



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

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 signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

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GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH – ELCA

2024 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Approval of Agenda

Congregational Meeting

Treasurer's Report

Budget for 2024

Thank You to outgoing members -Dennis Chowen, Linda Hemmah and Clay Lange

Congregation Council President Report

Pastor's Report

Old Business:

New Business:

2023

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

President – Kelly Magdanz
Vice President – Brandon Caneva
Secretary – Mikayla Wilson
Treasurer – Robin Baldwin

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Building (Facilities) Committee	David Lyons and Brandon Caneva
Youth & Education Committee	Mikayla Wilson and Debbie Patmore
Evangelism Committee	Clay Lange, Dennis Chowen and Linda Hemmah
Stewardship Committee	Brandon Caneva & San Monahan
Worship & Music Committee	Robin Baldwin

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH – Pastor Carla, Michelle Williams and Dadra Avery

CONFIRMATION – Pastor Kevin

PRE CONFIRMATION -Melissa Pankratz

LIBRARY –

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN – President – Debbie Patmore

QUILTERS – Sue Whitford and Marlene Adolph

2023 GRACE LUTHERAN ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE -

JD Williams, Robin Baldwin, Ethan Dschaak, Linda Hemmah & Shawn Mechling

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH - ELCA

Annual Meeting January 15, 2023

Call to Order

Approval of Agenda:

First - Robin

Second - Eileen Raforth

Parsonage project - Under budget, thank you to all those that helped and donated

Make sure to sign up and volunteer - sign up sheets posted in the entry way

Proposed budget

Approval of the budget

No outgoing members - Congratulations to our new Council President Kelly Magdanz

Council President Report

Pastor's Report

Old Business

New Business

End with prayer

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings from your Grace Lutheran church council! We kicked off 2023 with the addition of our new pastors, Pastor Kevin and Pastor Carla. It is a blessing to have a family team who have already made a huge difference in our worship and education. They have been a good fit with our church family and our community. We are pleased to see that people are returning to Grace Lutheran Church and many new families are joining!

Many improvements to the church were completed this year. Here are the highlights:

- We insulated the back downstairs entry to the preschool and storage room. This was completed for \$2,000 and has eliminated our problems with freezing pipes.
- Thanks to David Lyons, we now have diagrams throughout the church facility locating things such as electrical panels and water shut off valves.
- The sanctuary leak has been repaired so there will be no more buckets up front! This was completed for \$200 by Lowe's.
- Our front outside railing has been repaired by Dan Boy. He did a beautiful job and at a minimal fee.
- Gary Meyer did a great job remodeling our new robe area behind the cry room. It has given us much needed space.
- The sculpture engraving has been completed outside the Parrish office. Thanks to Brandon Caneva.
- Additional cameras have been placed outside to protect our facility and members.

As part of our congregational support, three of our high school graduates were each awarded a \$500 scholarship. We also continue to support Lutherans Outdoors and Outlaw Ranch. The Red Bucket has generated money to send children to camp. We believe this is a cornerstone to bringing our young people closer to God and helping to form their faith. Consecration Sunday generated giving to support our church and its ministry. Thanks to San Monahan, Pastor Kevin, and the consecration committee for their guidance. We are also gratified that Believers Fellowship Church rented our preschool rooms to conduct their morning preschool classes after losing their church to fire. We miss the busy voices of the children now that they are back in their own facility.

2023 brought another successful Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and GLCW was back to serve breakfast. Thanks to all the church members who helped and to Debbie Patmore for heading up the effort. The Christian Motorcyclist Association was here and gave a donation for use of the church. Back in April, we had a successful Easter Egg Drive. Thanks to Brandon Caneva and our Easter bunny, Tim Potts.

The worship and education committees have grown their programs and it's good to see so many children, youth, and adults involved. Heather Kreutz and Diana Bauer will be filling two of three open council positions. Please consider serving with us. Additionally, our 2024 budget has been approved by the congregation. Grace's pastors and staff are the best around and the council approved raises for all. Their hard work benefits the church family.

It has been an honor to serve as your president. God bless you all and let's continue to work and grow in our faith and love for one another.

Kelly Magdanz



January 14, 2024
Grace Lutheran Senior Pastor's
Annual Report

2023 GLC Annual Pastor's Report—Rev. Kevin Jensen

Since the Sturgis police station is just up the street from Grace Lutheran Church, I often hear sirens and see them zoom by on their way to an accident or other emergency. I often stop what I'm doing and say a brief prayer for them. Especially on cold winter days I am really thankful for those who do that work. And I pray for those going out to have T-O-J-A. To Trust Only Jesus Always!

