



ANNUAL REPORT

VALLEY OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

20
25
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**THE MINISTRY OF VALLEY OF PEACE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Living in God's love and compassion, we are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit
works through us for healing, justice, and peace.

Annual Report to the Congregation

May 18, 2025

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Minutes of the May 19, 2024 Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Call to Order

Outgoing President Pat McGraw called the meeting to order at 11:37 a.m.
Pastor Ashley opened the meeting with prayer.

Secretary's Report

The minutes from last year's semi-annual meeting and annual meeting were read by Secretary Chrys Johnson. Pat McGraw asked for a motion to approve the minutes and Christine Weatherman made the motion. Sally Daniels Herron seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Update

Christine Weatherman spoke for Joe Thom in his absence. The budget was balanced for 2023. Giving was slightly below what we needed to make expenses for the year, but December was a strong month, and the shortfall was eliminated. As chair of Stewardship, Christine said she is in awe of the possibilities going forward. A deficit budget was passed, but everyone was asked to prayerfully consider increasing their giving by \$216 a year to eliminate the deficit.

New Business

Dave Gilyard expressed his thanks to everyone who has served on his committee to supervise work on the Lower Level. He explained the 2 phases of schematic design and design development. The next step with the architects is a construction document phase and then things will move to a general contractor for bids. Currently there is a bid from the architect for \$25,500. The final phase is in the planning stage. Dave said that the committee is looking at information for a commercial kitchen. Anna Pearson from All God's Children has attended many of the meetings that Dave has held. Dave reported that \$30,000 is available from the kitchen fund. A motion was made by Shennon Jay to approve using money from the kitchen fund to begin work on the kitchen. Jim Jasper seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion was approved. Pat McGraw thanked Dave's team for their work and there was a round of applause.

Outgoing President Pat McGraw said it has been quite a year, and he thanked everyone for leaving us in a good spot. He made special mention of the staff of AGC and VoP staff. Pat read the ballot, a copy of which is attached. He called for a motion to approve the new officers. There was only one person listed for each position, so no discussion was needed. Pat Hoyt made a motion to approve the election of officers for the coming year and Diane Hinderlie seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion was passed.

Pastor Ashley addressed the meeting. She said she loved the fact that the meeting was being held on Pentecost. She had the new Council members stand and be acknowledged. She asked the new officers to accept their duties and then installed them.

Outgoing President McGraw officially handed the duties of Council President to Skip Humphrey.

Laurie Eaton made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Sally Daniels Herron seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer immediately.

Chrys Johnson

Minutes of the November 24, 2024 Special Meeting of the Congregation

Call to Order

President Skip Humphrey called the meeting to order at 11:18 a.m.

Pastor Ashley opened the meeting with prayer.

Update on All God's Children

Pastor Ashley explained what is happening with All God's Children at this time after finding a new director. She said it is wonderful how God is showing up. A Task Force of Valley of Peace members has been formed to help with the adjustments for the new director. Pastor Ashley asked the members of the Task Force to stand and be recognized. The Task Force is looking at companies that specialize in helping day care centers with their organization. The company being considered is Lake Area Discovery Center. The Task Force is very interested in partnering with this company and a decision needs to be made by January. Meetings will be held after the Sunday morning services on December 1 and December 8, at which time members of the congregation can obtain more information about LA.

Treasurer's Report

Joe Thom explained how the payment to LA would work. AGC would pay part of the fee and VoP would pay the rest. LA would be paid primarily through a direct payment of an amount between \$65,000 and \$75,000. VoP would also be responsible for most of the custodial expenses.

Joe also gave an update on the Rejoice and Renew campaign and reported that \$600,000 has been pledged thus far. It is possible that some of the Dorothy Sanford funds can be used to meet the expenses coming up in the next few months.

Lower-Level Project and Sanctuary Lighting

Dan Weatherman asked all of those involved with the lower-level project to stand and be recognized. Dan said they are close to getting bids on the project but are waiting to find out the results of the LA bid. Dan said he and those working with him are committed to keeping the congregation informed about what is happening. The lighting issues are not seen as being quite as urgent as some of the other issues we have. Also, fixing the lighting problems will be a lot more expensive than originally thought. Dan mentioned that we do need to address the lighting issue because incandescent bulbs are no longer being made.

Dan described 3 options for the sanctuary lighting – retrofit LED bulbs that are either on or off, retrofit LED bulbs that produce a low-quality light and cost \$1,000 per bulb, or an option of replacing the fixtures entirely (this option would provide better light for the choir). Dan received 3 similar bids and is satisfied with what the lower one offers.

Sara Blood, Worship and Music Chair, pointed out that the retro fit bulbs would just be a short-term gain, and they would also be hazardous to repair. She also mentioned that the choirs have a hard time seeing the music with the current lighting. Sara said that using part of the Dorothy Sanford funds to bring in better light to the sanctuary would be a great way to honor Dorothy. Joe Thom said that up to \$75,000 from the Dorothy Sanford Fund could be used for the lighting. Shennon Jay introduced Matt Dellwo from VoP, and he answered questions about how the new lighting would affect the look of the stained glass and other areas of the sanctuary. He also said the bulbs would be easier to change and they would be more cost effective. Shennon made a motion to approve a contract with Reach Communications in the amount of \$62,552 plus the cost for electrical work as required for a total of \$75,000 to remove the existing directional fixtures in the chancel area and replace them with new LED fixtures using funds as recommended by the finance team. Sally Daniels Herron seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion was approved. Five of the votes were received via Zoom.

Sally Daniels Herron made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Jim Jasper seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion was approved.
The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer immediately.

Chrys Johnson

Minutes of the February 2, 2025 Semi-Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Call to Order

President Skip Humphrey declared a quorum called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.
Pastor Ashley opened the meeting with prayer.

New Business

Skip announced that the purpose of the meeting is to hear a proposal for the 2025 Operating Budget.

Joe Thom, Treasurer, presented and explained the plans for the budget. The amount is \$401,137. Joe said that the amount for expenses is what is being approved. Revenue cannot be approved since that number is only an estimate.

- Salaries increased by 3% over last year, but there will be a period when we will be without a Director of Music, and there will be some savings then.
- Total expenses are up by \$9,000 over last year.

The partnership between All God's Children and Lake Area Discovery Center will cause several changes to the budget. In the past AGC has paid \$30,000 annually to Valley of Peace and was also responsible for all the custodial expenses. LA Discovery will begin the partnership with AGC at the beginning of the third quarter and the lease will begin during the fourth quarter. Joe said that VoP would gain an additional \$3,000 to their budget from this partnership. LA Discovery will pay \$20,000 of custodial expenses and this amount will increase as the enrollment at AGC increases.

Paul Mikelson, Stewardship Chair, spoke on member giving. He thanked everyone for their pledges last fall. He explained that the expense budget is what we expect to receive, but the Stewardship Committee bases their plans on hope. "Praise be to God." The meeting was opened to questions and it was asked why the amount for insurance went down. LA Discovery will be covering some of those expenses this year.

Another question was raised about Valley of Peace donating to national disasters because it was not listed in the budget. We do contribute to ELCA and they give support to disaster relief. The meeting was turned over to President Skip Humphrey again. He asked for a motion to approve the budget of \$401,137. Dave Gilyard made a motion to approve the budget, and Dee Kendall seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion was carried.

