegmans. Occasionally, especially in December, homemade goodies are enjoyed. The sign-up for hosts is adequate, but more volunteers would be helpful. There are simply not enough people attending worship to support all the activities we remember.

The committee reassembled for the Church Picnic in June and coordinated with a similar committee at St. Paul's Pittsford. It was well attended and may indicate that people are interested in social activities.

As a whole, Fellowship Committee has not recovered from the pandemic. There had been a social event at least alternate months, but that has not been the case for several years. Simple Suppers (Wednesdays during Lent) were organized by Mark Finke. Women's Fellowship (book study) and Men's Breakfasts continue to provide fellowship, but belong to another committee.

SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS- MISSIONS AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

Julie Owen, Missions and Social Concerns Chair

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

“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Galatians 5:13-14

The SERVE Core Ministries include: 2nd Sunday Dinner Ministry, the Angel Tree, Quilting Group, , connections with our international "twinned" congregation in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe, God's Work Our Hands, and Upstate NY Synod Mission Support. The Mission and Social Concerns Committee (M&SC) oversees much of this engagement.

To support the vision of BLC to build lasting community that follows Jesus, M&SC facilitates engagement (through activities that help build relationship and connection), provides education and information on social justice issues and aligns BLC's spending plan with congregationally defined priorities.

In May/June 2024 the M&SC team administered a survey to understand BLC's and our community's mission priorities. There were multiple means of communication and a variety of options to complete the survey.

The following is a summary of the survey results (shared with the congregation in the July 2024 quarterly dialogue):

64 total responses (7 questions)

✓53 – member of BLC (83%)

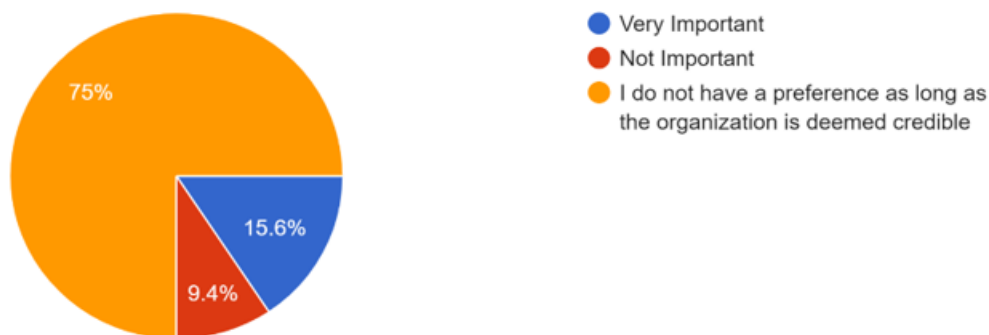
✓3 – not a member but participate in services/activities in person and/or on line (5%)

✓8 – I am a member of the greater community with no specific connection to BLC (12%)

Survey Results:

- 1. When considering the potential recipient of congregational missions funds and ministry partnership, how important is it to you that we focus on a faith based organization? (Select one)**

64 responses



2. Which broad categories of mission mean the most to you? (Select all that apply)

- Supporting Children and Youth: 39 (60.9%)
- Supporting Seniors
- Supporting People with Different Abilities (Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, Physical Disabilities etc.)
- Supporting Families: 41 (64%)
- Veteran's Programs
- LGBTQIA+ Justice
- Immigration and refugee services: 33 (51.6%)
- Supporting end of life transitions (including hospice care): 36 (56.3%)
- Disaster Response (i.e. fire, flood, natural disasters)
- Housing Insecurity (i.e. unhoused, rental assistance, affordable housing): 38 (59.4%)
- Food insecurity: 48 (75%)
- Mental/Behavioral Health Services
- Domestic Violence: 35 (54.7%)
- Racial Justice
- Missionary Support
- Environmental Issues (Care of Creation)
- Criminal Justice (i.e. incarceration, prison ministries, crime prevention, violence prevention)
- Other: Rebuilding inner city nuclear families, educational opportunities, all of the above are important

3. Which categories would be your highest priority? (Select your top 3)

- Food Insecurity: 34 (53.1%)
- Housing Insecurity: 20 (31.3%)
- Supporting Children and Youth: 18 (28.1%)

