

*ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL  
MEETING*



*LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH  
LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY  
(A Christian Day School)*

*225 WEST TENTH STREET  
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 16501  
(814-454-0106)*

*JANUARY 26, 2025*

***AGENDA***  
***ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING***  
***JANUARY 26, 2025***

**A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Discussion on the Process of Voting | Mr. Les Fobes |
| 2. Adoption of the Agenda              | Mr. Les Fobes |

**B. PASTOR'S COMMENTS**

Pastor Jay Mitchell

**C. REPORT OF LMA ADMINISTRATOR**

Mrs. Michelle Thom

**D. ELECTION OF COUNCIL**

- |                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Nominating Committee Report | Mr. Greg Kern |
|--------------------------------|---------------|

**E. REPORTS OF CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL, STAFF, COMMITTEES**

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Reports                                | Mr. Les Fobes |
| 2. Reports be Accepted and Placed on File | Mr. Les Fobes |

**F. FINANCIAL REPORT**

- |                          |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1. 2024 Financial Review | Mr. Greg Kern |
| 2. 2025 Budget           | Mr. Greg Kern |

**G. PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS BY CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL**

Mr. Les Fobes

Be it resolved:

1. That we express our thanks to Almighty God for the blessings we have received during the past year, and that we pledge ourselves anew to dedicated Christian living, worship, and service in this new year of grace, 2025.
2. We express our thanks to all members of the congregation who served so faithfully in our church during 2024, especially those members of Congregational Council completing terms of service; Pat Bellingham, Dave Griswold, Jean McMillin and Jeff Swanson.
3. That we also express our sincere thanks and gratitude to our 2024 staff: Ciara Adams, David Buerk, Norma Buerk, Caryn Chludzynski, Jody Donovan, Kim Evans, Amanda Fried, Walt Gaber, Amy Gilewicz, Linda Graffius, Beth Keller, Ron King, Jan MacInnes, Rebecca McCormick, Pastor Jay Mitchell, Heidi Myer, AJ Noyes, Sarah Prylinski, Sutton Rowland, Katie Romba, Miriam Scheid, Stephanie Sherwood, Caiden Snider, Karen Socash, Michelle Thom, Bryan Timm, Jenna Uhlig, Erin VanDyke, Kevin Zirola.
4. That the Council be authorized to act on the report of the auditor when completed.
5. That the minutes of this meeting be considered for adoption by the Church Council not later than the second regular meeting following this annual meeting.

**H. ADJOURNMENT**

- |              |                     |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 1. Hymn      |                     |
| 2. Blessing  | Pastor Jay Mitchell |
| 3. Dismissal | Pastor Jay Mitchell |

***LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH STAFF***

PASTOR JAY MITCHELL	PASTOR
BRYAN TIMM	CANTOR
BETH KELLER	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRY
SARAH PRYLINSKI	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRY
JAN MACINNES	CARE MINISTRY
MIRIAM SCHEID	PARISH MANAGER
NORMA BUERK	SECRETARY
MICHELLE THOM	ADMINISTRATOR LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY
AMANDA FRIED	SECRETARY LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY
DAVID BUERK	MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR
CAIDEN SNIDER	SUNDAY MORNING / WEEKLY SECURITY
SUTTON ROWLAND	SUBSTITUTE / SECURITY

***LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH COUNCIL***

LES FOBES . . . . PRESIDENT	TOM KLOMP . . . . VICE-PRESIDENT
EMMA CHAFFEE . . . . SECRETARY	GREG KERN . . . . TREASURER
GINA SNIDER . . . . ASSISTANT TREASURER	
PAT BELLINGHAM	NICK LANG
ROB COONEY	JEAN MCMILLIN
ELY COONEY	PASTOR JAY MITCHELL
JONATHAN GABER	LIZ STROUP
DAVID GRISWOLD	JEFF SWANSON
MICHAEL HEDLUND	PATRICIA YOUNG

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  
JANUARY 28, 2024**

1. Meeting Called to Order at 11:33am by Stan Rose.
  - a. Opening Prayer: Pastor Jay led in an opening prayer.
  - b. Declaration of a quorum – Stan Rose affirmed that after a count a Quorum was present.
    - i. Attendees: 64 attendees
  - c. Appointment of a Secretary – Emma Chaffee, Church Council secretary, will act as secretary.
  - d. Explanation of Voting Procedure – Stan Rose
  - e. Appointment of Tellers – Stan Rose had previously appointed 2 people as tellers if needed for voting
  - f. Approval of Agenda:
    - i. Agenda was motioned to be adopted by Ken Kraut and seconded by Mary Daniels. Motion was unanimously accepted.
2. Pastor Jay's Report: Draws attention to gratitude in report and urges people to join committee's if feeling the call to do so.
3. Report of LMA Administration: Staff expressed concern of future of LMA due to number of enrollments. Called a new administrator to LMA.
  - a. Mrs. Michelle Thom briefs over becoming the new administrator at LMA. Explains T.E.A.M.: Together Everyone Achieves More mindset for LMA and LMC. Also briefs over traditions we have had and continue to do, but also new ideas that had been brought to the table and carried out.
4. Election of Council:
  - a. Greg Kern presented all 7 nominations for church council; Emma Chaffee, Jonathan Gaber, Rob Cooney, Les Fobes, Jean McMillin, Tom Klomp, & Nick Lang newly nominated for 2024. Motion to close nominations and vote in all 7 present nominations made by Sandy Barbaro and seconded by David Griswold. Motion was unanimously accepted.
5. Reports of Congregational Council, Staff, & Committees:
  - a. Briefed over and reports were accepted and will be placed on file.
  - b. Motion to accept the reports made by Ken Kraut and seconded by Mary Daniels. Motion was unanimously accepted.

2024 Minutes, cont'd.:

6. Treasurer's Report by Greg Kern, Treasurer:

- a. 2024 Budget was presented by Greg Kern
- b. Michelle Thom highlights different strategies for LMA to increase attendance and boost financials.
  - i. Tuition Discounts
  - ii. Open Houses
  - iii. Outreach to surrounding pre-schools to increase enrollment.
  - iv. Alumni outreach
- c. Endowment report given to Greg Kern by Rob Benacci, Barbara Chaffee, and Bill Lasher
- d. St. Matt's Endowment report given to Greg Kern by Gina Snider
- e. Approval of Treasurer's Report & Budget for 2024 was brought with recommendation from church council. Motion was unanimously approved.

7. Proposed Changes to Luther Memorial Church Constitution:

- a. Bill Lasher went through the constitution for last annual congregational meeting and fixed errors, etc. Must be ratified and voted on for a second year.
- b. Presented: Our current constitution has references to the Bethany Foundation which no longer exists. Council decided to remove these references, and at the same time review the entire constitution and make any necessary or desired updates. The changes are essentially editorial and are summarized below.
  1. Several typographical and formatting corrections were made but are not shown. Examples are the addition of periods to the section numbers; replacing periods with “)” on numbered subsections for consistency; spelling; and punctuation errors.
  2. Addition of a revision date to the header which will need to be filled in once it's approved by the congregation.
  3. Selection of options in the ELCA model constitution reflecting our practice that were not done in the original document – specific subsections are:
    - a. C5.03 – Council elects its own officers rather than the Congregation; removal of any references to by-laws since we don't have them.
    - b. C8.02 (d) – Associate members must be members of other Christian congregations (as proposed to ELCA or Lutheran)
    - c. C9.01, C9.21 – A call committee is elected by Council, not by the congregation.
    - d. C10.02 and C12.12 – Removal of the word [senior] in front of pastor since we are unlikely to have a senior pastor for the foreseeable future.