This past year has been amazing. Our ministry together has really started to flourish. In more than 30 years of being together, Pastor Carla and I have always served separate churches. So, we were a little nervous when God called us to serve the same church. But you have lived up to your name—disciples of Grace—and our ministry together is off to a great start in Sturgis and the surrounding area.

The key for me has been to remember my pastor wife has some amazing talents and insights. And when I actually listen and respond positively to her, our marriage, and our ministry, flourishes!

Another amazing thing the Holy Spirit worked in and through us as a congregation this past year was our Consecration Sunday. It was a tremendous team effort! And I am so thankful that so many of you realized our giving is truly an act of worship. Lots of you took a "Step Up" in your giving and are trusting that the Lord is leading us into a bright future together. In fact, this year went so well the committee has agreed to have another Consecration Sunday this coming fall!

Along with all the incredible worship services we have shared together, we have had a number of wonderful new disciples join our fellowship. We have also had a number of folks start using the *Lutheran Bible Reading Plan*. I have truly enjoyed reading several chapters of my Bible every day and it warms my heart to know that a number of you are doing that too.

So, this year, I am inviting you to go to teachsundayschool.com and check out the *365 Day Bible Reading Plan*. This one is a little different from the one we just did because it goes through the Bible a little differently. But I am convinced it will be a great new way of reading the Scriptures. Do prayerfully consider joining me in this new Bible reading adventure this year.

I am also thankful that our *Arise and Shine—Family Advent Worship* went so well this past December and I'm looking forward to sharing with you this year in a yet to-be-determined Wednesday Lenten series.

Now as we move into another New Year, we pray for our first responders using Proverbs 3:5: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight." That means relying on **T-O-J-A: Trust Only Jesus Always!**

In the joy of Christ, Pastor Kevin

Report to the Congregation - 2023

Pastor Carla Nelson, Youth & Family Pastor

Wow! We've served together for a year! What a blessing to have so many faithful and gifted members and friends at Grace Lutheran Church. Wow! Wow! What awesome youth and young adults we have at Grace Lutheran Church.

My main responsibility is to support all aspects of the Education Ministry at Grace Lutheran Church.

This fall, I began a Wednesday evening Bible Study at 5 pm studying the minor prophets. This Bible Study meets whenever we have Wednesday Night Live (during the school year). A group of young women have also begun meeting monthly for Bible Study and we are studying women of the Bible. The group chooses a day that works best so it changes each month. Please ask Pastor Carla if you are interested in joining either Bible Study.

I preach at least once a month at Grace. I assist Pastor Kevin in a variety of ways. We often attend different events so we can be represented in a variety of places. Pastor Kevin and I have a deal, he does the funerals and I do the weddings. I had two weddings in 2024. I also presided at two funerals and several baptisms.

Our first rally provided many opportunities for ministry and learning. All but one morning, we were up and at them with an army of saints of Grace providing breakfast. We enjoyed getting to know the regulars and grew closer to the Grace volunteers. We got to know the members of the Christian Motorcyclist Association who utilizes the Rose Room and provide worship each day at Grace. We also monitored the city photo stand the Thursday of the Rally and that provided some good exposure for Grace Lutheran as well as serving as a fundraiser.

I visit with our wonderful quilters group and try to attend most WELCA meetings and programs.

I organized a table for Grace Lutheran at the Lighting of the Christmas Tree. We gave candy canes with invites to Christmas worship.

I also have had several meetings to stir up interest in the ELCA National Youth Gathering next year in New Orleans and also Caraway Street. Our youth can't commit to the Youth Gathering, so we will offer a shorter opportunity during the summer for our high school students. We continue to explore interest in Caraway Street. If you have a passion for our youngest members and enjoy puppets, please, please, please let me know.

I completed my report for the Box Elder Mission Start in May, which was my other part time call. In June, I was asked to serve as part-time interim director of LuMin: The Hills, the Lutheran campus ministry at Black Hills State and SD School of Mines and Technology. I anticipate completing this part time position in May of 2024, so I will be looking for a part time call to go along with the call at Grace. I have preached a couple times at St. Thomas Episcopal, Sturgis as well as visited several churches in connection with the campus ministry and mission start.