Honorable mentions:

- Immigration and refugee services: 17 (26.6%)
- Supporting Families: 15 (23.4%)
- Domestic Violence: 14 (21.9%)

4. Is there a specific organization/ministry you would recommend we consider partnering with?

11 responses/10 suggestions:

- Open Door Mission (4)
- Coldwater House (Open Door Mission focus on women and children)
- Advent House, Saints Place, Willow
- World Hunger Appeal
- Local Food Pantries
- Bivona Child Advocacy
- The Goodwill Learning Center
- Lutheran World Relief

5. ELCA Social Statements are teaching and policy documents that provide broad frameworks to assist us in thinking about and discussing social issues in the context of faith and life. Of the topic statements listed, please select the top 3 you would be interested in learning more about.

- Abortion
- Caring for Creation
- Church in Society: 24 (37.5%)
- The church and criminal justice
- The death penalty
- Economic life
- Education
- Genetics
- Health and health care
- Human sexuality
- Peace: 26 (40.6%)
- Race, ethnicity and culture: 28 (43.8%)
- Sexism

The results of the survey reinforced that our financial support beyond our walls aligns well with the congregationally identified priorities and supports agencies and services where BLC members have direct and consistent involvement.

Additionally, the committee strives to equally address these three areas of focus:

- 1) Crisis Aid (efforts which address immediate and sometimes life-sustaining needs)
- 2) Sustainability Aid (efforts which provide training or systemic change)
- 3) Accompaniment (opportunities and resources for BLC members to engage with others in service)

BLC M&SC spending plan for 2023-2024 included support for these BLC mission partners:

- Coldwater House (A women and children’s shelter under the umbrella of Open Door Mission)
- Fairport Good Neighbor Fund
- ELCA Genesee/Finger Lakes Conference
- Shurugwi Parish, Zimbabwe (BLC’s twinned congregation)
- Advent House
- Ecumenical Ministries of Perinton
- Keeping our Promise
- Habitat for Humanity
- Seafarer’s International
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) now known as Global Refuge
- Learning Links
- Family Promise
- Saints Place
- World Hunger Relief
- Perinton Food Shelf
- Evergreen East (formerly Pines of Perinton) weekly distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables June-Oct.

Additionally, the M&SC was pleased to recommend HOPE 585 is this year’s recipient of the Investment in Ministries fund distribution of approximately \$1400. HOPE 585 is located in the city of Rochester and is an organization committed to reimagining the approach to child welfare support. HOPE 585 offers youth mentoring, reunification support, crisis counseling and case management, summer camp, foster youth support and more. M&SC is actively exploring how we might continue building relationship and connection to support these vital services.

MISSION	VISION	VALUES
We are a relationship-centered community where marginalized youth and their families hope, heal, and thrive.	A restored community where youth and their families have moved from systemic trauma to a place of power and belonging.	Collaboration Authentic relationships Dignity, Hope, Innovation Inspiring Vision, Trust

For over 100 years, the collective generosity of the BLC community has had a tangible impact in our local and world community. "For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9).

Thank You, Bethlehem Lutheran Church!

... because of your generous support of the 2024

Learning Links School Supply Drive

70+ students in need returned to school with a new backpack full of needed supplies.



"Thank you for your very generous donation...In 2023 The Perinton Food Shelf provided food and assistance to over 1500 individuals in the Perinton area."

"Thank you.... Together, we are helping people in our community get through their difficult times."

Fairport Good Neighbor Fund

A huge "Thank-you"
 ...for coming out every Saturday to get produce, and to all of you who give of your time to help feed those in need in our area through their local food banks, shelters, etc.
 It was a record year for the number of organizations that we were able to assist.



Gleaning/Moll Farms: weekly distribution at Evergreen East



The friendship and generosity from your congregation are such a blessing! **Your gift makes a lasting difference in the lives of thousands of men, women and children.** who come here because they simply have few options to turn for dignified and compassionate emergency services.

Your kindness lifts their spirits – and surrounds them with hot meals, safe healthy shelter, addiction recovery, permanent housing, job readiness and life skills training.... all meant to provide a real opportunity to change their lives from the inside out through the encouragement of our staff and the love of God in their lives.

