



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

MESSAGE FROM BISHOP

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP
ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

Over the past year we have continued to experience changes in the world around us. Even as our church finds ways to adapt to this changing world, we find hope in the unchanging and always present promise of God's love through Jesus Christ. We change and adapt not to conform to the world but because we believe that the gift of God's Son is for the world, and that our congregations and worshiping communities are places to gather and be sent into the world, where we will tell the story of God's love in word and deed.

The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the churchwide organization provide ways for the church to move beyond the boundaries of structures and geography and to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, our cities, our country and beyond. We engage in this ministry knowing that our church walks by faith, trusting in God's promise in the gospel, and that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word. In John 15:5, Jesus reminds us, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." We are connected by the promise that we do all through Christ and can do nothing apart from him.

God gives the Holy Spirit, who uses gospel proclamation — in preaching and sacraments, in forgiveness and in healing conversations — to create and sustain this faith. Just as we rely on God to sustain our faith, we rely on each other to sustain the ministries that offer God's love to the world. Through your generosity to each expression

of this church — your congregation, your synod and your churchwide organization — you add to our collective voice proclaiming God's love for all.

I am grateful for your generosity over this last year. My gratitude spreads far beyond your generous financial gifts. You've shared your gifts of time through countless hours of volunteering, serving and accompanying. You've shared the gifts of your voices as we've tried to discover and learn how God is calling us to be the church now and into the future. And, finally, dear church, you have shared the gift of the realness of God's love with the world around you. Be well, dear church, and stand steadfast in the promise of God's love and grace as you take that promise with you into the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

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

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” —John 15:5

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Son of God, Eternal Savior

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line of each system.

1 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,
2 As you, Lord, have lived for oth - ers, so may we for oth - ers live.
3 Come, O Christ, and reign a - mong us, King of love and Prince of peace;
4 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,

Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race,
Free - ly have your gifts been grant - ed; free - ly may your ser - vants give.
hush the storm of strife and pas - sion, bid its cru - el dis - cords cease.
Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race:

you our head, who, throned in glo - ry, for your own will ev - er plead:
Yours the gold and yours the sil - ver, yours the wealth of land and sea;
By your pa - tient years of toil - ing, by your si - lent hours of pain,
by your pray - ing, by your will - ing that your peo - ple should be one,

fill us with your love and pit - y, heal our wrong, and help our need.
we but stew - ards of your boun - ty held in sol - cmn trust will be.
quench our fe - vered thirst of plea - sure, stem our self - ish greed of gain.
grant, oh, grant our hope's fru - i - tion: here on earth your will be done.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 655

Text: Somerset C. Lowry

Music: IN BABILONE, Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse Boerenlities en Contradansen, 1710;

arr. Julius Röntgen

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ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY 14, 2024

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MEETING AGENDA

ATONEMENT LUTHERAN CHURCH
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
JANUARY 14, 2024 – 12:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

- Church Council President Dave Frank

OPENING DEVOTION

- Pastor Gene Talley

APPROVAL OF CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

- January 15, 2023

PASTORS' REPORTS

- Pastor Gene Talley
- Pastor Kevin Kretzmann Farrar

CHURCH COUNCIL & MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

- Refer to the Annual Report

CONGREGATIONAL ELECTIONS

- Nominating Committee Slate of New Church Council Members – 2024-2026
 - President-Elect / Vice President – Matt Luttmann
 - Secretary – Amanda King
 - Treasurer – Deb Tews
 - Administrative / Personnel – Carol Mohr
 - Children, Youth and Family – Laura Brogan
 - Outreach and Service – Renee Stadler
- Nominating Committee Slate of Synod Assembly Delegates
 - Dan Christianson – 2024
 - Mark LeMahieu – 2024
 - Youth Representative – TBD – 2024
 - Youth Representative – TBD – 2024

□ Nominating Committee – 2024

- President – Dave Frank
- President-Elect / Vice President – Matt Luttmann
- Past President – Lori Schantz
- Congregation Member at Large – Bruce Paul

MEETING AGENDA

OLD BUSINESS

- None

NEW BUSINESS

- Review and Approve 2024 Annual Ministry Plan Budget
 - Michelle Goetsch, Treasurer

- Approve 2025 Annual Congregational Meeting Date
 - Proposed – Sunday, January 12, 2025

- Recognition of Departing Bookkeeper
 - Larry Alber

- Recognition of Departing Financial Secretary
 - Doug Ehrick

- Recognition of Departing Audit Committee Members
 - Dan Christianson
 - Mike Hietpas
 - Diana Luttmann

- Recognition of Departing Nominating Committee Member
 - Bruce Paul

- Recognition of Departing Church Council Members
 - Michelle Goetsch, Treasurer
 - Judi Henry, Fellowship / Social Planning
 - Mark LeMahieu, Secretary
 - Tom Nickel, Administrative / Personnel
 - Marty Petersen, Outreach and Service

ADJOURNMENT

- Church Council President Dave Frank

CLOSING PRAYER

- Pastor Kevin Kretzmann Farrar

MEETING AGENDA

2024 CHURCH COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS – PROPOSED

Church Council Officers Term Expires

President	Dave Frank	2024
President-Elect / Vice President	Matt Luttmann *	2026
Secretary	Amanda King *	2026
Treasurer	Deb Tews *	2026

Standing Committees Term Expires

Executive Committee	<i>As defined by constitution</i>	2024
Administrative / Personnel	Carol Mohr *	2024
Building and Grounds	Andy Hesselbach	2025
Stewardship / Finance	Rachel Zabkowicz	2025

Special Committees Term Expires

Children, Youth and Family	Laura Brogan *	2026
Fellowship / Social Planning	Justin Geiger	2024
Outreach and Service	Renee Stadler	2026
WELCA	Candy Nemke	2024
Worship	Sally Munia	2025

Audit Committee Term Expires

Michelle Goetsch *	Member	2025
Mark LeMahieu *	Member	2025
Diane Luttmann *	Member	2025

Apple Tree Society – Mission Endowment Fund Term Expires

Dan Christianson	Member	2024
Doug Ehrick	Member	2025
Lisa Gandrud	Member	2025

* Denotes new Church Council and Committee members presented for election at the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 14, 2024.

NOTE: Church Council Officers and Committee Members require final approval at the Church Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 16, 2024.

ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING NOTES FROM YEAR PRIOR

Atonement Lutheran Church
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2023 – 12:00 pm (noon)

CALL TO ORDER – 12:01 pm

- 2023 total confirmed membership – 510
- Quorum requirement equal to 10% of confirmed members or 51 attendees.
- In-person attendees – 74; online attendees via Zoom – 14; total attendees – 88
- Quorum established with 88 confirmed members in attendance.

OPENING DEVOTION – Pastor Gene Talley

APPROVAL OF CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES:

- January 9, 2022 – pages 4-7
 - April 3, 2022 – page 8
 - August 7, 2022 – page 9
- A motion to approve all three meeting minutes was made by Dan Christiansen, seconded by Renee Stadler, and adopted by Congregation members attending in person and members participating online through a Zoom poll with results >50%.

PASTOR'S REPORTS

- Pastor Gene Talley
- Printed in the Annual Report – page 14
- Pastor Kevin Kretzmann Farrar
- Printed in the Annual Report – page 15-16

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- Council President Lori Schantz
- Printed in the Annual Report – page 17

FINANCIAL REPORT

- Council Treasurer Michelle Goetsch

MINISTRY STAFF & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Atonement Ministry Staff and Committee Reports
- Printed in the Annual Report – pages 21-36 and pages 38-44

ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING NOTES FROM YEAR PRIOR

ELECTIONS:

□ Nominating Committee Slate of New Council Members (2023-2025)

- Building and Grounds – Andy Hesselbach
- Children, Youth and Family – TBD
- Stewardship/Finance – Rachel Zabkowicz
- Worship – Sally Munia
- The new Church Council members were adopted by Congregation members attending in person and members participating online through a Zoom poll with results >50%. NOTE: A motion and second were not required for this vote.

□ Nominating Committee Slate of Synod Assembly Delegates for 2023

- Dan Christianson
- Candy Nemke
- Matthew Gandrud – Youth Representative
- Greta Geiger – Youth Representative
- A motion to approve the Synod Assembly delegates was made by Sally Munia, seconded by Wendy Hunjadi, and adopted by Congregation members attending in person and members participating online through a Zoom poll with results >50%.

□ Mission Endowment Fund (Apple Tree Society)

- Dan Christianson (2023-2024)
- Doug Ehrick (2023-2025)
- Lisa Gandrud (2023-2025)
- The Mission Endowment Fund Committee members were adopted by Congregation members attending in person and members participating online through a Zoom poll with results >50%. NOTE: A motion and second were not required for this vote.