2024 Minutes cont'd.:

- e. C13.04 – the Mutual Ministry committee is appointed by the president of council (as opposed to the vice-president) along with the pastor.
  - 4. C12.05 and C13.02 – removal of mentions to the Bethany Foundation
  - 5. C16.01 – adding the number of voting members (2) needed to propose amendments.
  - c. Motion to accept the proposed changes to Luther Memorial Constitution made by Ken Kraut and seconded by Loretta Deeds. Motion was unanimously approved.
8. Proposed Resolutions by Congregational Council:
- a. Be it resolved:
    - 1. That we express our thanks to Almighty God for the blessings we have received during the past year, and that we pledge ourselves anew to dedicated Christian living, worship, and service in this new year of grace, 2024.
    - 2. We express our thanks to all members of the congregation who served so faithfully in our church during 2023, especially those members of Congregational Council completing terms of service; Emma Chaffee, Mark Howell, Ann Flick, Dave Kinzig, Skip Meyn, Jean McMillin, Stan Rose.
    - 3. That we also express our sincere thanks and gratitude to our 2023 staff: Ciara Adams, Imarii Anderson, David Buerk, Norma Buerk, Cheryl Caram, Becky Carey, Caryn Chludzynski, Jody Donovan, Kim Evans, Amanda Fried, Walt Gaber, Amy Gilewicz, Linda Graffius, Beth Keller, Ron King, Pastor Karen Lundwall, Jan MacInnes, Rebecca McCormick, Pastor Jay Mitchell, Pastor Brian Moran, Heidi Myer, AJ Noyes, Sarah Prylinski, Sutton Rowland, Katie Romba, Miriam Scheid, Stephanie Sherwood, Caiden Snider, Karen Socash, Michelle Thom, Jenna Uhlig, Keven Ziroli.
    - 4. That the Council be authorized to act on the report of the auditor when completed.
    - 5. That the minutes of this meeting be considered for adoption by the Church Council not later than the second regular meeting following this annual meeting.
  - b. Motion to accept the resolutions made by Eric Hedlund and seconded by Les Fobes. Motion was unanimously accepted.
9. Columbarium Addition:
- a. Question asked if the columbarium was complete.
  - b. Rick Kern spoke to the topic and said yes, except for some lighting additions.
10. Adjournment:
- a. Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Ken Kraut and seconded by Jessica Copfer. Motion was unanimously approved.
  - b. Closing Prayer presented by Pastor Jay.
  - c. Meeting adjourned at 12:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Emma Chaffee*

***NOMINATING COMMITTEE***  
***ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024***



The Nominating Committee, formed ad-hoc at the October 2024 meeting of Church Council, was asked to seek church members willing to stand for election to Church Council at the annual meeting on January 26, 2025. The committee members were Les Fobes and Greg Kern with some help from Pastor Jay.

Pat Bellingham and Jeff Swanson have finished their first 3-year terms and do not wish to run again. Jean McMillin has finished her 1-yr term and does not wish to run again. Dave Griswold has finished his second 3-year term and cannot run again.

Liz Stroup has finished her first 3-year term and will run again.  
Eli Cooney has finished his 1-yr term and will run again.

This means that there are three open positions.

The following three members have agreed to become nominees for the three available positions for Luther Memorial's Church Council:

**3-year terms**  
Liz Stroup  
Jonathan Ulrich

**1-year term**  
Eli Cooney

Respectfully submitted,  
*Greg Kern*  
Nominating Chair



*REPORT OF THE  
CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024*

Luther Memorial is continuing to accomplish great things in our “faith lives” throughout the Erie community and the world. As a congregation we have helped financially and spiritually in the support of disaster relief, mission outreach, the ELCA, the NWPA Synod and many local outreach organizations. Our support for Luther Memorial Academy and Bethany Outreach is exemplary. As you read through the Annual Report you will see clearly the work and accomplishments of our congregation as we reach out into the Erie community and the world doing God’s work and spreading His light.

It has been two years since the Luther Memorial congregation called Pastor Jay Mitchell to serve as leader of ministries in our church community. We have been blessed by his leadership, devotion and innovative approaches to our spiritual growth. Pastor has introduced us to new ways to explore our faith experience with others in our daily lives. We share in these experiences by participating in Brown Bag Bible, Bible After Dark (BAD), Book Group, Adult Forum, Second Sunday Sorée, and weekly opportunities to visit with him at a local café.

Luther Memorial has been blessed to have had Walt Gaber as our cantor. He has led our music programs, Concert Series, and numerous music enrichment experiences for us over the years. For those in his choirs it was a sad day when he announced his retirement in August. A Search Committee began looking for a new cantor. Luther Memorial was blessed again when the committee selected Bryan Timm as Luther’s new cantor. Bryan has continued to enrich the exceptional music programs at Luther Memorial that we have long been known for.

Some of the highlights of this year have been:

- New and unique programs for adults and youth
- Repair of the fellowship hall dishwasher
- Installation of a hot water heater for the fellowship hall and parlor kitchens
- Upgrades to the fellowship hall kitchen
- Replacement of carpet in the parlor, hallways and LMA library
- New parlor furniture
- Selection of Bryan Timm as Luther Memorial’s cantor
- Plans for a church and LMA electronic sign in the greenspace

I would be remiss if I did not thank the entire Luther Memorial staff for the dedication to this ministry. I thank all of you who have served on committees, been council members, prepared food, performed music, visited the homebound, prayed for all of us, knitted, led prayer groups and Bible studies and all those other things you do to make the mission and ministry at Luther Memorial an important part of our lives and the Erie community.

*Les Fobes*  
Church Council President





***REPORT OF THE PASTOR***  
***ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024***

<sup>12</sup> But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; <sup>13</sup> esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. <sup>14</sup> And we urge you, brothers and sisters, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. <sup>15</sup> See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. <sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not despise prophecies, <sup>21</sup> but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup> abstain from every form of evil.

-I Thessalonians 5

Who can believe we are at another Annual Meeting?! It seems like such a short time ago that I wrote my first Annual Report of my ministry with you. But, as I have told so many of you, this is a key sign of the joy I find among you and the Spirit's providence in leading us to one another to share in ministry in this corner of Christ's Church.

*Rejoice Always*

In the past year, we have welcomed 4 new siblings as members of our congregation, 5 children to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, 4 young adults to full confirmed membership, 2 children into the family of God through Baptism, and 1 child into the family by recognizing their baptism in another congregation. This is such a reason to rejoice!

But if that wasn't enough, we should rejoice that we gathered for worship 62 times! Among these gatherings, we celebrated our first Luther Schools Week worship, one worship on Zoom (thanks, Snowpocalypse 2024!), and welcomed our siblings from the Erie Conference for Ascension worship. We also gathered for several midweek services during Advent and Lent.

It was also my privilege to preside over chapel for our students every Wednesday that LMA is in session, as well as LMA Commencement in June. I cherish our school, our children and our faculty. What a ministry Luther Memorial has in the community!

We also rejoiced with Linda Graffius as she entered retirement from being our Director of Care Ministries and with Cantor Walt Gaber who retired as our cantor. We also welcomed Cantor Bryan Timm to our community here at Luther who has done a noble job leading our worship!

But, as always, those are just the statistics and do not include the meals we have shared, stories we've told, gatherings we've hosted, and other times of being together in joy. I am so grateful to those of you who have opened your homes and your lives to in my time here and remind you that I am always happy to meet!

*Pray without Ceasing*

Know that you are always in my prayers. And I hope that you continue to keep me in yours. This is the very foundation by which we are made one in Christ. In prayer we have gathered around five families in their grief as we commended siblings to the loving arms of their Redeemer. We gathered around our youth as they went off to Confircamp. I have had the opportunity to visit several of our members who have been hospitalized and a goodly number of our homebound members. Again, please be sure to reach out to me if you are in need of the visit—or if you just want a friendly chat. Being together in prayer is always holy time.

Report of the Pastor, cont'd.:

*Give Thanks in All Circumstances*

Paul elsewhere writes that he gives thanks for the partnership of the saints in sharing the gospel *from the beginning*. How deeply I share these sentiments with Paul. I am so grateful for your partnership in spreading the gospel here at Luther and in our daily lives here in Erie and far beyond.