Joe Thom gave more information about the partnership with Lake Area Discovery Center. AGC signed a contract with them this past week. Online enrollment will be opened tomorrow. Some upgrades to the space that AGC occupies will be started in April. The \$200,000 cost in upgrades will be split. Income for VoP will go up as enrollment milestones are met. Dan Weatherman gave an update on the lighting and electrical fixtures in the sanctuary. Work on this project will begin in March. He addressed the boiler replacement and said he has a bid of approximately \$800,000. The decision on this project will need to be made within the next few weeks to keep the price.

Dave Gilyard presented details on the kitchen and other lower level improvements. He thanked his team for all their work. At this time, it would be over \$900,000 to do the work in the kitchen. There will be a meeting with Hennepin County regarding the requirements for any work that is done.

Joe reminded all committees about the money available from the Dorothy Sanford Fund. LA Discovery will be contributing 100% of the cost for all the classroom updates. Volunteers were asked for to help prepare the spaces for renovation. Skip thanked everyone for their willingness to assist with these projects.

Shennon Jay made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Sally Daniels Herron seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer immediately.

Chrys Johnson

Minutes of the February 16, 2025 Special Meeting of the Congregation

Call to Order

President Skip Humphrey called the meeting to order at 11:39 a.m.
Pastor Ashley opened the meeting with prayer.

New Business

Skip announced that the purpose of the meeting is to hear updates from the Finance Team and the Property Team. Dan Weatherman, chair of the Property Team, spoke regarding the progress of the building issues. Since we don't want to delay moving forward with the building process Skip asked for a motion to waive the usual two-week waiting period for moving forward with any building plans that is stated in the bylaws. Christine Weatherman made a motion to waive the waiting period and Sally Daniels Herron seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion was passed.

Skip Humphrey asked to hear a report from the Finance Team and Dave Gilyard presented the report since Joe Thom was absent. Dave reported that the Finance Team completely supports going ahead with the work on the HVAC system. In order to complete the other projects, funds from the Dorothy Sanford Account will be used. After paying for the sanctuary lighting, there will be \$590,000 remaining in the Dorothy Sanford Account. Paul Mikelson said there is \$700,000 in the Rejoice and Renew Account. A question from a member watching the meeting on Zoom was raised as to when we will be doing the work in the kitchen. Dave said that some of the holdup on going forward with the kitchen is due to getting the arrangements set up with Lake Area Discovery Center. Last fall a bid of \$750,000 was received for the kitchen. Dave mentioned that they are looking at an alternate plan with the architect.

Dan Weatherman spoke about the issues of heating the building. Solar or geothermal plans are not feasible for our building. He has been working with a company called Minify on energy efficient plans. It has been suggested that we get two new boilers and Dan received 3 bids through Minify. The bid Dan would like to consider is \$857,667 and there would be rebates of \$46,000 after the project is completed. Dan thanked Joe Cherra, Steve Hoge, Skip Humphrey, Jim Jasper, Dave Gilyard, and Pat McGraw for their help on the HVAC project. A motion was made by Jim Jasper to approve moving ahead with the HVAC project. Shennon Jay seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the motion was passed.

Leslie Gilyard made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Diane Hinderlie seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:51 a.m.

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer immediately.

Chrys Johnson

President's Report

This past year our focus has been to maintain the ongoing ministry and service and vigorous engagement that our church Teams provide in service to the broad range of church activities. Our focus this past year has been to prepare and execute significant construction work and to facilitate the transfer of business management of All God's Children pre-school activities to new management.

The Church Council members, guided by Pastor Ashley's opening commentaries and prayers, have discussed, and approved, several contracts and forms of engagement that is allowing for the changes that are now upon us. Additionally, throughout the year, our congregation has enjoyed the Faith Forums and other events where guest speakers and friends participate.

All in all, I believe the Church and congregation have helped move the Church forward as we renew our church for the future.

Hubert Humphrey, III

Pastor's Report

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."
Ecclesiastes 3:1

I talk often about the seasons of our life, often I will say we have seasons where we can give and seasons where we need to receive. As I think about the past year, I cannot help but think about each season, knowing that each one holds meaning and sacredness. Through all of the seasons, God is with us, not just as a distant observer, but as a companion who walks beside us, weeps with us, laughs with us, and continually invites us into deeper love, justice, and renewal.

This year, we have journeyed through many seasons together, some tender, some bold, all filled with the Spirit's quiet, persistent movement. Each season has invited us to lean into our identity as we continue to share God's love and peace with one another and our whole community.

Spring 2024: Rejoice & Renew

Last spring, we launched our Rejoice & Renew Capital Campaign, and what a season of rejoicing it was! We nearly reached our goal of \$1.3 million, a remarkable testament to the generosity, trust, and vision of our church. But more than that, the campaign sparked a deeper sense of connection and possibility. Together, we dreamed bigger. We stretched further. We said "yes" to what could be, and in doing so, we rediscovered that the Spirit is already at work, preparing us for the future we cannot yet see.

Summer 2024: A Summer of Awe

With hearts still full from the joy of the campaign, we entered a Summer of Awe. We chose to pause and notice the awe that surrounds us every day. From the shimmer of light through the sanctuary windows to the laughter of children on the front lawn, from quiet prayers to bold songs, we were reminded that awe is not a rare experience; it is a way of being that connects us more deeply to our belovedness, creation, one another, and God. This season invites us to soften our pace, to listen more deeply, and to be filled again with awe and wonder.

Fall 2024: Listening & Discernment

In the fall, we found ourselves in a season of discernment following the resignation of Anna Pearson, our Director of All God's Children Learning Center. This presented an opportunity to open ourselves to the question of what now. Through prayer, listening, conversation, and discernment, the congregation chose to begin a new chapter with a collaboration with Lake Area Discovery Center. Thank you to the All God's Children Board and Task Force Members for their faithful and thoughtful leadership and work with this process. This decision reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting children and families, and to shaping spaces of love and learning that reflect our values.

In the midst of this transition, we also took bold steps toward renewal in our physical space, discerning options for sanctuary lighting and HVAC work. These are not just maintenance decisions; they are investments in accessibility, sustainability, and welcome for all who use our building.

Winter 2024-25: Transitions and Tenderness

Winter brought with it a season of change. We honored the retirement of Hsu-hui Wang, who served for two years as our Director of Music. Elim Lutheran Church also made the difficult decision to end our shared partnership to support a full-time Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries. We also celebrated new life with Kelsey Pierson, our Ministry Support Coordinator, who began a year-long leave following the birth of her son, Finley. In the midst of this change, we also welcomed new staff members: Sally Daniels Herron, serving as our Interim Ministry Support Coordinator for the year, and Christine Weatherman, who began her role as our new Director of Music. I continue to give thanks to our thoughtful, faithful, and joyful staff members.

Now: A Season of Becoming

And now, here we are, in a season of becoming. Building projects are underway. HVAC work is beginning. Office and storage spaces are shifting. Summer construction with Lake Area Discovery Center is on the horizon. There is dust and noise and movement everywhere, and in it, the Spirit is stirring.

But more than just the building is changing. We are changing. I see all of you caring for one another, sharing your resources with each other, supporting each other, and in all things, sharing the love of Christ with all people. And, the energy here is contagious, as we are seeing more and more visitors each week experience the same energy and love that I pray all of you have and continue to experience. We are becoming more fully who we are called to be.