Both your pastors stay busy with the work of the church at Grace and feel blessed to be so cared for, prayed for and supported. Thank you for sharing with us the gifts God has blessed you with.

Pastor Carla

2023 New Members

Matt, Carrie and Alvin Bunkowske

Peyton, Courtney, Braxten, Losslyn, and Lorraine Bahe

Kris and Rick Little

Mary Jean (Jeannie) Humble

Tyler, Dee, Landry, Arina and Blaisely Haugen

Kaylynn Goergen

Terri Huntley

Jarred, Inga, Arminas and Adonis Curry

Kevin, Carla, Samuel and Kendra Jensen

2023 Baptisms

Douglas, Brandy, Willow and Coral Nikkila
and Leonardo Comperatore

Holland Rohde

Brexten Pudwill

Lorraine Bahe

Khiana Williams Oviatt

Aurora and Eleanor Paul

Jason Lucas

Jesse Bauer

Jordan and Blakeley Baker

Robert Johnson

2023 Weddings

Madison Kreutz & Nicholas Anderson

IN MEMORIUM

Remembering those who have departed this life this past year.
Many were near and dear to the Grace Lutheran Church family.
Their funerals were conducted at Grace Lutheran
or under our care and ministry.

Jesse Whitford*

Eva Sigman*

Eleanora Miller*

Elmer Preszler*

Teena Sigman*

Edward Pickar*

Clara Ramona Hultman*

Marlowe Kinkade*

Robert Johnson

Marjorie Lyons

Larry Knutson

Ester Cleland

Travis Burnett

With 7 additional non-member funerals at BH National Cemetery

*Members

0	2022	2023	2024
	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET
60000 · Advertising Expenses	\$ -		
60100 · Bank Charges	\$ -		
60200 · Children's Ministry	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 700.00
60300 – High School Youth	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
60400 · Dues/Subscriptions	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
60500 · Training/ Education	\$ -		
60800 - Facilities & Equipment-other(Elevator)	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
60801 · Building Repairs/Maintenance	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 700.00
60803 · Cleaning Supplies	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
60804 · Equipment Repairs/Maintenance	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
60805 · Grounds Maintenance	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00
60806 · Insurance	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
60807 - Janitorial Services	\$ 14,400.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 7,500.00
60808 · Leased Equipment	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00
61600 · Licenses and Registrations	\$ -		
61700 · College Scholarship	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
61710 · Kitchen Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
61900 · Miscellaneous Expense	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
61901 - Music Expense-Piano Tuning	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
61902 · Sheet Music for Choirs	\$ 500.00		
62000 · Office Supplies, Library Supplies, Office S	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 2,500.00
62100 · Organist	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,300.00
62101 · Worship Supplies, General	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 1,800.00
62201 · Parsonage Maintenance	\$ 1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
62202 – Mortgage Interest	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 7,800.00	\$ 7,800.00
62203· Mortgage Principle	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
62204 · Utilities	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
62301· Pastor's Base Compensation	\$ 44,300.00	\$ 82,000.00	\$ 85,575.00
62302 - Pastoral Professional Expense			\$ 450.00
62303· Continuing Education	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
62304 · Lodging	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
62305 · Meals	\$ -		
62306 · Mileage	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,500.00
62307 · Pension, Medical, Dental	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 46,000.00	\$ 44,000.00
62308 Social Security Reimbursement	\$ 3,390.00	\$ 6,300.00	\$ 6,600.00
62401 · FICA/Medicare Expense	\$ 1,700.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
62402 · Administrative & Office Wages	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 35,500.00
62500-Youth Ministry Coordinator			
62501 – Workman's Comp Ins	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 1,800.00
62600 · Postage	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
62800 - Professional Accounting	\$ -		
62900 - Pulpit Supply	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,200.00
63000· Pulpit Supply Mileage	\$ 400.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 400.00
63304 · SD Synod Monthly	\$ 6,325.00	\$ 6,325.00	\$ 6,325.00
63700 · Telephone, Telecommunications	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
63901 · Electricity	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 9,500.00
63902 · Natural Gas	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 5,500.00
63903· Water Expense	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,600.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 220,165.00	\$ 255,875.00	\$ 255,800.00