□ Nominating Committee for 2023

- Council President – Dave Frank
- Council Vice President – to be selected at the January Church Council meeting.
- Council Past President – Lori Schantz
- Congregational Member at Large – Bruce Paul
- The Nominating Committee were adopted by Congregation members attending in person and members participating online through a Zoom poll with results >50%. NOTE: A motion and second were not required for this vote.

ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING NOTES FROM YEAR PRIOR

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

□ None

NEW BUSINESS

□ REVIEW AND APPROVE 2023 ANNUAL MINISTRY PLAN

- Atonement 2023 Annual Ministry Plan was presented by Treasurer Michelle Goetsch

- Printed in the Annual Report – page 37

- The Annual Ministry Plan as presented was adopted by Congregation members attending in person and members participating online through a Zoom poll with results >50%. NOTE: A motion and second were not required for this vote.

□ APPROVAL OF UPDATED CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

- Constitution and Bylaws for 2016, 2019, and 2022 were reviewed and revised by Gary Dostal, Mark LeMahieu, and Lori Schantz

- The updates to the Atonement Constitution and Bylaws were adopted by Congregation members attending in person and members participating online through a Zoom poll with results >50%. NOTE: A motion and second were not required for this vote.

□ 2024 ANNUAL MEETING DATE

- Sunday, January 14, 2023 at 12:00 pm (noon)

□ RECOGNITION OF DEPARTING 2022 COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Jenny Mueller, Ron Nemke, and Lori Schantz

□ ADJOURNMENT

- Time – 12:26 pm

- A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mike Gandrud, seconded by Mary Mooney, and adopted by Congregation members attending in person and members participating online through a Zoom poll with results >50%.

□ CLOSING PRAYER – Pastor Kevin Kretzmann Farrar

The Atonement Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes were submitted by Mark LeMahieu, Council Secretary, and Lori Schantz, Council President.

AUDIT REPORT

The audit/review team met to review the records for the 2022 calendar year. This year's team consisted of Mike Hietpas, CPA, Diana Luttmann, CPA, Dan Christianson. The review was done with the help of Larry Alber and Sandy Zielinski who furnished the necessary records and answered questions that were needed to complete our task. The complexity of Atonement's financial record keeping is handled by our Power Church Management System Program. The program tracks our assets which are in 4 different financial institutions. It also tracks our financials which are divided into 6 areas of focus: #1 Ministry Plan Fund, #2 Mission Endowment Fund, #3 Memorial Fund, #4 Capital Improvement Fund, #5 Mission Partners Fund, #6 Outdoor Worship Ministries Fund.

The complexity of accurately recording donations was again noted since there are 4 different ways to contribute. The usual cash/checks came through offering plates/baskets, as well as electronic giving through Vanco Simple Giving, Breeze and PayPal.

The check register was reviewed and cross checked with paperwork as to who the check was issued to and for what purpose. No issues were found.

Once again the major issue from this review is the receipt of contributions coming from 4 different sources. Each has a different timeline as to when the monies are actually transferred to Atonement. To complicate things further, each donation source has a different fee for their services which makes for an accounting nightmare to say the least. That makes this a rather expensive process. The bank deposits were reviewed but again this is also very complex and confusing based on the 4 sources used for giving. A suggestion was made to hold a Cyber Security class for the staff as well as those dealing with church funds since this is an issue in today's electronic age. It was also asked that the bookkeeper/accountant be allowed to use electronic payments for regular monthly bills.

It was also noted that WELCA has its own checking account. It was recommended that they submit a financial statement of contributions and distributions of their funds for the annual report as well.

In summary, this team found that Atonements Books are in excellent condition. A big THANK YOU again goes to Larry Alber, our bookkeeper, and those who work with him in this huge task.

Also, Thank You to this audit team for taking the time to review the 2A22 books of Atonement Lutheran Church.

Dan Christianson - Chair, 2022 Audit Team 2023

PASTORAL REPORTS

PASTOR GENE TALLEY

I find myself preparing this report in the midst of planning for Advent and Christmas. Advent happens to be my favorite season of the church's liturgical year. I believe the themes of hope, waiting, anticipation, and preparation are particularly fitting metaphors for our lives as Christians. As followers of Jesus, we live in the midst of the already-but-not-yet realities of Advent. We are people who are heirs to promises made long ago – some of those promises Jesus has already fulfilled, while we continue to wait for the fulfillment of others. It is not unlike the reality of having purchased someone a Christmas gift, but not yet having given it to them... or like the expectation that comes from believing – knowing – that someone has purchased an important gift from your wish list, but not having received it yet.

This past year with you has been a year full of many firsts for me – my first Holy Week and Easter with you... my first experience worshiping and leading worship in our Outdoor Worship Center... my first opportunity to be a part of First Communion, Bible Presentation, and other celebrations. Each experience has included plenty for me to learn, adding to my own feeling of already-but-not-yet being your senior pastor.

As I reflect on the past year, several things stand out. One is the Reconciling In Christ (RIC) process, which you can read about in a separate report. I share with you several others here.

Children's Christian Theater

In March Atonement hosted a performance of Praystation by Children's Christian Theater. Two members of Atonement were in the performance, Griffin Geiger and Isabel Talley. The performance we hosted was not the only one I attended, and I was struck not only by the number of people who attended the performance, but also the generous reception provided to the performers. Our audience was the only one who gave them a standing ovation. While this may seem a small thing, it spoke volumes to me about the kind of welcome that has been cultivated here at Atonement for many years – the kind of welcome I believe is important, even essential, as we strive to share the message of God's love with the world around us. Thank you to Sally Carlson for her work with Children's Christian Theater and making this opportunity available to us.

Worship Technology Upgrades

Our part of the 2022 Christmas Special Ask was designated for technology upgrades in our worship space. While we hoped to address both sound and livestreaming video issues, the sound issues were more important – they affected both in-person and livestream worshipers. We purchased and installed a DISTRO9 HDR and Diversity Fin Antenna Bundle. The part you can see in our sanctuary is a fat, black fin attached to the wall behind the A/V booth. All of our wireless microphone signals are now handled through this one device, instead of their own (at times competing) antennas. What you have hopefully noticed is that we have not experienced the same dropped signals and other microphone issues we had before. This, again, is an important hospitality issue.

[Report continued on next page]

PASTOR GENE TALLEY

[Report continued from previous page]

We will continue to assess how worship is planned, presented, and led, so that our worship continues to be meaningful, accessible to as many people as possible, and clearly communicates God's love and welcome. Thank you to Pr. Kevin Kretzmann Farrar, Isabelle Seifert, and especially Mike Murphy for their involvement in this upgrade, as well as Ron Nemke for the installation help.

Transition to Realm

One "behind the scenes" change that will have happened by the time of our annual meeting is the transition from Breeze and PowerChurch to Realm as our church management software. PowerChurch has served as our accounting software for many years. More recently Breeze became the software we use to manage our roster of members, friends, staff, and other people. Since giving records were in PowerChurch, this required keeping two complete rosters – which didn't always reconcile easily. A small task force considered options and eventually presented to the Congregation Council the opportunity to switch to Realm, which can provide both roster management and accounting in one cloud-based package. While I realize this may not sound exciting to many of you, many of us on staff are excited because having one, complete software package means many saved hours that used to be spent reconciling our two primary databases. We also look forward to a more complete online directory which all our members can have access to, and additional options for organizing classes and small groups. These are all tools that we expect will make our goal of sharing God's love with each other and the world around us easier, and make our staff and key volunteers more effective. Thank you to Mark LeMahieu, Lori Schantz, and Pr. Kevin Kretzmann Farrar for serving on the task force which looked at options, and especially Pr. Kevin for taking point as we prepared for the transition to Realm and eventual roll out. Thank you, also, to our staff, especially Kara Mendez and Pr. Kevin, who got our current database into the best shape possible before the transition.

Staff Book Study

I can't say enough good things about our staff. I am truly honored and blessed to have inherited such a fine group of individuals to work with. I realize my report is already long enough, so I will summarize my experience of our staff by sharing that one of the highlights of my year was the book study on Growing Young that we did as part of our staff meetings. Not only was this resource a valuable one that we then also shared with volunteers involved in our Children, Youth, and Family ministries, but the conversations and insights shared were invaluable. Thank you Kara, Isabelle, Anne, Sarah, and Pr. Kevin.