And we do all this in the context of a nation that is weary and uncertain. We feel it in the headlines, in our conversations, in the quiet parts of our hearts. And yet, even now, we trust in a God who meets us in weariness and still speaks peace. We believe in the power of community to heal what is broken, to tell the truth in love, and to act with compassion and courage.

At Valley of Peace, no matter the season, we remain committed to the sacred work of healing, justice, and peace. This is not a trend or a campaign, it is the heart of our calling and work as a church. And it is a joy and a privilege to walk with you in this season.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Ashley

Treasurer's Report

The 2024 expenses approved by the congregation was \$387,748, and we ended the year with deficit of \$30,153.

Income for the year totaled \$358,256 which was below budget estimates as the result of weaker member giving.

Expenses for the year totaled \$388,409 which was in line with budget for the year.

Also at the end of 2024, Valley of Peace had over \$659k invested with Thrivent from the Dorothy Sanford estate. In 2024, we used \$200k from Dorothy Sanford fund as part of the Rejoice & Renew capital campaign.

Many thanks to the finance team, which includes Dave Gilyard, Steve Hoge, Matt Stettler, Pam Syverson, Judy Greeninger, and Pastor Ashley.

Joe Thom, Valley of Peace Treasurer

Audit Team Report

The audit has not been completed at this point.

Adult Faith Formation Team Report

Adult Forum

We had a wonderful lineup of topics and presenters in 2024-25 for Adult Faith Formation. Our general themes were Bible Study, Current Events and Our Christian Response, Justice, and "potluck"- a variety of topics.

Highlights from each of these themes included the following:

Bible Study Topics

- Manna and Mercy (7 sessions) - Laurie Eaton, Jon and Ruth Larson
- Faith Stories that are Not Original to the Bible - Paul Mikelson
- Our Greatest Glory--Luther's Genesis Lectures - Pace Warfield
- Favorite Parables - Paul Mikelson

Current Events and Our Christian Response Topics

- Christian Nationalism – Ruth Larson
- The Israeli-Hamas Conflict – Paul Mikelson
- Establishing Independent Judiciaries in former Soviet countries - Judge Robert Carolan
- Climate Change – Ann Dybvig (postponed until next fall)
- Artificial Intelligence Exploring Generative AI - Andy Dybvig

Justice Topics

- Sojourner Project (domestic violence non-profit & shelter) - Courtney Flug
- Bread for the World – Marty and Dottie Fergus
- East Side Neighborhood Services: Vital Living Program - Caitlin Enright
- Exodus Lending - Anne Leland & Meghan Biebighauser
- Video: Huson Smith: Tribute to a Religious Visionary
- Queer Theology - Pace Warfield
- Parenting with Purpose - Lori Strong
- Golden Valley Equity / Inclusion Manager - Sean Kaempfer

Potluck Topics

- Christianity in Taiwan - Hsu-hui Wang
- Pop Culture and Theology - Pace Warfield
- Viewing/participating in the Children's Faith Formation gallery- Pace Warfield
- Medicare 101 and Medicare Updates - Margaret Wallace
- Faith expressed in art through the ages and around the world - Barb Mikelson
(Bonus trip to MIA led by Barb in the afternoon)
- Global Mission – Guest Speaker Pastor Melissa Gonzales
- Honoring Haha Wakpadan: The Basset Creek Oral History Project - Crystal Boyd
- Christmas Games - Jon Larson
- Noble School - Robbinsdale district volunteer coordinator - Mindy Potvin
- “My work with the Synod” - Emily Moravec
- Who Do You Want to Be When You Grow Old? - Jon and Ruth Larson

Small Group Bible Study

In addition to Sunday Adult Forum, there are two small-group Bible study options for women and men this year. Coordinated by Elaine Lofquist, Rebecca's Circle is a monthly meeting offering an opportunity for women to socially reconnect and followed the Bible study offered in Gather magazine. On Thursday mornings, a study of the week's upcoming scriptures is led by Pastor Ashley, Laurie Eaton, Dr. and Pace Warfield.

VoP Book Club

In about 1996, about a dozen people gathered weekly to discuss Rick Warren's popular book “The Purpose Driven Church”. In the nearly 30 years since, the makeup of the group ebbed and flowed. Over a hundred books have been read and discussed and as importantly, friendships were forged. Borrowing from an overused phrase, “what happened in book club, stayed in book club” and discussions were sometimes shortened to make time for providing support during people's invariable hard times. Despite continuing to use Zoom and adopting a mix of remote and in-person meetings, the small core of members has made the sad decision that we lack enough regular members to continue. We hope this is a pause and that our group will revive if a handful people wishing to be “regulars” emerge.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Hoge and Nancy Rogness

It is a joy to work with the dedicated members of the Adult Faith Formation committee who bring enthusiasm and ideas, lead sessions, invite speakers, promote, and show up to learn about our journey with God and his world.

Submitted by Jon Larson
Adult Faith Formation Committee Chair

Children, Youth, and Family Ministries Team Report

A theme for the past year for children, youth, and family ministries, as with Valley of Peace at large, is one of transition. As All God's Children transitions to being a part of the Lake Area Discovery Center, the building and especially lower level transitions in preparation for construction, and I, the Director of Children, Youth, and Family ministry, transitioned from being in a shared ministry position with Elim Lutheran Church to working solely at Valley of Peace for a few months, these transitions mirror many transitions that go on in families, with work and school transitions, moving, new life and additions to the family, and the passing on of loved ones. Due to all this transition, I endeavored to make the Children's Faith Formation and Confirmation programs of Valley of Peace a place of stable welcome for our families.

Changes to the Children, Youth, and Family Ministries Director Position

In the fall of 2023, Valley of Peace and Elim Lutheran Church entered a partnership to split the CYF position between the two congregations, sharing in a vision for joint ministry. Due to budgetary constraints, Elim ended the partnership in March 2025. Valley of Peace kept the position on full time through the end of May 2025, at which point the position will transition to half-time. It was sad to lose the connection between the two congregations as there were many exciting things in the works and a growing vision for what a joint CYF program could look like. Much of the spring of 2025 has involved a reimagining of the future of CYF ministry without Elim's partnership.

Existing Programs

Valley of Peace continued its ongoing Sunday morning Children's Faith Formation with a year-long curriculum called Cloud of Witnesses, where participants learned about people who lived out their faith in their own circumstances. The curriculum concluded on May 11, 2025 with a gallery available for the entire congregation to see what the children have learned the past year.

Confirmation continued on Wednesday evenings. Three youth were confirmed on Reformation Sunday, 2024. This year focused on learning about the Bible, and confirmands and mentors spent the year learning about God's story which continues even to today.

Youth Group saw many shared opportunities between Valley of Peace and Elim, with two open mic nights (one in May 2024, the other in November 2024), service projects (including a trip to Feed My Starving Children), and a joint Christmas party. Valley of Peace joined Wildfire congregations in sending three youth to the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July 2024. This year, Valley of Peace anticipates sending five youth to North Carolina for a mission trip to provide hurricane relief in partnership with Wildfire congregations.