Thank you again for sharing from your heart through your generous donation – and for helping to transform lives into a joyous celebration of new life!



Transforming the lives of families experiencing homelessness. Because every child deserves a home.
 "Thank you for your continued support"

New name.
Same mission.



LIRS is now **Global Refuge**.

Thank you for your generous gift... Because of your generous stewardship, we can continue to provide much-needed help to refugee and migrant children and families.

Since LIRS began in 1939, congregations like yours have helped more than 500,000 migrant and refugee men, women, and children rebuild their lives in communities across the country. And even now, as that legacy of welcome is threatened, we are standing united in hope. Together, we welcome families and advocate for people who've suffered so much.

By helping LIRS welcome the stranger, you are sending a powerful message of hope conquering fear. I am eternally grateful for your congregation's compassion and commitment to the mission of LIRS. Thank you again, not only for your gift, but for your understanding.

Together in Christ's love for the stranger,

And on behalf of the M&SC team, **THANK YOU BLC** -

For your generosity, compassion, advocacy, kindness and commitment to building relationship and connection. I am filled with gratitude for God's unwavering guidance and abundant blessings. I pray we remain steadfast in our vision to build lasting community that follows Jesus as we serve Him and our community.

With love,

Julie Owen, Chair Missions and Social Concerns

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR FY 2024

Glenda Lockard, Treasurer

Financially, FY2024 was another year to celebrate! Read on for a summary and refer to the charts in the appendix for detailed financial reporting.

Giving: Regular giving increased \$14K over the previous year, \$31K was received for the stained glass window repairs, over \$9K in gifts to the IMF and Memorial Fund, and \$7.5K in support of our youth at the National Youth Gathering. Thanks be to God for the generosity of your people here at Bethlehem!

Operating Expenses: Our budget included funding for a Family/Youth Minister, however we were not able to staff that position fully until very late in the fiscal year, resulting in 4.5% less expense overall than expected. In all other categories, the church spent very close to the spending plan, ending the year within 1% of the spending plan.

Net Church Operations: Increased giving combined with lower expenses allowed BLC to end FY2024 in a much stronger financial position than we anticipated at the beginning of the year. We expected to be in the red by \$18K but ended up in the black by \$18K. We celebrate that God has provided resources to enable us to accomplish the ministry we are called to embrace.

Other Income: Our rental property has been operating smoothly. Rents have been coming in regularly and we have invested some of that into much needed repairs. Overall, the rental property increased our net assets by \$17K and our investments added over \$6K to our bottom line.

Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets: BLC ended the year with over \$34K more in unrestricted funds than when we started. At the Annual Meeting, Council will bring a recommendation to the congregation to utilize a portion of the increase to fund one-time expenses in 2025 as well as to transfer a portion 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!

2024 FISCAL YEAR RESULTS

Church Operations Only

	Actual	Budget	b/(w)
Receipts			
Contributions	\$ 415,938	\$ 401,200	\$ 14,738
Special Receipts	6,788	5,175	1,613
Total Receipts	\$ 422,726	\$ 406,375	\$ 16,351
Spending			
Worship & Music	\$ 13,036	\$ 14,335	\$ 1,299
Christian Education GROW	1,910	2,800	890
Fellowship	1,940	2,000	60
Other Ministries	1,341	1,500	159
Missions & Social Concerns	24,645	24,072	(573)
Synod Mission Support	58,231	56,168	(2,063)
Staff Compensation	242,561	257,498	14,937
Care of Property	39,379	41,490	2,112
Office & Administrative	21,979	24,423	2,443
Total Expenses	405,023	424,286	19,263
Operations Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 17,703	\$ (17,911)	\$ 35,614