While I am grateful for each of you, I would like to name a few folks in particular for whom I am grateful over the past year:

- + Pastors McCullough, Zackrison, Lundwall, and Moran for coverage during vacations and Continuing Education.
- + Les Fobes, our Council President this year and who has nobly steered our congregation toward the bright future God intends for us.
- + The members of Council who have worked diligently to vision and dream big what God has in store for us at Luther.
- + The entire LMA community but in particular Mrs. Michelle Thom, our Principal, whose partnership in ministry in this place has been unparalleled.
- + The members of the Cantor Search Committee who worked this year to find a new cantor—not always an easy task.
- + Finally, while it would be an immense use of paper to name you all, I am so grateful to you and to God *for* each of you and our partnership here together in the many adventures God has in store for us.

*Do Not Quench the Spirit*

We also tried something new this year and Council gathered for a Retreat in July to vision and dream but also to set ourselves some goals and markers for the year ahead. We will do so again this July. But through it all, we have seen the many ways the Spirit is still active in and among us here. I hope you can feel—as I can—the ways the Spirit enlivens our gatherings and our work in the world. I am so excited for the year ahead and I hope that you will lean into the guiding of the Spirit with me as we live into God's intention for us here at Luther.

As I have said many times, I continue to keep you in my prayers and hope that you keep me in yours.

Always yours in Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Jay".

The Rev. Jay C. Mitchell, pastor



*REPORT OF THE PASTORAL ASSISTANT  
TO HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024*

As always, I must begin by thanking you for your continued support of the ministries of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church these past twelve years. Your support enables this ministry site to continue to provide important outreach to the neighborhood of Little Italy, as well as to the wider community in the City of Erie. Your good wishes, thoughts and prayers are sustaining to me and your siblings in Christ at Holy Trinity.

We continue the pick-up of rescued food from Country Fair Stores and Giant Eagle bakery, and the addition of the shared Panera and Country Fair pick-up from Luther Memorial. This enables us to distribute bags of rescued/prepared foods on Tuesday evenings along with the meals. The generous congregations of the Erie Conference also provided the traditional Thursday end of the month “Sloppy Joe Dinners” each month, enabling our friends and neighbors to be served 8,540 meals, and the additional 1,470 food bags. Your continued support of these ministries is a gracious gift for which we cannot thank you enough.

We continue to give thanks for the generous offerings of time and talent from our volunteers. However, we continue to deal with dwindling numbers of volunteers as most are of retirement age and are dealing with health issues and the vagaries of aging, that are limiting their availability. So if you or anyone you know may be interested in volunteering their time once or twice a month for 3 hours or so please contact us and we will gladly show you the simple ways in which we serve people, with food.

The beginning phases of the “Laundry of Love”, enabled by the grant for \$67,000 from the Lutheran Foundation for Long Term Living are in place and we hope to have the laundry up and serving our friends and neighbors in the first quarter of 2025. The laundromat will allow our friends and neighbors access to free laundry services and the ability to use our locker room facilities for showering while doing their laundry. We plan to provide them the opportunity to get **“a little body wash, a little shampoo and a little dignity”** through this new and much needed ministry.

We continue our small group Bible Study on Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:00 pm using our conference call toll free number that is graciously led by Pr. Harbaugh in his retirement and me. We have completed a study of the entire Bible, and have completed an in-depth study of the Gospel of John and are currently doing an in-depth study of the book of Romans. You are welcome to join using the conference call toll free phone number 848.777.1212 Conf. ID: 6436436431#.

Worship continues each week at 11:00 am and we continue to worship a steady number of 45 or so siblings in Christ each week. Our Sudanese community remains strong and vibrant and an integral part of our worship, as they provide special music every other week, and when an Arabic reader is the lector for the day, the first and second readings are read for the community in Arabic.

We were blessed to be able to send four young people to the National Youth Gathering, and four young adults to the Multi-cultural Youth Leadership Event/National Youth Gathering in New Orleans this past July. It was a truly meaningful and blessed event for these eight young people.

Please know that the continuation of these ministries is a result of your vision and willingness to be the church in the world, and that the congregation truly appreciates your witness, and that you are welcome and encouraged to visit any time the spirit would move you, and are always most obviously welcome to volunteer your time and talents in whatever way you are moved, as well.

Pastoral Assistant, cont'd.:

On a personal note, thank you for your continued prayers and good wishes as I deal with my double cancer diagnosis and treatment. The bladder cancer has been receiving maintenance treatments after the surgery to remove the tumor in January, and the prostate cancer has been treated with radiation and hormone therapy, and is currently under “control”.

I do miss coming to Luther Memorial to lead and share in worship as we had done in the past, but know you remain close in our hearts and thoughts and prayers. I cannot say it often enough, thank you again for your ongoing prayers, good wishes and support, wishing God’s peace and blessings to each and every one of you; in Christ,

*Ron King*





**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRY**  
**ANNUAL REPORT – 2024**

The following groups, programs, and special events are under the umbrella of Christian Education at Luther Memorial Church. With the lifting of Covid restrictions programming has continued to grow in 2024.

Sunday School	Wednesday Lenten Studies
Vacation Bible School	Adult Spiritual Growth
Third Grade Bibles	Baptism Celebration
First Communion	Dinner With Our Flock
Christmas Pageant	Care Squad
Confirmation Classes	Rally Day
Nursery	Bingo / Yard Sale
Camp Lutherlyn	LYO Service Sunday
Lutheran Youth Organization ( LYO)	Gods Work, Our Hands
Acolyte Training	Soup Sales

The Cradle Roll is overseen by Jeanne Gaber.

Baby blankets are delivered to our newborn babies.

The following were new or occurred in 2024:

- Fundraising for the LYO will continue and planning has begun for the next National Youth Gathering which will be in New Orleans, 2024. 13 attended the Gathering in July.
- No attendees for Winter Retreat at Lutherlyn for 2024.
- Trunk or Treat was well attended by LMC and LMA families.
- The annual Easter egg hunt on Palm Sunday following the 10:30am service has been well attended and continues to bring spring happiness.
- The LYO (grades 6-12) continues to grow as does our Sunday School.
- Confirmands attended 5 weeks of classes from 11:30am to 1:00pm with Beth, Sarah, and Pastor Jay leading up to Reformation Sunday in October. Lessons, topics, and lunch were enjoyed.
- Next National Gathering will be in Minneapolis, Minnesota summer 2027.
- Our nursery continues to be overseen by Anna Keller
- Thank you to our church families for participating in the Family Christmas Program where they selected their favorite Christmas Carol and shared why it was special for their family. It was enjoyed by all.
- Our Sunday School grades PreK-5 have been meeting the second Sunday of the month in Fellowship Hall from 9:30 to 10:15am. LYO meets the third Sunday of the month 9:30 to 10:15am.

Christian Education, cont'd.:

- Thank you to Cathie Dugan, Keri Cooney, and Kelly Lang for volunteering to teach and guide our young children in their Christian faith.
- Confirmation Camp in June 2024 at Lutherlyn was well attended by the LYO aged youth. Thank you to our dedicated and generous church members and church council for their continued support and financial donations for sponsorships.
- Fundraising for the youth has continued with the selling of ham loaves, greeting cards, seasonal basket raffles, BINGO, soup sales, bake sales, yard sale, car washes, flea market, and craft fair.
- The Care Squad continues to make cards for the V.A. Hospital and other small outreach projects.
- Volunteer opportunities were able to be done this past year from God's Work Our Hands, CROP Walk, and other service projects.
- Service Sundays with the LYO continue to look for opportunities to serve members of our congregation in 2025
- The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Scavenger Hunt was canceled fall 2024 due to the Oktoberfest. Plans to revisit the Scavenger Hunt in 2025 resume.
- LYO hosted BINGO Fall 2024 and will host Spring 2025.
- VBS ran Wednesday evenings May 22, May 29, June 5 and June 12.
- LYO Christmas Extravaganza is held annually the first Friday in December and was postponed due to weather. We did host a Hot Cocoa station for the entire community at the Downtown D'lights instead the following weekend and served over 1000 cups of Hot Cocoa. Thank you to an anonymous donor which allowed us to purchase the supplies for the event.
- Continued thanks to Lena Donnelly for her dedication in organizing, recruiting, practicing, and presenting the St. Lucia Program at Luther each December. Also many thanks to our cantor, Bryan Timm, and our Luther Memorial choir who are part of this special event along with Anna Keller and Emma Chaffee for your support for this fantastic event.

Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes the Body of Christ to raise a person of faith. Volunteers in Christian Education do important work and we are truly thankful for each and every person who has been a part of the team to help one another to know Jesus Christ. You are all so greatly needed. We continue to work, adapt as necessary, and thanks to your support of our Christian Education programming we continue to learn and come together as God's family.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Beth Keller and Sarah Prylinski*



*CANTOR'S REPORT*  
*ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024*

**“We proclaim the Word of God through Music”**

It is hard to believe that it has only been a few months since I started in the role of Cantor. The support and encouragement received by all has made me feel right at home. Given my appointment in September, it is hard to provide a year in review, but extend my heart felt gratitude towards the staff, teachers, musicians, and choirs, who have made this transition feel incredibly natural.

**Choirs**

As Lutherans, music plays a crucial role in how we worship. With the vast history of profound music in our congregation there is no doubt that we intrinsically and emotionally crave it in our religious practice. For many of us music connects us with our past evoking our memories of another time or place. I feel it important to draw on those experiences with our current resources as well as leave room to create new experiences.

Our adult choir and bell choir are two valuable volunteer groups that pour countless time into preparing and practicing working together as a team and tackling some of the challenges of creating meaningful leadership within our worship. We all enjoy a good football game this time of year, but we also know that game would not exist without countless hours of training, team building, and planning. Although I don't require members of the choirs to pass a push up test or endurance run around the church, musically they go through the same steps as any athletic team to perform their function each week. The devotion to each of these teams and support is truly something to take pride in.

**Instruments**

As of this report, it is in the works to move the Steinway grand piano from the old choir room to the fifth floor. By moving the piano to a more climatized environment it will help to make better use of the asset in the future. After its relocation it will need to acclimate to the room, receive a tuning, and be assessed further for some attention to condition of felt in the action. The Roland keyboard currently serving the fifth floor for rehearsal and assembly song suffers with a few electronic errors that would be more costly to repair than replace.

Both Allen Organs have had recent maintenance to address a few failed pistons. Both instruments are in reasonable condition provided their age. The sanctuary instrument installed in 1994 bears continued signs of failing audio controls. Upon powering on or off, loud popping can be heard as the delay relays in the amplifier stacks are failing. This could be addressed in a more extensive maintenance call but is time consuming and perhaps not the best use of funding. As digital instruments, it is best to keep in mind that the technology that drives them in many cases is no longer supported at their age and replacement or other alternatives will need to be considered for the future.

There are no concerns with the sanctuary grand piano and three rank pipe organ. The piano in the parlor will be tuned this month as preventative maintenance.

Cantor's Report, cont'd.:

**Concert Series and P.I.P.**

One of the more significant adjustments that will continue to take some time to flush out is my view and treatment of the Luther Memorial Concert Series. I feel it is important to advance this initiative by insulating it from the religious goals of the church and push it towards a mission of community engagement. By doing so we will need to adjust the budget for music and worship to reflect the needs of special musicians in worship, but I feel we gain a valuable step forward in autonomy of the concert series necessary to procure grants and draw in community awareness of all of the good things happening at Luther. Initially I would like to target local and regional ensembles that have few opportunities to perform. Drawing on the Jamestown Community Choir, Decho Ensemble (1/18), and other similar groups representing the demographics of our region, we hope to gain exposure and attention from the Erie community.

Presque Isle Pro-Musica (P.I.P), is a continuation of the Erie Chamber Orchestra that has been in residence at Luther for a few years. Although it is not a Luther Memorial Church program, I feel it is another important group to support as it draws attention and gains exposure. With Walt's recent decision to step down as President of the organization, I felt it necessary to accept the offer to become his successor in that role.

On March 2, 2025 we celebrate Transfiguration as the end of the Epiphany season as we move to our Lenten discipline. With diminishing numbers in our choral leadership, I am setting this Sunday to be a call to all and any individuals within the congregation, past members, friends and family to experience the fellowship of choir. The anthem, psalm, gospel acclamation, and hymns will be rehearsed at our normal times on Thursdays (6:30) and Sunday mornings (9:30) minimal two weeks before 3/2/25. If you have considered choir in the past, have advanced musical training or no musical training, you are encouraged to participate and experience for yourselves as there is safety in numbers. I hope to see many of you there.

In conclusion, I will admit it has been a flurry of activity beyond what I have normally been accustomed to in a smaller congregation, but it has been the congregation, staff, and musicians of Luther that has made it so rewarding. Thank you! In addition to the traditions of Blue Christmas, Lucia, and pajama worship, I hope sharing some of my own traditions such as beer and hymns and Holden evening prayer have provided other meaningful opportunities for fellowship. Here is to the future!

Respectfully submitted:  
*Bryan M. Timm*  
Cantor

*"We believe art feeds the spirit."*





**CARE MINISTRY**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024**

The year 2024 was a busy year for the Magic Fingers Knitter Group, Quilters and the OWLS.

**Knitting Group:**

We currently have 10 ladies in the group that knit or crochet doing wonderful work making prayer shawls, prayer crosses, baby blankets, baby hats and children's hats that are dispersed in our community to help others in need. We meet the second and fourth Tuesday of the month.

**Quilting Group:**

We currently have 9 ladies in this group helping to make the quilts. We had 11 quilts made and asked the congregation to help with tying the love knots to finish the quilts. Jay blessed them and they were delivered to Community Shelter Services at 655 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street in Erie to bring warmth and comfort to those they serve who are homeless and need a place to sleep and be fed.

This group meets the first and third Saturday of the month.

**OWLS Group (Older Wiser Lutherans):**

This group meets the third Wednesday of the month. During the Lenten Season all are encouraged to participate in our Lenten Services and Lenten Lunches.

We had a lot of fun together in our activities. We were able to go to the Penn State Planetarium for a wonderful program about the starry skies and the changes they go through. We went to lunch at Madeline's in Cranesville, PA, Ferrante's Winery in Geneva, OH, and Pine Junction Restaurant in NY. We had a great GAME Day with a lot of joy and laughter and enjoyed pizza for lunch. In November Michael DeSanctis, retired Professor of Theology and Structural Design and Architecture from Gannon, joined us and did a presentation on creches and how he made his own. They are displayed at the Church of the Convent at Christmas time for the community to enjoy.

We also had the OWLS Christmas Party in December and it was great fun; games, singing songs, a delicious lunch while enjoying each other's company. It was so nice having Bryan Timm come to play Christmas music for our 30 attendees.

**Bereavement:**

Several Journeying through Grief Booklets were sent over the course of the year to those in our congregation who lost loved ones. Sympathy cards are also sent as well as attendance at visitations and funeral services. This is so important to let those in need feel comfort and know we are here for them.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Janice A. MacInnes*  
Care Ministry



*PRAYER PARTNERS  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024*

The Prayer Partners of Luther Memorial Church has 11 members and has been active for quite a few years. These dedicated members are faithful in praying and keeping the reasons for prayers confidential. We meet every 6-8 weeks to update the lists.

The prayer lists consistently have 100+ names on them. This is cumbersome for the bulletin and for the group to manage. We understand that it is difficult at times to remove a name off the list and has resulted in some names being on the list for as long as 5 years. Therefore, we have had to make the following changes.