Finally, Valley of Peace and Elim had a joint Vacation Bible School in August 2024, where twenty-five children from both congregations and the community came together for a week to learn about showing compassion to each other and the planet. For Vacation Bible School in 2025, Valley of Peace is participating in the Wildfire Vacation Bible School in August 2025, hosted at Cross of Glory Lutheran Church.

New Programs

Due to all the transition, providing stability through existing programming was a central goal. Even so, there were new opportunities for the families of Valley of Peace including a children and youth choir that performed on Palm Sunday and will again on Pentecost, confirmation leadership in worship planning for the Second Sunday of Easter, and greater youth and confirmation participation in the Lenten midweek worship services and soup suppers.

Future

The future for Valley of Peace's children, youth, and family ministries is brighter than ever. With the success of the Rejoice and Renew capital campaign which will bring updates to our building, CYF ministries will be able to continue to do awesome and amazing things that were harder to do without the functioning kitchen, such as the return of popular fundraising events like a youth-served meal to the community.

Peace and all good,

Dr. Pace Warfield

Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries

Hospitality Team Report

This was our third year having the coffee cart out in the Narthex so that folks can easily get coffee and a treat after worship and not need to go into the Fireside Room. We continue to think this is a good idea, especially for visitors.

We continue to send cards to our shut-ins on a monthly basis so that they feel included in small ways with the church. We use a variety of cards; some of them handmade. If you know of anyone who should be receiving a card, please let us know!

Our team stands ready to welcome new members to our congregation, including matching new members with a current VoP member mentor who helps make sure their questions get answered. This year, thanks to the carpentry talent of VoP member, Jon Daniels, we installed a "Blessings Box" on the Bridgeway. Valley of Peace members generously donated non-perishable food items as well as things like Band-aids, tissues, feminine hygiene products, socks, shampoo, deodorant, etc. and then during the winter months, we added mittens, hats and scarfs...many of them handmade! It has been very well received by our neighbors!

We want to thank our committee members, Julia Madison, Chrys Johnson, Margaret Wallace, Matt Stetler, and Diane Hinderlie. Although not "official" members, Christine Weatherman and Sara Hoge send many, many cards, Nancy Rogness often helps with the Coffee Cart and Anna Halvorson volunteers at the Welcome Center. We are so grateful for their wonderful help! It is very much appreciated!

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Daniels Herron and Abby Stetler

Property Team Report

The properties team largely consists of a loose-knit group of volunteers gleaned from a Fix-It-Crew list and names added from a volunteer interest survey done last year. If you would like your name added, please contact Dan and indicate your area of interest such as plumbing, painting, etc. In addition, a more formal team meeting bi-monthly would be ideal. Members need not actually do any work or have any talent other than planning and prioritizing maintenance projects and be willing to tell other people what to do.

Ongoing maintenance occurred, as always. Leaky flat roofs, leaky drains, painting, and the like were typical over the course of the last year. Of larger significance was the reroofing of the steep asphalt shingled area over the sanctuary which was damaged by hail over a year ago and paid for with insurance money.

Outdoor planting areas were tended last season by a vigorous group of volunteers and were much appreciated. This year, we have a number of people that have signed up, but are in need of more. If not blessed with a green thumb, there is the opportunity to prove it by keeping the tree suckers from growing along the daycare fences.

The trash area has become something of an eyesore. We are looking at adding weekly trash pickup which should alleviate overflowing dumpsters. However, more needs to be done for aesthetic and zoning ordinance reasons. Enclosure options are being studied, so expect some improvements soon.

Bulbs for the sanctuary lighting fixtures at the altar area were no longer available, so replacement options were considered and new LED fixtures that are more energy efficient and longer lived were designed, put out for bids, and recently installed. Special thanks to Matt Dellwo for his help and expertise.

And finally, work in the upcoming lower level, mechanical, and new daycare provider projects have required that we make way for those changes to occur. The boiler and mechanical rooms have been cleared out and put into temporary storage to make way for the mechanical work to take place. To make way for daycare revisions, the choir room has been cleared out for a "gross motor room". (The choir will practice in Fellowship Hall.) As part of the Lower Level project, the Sunday School Office has been cleared out and moved into an alcove of the Youth Room. The Music Office has moved into the former Sunday School Office, which was repainted. And the old Music Office now stores chairs and tables that were formerly housed in Fellowship Hall and perimeter hallways, a great improvement. It was musical chairs with no losers. The many volunteers that helped in these efforts were incredible and a real blessing.

Dan Weatherman

Racial Justice Team Report

Racial Justice Team Members: Ann Dybvig, Laurie Eaton, Barb Mikelson, Nancy Rogness, Marty Fergus, Sara Blood, and Skip Humphrey. Staff liaison: Pastor Ashley Osborn.

In May of 2024 we responded to a request from the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE) team and Twin Cities Young Adult Ministries, to financially support young BIPOC Adults to participate as leaders for this event, with the goal of raising up new adult leaders of color as mentors and models for youth. Our request to the Valley of Peace Trust, in the amount of \$1,500, was approved. The VoP Racial Justice team believes that this is in keeping with our congregational commitment to engage in promoting racial justice in all aspects of our life together. Making use of our financial resources to raise up and support new leaders who would otherwise not be able to participate in this way is one way of exercising our privilege on behalf of others.

Our team decided to take a step back from creating regular “field trips” for congregation members, as participation was beginning to lag. Instead, we opted to promote racial justice events that were taking place in the larger community, for members to pursue on their own.

We continued working on our Land Acknowledgement. Our intention to connect the launch of our land acknowledgement with the renovation work by the Bassett Creek Watershed District has been postponed, as no work has been done yet. Crystal Boyd from Valley Community Presbyterian Church presented at an Adult Forum in January about the Haha Wakpadan/Bassett Creek Oral History Project they conducted. We submitted our Land Acknowledgment to the VoP Church Council for approval, and hope to have it approved by the congregation at our Annual Meeting in May.

VoP proposed Land Acknowledgement:

“We acknowledge that we live and worship near waters and on land taken from the Wahpekute band of the Santee Dakota Nation, who were the original inhabitants of this area. We honor their wise stewardship of this place and their recognition that we are all part of the same creation.

The injustice and trauma experienced by Native civilizations, with the arrival of the Europeans in America, have had a lasting impact on these nations. We are responsible to recognize and counter the historical and contemporary injustices that continue in our time.

We honor with gratitude the spirit of the peoples from long ago, the spirit of the Native people who live among us today, and the spirit filled people of Valley of Peace, united in this place.”

If approved by the congregation, we will work with VoP staff on how to incorporate this statement into our gatherings and our written documents.

After some soul-searching and conversation, as a team we realized that the consideration of “Racial Justice” as a whole is simply too big and overwhelming. With an acknowledgement of our limitations, we have decided for now to focus on one particular aspect of racial justice by developing our relationship with Tapestry Ministries. To that end we have supported them with a financial gift of funds that were collected to sponsor immigrants from Venezuela under a now-defunct government program to facilitate their prompt and safe move to the US. We attended worship at Tapestry, along with other members of VoP, in March. Pastor Melissa and Deacon Josue Gonzalez will again present at an Adult Forum to keep us informed about the current challenges and threats to immigrants under the GOP Administration. In addition, Tapestry Ministries will be added as a Mission of the Month for our ongoing financial support.