[Report continued on next page]

PASTOR GENE TALLEY

[Report continued from previous page]

Staff Transitions

Several staff transitions happened this past year. We welcomed Sarah Talley as our new Worship Team Leader back in January, and she has been a wonderful addition to our staff. She had already excelled at helping to provide both contemporary and traditional music during Advent and Christmas of 2022. This summer we said goodbye to Troy Mendez after 8 years – a long time for someone to serve in a Youth Director position! His legacy will be felt for years to come in the youth and young adults here at Atonement, as well as in the adult volunteers who worked with him. This fall we learned that two of our key financial staff, our Bookkeeper Larry Alber, and our Financial Secretary Doug Ehrick, would retire at the end of the year. Larry has served us faithfully for 13 years, and Doug for 15 years. We are grateful for their consistent, reliable work for so many years, and are sad to lose them and the collective wisdom they represent. We are also excited to welcome Lori Schantz into the role of Interim Bookkeeper, and Allison LeMahieu into the role of Financial Secretary. I look forward to working with both of them, and you can be certain your financial records remain in good hands.

Hopefully you have noticed throughout my report that there is little that I do here alone. Ministry is about partnership. I have left many of those partnerships out – there isn't room for all of them. But I value them all, and I am grateful to be partnering with you in ministry. As we continue to welcome more people into our worship and into our congregation, sharing the wonderful news of God's love for this world and affecting that world with God's love, allow me to close by saying thank you for your partnership. It means the world to me – and even more to those who learn about and experience God's love through us.

God's Peace,
The Rev. Gene A Talley
Senior Pastor

PASTOR

KEVIN KRETZMANN FARRAR

Dear Atonement Community,

At this point last year, Alissa and I were just days away from welcoming Zoë into the world. A lot has change for me in the last year but I am not the only one who has experienced much change in the past year.

In the last year, we have welcomed new families, said good-bye to loved ones, undergone staff transition (welcoming Sarah Talley as our new contemporary music leader and thanked Troy Mendez for his service as our youth leader), and have had our first full year with Gene Talley as our Senior Pastor.

I can't see the future for what is in store for 2024 but I believe that we have reason to be optimistic for 2024 building upon what has been emerging in 2023. Allow me to share some highlights from 2023:

- I was able to take a 12-week parental leave to care for—and bond with—Zoë when she was little. Both this time away and your support of me as I have become a father has been a true gift. You have demonstrated being a church that loves kids, supports families, and treats its employees with care.
- 8 graduating seniors received quilts, 12 students affirmed their baptism, 29 individuals received first communion, 12 kids received a Bible, and 9 kids received a prayer bear. These faith stepping stones mark big moments in our kids growing in faith.
- Our staff and Children, Youth, and Family committee have discussed Growing Young by Kara Powell et al as a means for discussing how we might continue to grow as a church that supports young people and their families in their faith formation.
- We painted a beautiful mural in our Education wing, adding vibrancy and color into our kid's space.

While there are many more highlights to celebrate and transitions to explore, these instances of light and vitality are all strengths that I believe we can build upon for 2024 and beyond.

With Gratitude,
Pastor Kevin

CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

DAVE FRANK

As we reflect on 2023 and think about where we are headed in 2024, I want to pause and thank our Congregation Council and staff. We were challenged with a Senior Pastor change, Contemporary Music Leader change, and other staff changes the past few years. That incredible amount of change was difficult, so it was nice to “normalize” a bit in 2023.

With that said, we suspect those headwinds and economic worries resulted in some decreased giving this past year. Our financial commitments for 2024 were also a little less than we hoped, so with increasing inflationary costs the Finance Committee and Executive Committee researched ways to balance a proposed 2024 Operating Budget. To make up that expected shortfall next year we weighed several options:

1. Refinance the mortgage - This would have stretched out the mortgage term 15 years, at a higher rate and a substantial fee. This option would have improved our cash flow by almost \$7,000 a month. The cost of doing this, however, just didn't seem prudent.
2. Borrow from our restricted Memorial Fund, which is allowed by Atonement's constitution. We all concluded that this was just pushing out the cash flow issue to next year and would deplete our cash.
3. Reduce expenses – We all are committed to the long-term success of the Atonement through the current staffing model. Our member attrition rate could have been much higher with all the changes (we were told to expect over 20%), but we were blessed to quickly fill the open positions with an amazing Senior Pastor and Contemporary Music Leader along with other volunteers.
4. Re-Amortize the mortgage – Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, our current lender, made the Council aware that since we had been paying ahead on the mortgage by two years, we could take the remaining balance and re-amortize it to the original term ending in January of 2029 (spread it out an additional two years from the planned early 2027 pay off). There is no fee to re-amortize the mortgage, and the interest rate stays the same. We were blessed as a congregation to have paid ahead due to previous Principal Payment Reduction campaigns, which provided us with this flexibility now, and we hope to hold another campaign at some point in the coming next few years.

The Council met on November 21st and voted to take advantage of the re-amortization option, thus lowering the annual mortgage payments by \$51,000. Since we re-amortized to the original term of the loan, a congregational vote was not needed.

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CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

DAVE FRANK

[Report continued from previous page]

On a more positive note, I hope everyone feels as good about our congregation as I do. As I write this update, it has never been more apparent to me how important the youth are to our congregation. The Faith Stories the confirmation students shared last month are always incredibly emotional (my eyes were sweating) and I have never been more Joyful in Hope, seeing nineteen students take their first communion the second Sunday of November with barely an open seat in the church. Thank you to the pastors, staff and volunteers that keep the Children, Youth and Family Program front and center.

I also attended a traditional service in November, and while I love our contemporary service and normally attend at 9:30am, the traditional service just felt good. I seem to be more of an early riser so no doubt I will be attending more of those services in the years to come.

With the church in a good place and stabilized, the Council will re-focus on more outreach efforts to grow our brand in the community to attract more new members. We would love to hear from any marketing experts in the congregation on ideas as we build that "marketing plan". We will also discuss internal options to focus on more unrestricted giving campaigns that help with the general cash needs of the church. Ideas like mortgage principal parties, Tell-a-Friend Sundays, more consistent usher presence, more new family orientations and many more ideas have been discussed.

In closing, I apologize for so much budget talk. Obviously, transparency is important. Many looked forward to a mortgage burning party in 2027, as did I, but that celebration will have to wait a couple more years.

Meanwhile, we move onward and upward, excited about the future and proud of our church for all the resources we continue to provide our community and the world.

Yours in Christ,
Dave Frank

STATISTICAL REPORT

(JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2023)



New Members (0)



Baptisms (7)

Emma Rae Zdroik | 1-22-23
Grant Joseph Biwar | 1-22-23
Isabella Nila Cooper | 1-22-23
Colton Michael Fronczak | 2-12-23
Laylah Everly Puranen | 6-4-23
Ava Lee Nielsen | 7-9-23
Ashton Michael Grzeskowiak | 12-10-23



First Communion (29)

January 29, 2024

Jackson Goetsch
Rory Peterson
Owen Girardin
Grace Thompson
Isabel Talley
Joel Dable
Drew Munzel
Emily Cravatta

November 12, 2024

Ava Balkunas
Nora Bridgeland
Anna Christen
Isabella Cooper
Brienna Dietzler
Maya Grasset
Nolan Greig
Noelle Hassler
Colton Heltemes
Merrie Hittle
Allison LaBarber
Jocelyn McDonald
Maddy Lewis
Addie Mueller
Reagan Mulligan
Tyler Risic
Evelyn Stanley
McKenna Zomboracz

November 19, 2023

Grant Biwer
Griffin Geiger
Hazelle Rahm



Confirmation (12)

London Cleaver	Paige Orluske
Zachary Felts	Bree Scafe
Nathan Hinek	Jacob Solsaa
Baleigh Miller	Natalie Storm
Eli Moore	Isaac Teisl
Kelsey Morgan	Henry Vallee



Member Deaths (7)

Evelyn Duewel	Jean Albers
Larry Kipfer	Allen Sande
Linda Youngs	Kurt Mason
	Warren Kindt

STATISTICAL REPORT

(JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2023)

Total Atonement

Membership	2022	2023
Members- Baptized	754	724
Members- Confirmed	510	495
Members- Associate	2	2

Released from Membership (51)

During the year 2023, 51 members were released from membership at Atonement, by means of transfer to another congregation or through annual role adjustment.