2024 FISCAL YEAR 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 10/1/2023			\$ 52,190	\$ 10,934	\$ 2,779	\$ 116,577	\$ 44,409	\$ 226,888
Income								
Contributions	415,938		415,938	2,852		31,000	6,503	456,293
Other Receipts	6,788	6,280	13,068				1,954	15,022
Rents Received		33,604	33,604					33,604
Total YTD Income	422,726	39,884	462,610	2,852	-	31,000	8,457	504,919
Expenses								
Inside Our Walls	322,147		322,147	1,406	288	39,826	2,688	366,354
Outside Our Walls	82,877		82,877	215				83,092
Investment Property		22,707	22,707					22,707
Total YTD Expenses	405,023	22,707	427,730	1,621	288	39,826	2,688	472,152
Surplus/(Deficit)	17,703	17,177	34,880	1,231	(288)	(8,826)	5,769	32,767
Net Assets on 09/30/2024			\$ 87,070	\$ 12,165	\$ 2,492	\$ 107,751	\$ 50,178	\$ 259,655

BLC Investment in Ministries Committee Annual Report
As of 9/30/2024 for BLC fiscal year 2023-2024

IMF Committee Members:

Mark Gaul	markrgaul@gmail.com	585-781-4379
Roger Kolker	roger.kolker@gmail.com	585-415-4594
Kim Kulik	kkulik7@gmail.com	585-330-7844
Judy Lohr	jalohr@rochester.rr.com	585-425-2171
John Panko	jpanko19@yahoo.com	386-956-6881

Purpose of the BLC Investment in Ministries Fund (from Constitution)

- C5.05.04** The purpose of the Fund is to support needs and people beyond the walls of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.
- a. The Fund may not be used for annual church operations such as staff compensation, office supplies, utilities, etc.
 - b. The fund is to support or benefit people/ministries outside of Bethlehem Lutheran Church's membership.

Financial Status of the BLC Investment in Ministries Fund

YTD Information available as of August 31, 2024	
[Fund established in June 2022]	
Market Value @ ELCA Foundation	\$56,122
2024 Beginning Balance (12/31/2023)	\$46,213
2024 Additions (Gifts + Quarterly Dividends)	\$7,557
2024 Withdrawals	(\$1,400)
2024 Change in Market Value	\$3,752

2023-2024 Accomplishments and Highlights:

- In 2024, the **Market Value of the Fund** exceeded \$50,000 for the first time. This allowed us to make a withdrawal of \$1,400 for 2024 to support our second ministry. The Missions & Social Concerns Committee is in the process of bringing forward a ministry recommendation to Council.

- In December 2023, ***Keeping Our Promise (KOP)*** was chosen as the inaugural ministry for support through the BLC IMF Fund. KOP is a comprehensive resettlement program in Rochester for refugees from Afghanistan who aided the United States. Since 2014, over 1,000 refugees have relocated to the area. Through the Fund, a contribution of \$1,288 was given to KOP. For more information on KOP, see the bulletin board in the upper hallway nearest the school district parking lot.

- In September 2024, ***Hope585*** was chosen as the second ministry to receive \$1400 from the IMF fund. Hope585 supports children and families – and aligns with BLC’s congregational priorities identified in the Missions & Social Concerns recent survey. HOPE585 reimagines a community where children are safe, with their families, by focusing on two things: 1) Providing excellent hope-centered programs and services to system-impacted youth and families and 2) Championing/Leading advocacy efforts that empower collaborative, community-driven change. For more information, go to <https://hope585.org/>

- In its role of providing overall planned giving information and education for the congregation, with leadership from the pastors, the IMF Committee assisted in developing ***two seminars held in May under the umbrella of Preparing for Spiritual and Estate Plans***. The May 5 seminar focused on ***Spiritual Care and Physical Planning***, while the May 19 seminar’s focus was ***Financial and Philanthropic Planning***. Video recordings of both seminars can be found at the bottom of the main IMF web site under Creating a Legacy.

- The recorded Minutes of meetings for what would become the Investment in Ministries (IMF) Committee go back to early 2021. ***Paulette Costanza*** had a vision for supporting people in need. With the assistance of husband ***John Costanza*** and a small committee which they recruited, this vision grew and became, with the approval of the congregation, the BLC Investment in Ministries Fund. This year Paulette and John stepped down from the IMF Committee, and we are profoundly grateful for their vision, hard work and inspiration.

- With the departure of Paulette and John, additional support was needed from the congregation. We are very thankful to Kim Kulik and Judy Lohr for their willingness to join us and serve on the committee.

ⁱ In 2024, we moved Affirmation of Baptism (Confirmation) to the fall of the year.

ⁱⁱ Each year we review our current 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.