On a related issue, two members of the Racial Justice team (Ann Dybvig and Nancy Rogness) worked along with Ruth Larson to create a proposed plan for Valley of Peace in the event of a visit to our building from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This plan has been submitted to the church council for their consideration and implementation.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Eaton, on behalf of the Racial Justice Team

Social Ministry Team Report

Social Ministry is a vibrant, multi-faceted part of life at Valley of Peace, demonstrating the generosity and community involvement of so many of our members. Each month throughout the year we invite congregational support and participation with a designated ministry.

It is important to note that every one of our Mission of the Month initiatives supports, nourishes, assists and enhances the lives of individuals of every color and of many cultures in our community. This is our commitment to Racial Justice at work!

The organizations we support include –

- **Exodus Lending** is a nonprofit helping Minneapolis families break their cycle of payday loan debt. During the past year hundreds of families were assisted by this program, which not only helps them financially, but offers financial counselling so they can break the cycle of debt and extremely high interest.
- Valley of Peace has had a long-standing relationship with our neighboring school, **Noble Elementary**. In addition to having volunteers go in weekly to work with students on reading skills and other subjects, VOP members contribute to the **School Supply Drive and the Winter Clothing Drive**, for the students at Noble.
- **Every Meal** is a ministry that serves the children of Noble School by providing bags of food for their weekends. We partner with Valley Presbyterian and Unity Minneapolis in our support of Noble with this program.
- VOP participates in an annual build week with **Habitat for Humanity**. Our volunteers and our contributions support the Habitat organization and their work in affordable housing.
- Through **Loaves and Fishes**, a weekly free community meal is served at Brunswick United Methodist Church, Valley of Peace is committed to prepping and assisting once per month.

- **PRISM**, our local food shelf and housing support organization, is supported throughout the year with food and monetary contributions, and with gifts for the **Holiday Gift Drive**.
- As a founding church for **Cherish All Children**, VOP remains supportive and involved in keeping children safe from exploitation.
- We remain grateful for and committed to our status as a **Reconciling in Christ** congregation, offering a true welcome for all.
- With a focus on **Global Missions** in February, VOP continues to support ministries in the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, as well as other mission projects.

We will be adding Tapestry as our new January Mission of the Month and keep posted to find out how we can help the new AGC Discovery Center under Lake Area.

Here is a sampling of what has been accomplished in the past year.

- A successful **lefse and cookie sale**, as well as a **benefit concert** by Caritas for Cherish All Children
- **Many speakers** in Adult Faith Formation, keeping us informed about our various missions of the month
- Twenty-one volunteers (17 VOP members and 4 friends) showed up for the **Habitat for Humanity** build
- **Many volunteers have shown up for Loaves and Fishes, Global Missions, PRISM, Noble School, Cherish All Children and the Synod's "God's Work Our Hands" service day**
- VOP was a sponsor for, and many members participated in **PRISM's Taste of the Burbs** fundraiser
- Two hundred **newborn baby kits** were packed, doubling the number of last year
- VOP members donated a carload of household and cleaning items to **Crescent Cove**, a pediatric respite & hospice home in Brooklyn Center
- In January when **Prism** put a call out for toilet paper and cereal, VOP answered by filling the foyer
- **Loaves and Fishes** are currently serving between 60 and 85 meals each second Wednesday of the month
- Twelve individuals served in key planning or action roles for our mission organizations
- And finally, we received **\$6,964.00 in contributions in 2024!** These funds were distributed to our monthly mission organizations.

What a tale of generosity and commitment to social justice and equity at Valley of Peace! In addition to the monetary donations VOP members contributed piles of **winter clothing, school supplies, gifts, household items, and groceries** to our Mission of the Month organizations, as well as giving of time in volunteering for these organizations and others throughout the year.

Please consider how you can be involved in and supportive of these organizations that VOP has chosen to assist! I will be happy to connect you with congregation members involved with these community organizations!

Respectfully submitted by,
Dee Kendall
Council Member

Stewardship Team Report

Our Stewardship drive for 2025 focused on reducing our budgeted operating deficit by one-third. If we do that each year for 3 years, we will have a balanced budget. Valley of Peace members were asked to fill out a "response card" to indicate if they would be willing to "give a little bit more in 2025" to help with that effort. We received 42 forms back and, of those, 25 promised to give more this year. We are ever grateful for the financial support, volunteer support and the prayers of our members. We have a number of programs that reach out and help the community and those are made possible by the generosity of our members.

Paul Mikelson
Stewardship Chair

World Missions Team Report

The Primary event sponsored by the World Missions Team was a New Born Kits project for Global Health Ministries (GHM). In the previous year we constructed 100 kits, this year we doubled that effort with 200 kits. Each of these kits included: one towel, one wash cloth, two diapers and pins, one bar of ivory soap, one newborn stocking cap, one receiving blanket and one newborn cotton t-shirt of "onesie".

GHM sends Newborn Kits along with medical supplies and equipment to partners in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Liberia, Madagascar, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, where they are used to encourage women to visit their local hospital or clinic for prenatal care and assisted delivery.

This project was funded through donations provided by members of VoP, in addition to a \$250 gift certificate from Thrivent Financial. We also received numerous knit stocking caps and quilted receiving blankets. The Rebecca Circle also helped with a donation and treats for the volunteers.

The World Mission Team also hosted an adult forum on world religions and a faith moment.

Ann met with Pastor Melissa Gonzales to plan a time for interested VoP members to visit and worship with Tapestry church in Richfield. This is a bilingual, multicultural congregation.

Dan recommended we procure some Mission of the Month envelopes for Sunday worship so that it would make it easier for people to designate offerings. This is in process, more envelope racks will be needed.

Submitted by Dan Johnson on behalf of the team: Melissa Dellwo, Ann Dybvig, Patty Holmstrom, Darlene Lamker, Catherine Martinacco, and Barry Terrass

Worship & Music Team Report

Team Members

Chair: Sara Blood

Team Members: Pastor Ashley Osborn, Christine Weatherman, Beth Brandt, Hsu-hui Wang, Barb Mikelson, Pat Hoyt, Laurie Eaton, Linda Franz, Pace Warfield, Kris Miller

Worship Planning & Leadership

- Continued rotation and inclusion in hymn selection led by Pastor Ashley. New Music Director Christine Weatherman will continue coordination in the coming year.
- Coordination of lay volunteers, with new scheduling efforts to avoid gaps and support newly confirmed youth and new members.
- Introduction of regular publication of lectionary texts in bulletins to support congregational engagement with *We Make the Road by Walking*.

Special Services

- All Saints (Nov. 3): Candle lighting during communion; roses honored baptisms and recent deaths.
- Thanksgiving Eve: Led by Pastor Wes Syverson with contributions from W&M and the broader congregation for setup and pie service.
- Advent Season: Included traditional services and themes (Hope, Joy, Peace, Love); highlights:
 - Advent II (Dec. 8): Inclusive Children's Program.
 - Advent III (Dec. 15): Christmas Music Celebration with choirs and bells.
 - Longest Night (Dec. 21): Reflective service with symbolic stone activity.
 - Christmas Eve (Dec. 24): Candle lighting service with safety issues addressed after falling tealights from roof replacement.
- Lessons & Carols (Dec. 29): Themed on Martin Luther, coordinated by Pastor Ashley and Leslie Gilyard.
- Lenten Services: Weekly soup suppers (March 12–April 9) returned for the first time since Covid, Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* study, and reflective prayer services on social justice themes.
- Holy Week & Easter: Emphasis on reflection and tradition with new lighting for Good Friday and celebration on Easter with a processional and trumpet accompaniment.