Worship Attendance

Average Weekly Attendance*	2023	
	Online	In-Person
8:00 am Worship	98	56
9:30 am Worship	108	107
9:30 am Kids BLAST	-	15
9:30 am Youth Classes	-	30
10:45 am Worship	-	37
Average Weekly	103	245

*Does not include summer worship

Average Summer Attendance	2023	
	Online	In-Person

8:30 am Worship	72	59
10:00 am Worship	129	101

Holiday Worship Totals	2023	
	Online	In-Person

Ash Wednesday	40	*
Maundy Thursday	28	52
Good Friday	180	233
Easter Sunday	300	446
Thanksgiving Eve	54	48
Blue Christmas	64	25
Christmas Eve	278	557

*Online only due to weather

Calculating Online Attendance

Online attendance numbers are calculated Atonement's Youtube channel. Metrics are measured by views within the first week of posted worship. Each view is counted as 2 attendees per the ELCA "Tracking Online Worship Attendance" guidelines.

STAFF REPORTS

CAREGIVING COMM. COORDINATOR DEACON MARIAN WASIERSKI

“Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.” James 5: 13-16

This selection from the letter of James gives us an image of how we believers can attain healing in a most profound way. This year I have reflected on the subject and practice and experience of healing. We need healing because we are suffering. Suffering comes from loss, worry, fear, changes, disappointment, conflict, disagreements, challenges, and obstacles to our will. We can get healing when we care for one another as God cares for us.

This past year Atonement’s culture of caregiving has continued to grow. Thank you for the ways you helped another in some way, especially in the small, quiet ways not always seen or acknowledged.

My summary of 2023 follows:

1. Tracking caregiving activity: The “Note Bird” tool remains a firm foundation enlarging our capacity to follow the needs of and responses to friends and members of ALC. Current registered team members include Pr. Gene, Pr. Kevin, and Deacon Marian. We meet weekly to discuss specific situations, and caregiving program developments. About 165 individuals received caregiving contacts one or more times during the year. [over 1,500 contacts were made.]
2. Caregiving Volunteers: We offer deep appreciation to those who have stepped forward this year in a caregiving capacity. Mary Ann Knippel, Sandy Snyder, and Marty Petersen provided home visits with Holy Communion. Sandy Zielinski and Judy Strampe provided transportation to and from church. Lorraine Behling, now surpassing 20 years of service, sent cards of joy and sorrow as events and situations evolved.
3. Prayer chain: I collaborated with Jan De Gaetano, Lorraine Behling, and the pastors regarding public requests for prayer support. When desired I submitted written prayer requests to the email prayer chain and Sunday prayer group.

[Report continued on next page]

CAREGIVING COMM. COORDINATOR

DEACON MARIAN WASIERSKI

[Report continued from previous page]

4. Funerals: I assisted with hosting two funerals-Linda Youngs (6/10) and Jean Albers (9/1).

5. Sunday presence: I attended worship once a month, all services. My role shifted this year from occasional assisting minister to “back pew” greeter and listener. I love to meet the faces connected to the voices I have come to know so well!

6. Office hours: Please do not hesitate to reach out whenever you need to. However, I will be more intentionally available during these days/times-Monday 1-5 & Tuesday 1-3.

7. Caregiving review: ALC remains impressive to me in the area of how members care for one another. The pastors and I continue to discuss ways to strengthen our caregiving ethos. Please consider the possibility of becoming a home communion visitor. Please consider helping with the card ministry. Lorraine says it's time to pass this important project on. Please consider giving someone a lift to church. Please share your ideas and assessments as we move into a new year of taking care of each other.

8. Sharing ALC Outreach activities with St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa: A leader at St Matt's reached out to us to ask for information about our social outreach engagements. These five leaders generously gave time and thought to his questions: Nancy Hanks & Linda Lundin (Church In Society), Marty Petersen (Church Council Liaison), Cindy Dostal (El Salvador Committee), and Renee Stadler (All People's Church). We have much to be proud of (in the best sense) and grateful for...God's Work-Our Hands all year round!

God's peace,
Deacon Marian Wasierski
Caregiving Communications Coordinator

CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

ANNE FAREBROTHER

Children and Family Ministries focus this year was on serving others and developing intergenerational relationships. Perhaps the most exciting new project was the planning and painting of our education wing mural, led by Isabelle Seifert. A committee of students in grades 2 through 12 helped dream up the theme. Isabelle led students and adults in painting throughout the summer, freshening our walls and inspiring new friendships. Our grand opening in September included a pop-up art gallery of diverse artwork from the entire congregation, both young and old. We gathered to celebrate the many talented artists God has blessed us with in our beautiful space.

Kids BLAST started 2023 by using our Chuck the Duck Bucks to support children in the Sudan through the ELCA Crisis Response. We have also used our Sunday School offerings to help families rebuild after the wildfires in Maui through the Thrivent giving program. In fall, Kids BLAST and church in society, led the congregation in a very successful Food Drive along with our youth, bringing in over 500 food items to make 36 Thanksgiving meal bundles for All Peoples Food Pantry. Cross Training students assembled the kits. Families from Kids BLAST, CrossTraining and ACTS donated treats for a Fellowship Sunday to bring attention to the need for food for our community.

To get to know others in our congregation, Summer Kids BLAST made and served root beer floats for Father's Day. Later in the summer, we decorated and served cupcakes to outdoor worshippers and began intergenerational conversations about our favorite summer activities.

We continued to create relationships as we invited honorary Classroom Grandparents to read to students and share their faith. At Christmas, Kids BLAST students presented a Christmas program and hosted a cookie reception for the whole congregation. Our Classroom Grandparents led Advent Crafts during the reception.

None of these goals could have been reached without the efforts of our dedicated teachers. Thank you to these faithful, caring volunteers!

Teachers from 2023 include Mackenzie Bridgeland, Laura Brogan, Amy Christen, Melinda Felts, Jaci Geiger, Rachel Girardin, Michelle Goetsch, Doug Hittle, Amanda King, Faith Laning, Ashley LaBarber, Kim Leskovar, Stacy Meller, Jenny Mueller, Karen Mulligan, Erin Rose, Debra Tews, Jennifer Yourd and Lauren Zomboracz.

A special thanks also goes out to Lisa Borgman for her gift of photography and help with the Christmas program, Renee Stadtler for leading the food drive, Gary Dostal for wall prep for the mural and Jaci and Justin Geiger for leading our fellowship Sundays.

Anne Farebrother

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP COORDINATOR

STEVE JOYAL

This concludes my eighth year as Coordinator of Traditional Music at Atonement Lutheran Church, and with organ, piano, Adult Choir, Bell Choir, and some exceptional special musicians leading the 8:00 services, we hope you have enjoyed our efforts to enrich and enliven the worship experiences. (Of course, special musicians continue to be sought for various services throughout the year. All ages and varieties of performances are welcome. Please volunteer early and often – see me if you are interested!)

Our relatively new Allen organ and the Bösendorfer grand piano remain in excellent condition and we continue to maintain regular piano tunings three times each year. They are both proving extremely useful as we continue to explore a variety of liturgies and new and exciting hymns!

With the assistance of the “Music Library Committee” – Mary Hoffmann, Marty Peterson, and Sandy Zielinski – who worked tirelessly since to clean the music storage room and file our new music -- the choir and handbell music continues to be reorganized into a manageable system. We have an extensive library of music and will continue to explore new anthems and special offerings throughout the coming years.

Our December, 2022 Festival of Music was very capably handled by Dianne Hoskins and Sarah Talley when I went down with Covid last December. Hopefully as you read this, we have had a better experience this December and our Bell Choir, Adult Choir, and Worship Team have presented a wonderful telling of the Christmas story in music.

Last year’s REQUIEM by John Rutter provided a very moving Good Friday presentation with a huge turnout for our Festival Choir. We are again planning something very special for Good Friday this year. If you are interested, please talk with me about becoming a singer for that occasion.

Finally, please remember the music programs of Atonement when planning your Memorial Gifts, as our funds always need to be replenished for future endeavors, including hiring special musicians, purchasing new music, or undertaking special musical projects. Your continued thoughts, prayers, and support for our ministries are greatly appreciated!!

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Joyal
Coordinator for Traditional Music

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP COORDINATOR

SARAH TALLEY

I am just finishing my first year your Contemporary Worship Leader. It has been a fun and crazy year as we worked to prioritize congregational singing, introduced quite a few new songs, and to become the team you see before you each Sunday.

While my position is the only paid one on the team, Contemporary Worship at Atonement could not happen without the volunteers who give so much time to this ministry. I am thankful for the many singers on our team - their voices lend so much to the worship experience, and their knowledge of how Atonement does these songs helped me immensely. This year, I am especially grateful for the other members of the band - John Zabkowicz, Dan Olson, and Tim Farebrother. Without their flexibility, talent, and senses of humor, the transition to my leadership could not have gone so smoothly. These volunteers all give up a rehearsal night every week and many hours on Sunday morning - thank them if you see them!