The types, guidelines and availability for lists are as follows:

- The short-term list is 1 year or less (i.e. accidents, hospitalizations, surgery, new acute illness)
  - The short-term list will be in the bulletin each Sunday.
- The long-term list is up to 2 years (i.e. cancer treatment, dementia, addiction, personal issues)
  - The long-term list will be at the welcome table each Sunday for those members who want to include them in their prayers.
  - Our military men and women are included with the long-term list.
- The private list is confidential and is only seen by the prayer group members and Norma.
- The Grief listing will continue to be in the bulletin and the loved one will be listed for one (1) month.

These 2 lists will be included in the newsletter in March, June, September and December. It is **YOUR** responsibility to inform Linda, group members or Norma of updates, deaths or removal, preferably by email the first week of the months, March, June, September and December.

We attempt to get updates by making phone calls and emails. Many times there is not a response to an email and if a phone message is left it is not returned. Therefore, if updates are not received on any of those being prayed for the person(s) will be removed from the short-term prayer list after one (1) year and from the long-term list after two (2) years. All we ask is that you keep us informed of your loved ones.

Please save these guidelines and write down the names and dates of your entries for the lists as a reminder.

The Prayer Partners are an integral part of Luther Memorial's ministry and we thank you for your confidence and support.

Linda Graffius [swedemom@verizon.net](mailto:swedemom@verizon.net)  
Jane Kinzig [javajane57@verizon.net](mailto:javajane57@verizon.net)  
Mary Mumford [jdavemumf@hotmail.com](mailto:jdavemumf@hotmail.com)  
Pat Young [youngkat3@verizon.net](mailto:youngkat3@verizon.net)  
Mary Daniels [marydaniels43@yahoo.com](mailto:marydaniels43@yahoo.com)  
Jan MacInnes [jamacsl@verizon.net](mailto:jamacsl@verizon.net)

Christy Adams [christyccclp@gmail.com](mailto:christyccclp@gmail.com)  
Jeanne Gaber [jeannegaber@gmail.com](mailto:jeannegaber@gmail.com)  
Donna Sedelmyer [timmy0802@gmail.com](mailto:timmy0802@gmail.com)  
Lee Swenson [leeswenson@verizon.net](mailto:leeswenson@verizon.net)  
Emma Braine [rbraine1134@gmail.com](mailto:rbraine1134@gmail.com)



***REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR  
LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024***

For 49 years, Luther Memorial Academy has been dedicated to providing high-quality education and fostering a nurturing environment for our diverse student body. This is my second year as the administrator at Luther Memorial Academy and I am proud to tell others about our amazing school! Focusing on the traditions of LMA while introducing new ideas continues to be my priority. We are excited to begin planning 50<sup>th</sup> year celebrations for next school year!

For the beginning 2024-2025 school year, we welcomed one new staff member to the LMA team. Mrs. Erin VanDyke joined our team filling up our vacant Kindergarten position. She is a great fit and addition to our staff. Additionally, at the end of last school year, Mrs. Kim Evans retired, but came back this year to assist in our library.

Continuing traditions included the LMA Family Picnic, LMA Sunday, Children's Grief Awareness Day partnered with The Caring Place, School Spirit Days to support Luther Lion at the Erie Zoo, the Thanksgiving Feast (led this year by Elaine Brady, Ranka Vidakovia, and Natalie Montero), the Christmas Fair (led by Brooke McCall), the Christmas Carol Sing-along (joined this year by Forte Group from Northwestern High School), Student-led school newspaper, Middle School Dances, Read Across America Day (led by Kim Evans), Challenge 24, the National Geography Bee, 8<sup>th</sup> grade etiquette luncheon, and service hours for all grade levels.

New additions include an LMA trivia night, Block Party fundraiser (complete with a cornhole tournament and carnival games), Crop Walk, Tea with Thom (community communication meeting), Sponsorship of a Luther Memorial Photo Board at Zoo Boo, student volunteering at Bethany Outreach Center, a PTL holiday cookie box sale, participation in the MathCounts (middle school math competition), and bowling team. Ciara Adams, sixth grade teacher, is planning a production of the Wizard of Oz in the spring. To close out the school year, we are planning to participate in the St. Patrick's Day Parade and Lutheran Schools Week. Furthermore, LMA has created a monthly electronic newsletter. You may sign-up to stay up-to-date with all the things happening at LMA and receive this newsletter here: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/IFORHQj/enewssignup>.

To promote reading along with the Spring total eclipse, LMA was awarded a Little Free Library from Simons Foundation in partnership with Lake Erie Candy Co. and Werner Books. We held an art contest to have our students decorate the Little Free Library. It is placed by the school entrance on 11<sup>th</sup> Street. A dedication ceremony was held on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 and the Little Free Library is officially open!

We replaced the Stanford 10 standardized testing with NWEA Map Growth testing for all grade levels this school year. This assessment is given 3 times per year and provides teachers with actionable evidence to help inform instruction. It provides information on student achievement as well as student growth.

We received Title I funding for teacher back pay from the 23-24 school year. This money will be applied towards our bottom line for our 23-24 budget sheet to repay salaries already paid out. Additionally, we received Title IV and Title II funding. We were able to purchase a staff ViewSonic Technology Training, 14 new Chromebooks for replenishment, and a Research-Proven Reading Program called Lexia Core5 for students in K-5.

LMA Administrator Report, cont'd.:

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's (PCCD) School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC) granted Luther Memorial Academy \$75,000 for physical and emotional safety needs including a new fence for the playground, more exterior lighting, security camera updates, an online Student Information System, and small group counseling sessions for students.

Our student enrollment this year was consistent to the last few year's enrollment (89 students), however it remains lower historically and there is room for growth. Work continues by the LMA School Board and myself in attempts to recruit more students for next school year. Luther Memorial Church has been a vital and treasured support for Luther Memorial Academy, and we are indebted to all who have supported us.

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

MICHELLE THOM, Administrator

AMANDA FRIED, Office Manager

**TEACHING FACULTY 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR**

ERIN VANDYKE – Kindergarten

KEVIN ZIROLI – Grade 3

KATIE ROMBA – Grade 1

KAREN SOCASH – Grade 4

BETH KELLER – Grade 2

REBECCA MCCORMICK – Grade 5

CIARA ADAMS – Grade 6 Homeroom, 6-8 English, 6-8 Reading

AMY GILEWICZ – Grade 7 Homeroom, 6 & 7 Math, 6-8 Social Studies, K-8 Art

CARYN CHLUDZYNSKI – Grade 8 Homeroom, 6-8 Science, 6-8 Spanish, 8 Math

AJ NOYES – Specials K-8: PE, Health/Guidance, Music, Spanish K-5, Technology K-5, 6 Study Hall

KIM EVANS - Library

STEPHANIE SHERWOOD – Act 89 Reading

JODY DONOVAN – Act 89 Math (Kdg. – Grade 6)

ELLEN CASS – Act 89 Math (Grades 6-8)

HEIDI MYER - IU Speech

MIRIAM SCHEID – Tech Support and Financial Support

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:**

JOHN BARTLETT – President

LES FOBES - Church Council President

MARIA GOELLNER - Vice President

PASTOR JAY MITCHELL - Pastor

GREG KERN - Treasurer

SHANNON MCADOO - Member

MIRIAM SCHEID - Assistant Treasurer

HEATHER BARTLETT - Member

PREEYA MONTROY - Secretary

JASON KING - Member

MICHELLE THOM - LMA Administrator

M J HOWELL - Emeritus

AJ NOYES - Teacher Representative

**BEFORE SCHOOL PROGRAM:** CARYN CHLUDZYNSKI

**AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM:** BETH KELLER – Coordinator  
CARYN CHLUDZYNSKI

**MEMBERSHIPS:**

Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA)

Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5 (IU)

LMA Administrator Report, cont'd.:

**PARENT/TEACHER LEAGUE:**

LEAH KING/KIM WERTZ – President  
MINDY BOYD – Vice-President  
DANIELLE OSMAK – Secretary  
PAULA NOBLE – Treasurer  
BETH KELLER – Teacher Representative

**SPORTS/ACTIVITIES:**

Cross-Country, Swimming, Basketball, Bowling

**GRADUATION AWARDS:**

George E. Black Award for Most Outstanding Student  
J. David Mumford Award for Academic Excellence  
Helen Schade Award for Academic Fitness  
Alice Engel Extraordinary Effort Award  
Susan M. Belott Christian Service Award  
Richard Strobel Award

**THRIVENT GIFTING PROGRAM:**

Thrivent Financial helps LMA through the “Thrivent Choice” program. This program allows members to direct funds to LMA. It is not a matching program, but rather a direct donation to our school. We count on members to keep us in mind and are very grateful for support.