Music & Staff Transitions

- Retirement and recognition for Music Director Hsu-hui Wang
- Interim leadership:
 - Christine Weatherman (choir)
 - Pace Warfield (bell choir)
- Search completed for Music Director with hiring of Christine Weatherman

Projects & Improvements

Lighting Project:

- Thorough review of outdated and unsafe sanctuary lighting.
- Multiple bids considered; final installation completed in March. Services moved to Fellowship Hall during installation.

Paraments Care:

- Damaged paraments professionally cleaned; protective storage solutions being sourced.
- Parament transport coordination by Dan Weatherman and Linda Franz.

Baptism Booklets:

- Redesigned to connect with All Saints Day, created by Pace, reducing the need for photographers and external printing.

Team Engagement

- High/low check-ins opened each meeting, fostering connection and care.
- Form thank-you letters to worship volunteers coordinated by Sara and Parish Coordinator Kelsey Pierson, with personalized notes from team members.
- Pastoral leadership and team presence were consistent throughout the year despite staff transitions.

Ongoing Work

- Continued coordination of special services and support for annual traditions.
- Integration of new members and volunteers.
- Collaboration with other committees (e.g., for Palm Sunday brunch, Global Missions during Lent).

Worship Arts Team Report

The Valley of Peace Worship Arts committee has completed its ninth year of creative work for our church. Our goal is to explore all the possibilities of worship, art, visuals and creativity for our church spaces and for our congregation members.

- Throughout this past year, we have focused on simple enhancements to our sanctuary, utilizing the banners and cloth drapes that we have in our inventory, that call forth the liturgical colors of each church season.
- We have worked with both the Worship and Music Committee, and the Altar Care team in our efforts this year, and appreciate their collaboration, as well as the support from Pastor Ashley.
Thank you to all on our team!!
- We are also grateful to the many congregation members who help in decorating the church for the Advent and Christmas seasons.
- During the Lenten season, we enjoyed a beautiful photography exhibit in the Fireside Room. We featured photographs and accompanying Haiku poems by our own Dan Johnson.

Our group includes Anna Campbell, Dan Weatherman, Melissa Dellwo, Matt Dellwo, Barb Mikelson, Emilie Moravec, Kristy Collin and Ben Brandt. **We would love to have more people to join our team! Please consider this ministry for our church, whether you need an outlet for your creative energies, or just like to help others make things look beautiful! Just talk with any of us for more information.**

Respectfully submitted,
Barb Mikelson

Rejoice & Renew Capital Campaign Continuation Task Force Report

Rejoice and Renew - Year one

We were very happy with the results from our Rejoice and Renew campaign that resulted in almost \$1.3 million in pledges. 22 gifts were one-time gifts and many of those have been paid in full. 57 gifts are being paid in monthly, quarterly or annual installments and almost all of those are up to date. Only a few donors have not paid anything yet - but it is a three year campaign, so there is still plenty of time. In the 12 months from April 2024 to March 2025, we collected \$742,679 from donors to use in our various physical plant improvement projects.

With a recent additional pledge, we are only \$8,588 away from reaching our ultimate goal. We are hopeful that a few members, including new members, will help us raise that amount. Our Campaign Continuation Committee is continuing to work towards that end.

Pastor Ashley, Lauren Pockl, Diane Hinderlie, Paul Mikelson

Lower Level Task Force Report

At VoP's Annual Meeting in May 2024, the Congregation approved a contract with our Architect, Miller Dunwiddie, for the final design, construction and bidding documents. This phase provides a level of detail required of general contractors to bid the project.

With approval given to proceed, we held a number of meetings with our Architect, AGCLC, and some of the VoP Ladies that most frequently work in the kitchen for various events. Decisions were made for the following ...

Kitchen

- Selected flooring and wall surface coverings
- Decision made to use 3 electric Induction Pods for frying surfaces (no harmful gas emissions)
- 2 Convection Ovens – stacked
- VoP – 1 single door Refrigerator; AGCLC – 1, 2-door refrigerator and 1 small freezer
- Quartz Serving and Dirty Dish Counters
- Motorized rolling closure for serving and dirty dishes counters
- Dishwasher – ventless

Fellowship Hall

- Selected flooring and paint for walls
- Decided on a design for the front of the Fellowship Hall
- New double-pane energy efficient non-opening windows
- Replace ceiling lighting

ADA Restroom

- Selected flooring, ceramic wall tiles and paint for this room

With the design plans nearly complete in October, Rapids Kitchen worked closely with the Architect to provide the final MEP (mechanical, electrical, plumbing) rough-in detail, which is needed by General Contractors to bid appropriately.

By mid-November, all the phases and pieces of the Lower Level Renovation Project were coming together. At that time, we felt confident that we would be able to put the Project out for competitive bidding by early January 2025.

Late November, saw several new variables introduced that would have impact on the scope of the renovations ...

1. The high cost associated with the complete replacement and upgrade of VoP's HVAC Systems
2. We were made aware that an outside company - Lakes Area Development Center (LADC) would possibly be taking over management of AGCLC.

Anticipating the need to reduce costs based on preliminary construction estimates of April 2024, and taking advantage of less kitchen space requirements by LADC, Dan Weatherman proposed an alternative floor plan for the Kitchen and the location of the ADA Restroom.

With unanimous acceptance of the Revised Plan by the LL Team, a meeting was held with Hennepin County Health, Rapids Kitchen, Architect, and VoP Kitchen Ladies for reviewing of the Plan. With the feeling by all that the proposed revisions would work, and meet Health Department requirements for daily use by the Learning Center, it was agreed that we would move ahead with the revised floor plan.

A new agreement with our Architect, Miller Dunwiddie was required for the re-work of the plans. The agreement to proceed with Miller Dunwiddie was approved by VoP's Executive Team in late March.

The following cost reductions are anticipated with the revised Plan ...

- Relocation of planned ADA Restroom takes advantage of closer proximity to sanitation line and water source
- Leaves existing storage space and music office in north hallway as is. No demolition or construction of walls
- Keeps the front Fellowship Hall nearly intact, except for openings for service windows
- Do not have to relocate large duct work at the front of the Fellowship Hall
- Kitchen square footage footprint will be somewhat reduced
- Repositioning of the dishwasher to take advantage of existing plumbing/drain

In the Fellowship Hall, we will only ask for bids on the new energy-efficient windows and work required to accommodate the Serving and Dirty Dish openings. We will not ask for bids for new flooring, painting, or new lighting fixtures.

It should also be noted that the Revised Plan includes several prep surfaces and lowered sinks to meet accessibility requirements. Also, an additional door has been added for access to the West Hallway and a coffee-prep bar and storage cabinetry have been added.

With the revised plans currently being worked on by our Architect and Rapids Kitchen, they anticipate that the required construction documents, including MEP's, should be available by May 30. Thank you for your outstanding response to the Rejoice and Renew Campaign that will make the proposed improvements possible.