Grace Lutheran Church
Profit & Loss
 January through December 2023

	Jan - Dec 23
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
40004 · Interest Income	148.00
40013 · Offerings	225,952.76
40015 · Thrivent Choice Dollars	7.00
40016 · Rent-Funerals, Weddings, Other	1,275.00
40017 · Coffee Fund	2,599.51
40018 · WNL Supper Fund	808.23
40020 · Miscellaneous Income	83.18
	230,873.68
Expense	
60200 · Children's Ministry Exp	1,797.99
60400 · Dues and Subscriptions	1,238.35
60700 · Evangelism Exp	17.50
60800 · Facilities and Equipment	
60801 · Building Repairs & Maintenance	2,129.08
60803 · Cleaning Supplies	1,347.21
60804 · Equipment Repairs & Maintenance	569.08
60805 · Grounds Maintenance	1,031.83
60806 · Insurance	9,452.41
60807 · Janitorial Services	5,872.50
60808 · Leased Equipment	3,702.59
60800 · Facilities and Equipment - Other	1,251.72
	25,356.42
61710 · Kitchen Supplies	32.08
61900 · Miscellaneous Exp	5,923.24
61901 · Music Exp	103.05
61902 · Sheet Music for Choirs	111.29
62000 · Office Supplies	3,380.75
62100 · Organist	1,225.00
62101 · Worship Supplies-General	2,643.74
62200 · Parsonage/Housing Allowance	
62201 · Maintenance	404.92
62202 · Mortgage Interest	7,455.90
62204 · Utilities	3,100.08
	10,960.90
62300 · Pastoral Ministry	
62301 · Pastor's Base Compensation	75,230.64
62303 · Continuing Education	250.00
62304 · Lodging	772.98
62305 · Meals	74.31
62306 · Mileage	1,247.11
62307 · Pension, Medical, Dental	66,151.08
62308 · Soc. Sec. Reimbursement	6,234.24
	149,960.36
62400 · Payroll Expenses	
62401 · Fica/Medicare Expense	2,995.28
62402 · Administrative Wages	32,381.51
62400 · Payroll Expenses - Other	900.00
	36,276.79
62501 · Workman's Comp Ins	1,159.00
62600 · Postage	220.80
62900 · Pulpit Supply	1,150.00
63000 · Pulpit Supply Mileage	557.95
63300 · SD Synod	
63304 · SD Synod Monthly	6,325.00
	6,325.00
Total 63300 · SD Synod	6,325.00

3:27 PM
01/02/24
Accrual Basis

Grace Lutheran Church
Profit & Loss
January through December 2023

	Jan - Dec 23
63600 · Tax Expense	41.43
63700 · Telephone, Telecommunications	1,566.75
63900 · Utilities	
63901 · Electricity	8,657.71
63902 · Natural Gas	5,087.93
63903 · Water	1,725.03
Total 63900 · Utilities	15,470.67
Total Expense	265,519.06
Net Ordinary Income	-34,645.38
Net Income	-34,645.38

Grace Lutheran Church

Balance Sheet

As of December 31, 2023

	Dec 31, 23
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
14000 · Pioneer Bank 2236	166,290.47
Total Checking/Savings	166,290.47
Other Current Assets	
15001 · Endowment Funds	152,775.65
Total Other Current Assets	152,775.65
Total Current Assets	319,066.12
Fixed Assets	
16000 · Capital Improvements	67,389.84
16001 · Church Building	607,610.16
16002 · Parsonage	230,000.00
Total Fixed Assets	905,000.00
Other Assets	
17006 · Children's Ministries	2,962.39
17007 · High School Youth Dedicated	19,879.70
17009 · Outdoor Railing Dedicated	3,118.16
17010 · Memorials	15,154.64
17011 · Music Dedicated	635.02
17012 · Radio Broadcast Dedicated	4,267.15
17013 · Quilting Account	3,942.42
17014 · Pastors Benevolence Dedicated	169.09
17018 · Zto Close out Dedicated Funds	-50,128.57
Total Other Assets	0.00
TOTAL ASSETS	1,224,066.12
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
50000 · Accounts Payable	93.25
Total Accounts Payable	93.25
Other Current Liabilities	
24000 · Payroll Liabilities	10,194.18
Total Other Current Liabilities	10,194.18
Total Current Liabilities	10,287.43
Long Term Liabilities	
19000 · Parsonage Mortgage	120,218.91
Total Long Term Liabilities	120,218.91
Total Liabilities	130,506.34
Equity	
20000 · Opening Balance Equity	1,048,878.43
20003 · Unrestricted Net Assets	75,621.48
Net Income	-30,940.13
Total Equity	1,093,559.78
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,224,066.12

2023 WORSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Grace Lutheran Worship Committee's chief duty is to plan, lead, and implement worship and the music ministries of the congregation. Throughout 2023, the committee prayerfully accepted the challenge and together with Pastors Carla Nelson and Kevin Jensen, Office Manager Keri Fischer, and the dedicated musicians, technical staff, and worship leaders, the Grace congregation was blessed to continue weekly worship through the radio broadcast and in-house worship. Together the committee prayerfully discusses mutual concerns suggested by the congregation, committee members, the church council, and the pastors as they carry out a plan to address concerns and improvements to the worship experience.