**SCHOLARSHIPS/MEMORIALS:**

Library development, improved curriculum, and financial aid to students are dependent upon the generosity of others. LMA is indebted to the Women of the ELCA, Thrivent, and individuals and families who have been generous to us. The EITC and OSTC Programs, crucial to us, allow tax deductions for businesses that contribute to us solely for the purpose of financial aid for our families.

Yours in Education,  
*Mrs. Michelle Thom*



**LUTHER**  
MEMORIAL ACADEMY



**BETHANY OUTREACH CENTER**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

Life change happens here because  
of your ongoing support.

Our Mission: Bethany Outreach Center impacts Erie’s lower eastside neighborhood by providing services and teaching skills to underserved families that will lead them to a path of positive life change.

**FOOD PANTRY**

**THERE WERE 8,292 VISITS TO OUR PANTRY.**

**CLOTHING CLOSET**

There were **3,101 visits** made to our closet.

**Wellness Program in partnership with the Inner City Art House**

25 households benefitted from our program

**Project Partners who’ve shared their Time, Talents, Ties and Treasures:** Second Harvest Food Bank, Build CDC~ HAMOT HEALTH FOUNDATION, Erie Insurance, The Erie Community Foundation, Lord Corporation, Cornerstone Construction, PSN~Plastics Services Network, PathStone, The Erie Federal Credit Union, Mercyhurst University’s Beyond The Gates Program, Times Old Newsies, Luther Memorial Academy, The HOVIS Fund, LCBA Branch 49, Crop Walk for Hunger, Students and Families of Erie Day School, ELCA, Faith Lutheran Church, Fulton Athletic Club, ROMOLO CHOCOLATES INC., ECGRA & THOMAS B. HAGAN

BREW HA HA, M.A.B.E.L. ~Mind And Body Education Link, Five Iron Golf, Café 7-10, Texas Roadhouse, Women of ELCA, The Erie Community Foundation Youth Philanthropists~ HEY! Hear Erie’s Youth, Members of GURDWARA SIKH CULTURAL SOCIETY, Erie Crawford Central Labor, Sisters of St. Joseph, Delta Sigma Theta, AKA’s, Emmaus, Various Churches, Regional Camp Service Day, Mt. Ebal Missionary Baptist Church, Cascade Park Club, Erie Crawford Central Labor, Community Labor Coalition, United Way of SOUTHWESTERN, PA, MH Equipment

**The Annual Turkey Man Drive:** Made possible by Second Harvest Food Bank, Erie Insurance, Cornerstone Construction, and a wealth of volunteers throughout the community who believe in the importance of helping those in need.

**Corporate Matches:** Erie Insurance, Thrivent Choice Program, and The Erie Community Foundation

Highlighted moments of our volunteers in action from Luther Memorial Academy. (Mrs. Thom and Student Volunteer)



Our Executive Director, Mabel Howard, is very thankful for opportunities to collaborate with so many amazing partners in the city of Erie.



A very special thank you to our **HOPE TEAM:** Organizations, Businesses and Individuals contributing \$5000 or more in 2024: Luther Memorial Church, Luther Memorial Congregation, ELCA, MORLIN, Inc., PSN~Plastics Services Network, Cornerstone Construction, Times Old Newsies. All of our donors, large and small as well as our volunteers, make it possible for Bethany Outreach Center to continue on with its good works, in efforts to create a better community for all. We appreciate each one of you.

**Executive Director:** Mabel Howard  
Location: 254 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Erie, PA 1503  
Website: [www.bethanyoutreachcenter.org](http://www.bethanyoutreachcenter.org)

**Executive Assistant:** Luanne Churchill  
Office Phone: 814-456-6254  
Email: [mabel@bethanyoutreachcenter.org](mailto:mabel@bethanyoutreachcenter.org)

*LMC PROPERTY COMMITTEE*  
*ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024*



The Property Committee is pleased to report that the parking lot, greenspace and exterior lighting have proved to be a tremendous improvement to Luther Memorial. An additional feature will be an electronic digital sign that has been ordered for installation on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and Sassafras Streets. The design for this sign was approved by the Arts Committee, Property Committee and Council. Look for its installation this spring.

During the Lenten luncheons this past spring the fellowship hall kitchen dishwasher quit working. After much research the Property Committee decided to have the dishwasher repaired for approximately \$4,000 rather than replace it for nearly \$35,000. The Property Committee is happy to report that it is working beautifully and will hopefully last another 35 years. At the same time additional changes were made to the kitchen. A handwashing sink, new storage cabinets and a tank-less hot water system were installed as well as the improvement of the hot water supply to the parlor kitchen.

General maintenance for the church year 2024 consists of \$23,349.59 including:

Roof Repairs	Heating and ventilating repairs and maintenance
Plumbing	Fellowship Hall kitchen repairs
Lighting updates	

Cost of services were \$37,195.67. This includes:

Landscaping	Alarm monitoring and security camera monitoring
Snow removal	Trash services
Elevator service and repair	

Property and the Arts Committee worked together to achieve another big change to one of our favorite gathering places. This fall the carpeting in the parlor, school library and main hallways was replaced and new furniture, lamps and updates were made to the parlor. Many comments have been made about the ease in getting out of the chairs and loveseats. These projects were made possible because of Jean Hedderick's memorial fund.

The final phases of the columbarium renovation were completed this year. Additional niches, improvements to the lighting and seating were part of the changes made to the columbarium.

This year a small chapel was created at the Martin Luther window. This space is now appropriate for private meditation.

A thank you to the Property Committee members for their continued dedication to the upkeep of our church facilities:

David Buerk	Dave Kinzig
John Evans	Tom Klomp
Les Fobes	Miriam Scheid
Jeanne Gaber	Jeff Swanson
Mark Howell	

Respectfully submitted,  
*Les Fobes*



**WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE**  
**ANNUAL REPORT – 2024**

The mission of the Worship and Music Committee is to “*plan the meaningful celebration of Word and Sacrament according to the Lutheran tradition.*”

Those who actively served on the committee during 2024 include:

Pr. Jay Mitchell	Mary Daniels
Cantor Bryan Timm	Les Fobes
Cathie Dugan, Chair	Walt Gaber
Jessica Copfer	Betty Pletz

While longer an active part of the committee, we continue to count Joanne Dahlstrand as one of our members, as she served faithfully for many, many years. We give thanks to God for her long life, her love of worship, and her service to the church.

The Worship and Music committee met five times this past year, reviewing past practices and considering new ideas in order to enhance the worship experiences at Luther Memorial. The committee is also responsible for ensuring that needed resources are in place for the conduct of liturgy, and for coordinating the decorating of our worship spaces.

As 2024 ends, we are close to the completion of two full years under Pr. Jay’s leadership. He continually challenges all of us to think more deeply about how we worship, and why we do what we do. Make sure you read *Worship Matters*, a regular part of our bulletin. I guarantee you will learn something very interesting every week. Perhaps the biggest change in our worship life has been the retirement of Walt Gaber. After many years as our Cantor, Walt felt it was time to exchange his seat on the bench for a seat in the pews beside Jeanne, and have time to focus his life on other things. We are grateful for all the time and energy he put forth to keep our music timely and inspiring. We are very fortunate to have Bryan Timm join the Luther Memorial family as our new Cantor. Bryan brings a wealth of experience and talent, and has much to share with our congregation.