Many thanks to the Lower Level Improvement Team ... Sally Daniels Herron, Pete Mikelson, Pr Ashley Osborn, Sten Pearson, Dan Weatherman.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Team ...
Dave Gilyard

Mechanical Systems Task Force Report

The Mechanical Systems Task Force's work is beginning to come to fruition. To review, it was determined that nearly all of the major mechanical equipment was in need of replacement within the next one to five years and that some areas of the building are not code compliant. Most are likely aware of the fickleness of the current 60-year-old boiler as an example. Working with the consultant through various scenarios, a replacement strategy was agreed upon that balanced affordability with energy efficiency. While the new system still uses natural gas and electricity for power, it utilizes a number of things to reduce the amount of energy used such as new boilers, air conditioner components, and pumps which will all be high efficiency. A sophisticated automation system will further reduce energy consumption by coordinating the various pieces of equipment to work together, only bringing in hot or cold fresh air when needed, and controlling indoor temperature on a schedule (but can be adjusted remotely as desired). The temporary air conditioning units located in the office and Fireside Room will no longer be needed.

Minify Energy will be acting as construction manager. The total cost of the renovation project is \$857,667. Due to the energy saving aspect of the design, it's anticipated that rebates will total up to \$46,000 though the rebate applications cannot be made until after installation and are not guaranteed.

Demolition of the existing boiler began May 7. Other equipment will be demolished and replaced over the next few months. Air conditioning will be out of service in the sanctuary areas over the summer, so expect to be cooled by open windows if needed or in hotter conditions, services may be held in the Fellowship Hall. The entire project is expected to be completed sometime in early September.

I would like to thank the members of the committee for their work over the last few years: Joe Cherra was involved early on during the solar portion of the process. For all systems that we explored, the members are Steve Hogue, Skip Humphrey, Jim Jasper, Dave Gilyard, Pat McGraw, and myself.

Dan Weatherman

Altar Care Report

The Altar Care Team prepares the altar for worship and communion. We commune by intinction with homemade bread, gluten-free wafers, and pre-filled communion kits. We are serving communion every Sunday.

We continue to use Best Wishes Florists in Golden Valley for our Sunday flowers sponsored by congregation members.

Our team members are Kathy Boesen, Claudia Arohnson, Pat Hepner, Steve Collin, Melissa Dellwo. Our bread bakers are Barb Mikelson, Pam Syverson, Jon Osborn, Laurie Eaton, Christine Weatherman, Lisa Thanghe as well as Kathy Boesen and Pat Hepner. We will always welcome new members. Linda Franz, Chair

Every Meal Report

Every Meal is the week-end food program for Noble School supported by VOP and two partner churches. This program offers five culturally diverse food choices that families can sign-up for through the school. The food bags are distributed every Friday during the school year.

Valley of Peace supports this ministry with volunteers and also with financial giving. Last year the cost per child was about \$370.00 for the 40 week program. Along with our partner churches, we commit funds every year to help off-set the cost of the program.

Food insecurity is very real for families in our community and Every Meal is a way for us to help the families at Noble School. We are hoping, through the Mission of the Month, that we can continue to fund this very important ministry.

God's Peace,
Linda Franz, Every Meal Coordinator for VOP
Dee Kendall, Social Ministries Chair

Personnel Committee Report

The VoP Personnel Committee works to assure consistent, professional, and fair employment practices for our church staff members. The committee includes elected members Melissa Dellwo, Tara Kuckkan, Pastor Ashley, and Council Past-President Pat McGraw. Membership is defined by VoP Bylaws.

This committee does not meet on a regular schedule, but meetings and discussions take place as relevant topics arise.

This year the Committee:

Interviewed and hired Christine Weatherman as Director of Music.

Reviewed and revised the Director of Music job description.

Revised Pace Warfield's position as the Director of Children, Youth & Family after the unexpected end to the shared position with Elim Lutheran Church.

Appointed Christine Weatherman Temporary Director of Music and Pace Warfield Temporary Bell Choir Director.

Negotiated departure and PTO for the outgoing Director of Music.

Reviewed the Continuing Education policy.

Planned for and recruited Interim Ministry Support.

Reviewed and revised Family Leave policies due to changes in legal requirements.

Reviewed Sabbatical Leave Policy.

Approved Kelsey Pearson's sabbatical request.

Reviewed our Parental Leave Policy.

We wish to express our appreciation to Pastor Ashley and the entire staff of Valley of Peace for their continuing leadership.

Respectfully submitted, Melissa Dellwo

All God's Children Learning Center Report

A Look Back at This Year

This year has been one of big transitions and meaningful growth at All God's Children Learning Center. With Lake Area Discovery Center partnering with us, we're navigating change together, and through it all, our amazing team has remained focused on what matters most: creating a safe, loving, and supportive environment for our children.

Change isn't always easy, but it has brought our staff closer together. We've learned, adapted, and worked as a team to ensure that our center continues to feel like a second home for both our families and our little ones.

We're proud of how far we've come and so grateful for the dedication, kindness, and heart our staff brings every day. As we look ahead, we're excited to keep building on this foundation of care, connection, and teamwork.

With our partnership with Lake Area Discovery Center, our center will be getting a facelift in the near future to bring some much needed updates to the building. The biggest and most exciting change will be adding bathrooms directly to our preschool and Pre-K classroom area - a long awaited improvement that will make a meaningful difference in daily routines and classroom management. These improvements will help us better support our children and staff.

Thank you to all our families, the board, and the Valley of Peace community for the trust and, more importantly, the support that you have given us this year, the years prior, and the years to come.

In service,
Kay Burns
Director All God's Children Learning Center

Endowment & Memorial Trust Report

Members of the Trust Board:

Bob Gullick, Christy Flicke, Jon Larson, Mary Hovden, Annette Balkenende, Zach Pierson, Matt Stetler, Steve Hoge

The purpose of the trust is to provide resources for new opportunities for the VOP mission that are not planned for in the budget of the congregation. Christian stewardship through the trust helps us to bless others beyond our own lifetimes.

Income from gifts to the trust provides the congregation with funds for new and unbudgeted programs or items. The principal stays in the trust and continues to grow. In addition to the general trust funds, the trust currently has two designated funds: for music and for youth programs.

A gift may occur while the donor is living or through the donor's will. An honoring gift in thankfulness for a living friend or family member is an excellent way to ensure that a person's gifts of ministry are carried on in perpetuity. Donations of any size are welcomed.

Highlights of our work in 2024:

- Established quarterly meetings
- Transferred the 1979 copy of the Trust Document to an editable PDF
- Discussed term limits
- Completed criteria for grants
- Presented at Church council
- Recruited two new members (Matt Stetler and Steve Hoge)
- Secured Pastor Wade to present on Trusts during Adult Faith Formation (April 28, 2024)
- Updated by-laws to include policy on designated funds sub-accounts
- Article in VOICE about Trust in August
- Temple Trust talk and cake in February to celebrate the anniversary of Trust
- Trust approved grants to improve garden beds, National Youth Gathering, ELCA Multicultural Youth Leadership Event

Goals for the trust in 2025:

- Establish a user-friendly location on the VoP Website
- Complete New Member Handbook

VOP Trust Investment Overview 2024

The majority of the investments are managed through UBS Financial Services Inc. Our investment allocation is a moderate risk profile. The allocation of investments at 12-31-2024 was:

Cash/Cash Alternatives	\$20,120.03	5.29%
Equities	\$190,240.70	50.05%
Fixed Income	\$169,760.75	44.66%

Total in UBS account as of 12-31-2024: \$380,121.48

The percentage change from 2023 was 16.4%.