Weekly Music Leaders: Sunday morning musicians included Marlene Kotab, Dan Chapman, Candy McKay, and Danilee Chapman. Marcia Potts and Christian and Marlene Kotab also provided music leadership at Wednesday Night Live. Members of the Grace Choir, Lynette Kvanvig, Gary Meyer, Mikayla Wilson, Marie Ritten, and Paul Haedt all contributed their musical talents. All worship helpers are appreciated, and the committee wants to thank all who answered the call to help make the services a blessing.

Lent/Easter: Ash Wednesday services were cancelled because of a snowstorm. The Easter Cantata was held at Grace in April, but also delayed because of bad weather. Grace Youth were commended for their performances during Holy Week. The Confirmation Class performed a Living Last Supper on Maundy Thursday and the High School Youth performed a Reverse Advent on Good Friday. An outdoor Sunrise Easter Service was held at the Lion's Park Gazebo at 6:30 a.m. Thanks go out for the Easter Breakfast served by the Patmore/Berg families.

Graduation Sunday: On May 21st, Austin Atyeo, Jeslyn Deserly, Landry Haugen, Keeley Heikes, Owen Koontz, Taesha Monahan, Brianna Neuschwander, Chayton Peterson, Allyson Tedder, and Jake Vliem were honored at the Graduation Sunday celebration.

Back-to-School Blessing: Many children and school staff attended the Back-to-School Blessing Sunday on August 27th. Tessa Gunderson handed out blessing backpack tags to the children and a special liturgy for Back-to-School was used during the worship service.

WNL: Wednesday Night Live activities began on September 13th with a scavenger hunt. All enjoyed delicious meals cooked by the Patmore/Berg families. It was a blessing to see the children once again learning lessons about Jesus and then joining in a family meal. We pray even more families and youth will attend in the coming year. Worship followed the meal at 6:30 p.m.

Confirmation: 5 students were confirmed on Oct. 29 – Danica Dschaak, Arina Haugen, Brinley Heikes, Kerrigan Meland and Olivia Vliem. They read their inspirational faith statements as part of the service.

Assisting ministers: The congregation was blessed to have Tim Patmore (head of assisting ministers), Tim Potts, Garland Dobler, J.D. Williams, and Kim Webber continue as assistant ministers. They are key to the service every Sunday and especially during pulpit supply Sundays.

Christmas: Tim Patmore arranged the purchase of a new outdoor Nativity display. The Mechling, Williams, Bahe, and Nikkila families read the Advent Wreath Readings and lit the wreath. The Christmas Music Service was December 17th with the Christmas story read by Otto Magdanz, Rick and Kris Little, and Garland Dobler along with music provided by the young children and adult musicians. The Children's Christmas Program on Dec. 20th was a blessing to all after having been cancelled in 2022 because of bad weather. The Christmas Eve Service had an attendance of over 280.

Thanks to our faithful Worship Committee Members: Marlene and Christian Kotab,

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

No Report

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH LIBRARY

No Report

2023 PROPERTY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

With the close of 2023 brought minimal issues with the church maintenance. It has been mostly just average maintenance, making sure furnace filters are replaced every 3 -4 months, and making sure there are no water leaks. I want to thank Tim Patmore for removing snow from sidewalks and steps. A thank you to Brandon Caneva, Clay Lange and Pastor Kevin for the repair work on the lawn, even though it was torn up during the rally, but was fixed again with a little raking and new grass seed. Finally I want to thank Fresh Start Cleaning and Restoration for the cleaning of all the church carpets.

David Lyons
Property Chairperson

2023 STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Grace Stewardship Committee continues to lead the stewardship activities of our church. San Monohan and Brandon Caneva along with Pastor Kevin provided their time and talents to serving the Lord by devoting themselves to the efforts of our Stewardship Committee.