There are many people whose efforts make our worship life run smoothly. Thank you first to Pr. Jay, for all the thought you put into making our worship meaningful, and to Bryan, for the deep care you have for worship, and the fresh way you have of looking at our worship practices. A most well-deserved “thank you” also to Norma for all the work you put into coordinating many key components. In addition to producing our weekly bulletins, Norma coordinates the schedules for all worship related elements and personnel. Thank you to the assisting ministers, communion assistants, altar guild members, musicians, lectors, acolytes and online camera operators who offer their gifts to our worship life. Your contributions are greatly appreciated. Thank you also to Les Fobes, whose attention to the details of the aesthetics of the sanctuary are greatly appreciated. Thank you to Caiden Snider, who is always on the spot, taking care of all manner of things that need to be done. There are many others who carry on their own quiet work all around us, often without having to be asked, and just because they see a task needs to be done. To you we owe a word of gratitude as well.

Above all else, I am most grateful for the steadfast strength we have together as a church family. We care deeply for each other, and we care deeply for the ministry and traditions of Luther Memorial Church.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Cathie Dugan*



***EVANGELISM INFORMATION***  
***ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024***



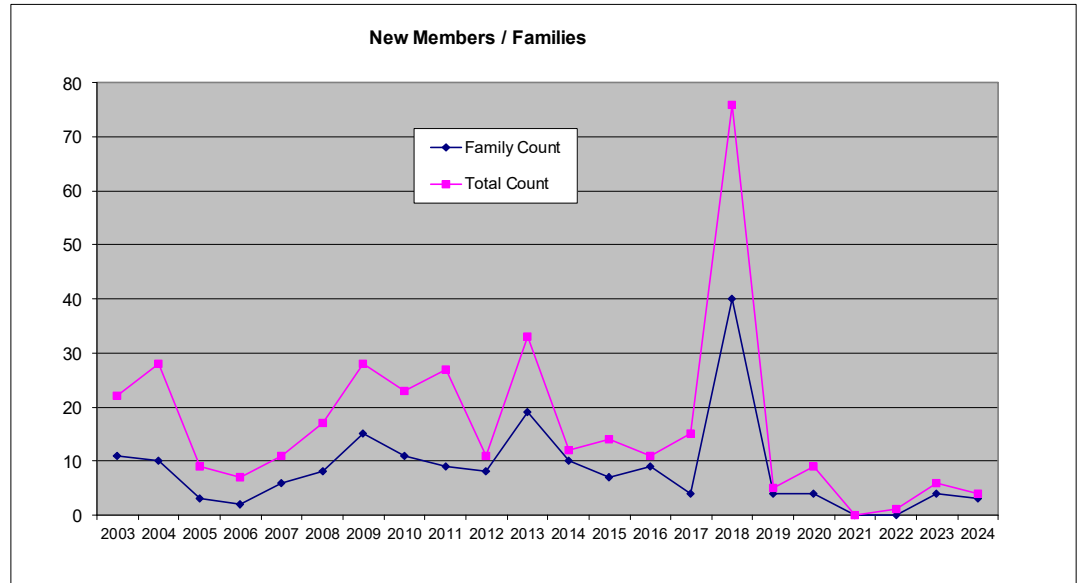
New Members received in 2024:

Paula Noble  
Susan Forsythe  
Gail Blakely

Tyler Noble

New Members / Families Through 2024

Year	Family Count	Total Count
2003	11	22
2004	10	28
2005	3	9
2006	2	7
2007	6	11
2008	8	17
2009	15	28
2010	11	23
2011	9	27
2012	8	11
2013	19	33
2014	10	12
2015	7	14
2016	9	11
2017	4	15
2018	40	76
2019	4	5
2020	4	9
2021	0	0
2022	0	1
2023	4	6
2024	3	4
Totals:	187	369
Average:	8.5	16.8



**Attendance**

Average attendance before Covid in 2019 was 165 / week. In 2024 if we include YouTube as well as in-person attenders, average attendance was 141 / week. Last year's average was 150 / week.

In 2024, we had 2 Baptisms:

Rylee Nobel  
Martin Gaber

1 Recognition of Baptism:

George Hedlund

4 Confirmed Youth:

Marshall Boyd  
Ella Graffius  
Blake O'Brien  
Eleanor Wertz

Thank You!

- To Greeters who warmly welcomed visitors and all who attended our services
- To Staff members and Congregation members who took the time to invite acquaintances from the school, their friends, and family members to join us – at church or on YouTube!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Eric Hedlund*



*LITURGICAL LIFE*  
*ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024*

Our 10:30 Sunday morning worship services continue to be live streamed and are available on our Luther Memorial website and YouTube. Presently six (6) volunteers rotate Sunday mornings to live stream our service. Additional help would be greatly appreciated and you are welcome to contact our church office for more information. Check with one of those who currently help; it's not hard and you'll pick it up in a snap.

The liturgical calendar continues to be followed throughout the year and paraments changed accordingly.

The Christmas trees in the main church, Faith Chapel, and throughout the building were set up. Decorations were ready to go for Hanging of the Greens. Thank you to David Buerk and Caiden Snider for their assistance with this.

Thank you to each and every one for their help this year. It was certainly needed!

**VIDEO OPERATORS – LIVE STREAMING**

Christy Adams  
John Bartlett

Beth Keller  
Nick Lang

Sarah Prylinski  
Gina Snider

**LECTORS ~ 10:30AM**

Christy Adams  
Diane Banks  
Jack & Tessa Bartlett  
Pat Bellingham  
Karen Braendel  
Rosanne Braine  
Patrick Cimino  
Mary Daniels  
Barb Dennison  
Ann Flick  
Les Fobes  
Lucia Goellner  
Lynnette Gustafson

Eric Hedlund  
Amelia & Kelley Lang  
Bill Lasher  
Karen Lundwall  
Kate Martin  
Brooke & Lincoln  
McCall  
Lincoln McCall  
Linda Melaragno  
Vance Meucci  
Cathy Meyn  
Jane Moran  
Blake & Jake O'Brien

C. Noelle Partusch  
Stan Rose  
Marilyn Rositer  
Lois Smith  
Mason Snider  
Lee Swenson  
Gabe & Liz Stroup  
Cecilia, Madeleine &  
Jonathan Ulrich  
Madeleine Wertz  
Veronica Wolf  
Braxton Yoder

**ASSISTANT MINISTERS**

Pat Bellingham  
Rob Benacci  
Emma Chaffee  
Barb Dennison  
Cathie Dugan

Ellen DiPlacido  
Julie Ditz  
Ann Flick  
Mark Howell  
Kate Martin

Chloe Meucci  
Stan Rose  
Liz Stroup  
Linda Swanson

**COMMUNION ASSISTANTS**

Cathie Dugan  
Ann Flick  
Jeanne Gaber

Jonathan Gaber  
Linda Graffius  
Elaine Kern

Martha & Tom Klomp  
Stan Rose

Liturgical Life Committee, cont'd.:

**ACOLYTES**

Serving as an acolyte is an important part of our worship. We thank those that served during our services. A special thank you to Jessica Copfer for serving as our acolyte for many, many Sundays! If your son or daughter would like to serve as an acolyte, please see Beth Keller or contact Norma in the church office.

Jack Bartlett  
Tessa Bartlett  
Marshall Boyd  
Patrick & Shelley Cimino  
Jessica Copfer

Gia Fracassi  
Ella & Evelyn Graffius  
Cecilia & Noah Montroy  
Bella, Blake & Isabella  
O'Brien

Matthew & Mason Snider  
Gabe Stroup  
Christian & Penelope  
Wolf  
Ellie Wertz

**ALTAR GUILD**

Altar Guild volunteers prepare for the celebration of communion. Adjustments to preparation have taken place over the past few months and we thank our altar guild for their continued patience and understanding. Communion by cup is done each Sunday.