Valley of Peace Endowment and Memorial Trust
December 31, 2024

INCOME AND EXPENSE	Year End 2024	Year End 2023	Year End 2022
Income			
Contributions	\$ 2,285	\$ 625	\$ -
Interest/Dividends	\$ 16,604	\$ 11,093	\$ 11,991
Market Value changes	\$ 17,803	\$ 27,986	\$ (70,105)
Total Income	\$ 36,692	\$ 39,705	\$ (58,114)
Expenses			
Grants approved from Trust	\$ 6,475	\$ 2,950	\$ 4,385
Investment Management Fees	\$ 175	\$ 175	\$ 175
Other Trust expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Expenses	\$ 6,650	\$ 3,125	\$ 4,560
Net Increase (Decrease) to Trust	\$ 30,042	\$ 36,580	\$ (62,674)
TRUST BALANCE	\$ 381,903	\$ 351,861	\$ 315,282

2024 Contributions

In Memory of Bob Hoyt	\$ 2,135.00
In Memory of Grace Belsaas	\$ 150.00
	\$ 2,285

2024 Grants Approved from Trust:

Boy Scout Eagle Project to repair, replace, and improve garden beds	\$1,000
National Youth Gathering 2024	\$2,500
ELCA Multicultural Youth Leadership Event 2024	\$1,500
Cake for Church Trust Celebration	\$25
VOP Music from their designated funds	\$1,100
VOP Youth from their designated funds	\$350
	\$ 6,475

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Minneapolis Area Synod
of the ELCA

On the evening of Jesus' resurrection, as two of his followers were walking along the road that leads from the city of Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus "talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them." - Luke 24

Grace and peace to you, beloved of Christ Jesus.

This resurrection story is a favorite. We walk together as church, and Jesus draws near and walks with us. The labors of the day, the content of our discussions, the swirl of society and politics, the hopes and fears, these things shift, and yet, Jesus walks with us and is known once again as we gather together around the table.

What a year this has been. This report to the worshipping communities of the Minneapolis Area Synod is an opportunity to look back on 2024, and to look ahead at the year to come. Most of all, it is an opportunity to name and celebrate some of the ways the Holy Spirit continues to enliven God's church. We give thanks to you and your congregation for your partnership in this ministry we share.

On May 4, 2024, you elected me to serve as your Bishop. On August 1, 2024, I took office, and on September 21, 2024, I was installed during a festive and moving worship service at Central Lutheran Church. This election represents a significant threshold in our synod's life as we continue by the Spirit's leading along paths yet unknown. Thank you for your trust and your continued prayers. We are particularly grateful for the intentional work of the Bishop's Election Committee. My deep thanks to Bishop Ann Svennungsen for her 12 years of faithful leadership, and for her generosity of wisdom and spirit as I learn the ropes. As I have restructured parts of our synod's ministry team, we have had several staff transitions. Some have completed their service, over the summer and fall we welcomed a few new staff, and in 2025 we will welcome more. Thank you to our staff for their patience, perseverance, faithful ministry, and good courage during a long transition.

Stepping into this role, I am more mindful than ever that we are **Church Together:**
Learning Together, Listening Together, Serving Together, Worshipping Together.



A few highlights from 2024



- 137** worshipping communities, including
 - 3** new starts
 - 8** congregational strategic ministries
- 3** congregations marked Holy Closures this year, honoring their years and ministry, and in closing, stewarded their assets by contributing to the Resurrection Fund.
- 11** languages spoken in worship



- 62** call processes in **55** congregations
- 8** ordinations of new pastors and deacons and **24** rostered ministers installed into new positions
- 34** people discerning a call to ministry and active in our candidacy process
- 305** pastors and deacons currently serving in our synod, and around **370** retired ministers
- 52** pastors and deacons serving in specialized ministries, including chaplains, educators, social ministry leaders, and missionaries



- 5** years of Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices cohorts supported by a grant from the Lilly Endowment's Thriving Congregations Initiative, with plans to apply for a scaling grant in 2025
- 17** congregations in the current cohort of Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices, and **13** in the first cohort (that's nearly 1/4 of our synod's congregations!)
- \$1.25 million** grant received from the Lilly Endowment for Family Faith – a project accompanying parents and caretakers from the Synod's new and strategic ministries. Watch for more details coming soon!



- 800** people attended the Bishop Installation in person, including **220** clergy
- \$2,681,409** pledged in Mission Support, with **50%** supporting MAS ministry and **50%** for ELCA ministry
- 2** companion synod partnerships: Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) and the Leipzig District-Evangelical Lutheran Church in Saxony, Germany, including visits from Archbishop Musa Filibus (LCCN), Superintendent Sebastian Feydt and Pastor Cristoph Reichl (Leipzig)



Synod staff supported leaders and congregations, convening, communicating, collaborating, and navigating conflicts

Hosted many special events such as an Eco Faith Summit, Boundaries Workshop, Bishop's Theological Conference, Ministeriums, and Communicators Gatherings



What a gift to reflect on the amazing ways we were Church Together in 2024! We look forward to 2025 with the Conference Assemblies in February, Synod Assembly (May 2 - 3), and the ELCA Churchwide Assembly (July 28 - August 2). We walk together as church, trusting that Jesus continues to come near and walk with us. We are Church Together. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Bishop Jen Nagel

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

All around us, we see signs of God's love and goodness. A person who has stepped away from church for many years steps back into a congregation, feeling the call of the Holy Spirit. Young adults feeling isolated in a digital-first world start gathering in person in a small group, enjoying the warmth of a hug and a new friend asking about their week. A mother plants a garden, and it yields fruits and vegetables, giving her nutritious food for her kids and extra produce to sell at the local market. Everywhere we look, we see signs of Christ's love. In Psalm 93, we read: "More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore" (4-5).

God's love is a majestic thing, and it moves us to share it in word and deed. The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, across our country and around the world.

I am so grateful for you, dear church. Your generosity to each of these three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has bolstered the church's ability to share the message of God's love to people who are longing for it. Through your

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—Psalm 93:4-5

financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices, you've helped carry this message of God's majestic love. Thank you, dear church. As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to stand steadfast in God's promises, sure of God's love and goodness.



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Membership Statistics

Baptized Members, as of May 2025: 260

Confirmed Members, as of May 2025: 225

Average Sunday Worship Attendance (In Person): 75

Average Sunday Worship attendance (on Facebook Live): 7

3 Baptized from May 2024 – May 2025

William Arlo Schueth
Finley George Pierson
Cameron Andrew Begg

3 Confirmed Members on October 27, 2024

Naomi Dybvig
Eleanor Gale
Olivia Laurent

1 Death from May 2024 – May 2025

Duane Eklin

13 New Members from May 2024 – May 2025

Vicki Anderson
Mike Belko
Elizabeth Hermeier
Dan Kempf
Sarah Kempf
Dan Miller
Kris Miller
Mark DiPietro
Keila DiPietro
Erika DiPietro
Heather White
Henry White
Joyce Wilson

Agenda for May 18, 2025
Annual Meeting

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Secretary's Report

Capital Campaign Update

Building Projects Update

President's Report

Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly Report

Approval of Land Acknowledgment

Election of New Officers & Council Members

Celebration and Installation

Adjournment