We could not be happier with our congregation's response to our *New Consecration Sunday!* By emphasizing our giving as an act of worship—our congregation has pledged to increase its commitment by more than 30% in 2024! This will be a big step in helping us become a center for mission beyond our own walls.

The ongoing Grace Lutheran Consecration Sunday Committee is composed of ten people including Brad Scott, as our guest leader, San Monahan, Gary Meyer, Bob Haivala, Connie Hurlburt, Ruth Smit, Kris Little, Ann Bertolotto, myself and Pastor Kevin. This team of dedicated disciples continues to make every effort to inform, inspire and encourage all of us to carry out our Consecration Sunday worship commitment.

As Pastor Kevin likes to remind us, Martin Luther encouraged us to make the sign of the cross daily, and especially in worship. We want to encourage you to think about it this way: God makes the first vertical line DOWN, we follow by moving IN to the center, and then OUT to our neighbors. Thinking of our giving this way can put our annual fall stewardship campaign in perspective and help us fulfill our promise to give a percentage of our income to the glory of God!

We are hoping our year-round stewardship emphasis will help us continue to dialogue about "Thanking God for all the Blessings God has given us" instead of "paying the bills." Sunday morning is about getting re-vitalized and getting ready to do God's work when we walk out of church. And a big part of that is responding to God's love through our tithes and offerings!

We would love to have new ideas and new disciples to serve on the Stewardship Committee! If you are interested, please contact Pastor Kevin or anyone currently serving on the Stewardship Committee.

Have a Blessed New Year! Brandon Caneva, Council VP & Stewardship Secretary

EDUCATION AND YOUTH COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Grace Lutheran Church High School Youth Group

The Grace Lutheran Youth Group met on Wednesday evenings following worship at 7 pm during spring and fall semesters of 2023. We have a great group of young adults who are very faithful about attending. Adult advisors are: Michelle Williams, Dadra Avery and Pastor Carla.

We try to plan for one service project, one fellowship activity and two Bible studies each month. Service projects included: served a Lenten Meal, made and sent valentines to the care center and Grace homebound, tied 10 quilts for our 2023 High School graduates, led the Reverse Advent Service on Good Friday, painted pumpkins and delivered around town, wrote thanks you cards to each of our Veteran's for Veteran's Day, made all the invitations for Christmas worship that were distributed at the lighting of the Sturgis Community Christmas tree, and sent Care packages to all the 2023 Sturgis High School graduates for their first college finals. We also provided Christmas presents to the LSS Women's Re-entry program in Rapid City.

We had a lot of fun with our annual Gingerbread House contest and want to thank Grace Church for participating in the voting. Congratulations to Blake Williams this year. Grace Youth Group attended a Spearfish Sasquatch baseball game on July 8th (hottest game of the season!) and we went bowling at the Sturgis Strikers. We want to especially thank Max at Sturgis Strikers for opening the bowling alley to us after hours for our fun time. The Grace Youth Group had a fundraiser during the rally monitoring the Photo Booth. It required adults to volunteer so a very special thank you to: Pastor Kevin, Gordon Kotab, Andria & Jared Williams, Chris Pankratz, Maddie Pankratz, Pastor Carla and her friends, Pastor Deb and Pastor Melinda.

We look forward to providing quilts for our 2024 High School Graduates, leading worship on Good Friday and many other service projects and fun activities. Please know all high school students are welcome and invited to be a part of Grace Youth Group, Wednesdays during the school year at 7pm.

Grace Lutheran Endowment Fund 2023 Annual Report (prepared before receiving EOY 1099's)
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The Grace Lutheran Endowment Fund is invested in the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust as of August 27, 2015.

Total Investment in ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust:

Beginning Value 12-31-2022	\$ 176,671.05	
Additions - Moved from Checking Account	\$ 10,000.00	
Withdrawals for expense & distributions	\$.00	
Reinvestments	\$ 5,737.20	
Change in Market Value	\$ 10,443.06	
Total balance as of Nov. 30, 2023	\$ 202,851.31	\$ 202,851.31

Checking Account report at Pioneer Bank and Trust

Balance as of 1-1-2023		\$ 17,998.88	
Deposited - Helen Miller Memorial	\$ 319.13		
Deposited - Mary Ann Strochien	\$ 1,000.00		
Deposited - Donation by Duane Hayes for the Williams boys removing snow	\$ <u>50.00</u>		
Total	\$ 1,369.13	\$ 19,368.01	
 Checks:			
GLC Quilters	\$ 500.00		
GLC VBS	\$ 500.00		
Love, Inc.	\$ 1,000.00		
Box Elder Mission, ELCA	\$ 500.00		
Deposit - Endowment Fund	<u>\$10,000.00</u>		
Total	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 6,868.01