Nancy Benacci  
Sharon Burke

Jessica Copfer  
Mary Daniels

Martha & Tom Klomp  
Donna Sedelmyer

Mary D

**USHERS**

Four (4) ushers are needed for each 10:30 service. As you can imagine, that's quite a number of people asked to help usher each Sunday;  $52 \times 4 = 208$ . Many people are kind enough to usher numerous times, and it's easy to do. Volunteers are always very welcome and appreciated. It would be wonderful to have a little additional help.



Many thanks is extended to all the volunteers for their help; our church needs each of you. There are many components to our Sunday morning worship. Volunteers are always so needed and welcome. If you have questions about anything, I urge you to speak with someone who is helping in that area or call the church office. Your dedication always glorifies God and makes Luther Memorial Church a warm and beautiful setting for worship. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Norma Buerk*



***'FEED MY SHEEP' FOOD MINISTRY PROGRAM  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024***

This will be the food ministry program's 13<sup>th</sup> year of service to our congregation! In 2024 we provided 23 freezer meals from participating volunteers. We are grateful to be able to provide this valuable service to our parishioners in need. If you are interested in helping out, either in food preparation, assisting at funeral luncheons, or know of anyone within our church community who could benefit from this service, please contact Norma in the church office at (814) 454-0106 or by email: [nbuerk@luthermemorialonline.org](mailto:nbuerk@luthermemorialonline.org) or Elaine Kern at (814) 392-7189 or by email: [elainekern53@gmail.org](mailto:elainekern53@gmail.org).

We are always grateful for new participants!

Four funeral luncheons were held in 2024.

*Elaine Kern*  
*'Feed My Sheep' Food Ministry Coordinator*



***IN MEMORIAM  
NOVEMBER 1, 2023– NOVEMBER 1, 2024***

RICHARD BRAENDEL  
MELANIE BENN BROWN  
CAROL EMERSON  
PAUL GUSTAFSON  
JAMES HASKINS  
CYNTHIA HESSINGER  
RANDY HESSINGER  
FLORENCE HOLDEN

CHERYL LUCHT  
PHIL MCAFEE  
TOM MCGRAIL  
ROBERT MICHEL  
MARGARET STALLSMITH  
EDNA ALICE HOAG SMITH  
JULIE WOLFRAM



**CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024**

The year 2024 got off to a great start with our 'Souper Bowl' Tasting Event in Fellowship Hall on February 4. We had a 'souper' turn-out and many delicious soups were sampled by all!

Our Annual Church Picnic was again held at the Rotary Pavillion on June 23.

On October 6, we held our annual 'Octoberfest' Tureen in fellowship Hall. We were back to our 'pre-covid' numbers with 50 plus participants!

Unfortunately, 'Snowmageddon' hit the day after Thanksgiving and our annual Christmas Coffee Hour had to be cancelled on December 1!

Here is to hoping for a more 'eventfull' 2025!

We welcome anyone to join our committee at any time.

Our first event of 2025 will be our 'Souper Bowl' Tasting in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, February 2. Please join us!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Elaine Kern

2024 Committee Members include:

Sandy Barbaro  
Les & Lois Fobes  
Judy Johnson  
Elaine Kern  
Tom & Martha Klomp

Jane & Dave Kinzig  
Kathie Kraut  
Jan & Skip MacInnes  
Cathy & Skip Meyn  
Lois Smith

Respectfully submitted,  
*Elaine Kern*



***ALTAR FLOWERS***  
***ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024***

Flowers add that touch of beauty to our worship, and thanks to many our weekly altar, front altar and columbarium flowers continue.

Anyone wishing to have flowers on the altar on Sunday is welcome to call the church office. Front altar and columbarium flowers are also available on any Sunday. If you would like flowers for a Sunday morning please contact our church secretary, Norma Buerk.

Flowers not taken by those who sponsor them are delivered to those in the hospital, homebound, to celebrate an upcoming birthday, or someone who could use a smile. A visit and a friendly face go a long way for those who are unable to get out, see their friends and attend church.

Altar flowers that are delivered:

- Betty Pletz delivers flowers on the second Sunday of each month.
- Diana Alvaro delivers flowers for the remaining Sundays.
  - If you would like to help with dropping off flowers to a friend following worship, please let us know. Your help would be appreciated.

Thank you to:

- Diana Alvaro for the preparation of containers for weekly deliveries.
- Carol Davidson for overseeing the preparation and delivery of cheer bags to our homebound this year. And thank you to those who assisted with the assembling of the goodies and to those who helped with deliveries.

**Donations** of flower vases, juice containers and contact paper are always welcome for the weekly deliveries and may be dropped off in the church office.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Norma Buerk*

***SUNSHINE COMMITTEE***  
***ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024***



Thank you to the Sunshine Committee gals, for all the cards they signed and addressed to our church members/friends, which in 2024 was composed of the following volunteers – Norma Buerk, Coleen DiCenzo, Jane Kinzig, Lois Smith and Pat Young.

The main purpose of the Sunshine Committee is to try to give a little “sunshine” to our homebound folks with a few cards sent to them during the year. Cards are sent to the hospitalized, to homebound folks and other members for different occasions and holidays (sometimes just to say we’re thinking of them), birthday cards to those celebrating their yearly milestones, and sympathy cards to those who have had a loss in their family.

We are always grateful for donations to our card supply, and if anyone feels so inclined, we will also take donations for mailing all those cards. Through the Sunshine Committee just under 300 cards were sent out in 2024 – and that’s a LOTTA postage! Donations of cards or monetary gifts may be dropped off in the church office or given to Pat Young at any time throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Patricia Young*  
Committee Chairperson



**WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
OF THE LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH UNIT**

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024**

*Our motto: As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, our society, and the world!*

All Luther Memorial women are considered members of W/ELCA, and are encouraged to attend any of our monthly Circle meetings, and/or the two General Meetings held each year, usually in April and October.

Any profits from our usual small fundraisers are put to good use, assisting the work of the W/ELCA at Luther Memorial and on the Synod and National level. Yearly gifts have been given to City Mission, Bethesda/Holy Trinity Community Center, Bethany Outreach Center, confirmation retreats, and Luther Memorial Academy.

Since the pandemic we are back to holding Lenten lunches with Betty Pletz as the “general” in charge of the organization, for five (5) Wednesday lunches during Lent, and a lot of friends to help out each week with cooking, set-up and clean-up. We thank one and all for your assistance!

Our two (2) circles did again fill 40 Christmas stockings/gift bags for Warren State Hospital residents this past November...and Tea Bag Invites continued to be given to any woman who joins the church during the year. This year our two circles joined together for the April General Meeting and not in October as two officers had Covid at the time.

For *many* years we have supported the “Pennies for Poverty” project – having canisters at all church entrances for people to throw in their change or dollar bills. We have also supported for several years, mostly through Pat Bellingham’s many efforts, the Human Trafficking issue in the Erie area, and awareness of same, through outreach and education work locally and throughout our NW PA Synod Women’s Organization, and also the Lily Project. We will also be supporting *Rachel’s Garden* – more of that coming up in 2025.

This was Pat Bellingham’s final year as the Women’s Synod President after holding that office for probably 10 years, including being a board member, and doing an excellent job for all those years. Thanks Pat.

Officers for 2024 were: Pat Young – President; Mary Mumford – Vice President; Pat Bellingham – Secretary; Betty Pletz – Treasurer. The leader for the Tuesday Afternoon Circle was Pat Young and for the Deborah Circle, Judy Johnson.

Thank you to all who support Women of the ELCA for your service and dedication. We invite any and all women, regardless of age, to join one of our active Circles. Both meet on the first Tuesday of the month. The Deborah Circle meets at 12:00 noon in the parlor and the Tuesday Afternoon Circle also meets in the parlor at 3:00pm.

God’s blessings,

*Patricia Young*