The biggest learning curve for me this year was outdoor summer worship. Setting up for and tearing down from that service every week is an ENORMOUS amount of work. I am more grateful than I could ever explain to the many people who helped with that week after week. That said, one of my main goals heading into 2024 is to rethink how that setup happens and who makes it happen. I am sure there must be a better way to coordinate and manage volunteers and preserve the volunteer time of the worship team - I just don't know what that is yet.

All in all, it's been a good year. I look forward to what God has in store for Contemporary Worship in 2024.

In peace,
Sarah Talley

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

ISABELLE SEIFERT

2023 was a year for trying new things! From January through December, I was a part of some really exciting events and programs at Atonement. From a communications standpoint, these new happenings at Atonement have kept me on my toes while helping me to grow so as a leader and communicator.

The beginning months of 2023 were spent rigorously planning for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. It happens every year, yet it always feels like a new challenge each time the holiday comes around! Together, our team of staff and volunteers planned a great Easter season that brought about new traditions (like preparing a shared meal together for Maundy Thursday) and brought back old traditions (like our typical Easter Breakfast feast.)

In the spring and summer time, I developed new projects and events in tandem with our Children and Youth ministries that pushed my creative leadership abilities while also extending opportunities for others in our Atonement community to get creative!

Working with Kara Mendez and an excellent team of student/parent volunteers, I hosted a paint-and-sip night in May to help raise money for our Youth's mission trip to South Dakota, and then again in November to raise money for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering. Both of these paint-and-sip nights were so much fun, and very effective in fundraising for our Youth.

Another major accomplishment this year is the mural project and opening/pop-up gallery night I worked on with our Children's Ministry. Between services on a random Sunday in April, I asked Anne Farebrother if she would be interested in helping me start a mural project in our Children's Education wing (because the off-yellow walls felt like they needed some pizzaz). In May, I got our Church Council's blessing to move forward with my project. In June, the Mural Committee was formed and met several times to make art and brainstorm mural ideas. We found all the support we needed within our Atonement community. I kicked off a fundraiser in July to help raise money for three different causes, all focused on students in the Atonement community. We raised \$1,800, and split the funds three ways between our Mural project (to help purchase paint and supplies), the School Supply collection for All Peoples Church, and the Education Fund for students in Tepeagua, El Salvador. Tom and Judy Larsen also donated their Thrivent grants to the project! Through July and August, dedicated families and individuals volunteered their time and effort to prep, prime, and paint the mural (not to mention all the late nights I spent in the Education Wing perfecting as many lines, shapes, and letters as I possibly could.) To celebrate the completion of the mural, we hosted a pop-up gallery and mural opening. I was over the moon to see all the incredible pieces that were submitted to the pop-up gallery! Big thanks to Anne Farebrother, Building and Grounds, the Church Council, and our dedicated families and individuals in Children's Ministry that helped make the mural a reality!

In the future I am looking forward to bringing more creativity to our ministries at Atonement. In terms of communications goals, I am eager for Atonement to become more known by our local community. I hope to explore more ways to bring about both of these goals in 2024.

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR KARA MENDEZ

First of all, thank you to all of you for being so flexible with my work schedule, allowing me to balance Office Manager and Paraprofessional/Teaching roles in the community.

I have been maintaining office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays 10:00am-2:00pm.

The office continues to be a busy place:

- Answering phones, greeting visitors, accepting deliveries, maintaining the Church Calendar
- Managing and maintaining church membership records
- Preparing Annual Report
- Contacting families regarding Baptisms, preparing certificates and bulletins and making sure a team is in place for the service.
- Managing supplies and volunteers for several bulk mailings as well as maintaining postage and bulk mailing account
- Working with bookkeeper on payroll entry and adjustments
- Coordinating room arrangements and availability with custodian
- Creating Summer worship handouts and putting together Sermon Discussion Guides
- The Bell: Importing and gathering information, proofreading and printing and mailing out
- Reconciling monthly credit card invoices with charged expenses
- Programming and maintaining key fob list
- Being on call for any needs that arise

I have GREATLY enjoyed helping everyone and serving everyone's needs!

NURSERY COORDINATOR KARA MENDEZ

We have not seen a lot of children visiting the nursery this past year, but we are still staffing it, with hopes of more visitors.

I am in constant communication with staff by text and email and also setting up an online availability and schedule. We are ready to serve our fellow ministries and community for yet another successful year.

Thank you to our caring nursery staff: London Cleaver, Lilly Luttmann and Claire Zabkowicz. They go above and beyond helping our littles!

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ADMINISTRATIVE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

CINDY DOSTAL

1 Corinthians 1:31—"Therefore, as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.'" 1 Corinthians 3:7—"So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."

Our partnership with the people of Tepeagua, El Salvador continues to grow! God might even boast of the work we have done together! Please consider joining a mission trip and seeing our projects yourself. Over time, the partnership is strengthened and reinvigorated as more members of Atonement experience life in Tepeagua. Thank you to each of you for your ongoing support!

The community water project has worked non-stop for over 18 months now. The elected Water Board and Community Board of Directors has set up the well and water system so that it is sustainable and carefully managed.

Last February, we sent our Christmas gift of \$6000 to the community for repair of homes and roofs. The Board of Directors asked to manage the home repair projects and it seems they have done very well. Eight homes received funds for needed materials and the labor was done either by the families or with some volunteer help within the community. We have received messages of profound gratitude. Homes that were uninhabitable during the rainy season were dry and comfortable. The community has asked that Atonement continue this donation yearly.

Pastor Rogel and the community held a one-year anniversary service to honor the life and passing of Pastora Margarita in October. Pastor Rogel continues to work in his full-time engineering/export job. He also serves his mother's two congregations with great empathy and love. He has agreed to earn a Bachelor's degree in Theology/Religion to continue this role. Now he is in on-line seminary classes several evenings each week. As he is also the father of three, Pr. Rogel is a very busy person!

Sponsors at Atonement supported 47 students over the past year. This is the highest number ever! We are now uploading letters to a Google drive. Sponsors can send a message at any time, just let Cindy know!

Atonement El Salvador Committee members include: Pr. Gene, Pr. Kevin, Renee Stadtler, Nancy Hanks, Jennifer Yourd, Nichole Ostrowski, Rachelle Bartels, Marty Petersen, Dan Christianson and Cindy Dostal. Let us know if you feel drawn to service with this group. Special thanks to Renee Stadtler who serves as our representative to the Greater Milwaukee Synod El Salvador Committee. Special thanks to Nancy Hanks for continuing in management of the Days for Girl's Kits.

EL SALVADOR UPDATE

CINDY DOSTAL

2023 Accomplishments

Goals for 2024

<p>Well/Water Project: The water system is maintained and sustainable.</p>	<p>None at present</p>
<p>Roofing Projects: Eight homes were repaired before the rainy season.</p>	<p>Send \$6000 to Tepeagua before the 2024 rainy season.</p>
<p>Educational sponsorship: was provided to 47 students over the year.</p> <p>Families annually receive: \$250 for elementary students, \$400 for middle school students, \$500 for high school students, \$750 for technical school students, and \$1200 per year for university students.</p>	<p>Please consider contributing to this program. You may opt to write letters or simply provide financial support. Tepeagua students are encouraged that you are praying and cheering for them!</p>
<p>Visits: Cindy Dostal attended Mission of Healing in February. A special service with community meal was held on Sunday. Cindy had the opportunity to visit with most students. A clinic was held in Tepeagua this week also. Over 130 members of the community received medical services.</p>	<p>Visits: All are welcome in Tepeagua. Please let Cindy Dostal know if you are interested in a trip there to build relationships and do light work in the community. Information about future medical trips will also be made available. We may also consider sponsoring Pr. Rogel for a visit to the United States in future years.</p>
<p>Days for Girls (DFG) Kits: The ladies of Atonement continue the incredible mission of making these reusable feminine hygiene kits. Seven suitcases were carried to El Salvador in February by the Mission of Healing. This is the max we can carry. We ran out of kits long before we had met all requests! These are life-changing!</p>	<p>Continue!</p>

APPLE TREE: ENDOWMENT FUND FOR MISSION OUTREACH DAN CHRISTIANSON

Atonement's Legacy Fundan endowment for the future.

“ The Apple Tree Society”

“To strengthen Atonement’s faith journey for the future through legacy giving. The faith of tomorrow blooms from the seeds of today”

We invite members to consider a legacy planned gift for God’s work. These gifts can be as beneficiaries from life insurance, annuities, IRAs, stocks or a percentage included in your will or trust.