Grand total of ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust and Checking \$ 209,719.32



Robin Baldwin
GLC Endowment Fund
Treasurer

Committee Members: JD Williams, Ethan Dschaak, Linda Hemmah, and Shawn Mechling

2023 Grace Lutheran Church Women Annual Report

The women of Grace Lutheran Church have been a part of Grace Lutheran since the beginning and will be in the future a very vital part of this congregation. Starting in January of 2024 the GLCW will no longer have circle meetings on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Instead, there will be one meeting of all combined circles meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 1:30 in the afternoon. We voted in December to make this move to better serve our organization. Every 4th meeting will be a business meeting, Bible study and refreshments, the other meetings will consist of a Bible Study, program and refreshments. The first meeting of GLCW in 2024 will be January 9th at 1:30 in the Rose Room. We need your participation to keep this founding legacy thriving.

The women of Grace Lutheran are busy in a variety of ways to see to the need of many organizations. Every season of the church calendar, every Sunday and every Wednesday service, the Altar Guild is busy making sure that Grace Lutheran is ready for a service. Whether it is setting up for Holy Communion, making sure that the candles have oil or changing the paraments on the altar and pulpit.

Come Wednesday morning a group are making quilts for Lutheran World Relief, Cornerstone Mission, Behavior Management, Crisis Intervention to name a few of the organizations that reap the benefits of these quilts. The women and helpers make many types of kits for Lutheran World Relief. These kits are School Kits, Baby Care Kits and Personal Care Kits. The women serve many meals: coffee hour, soup suppers for Lent, funeral luncheons, help with wedding preparations, Holiday bazaar and of course the Rally Breakfast. We have food drives for Kiwanis, personal care products for Crisis Center, the women are involved with the community along with Grace Lutheran Church.

In 2023 GLCW were able to fulfill their normal endeavors that were available within the church and community. The quilters met at the church on Wednesday morning, they only take a few breaks during the year otherwise you can find them working away. They sold quilts at the Rally breakfast and the Holiday bazaar. Cards and calls were made to the shut ins and members to keep in touch with each other. The women, with the help of some men and children served the Rally Breakfast. It was a success with serving over 1000 people. The revenue from the breakfast helps us meet our yearly obligations. It was also time to start nominations for new officers. Blessings to these women who decided to keep their position for this following year of 2024 and thank you to the new volunteers. Thank you for your service.

October found GLCW holding their 3rd annual Holiday Church Bazaar . It was a fun time and yes we did make a little money to help with the budget. Thank you to all of the helpers and participants. We will be addressing this event for new ideas to improve it.

Thankoffering Sunday was held in November with a skit and temple talk. Thank you women of Grace for your donations to the Women of ELCA and their charitable organizations. It was heartwarming to see all of the women of Grace come forward with their offering.

December and Christmas... The participation was overwhelming to put our Christmas packages together and delivered to our shut ins this year. What a great family of women! You could feel the joy and love for our shut in and loved ones.

Wishing you a very blessed 2024!

Yours in Christ,

Debbie Patmore, GLCW President



all healthy
all safe
all accepted



all with

2023 Annual Report to Congregations

All With Your Partnership in Healing Outreach

Runaway & Homeless Youth have brighter futures. 93% returned to their family or transitioned to a safe living environment and 100% enrolled in school or a GED program at discharge.

Children & teens are healing from trauma. 89% of youth in Foster Care and 91% of youth in Residential Treatment showed reduced trauma symptoms over the course of their time with LSS.

Mentors are making a difference. 97% of high school mentees are on track to graduate with their class in May and 92% indicate they have improved self-esteem.

Families are safer. 65% of individuals in family violence intervention demonstrate a reduction in criminal thinking. This is a staggering increase of 29% from when the program was transitioned to LSS.

LSS Strategic Plan In Action

This year marked the first year of our new strategic plan in action. Our board of directors, executive team and leadership developed a four-year strategic plan and line of sight that guides our work toward making the greatest contribution to accomplishing our vision that all people in South Dakota will be healthy, safe and accepted.