As of the end of October 2023, the fund has \$81,560 invested into the ELCA Endowment Fund. Atonement’s Constitution requires a minimum of \$50,000 before any fund income can be dispersed for outreach missions. In 2024 the Apple Tree Society Committee plans to distribute some of the excess funds to two organizations to be determined.

Contact your financial advisor or tax specialist for more information about legacy giving with tax benefits.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE MARY TATERA

For the year 2023, as of November 30th, Atonement Lutheran Church has received 133 memorial gifts totaling \$17,542., which were given in memory or honor of members or loved ones. These gifts were dedicated to the ministries in Christ’s Church.

A registry of all persons remembered, and the givers is maintained in the narthex for your reviewing.

These gifts were given for: (plus undesignated)

- Youth Ministry
- Music Fund
- Outdoor Worship
- Knit-Wits
- Muskego Food Pantry
- Health Kits
- Paver

Purchases and donations included:

- Special Music
- Traditional Music
- Memorial Tree
- Outdoor Worship
- Paver
- Muskego Food Pantry
- Health Kits

The Memorial Committee maintains records of these gifts and makes recommendations to the church council of programs or projects that could serve our ministries.

Atonement Lutheran Church 2023 Memorials

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	YTD	YTD	YTD	YTD	Ending
Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Income	Transfers	Expense	Balance	
2023																	
Confirmation & Youth		150.00										200.00					
Fund for Music & the Arts		100.00	980.00	100.00		800.00	10501.57			100.00			12581.57	675.00	4055.05	\$ 16,619.81	
Knit Wifs								20.00	150.00				170.00			\$ 1,825.00	
Outdoor Worship						25.00							25.00		75.00	\$ 1,735.00	
Undesignated	270.00	100.00	1065.00	325.00		1325.00	10.00	0.00	165.00	890.00	465.00	4335.00	8950.00	1895.00	35019.53	\$ 9,784.35	
Quilters	100.00												0.00			\$ 100.00	
Kaminski Trust	26917.60												0.00		350.00	\$ 26,567.60	
El Salvador	770.00												0.00	770.00		\$ -	
Fair Trade																\$ -	
Total Memorials received													22076.57				
Total Expenses															41319.58		
Transferred														3,340.00			
Net income																	
Beg Bal	77893.74	270.00	350.00	2045.00	425.00	0.00	2150.00	10511.57	0.00	185.00	1140.00	4535.00					
Ending Balance																	60450.73

Respectfully
submitted, Mary
Tatera

CHURCH IN SOCIETY

LINDA LUNDIN

CIS Members: Jean Albers, Kathy Carlson, Barb Downer, Pastor Kevin Kretzmann Farrar, Pat Gallun, Jack & Alice Graham, Nancy Hanks, Jan Larsen, Linda Lundin, Sharon Holden Mattern, Marty Petersen, Renee Stadler, Judy Strampe, Kathy Strube, Pastor Gene Talley and Sandy Zielinski

Thank-you to all who supported and donated to all our fundraisers throughout the year. We are truly blessed with all the volunteers and the generosity of all.

Chili Supper

The Lenten chili supper was held on March 8th. The \$230.00, in donations, was divided between Waukesha and Milwaukee Habitat. The chili that was left over was taken to a shut-in and the Serenity Inn.

Support for APC included:

50 hygiene kits and paper products from donations and money from the APC budget were delivered to them. Two volunteers helped with spring and fall clean-up in the gardens at APC. They are very thankful for the help that we provide. More volunteers would be appreciated as well as any volunteers to help throughout the summer. We were able to supply APC with backpacks and school supplies from the congregation's generous donations.

Coats for Kids: Over 102 new coats were collected. Food for Christmas will be collected again this year. Thank you to Renee Stadler for organizing all the APC donations, delivering them and volunteering at the gathering table on a weekly basis.

Safe Babies/Healthy Families of Waukesha

With budget money, and a Thrivent grant we provided food and school supplies for the Safe Babies/Healthy Families picnic held in Waukesha. Ruth's circle provided the backpacks. Volunteers from the CIS committee and Ruth's circle helped to set-up and serve at the picnic. 29 children graduated and received back packs. Eight parents graduated from either high school, associate programs or college. We served 120 people including the children, parents and relatives. 20 baby quilts and clothing for children, 24months to 5 years, were donated. Thanks to Pat Gallun and Kathy Carlson for organizing.

GWOH

This year's GWOH, celebrated 28 ministries of the church where we see GWOH all year long. People had the chance to learn about each ministry and sign-up to be a part of one.

Veterans Collections of clothing and personal items

With donated items and a Thrivent grant, 19 boxes of clothing and personal care items were delivered to the VA. Included were quilts made by Diane Hoskins. Thank-you to Kathy Carlson and Pat Gallun for coordinating this collection and delivering the items to the VA.

[Report continued on next page]

CHURCH IN SOCIETY

LINDA LUNDIN

[Report continued from previous page]

Serenity Inn

Throughout the year Jan and Al Larsen have made 11 meals, delivered and served the meals to Serenity Inn. Anyone wanting to help support this ministry, by bring food is welcome to do so. \$100.00 was used to donate much needed paper supplies. Quilts and afghans were also donated.

Hope Center

A basket, worth \$225.00 was donated for the annual fundraiser auction. Thank-you to Kathy Strube for purchasing the items, making the basket and delivering it. Ongoing collections for clothing and personal care products for the center continues. 15 bags of donated clothing along with hygiene products have been delivered throughout the year. Thank-you to Kathy Carlson for delivering the items.

Food Collections

An ongoing food collection for APC and the Muskego Food Pantry continues. Thank-you to Jack and Alice Graham for delivering to APC and to Jean Albers for delivering the food to the Muskego Food Pantry.

Food Pack

It was not possible for us to do a food pack this year due to availability of a company that could provide us the needed food and was cost effective. Instead, we were able to supply the Muskego Food Pantry with much needed toilet paper and diapers.

Thank-you to all the CIS members for all their hard work throughout the year.

Submitted by Linda Lundin

OUTDOOR MINISTRY

RON PETERSEN

What a year 2023 has been!!! As hopefully you will recall, the mortgage for all of our Outdoor Ministry locations (Outdoor Worship Center, Memory Garden, and Playground) is paid for through the sales of niches, memory column inscriptions, and pavers. Our existing columbarium was filling up with limited availability of niches for future purchase. We needed another columbarium which would create enough future inventory of niches for sale to continue paying the mortgage for the next 9-10 years. This spring we ran a campaign for selling the remaining existing niches along with simply asking for donations to our Outdoor Ministry Fund to raise enough money to order another columbarium. The response was tremendous!!! Hopefully, by the time you read this our second columbarium will have been installed. We had enough funds to pay for the columbarium itself along with the additional landscaping that needed to be done. I encourage you next spring to take a walk into our Memory Garden....it truly is a beautiful, serene, and dignified Garden.

Additionally, four large Maple trees were planted in the Outdoor Worship Center which will provide much needed shade for our outdoor services. The Outdoor Worship Center, Memory Garden, and Playground all have seen a lot of use and are a blessing for us here at Atonement. What better way to appreciate God's creation than being outdoors!!! Without all of your support none of this would be possible!!! Thank you!!!

STEWARDSHIP/COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT

RACHEL ZABKOWICZ

Chairperson: Michelle Goetsch | Council Representative: Rachel Zabkowicz

Committee Members: Jason Cleaver, Mike Hietpas, Mark LeMahieu, Bruce Paul, and Sandy Zielinski.

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

The 2024 stewardship campaign theme is titled "Overflowing Generosity." God has entrusted each of us with gifts - gifts of time, talent, and finances. We ask everyone to contemplate how we can give back to the church in a way that reflects God's presence in our lives. Join us in a journey of faith and overflowing generosity by dedicating a part of your earnings that reflects the blessings bestowed upon you by God. Giving in proportion to these gifts allows us to uphold the mission and service of our church in harmony with God's intentions. As of 11/21/2023 our commitment response of \$513,804 remains below last year's commitment of \$557,155. We encourage anyone who has not yet responded to submit a commitment card. If you'd like to talk to someone about your giving, feel free to reach out to the church office. The committee is hopeful that additional commitment cards will be submitted before the end of the year.

Thank you for your overflowing generosity! God's blessings are plentiful, and we have many reasons to be grateful here at Atonement.

2024 MINISTRY PLAN

MICHELLE GOETSCH

Atonement Lutheran Church 2024 Ministry Plan

	2024 Proposed Ministry Plan	2023 Ministry Plan	\$ Difference of Proposed to 2023 Plan	% Diff. of Proposed to 2023 Plan	2023 Actual Results	2022 Actual Results
Contributions						
Pledge Pymts/Offerings	\$ 666,120	\$ 708,871	(42,751)		\$ 649,680	\$ 678,440
Total Contributions	\$ 666,120	\$ 708,871	(42,751)	-6.0%	\$ 649,680	\$ 678,440
<i>Transfer of Restricted Funds:</i>						
Mission Partner Benevolence	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	1,000		\$ -	\$ -
Confirmation & Youth	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,469	2,000		\$ -	\$ -
Traditional Music & Arts	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,300	2,000		\$ -	\$ -
Total to be Transferred	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,769	(769)		\$ -	\$ -
Total Revenue	\$ 671,120	\$ 714,640	(43,520)	-6.1%	\$ 649,680	\$ 678,440
Expenses						
<i>Benevolences</i>						
Mission Support / Benevolence	\$ 26,770	\$ 28,500	(1,730)	-6.1%	\$ 28,496	\$ 31,955
<i>Ministries</i>						
Outreach and Service	\$ 2,475	\$ 2,475	-	0.0%	\$ 2,506	\$ 2,112
Evangelism	\$ 1,450	\$ 2,250	(800)	-35.6%	\$ 1,876	\$ 2,343
Children & Family	\$ 5,250	\$ 5,700	(450)	-7.9%	\$ 3,909	\$ 4,343
Fellowship & Social Planning	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,100	200	18.2%	\$ 1,541	\$ 703
Stewardship	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400	-	0.0%	\$ 2,140	\$ 1,777
Worship	\$ 6,200	\$ 6,200	-	0.0%	\$ 5,576	\$ 4,803
Youth & Confirmation	\$ 5,300	\$ 5,650	(350)	-6.2%	\$ 3,292	\$ 4,712
Subtotal Ministries	\$ 24,375	\$ 25,775	(1,400)	-5.4%	\$ 20,839	\$ 20,792
<i>Staffing</i>						
Pastors + Housing + Fica	\$ 173,205	\$ 165,475	7,730	4.7%	\$ 165,086	\$ 148,080
Staff Payroll	\$ 184,574	\$ 186,582	(2,007)	-1.1%	\$ 180,404	\$ 182,808
Benefits & Training	\$ 94,605	\$ 97,909	(3,303)	-3.4%	\$ 93,876	\$ 72,220
Subtotal Staffing	\$ 452,385	\$ 449,965	2,419	0.5%	\$ 439,366	\$ 403,108
<i>Operations</i>						
Church Council	\$ 1,850	\$ 1,850	-	0.0%	\$ 2,070	\$ 6,859
Capital Replacement Fund*	\$ -	\$ -	-		\$ -	\$ 12,000
Church Office	\$ 24,710	\$ 21,050	3,660	17.4%	\$ 21,130	\$ 20,802
Facility Utilities & Overhead	\$ 29,000	\$ 28,500	500	1.8%	\$ 28,155	\$ 26,910
Buildings & Grounds	\$ 42,970	\$ 39,000	3,970	10.2%	\$ 44,751	\$ 40,689
Mortgage**	\$ 69,060	\$ 120,000	(50,940)	-42.5%	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000
Subtotal Operations	\$ 167,590	\$ 210,400	(42,810)	-20.3%	\$ 216,106	\$ 227,260
Total Expenses	\$ 671,120	\$ 714,640	(43,520)	-6.1%	\$ 704,807	\$ 683,115
Rev over (under) Exp	\$ 0	\$ -	(0)		\$ (55,127)	\$ (4,674)

* \$42,000 available for capital projects from restricted funds. Funding from operations paused.

** Mortgage reamortized over original loan timeframe with a maturity date of Jan. 15, 2029. 4.25% interest rate was maintained.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

SALLY MUNIA

As defined by our Constitution and Bylaws, the Worship Ministry Team has responsibility for all matters pertaining to the congregation's worship and making recommendations to the Congregational Council.

Here are some highlights of activities related to worship and the worship committee:

- The committee approved the purchase of hymnals to be used mainly at the 8:00 traditional service using funds from a memorial gift in memory of Larry Kipfer.
- Worship committee continues to be a resource for our music staff, Steve Joyal and Sarah Talley. Any issues brought forward will be presented and discussed at Church Council.
- Discussions continue on various ways to make it possible for the youth to be more involved in worship and communion. We have seen the Youth leaders bring the Cross+Training and ACTS students into church so they can partake in communion.
- The Worship Committee has begun discussions with Pastor Talley on how we can work together to plan for Atonement's future worship needs.
- The committee will continue to evaluate our worship and communion schedules. The intent of these discussions is to ensure that we continue to best meet the needs of the congregation.
- Since coming to Atonement less than a year and a half ago, Pastor Talley has been focused on many different areas of our church life. Worship is one area where it is felt we have very strong staff leadership, resulting in the committee getting together only a few times in the last few months. We plan on meeting more regularly come the new year.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sally Munia, Worship Committee Council Representative

WOMEN OF THE ELCA (WELCA)

LORI SCHANTZ

The Women of the ELCA at Atonement had a faith-inspired year coordinated under the theme:
All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle. – Francis of Assisi

There are six active WELCA Circles and one Café Group that meet monthly for fellowship, faith building, Christ-centered friendships and service projects. We welcome all women of Atonement to join a Circle or participate in any of our events or service projects. As a part of WELCA, we join with national and international sisters in shining our light to make a difference in the world with God's help!

WELCA Officers were as follows:

President – Lori Schantz

Secretary – Wendy Hunjadi

Treasurer – Kathy Elgin-King

Mission Action – Mary Taylor/Kathy Carlson

Mission Community – Nancy Hanks

Council Representative – Candy Nemke

Circle and Café Chairwomen were:

Elizabeth – Shirley Littleton

Leah – Terry Hagen/Denise Kral

Lydia – Nancy Hanks/Jan DeGaetano

Mary/Martha – Wendy Hunjadi/Lori Schantz

Rebekah – Sharon Holden

Ruth – Pat Gallun/Sandy Zielinski

Hannah Café – Laura Baldwin/Renee Hesselbach

Our four General Meetings every year are open to all women of Atonement:

February 11, 2023 - Jenn Hollingsworth of Hebron Housing Services shared information on how HHS provides emergency short-term shelter and long-term housing solutions for individuals and families in Waukesha County. The circles then enjoyed fellowship and soups/breads courtesy of the Elizabeth and Rebekah Circles and a special offering of \$140 was collected to benefit Hebron Housing Services.

May 1, 2023 - Janen Najeeb, President and Founding Member of the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition shared a very informative talk about Islam and Muslims, followed by a time for questions and answers. This was a wonderful opportunity to learn and become more informed about the beliefs of Islam and references to women in the Quran. Pies and other desserts were provided by the Leah Circle and a special offering of \$103 was collected to benefit the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition.

September 18, 2023 - Lydia Circle were our hosts, providing salads and appetizers. Following the business meeting, Amanda Espurvoa of "Amanda Made" led members in a fun fall-themed craft.

We ended the year with our General Meeting on December 2nd, 2023. We enjoyed brunch provided by Ruth and Mary/Martha Circles and a concert in the sanctuary by the Women of Note. Paper products and cleaning items were donated to Siena House and a special offering was collected for the Muskego Food Pantry in memory of Jean Albers.

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WOMEN OF THE ELCA (WELCA)

LORI SCHANTZ

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Women's Ministry Sunday, a celebration of all women's ministries at Atonement was held on October 1st. We enjoyed a sermon from Rev. Afi Dobbin Mays, who is the Assistant to the Bishop for Authentic Diversity and Leadership. Several WELCA members attended the WELCA National Triennial Convention in Phoenix this September and Atonement WELCA made a donation of \$150 for the convention.

Mary/Martha Circle organized and hosted a Trivia Night in October as their major fundraiser for school supplies for the LWR school kits.

WELCA Service in 2023:

Quilts - Dianne Hoskins made a total of 230 quilts this year and about two-thirds were sent to All People's Church and other local charities. The remaining quilts were sent to Lutheran World Relief.

Lutheran World Relief - In addition to the quilts, the ladies of WELCA assembled 231 personal care kits, 52 baby layette kits and 1,037 school kits, which were packed and delivered to the LWR collection site for delivery to people in need throughout the world.

Days for Girls - In 2023, 183 Days for Girls kits were sent to El Salvador and 50 kits were sent to Nicaragua. In addition, we were able to contribute 65 sewn carry pouches to be used by Days for Girls international in kits to be sent where most needed.

Christmas in July - A total of 658 hand-made and purchased hats, scarves, mittens, gloves and socks were collected and donated to several local agencies serving those in need.

Knit Wits - This busy group of knitters and crocheters made 158 afghans, 10 prayer shawls, 24 hat/scarf sets, 1 baptismal outfit and 19 pairs of mittens in 2023! These handmade gifts were delivered to homeless shelters, food pantries, Veteran's groups, nursing homes and All People's Church, as well as other local organizations. The Silent Auction fundraiser was again held in November and December. Half of the auction proceeds were given to the Muskego Food Pantry in memory of Jean Albers and the other half will be used to buy yarn in the coming year.

Operation Christmas - 80 Christmas gifts and 31 Gift cards were collected for teens who reside at the Hope House and/or attend school at the Cross Training Academy, affiliated with the Milwaukee Rescue Mission.

Tepeagua Student Scholarships - WELCA sponsored education costs for two twin high school age boys this year.

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WOMEN OF THE ELCA (WELCA)

LORI SCHANTZ

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Safe Babies Healthy Families – Ruth Circle provided backpacks of school supplies for the “graduates” of this program at their annual summer picnic.

WELCA made a special contribution of \$2,500 to the Atonement Fund for the beautiful new cabinets in the conference room.

In addition to all these special service projects, WELCA Circles support Hope Center and Siena House with meals and cash donations throughout the year.

It was an honor to serve as WELCA President this year and I am profoundly thankful for all the women of Atonement for their support, service, faith, love and commitment to shining their light at Atonement and everywhere they go.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Schantz
WELCA President 2023

RECONCILING IN CHRIST (RIC)

PR. GENE TALLEY

ON BEHALF OF THE RIC CORE TEAM

The Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Core Team members are currently Ashley LaBarber, Laura LaBarber, Jennifer Yourd, Gail Shellestad, Bruce Paul, Sally Munia, Frank Waltz, Isabelle Seifert, Pr. Kevin Kretzmann Farrar, and Pr. Gene Talley.

In January we welcomed the Rev. Bill Beyer, who was able to speak powerfully from the perspective of being an ELCA pastor who is also gay. Pastor Beyer's personal stories and sense of humor were well received by everyone who attended.

While often viewed as being only about LGBTQ+ issues, any RIC welcome must also include language related to racial equality. It is our intent to use this process to also help us pay attention to many other ways we can provide a more full welcome to all sorts of different people. Partly due to this wider awareness, last winter the extra staging that had been installed temporarily during COVID recording and live streaming of worship was removed from the handicapped accessibility ramp that leads to our chancel area (the raised area where our altar sits).

This past spring I led four sessions of a class called Inspired Bible Reading. "Inspired" is the term used in the ELCA Constitution to refer to our scriptures, and offers a quite different basis for understanding the Bible than those who refer to scripture as "inerrant." We looked at both the standard "lobber" passages that have historically been used against LGBTQ+ individuals in the church, as well as some passages that offer more positive understandings. The classes were both well attended and well received.

This fall some members of the RIC Core Team attended one or both of two events offered by our Greater Milwaukee Synod, a deconstructing racism event, and the synod's RIC Team's "We Love All" event. Both events were very helpful.

Most recently, we offered two opportunities to attend an event focused on better understanding what people mean when they talk about Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression (sometimes abbreviated as SOGIE). The purpose of sharing this information and having discussions around it was to better understand how people who choose to use terms such as "bisexual" or "transgender" use them, which is often very different than the simplified meaning they are given in the media. If you were not able to be part of those conversations but want to know more you can find information about this, and most of our previous events, at <https://www.atonementmuskego.org/reconcilinginchrist> (under the "About" tab on our website).

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RECONCILING IN CHRIST (RIC)

PR. GENE TALLEY

ON BEHALF OF THE RIC CORE TEAM

[Report continued from previous page]

Throughout the year our team has reflected on the scope of one-on-one conversation with other members. While people have noted that these are “hot” topics, and some shared concerns that we would lose some members, those we spoke with still thought these are important conversations to have. Despite general concerns about losing members (or their financial support), nobody shared any specific information about anyone they expected would leave. Overall, most conversations we have had were very positive. We are always open to having more conversations – please feel free to contact anyone on the RIC Core Team to share your perspective or ask questions.

Early in 2024 we will be developing a possible Welcome Statement. Once we have confirmed with Reconciling Works, who oversee the Reconciling in Christ process, we will begin discussing the Welcome Statement within the congregation. This will be our next big step toward a possible vote on becoming Reconciling in Christ. We are aware that this eventual Welcome Statement may bring up yet more questions, and that some people’s questions remain unanswered. We look forward to the ongoing conversation with all of you.

Up to this point I have resisted putting anything more than a very loose timeframe on this process, because I believe that our ability to have these kinds of conversations within our congregation is the most important part of the process, not the eventual outcome. The simple truth of the matter is that these will continue to be issues to be addressed, no matter the outcome of this process. That being said, development of a Welcome Statement will be a big step toward concluding the RIC process. Assuming that is finished this spring, it seems reasonable that we could be voting on that Welcome Statement sometime next fall or winter.

Thank you, again, for your participation with us in this important conversation. These issues will not be going away. I believe the intent behind the inclusion of the request for your next senior pastor to lead this conversation among you was to honor the fact that Atonement already provided a warm welcome to many people, but to learn how we could become even better at welcoming more people. No matter how well we welcome the world around us into God’s loving grace, we will always have more to learn. I am heartened by the fact that I see that desire to provide an even better welcome continues to endure here at Atonement.

God’s Peace,

The Rev. Gene A Talley, Senior Pastor
On behalf of the RIC Core Team

ALTAR GUILD

SALLY MUNIA & MARILYN KULAS

We have continued to serve communion with individual cups and wafers at each service. One change this year is that we now have communion when there is a 5th Sunday in a month, making communion on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of each month.

Altar guild duties include dusting the altar area, changing the paraments and banners according to the church year or for special occasions, set-up and clean up for communion, changing the eternal candle, altar candles, and laundering the altar linens. When we worship outside, communion is distributed using the individual communion creamers, which are given out at the start of the service. These were purchased, and prepared for each communion Sunday, along with setting up the table each week for our outside 'altar'.

We'd like to thank all the individuals that continue to give of their time to serve on Altar Guild. We couldn't do it without you! Whenever there is a need, many step up and offer to do whatever has to be done. We are blessed with a wonderful group of Altar Guild volunteers.

A very special thank-you to:

Marilyn Kulas for making sure we never run out of supplies.

Sharon Holden for embroidering the baptismal napkins.

With the decline in the numbers of our volunteers, new members are always needed to serve on this important ministry. The time commitment is minimal, and training will be provided whenever there is a need.

Sally Munia and Marilyn Kulas will continue to serve as Altar Guild coordinators for the upcoming year.

Prayers that all remain safe and healthy during the new year.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Munia and Marilyn Kulas

BUILDING & GROUNDS

ANDY HESSELBACH

With 2023 being my first year leading Buildings and Grounds on council, I have been working my way up the learning curve with tremendous help, guidance, hard work, and unwavering support from Ron Nemke and Bruce Paul who both previously held the position for numerous years.

Overall performance of the building's mechanical equipment in 2023 was strong with the only significant maintenance being repair to the original water softening system – which also cleared up problems downstream at other equipment around the building.

There are two primary themes for 2023.

First, the budget challenges around snow clearing and salting services. Snow totals for 2023 were 50% above the average of the prior 5 years. Furthermore, costs were greater because snow came down across numerous moderate weather events rather than a small number of large snowstorms. This resulted in budget impacts of approximately \$8,000 greater than planned. None-the-less, the clearing service was high quality and timely to support activities around the church. On the heels of this increased budget pressure, we thought it appropriate to test the market and seek proposals from multiple snow removal contractors for 2024, including “fixed” priced contract alternatives. However, in the end, our current provider bid the best rates and fixed priced options were not attractive for typical winter weather, and very unattractive in a low snow year.

The second item is the excellent work of Ron Peterson and Isabelle Seifert (as they each highlight elsewhere in this annual report) who have combined generosity, creativity, and hardwork to dramatically improve the exterior and interior spaces of Atonement. Their efforts and those of many others have made Atonement more welcoming, functional, expressive, and beautiful. Thank you very much for your exceptional work.

It has been a very rewarding first year in this position and I can't say enough about the many individuals who have helped maintain our church home which is critical to our mission of doing God's work. We are truly blessed.

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at [ELCA.org/SOFIA](https://www.elca.org/SOFIA).



Evangelical
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