Rebecca Kiesow-Knudsen
President/CEO

We continue to identify areas for positive impact through listening to unmet community needs, collaboration and strategic priorities that are family-centered and ensure equitable access for those we serve.

Our operational strategies prioritize workforce & inclusivity within our organization and communities, financial viability of the agency and our services, and sharing the positive impact our work makes in the community through storytelling.

This Year At A Glance

Expanded Mentoring Services to serve youth in more communities throughout the state

Strengthened efforts to prioritize family role in an individual's success by elevating youth & family voice

Implemented Strengthening Families, a curriculum that helps build strong communication between parents and their children and helps families navigate conflict

Resettled 197 refugees through traditional resettlement and 290 Ukrainian refugees through Uniting for Ukraine pathways. We are expecting an additional 400 traditional and 50 U4U.

"How Much Is Enough?"



Lutheran Planned Generosity
of South Dakota

That's a bold question to open an annual report to all of those congregations whose generous mission support is an essential reason that planned giving ministry recognized its **40th anniversary** in the South Dakota Synod this year. We celebrated all of those who have been a part of Lutheran Planned Generosity and its predecessor organizations at the 2023 Synod Assembly, and issued a challenge to identify **40 gift plans to honor 40 years of generosity**. It's not too late for you to be a part of the celebration--just contact us and let us know that you have made a gift in your will or through a beneficiary designation, or would like to do so. For all of those who are a part of this history and continue to generously support ministry in the Synod and around the world, **thank you!** You are making a difference!

Back to that opening question. Relax and breathe a sigh of relief. We're not going to give you rules or scripture verses to calculate the expected size of your gifts. Rather, it's an invitation to each of us to better understand "**How much is enough FOR ME?**" In a world that tells us we should constantly strive for a bigger bank account, a larger home, a newer car, a longer vacation and the next promotion, it's easy to get lost and overwhelmed in the striving and never know when we've reached the point that we have enough. Because God entrusts us as stewards and caretakers, not owners, of all that we have, maybe an understanding of what that number is would be helpful for each of us. **What if** God continues to place more resources under our management to allow us to **simplify our lives by supporting ministry and serving our neighbors** instead of adding another zero to the balance sheet?

If you've never thought about your "enough" and how God might be calling you to make a difference through generosity, **we're inviting you to the conversation**. LPGSD is here to help you think about how your life can make a difference for your loved ones, your church, your community and all of those in need around the world.

It might be a gift in your will, or as a beneficiary designation from your IRA or investment account or life insurance policy. Or maybe using a tool that creates tax savings and income for you today AND a gift to ministry later.

In addition to this work with individuals and families, LPGSD also walks alongside congregations hoping to create or revitalize their own legacy through an **endowment fund**, offering members the opportunity to share in the ministry and outreach of their Christian family. Did you know that **more than \$650,000** was distributed to ministry from South Dakota endowment funds held at the ELCA Foundation in 2023? Your personal legacy plan might even include a family endowment or a gift to establish an endowment at your own congregation.

How much is your ENOUGH? If you discover that God is calling you to generosity beyond that number, LPGSD would be honored to explore the options and help you design a plan that takes advantage of the right tools to benefit your family and support God's work.

Contact Kathy McHenry at **605.274.5030** or **kmchenry@sdsynod.org**.
Visit our website at **www.lpgsd.org** or find us on Facebook.

your life can make a difference

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen!

Greeting from your sisters and brothers in Christ at St Dismas Lutheran Church!

There is an old saying that the only constant is change; and 2023 lived up to that statement. Working inside the walls, especially in 2023, has seen some significant changes to policies, visitation requirements, and schedules. What we see as stumbling blocks, God uses to his glory. Even amidst the many challenges, God has been at work in amazing ways in the lives of people inside and outside the walls.

Firstly, thank you for your support to insure that the ministry of St Dismas stays vibrant and active. We do not exist without the support and engagement from you. St Dismas is YOUR ministry to those experiencing incarceration; and we are grateful for your partnership.

Here are a few highlights for this year:

- On any given day, there are approximately 3750 people incarcerated in the South Dakota Department of Corrections system. In 2023, we worked with and saw attendance of approximately 574 individuals to worship, Bible studies, and one-on-one pastoral care visits. Worship and Bible study attendance has steadily increased over the year at each site.
- We had 31 baptisms of adult men including 3 affirmations of baptism.
- We were able to hold special worship on Easter and Christmas Eve inside the facilities.
- Our Reformation Festivals took place at both Sioux Falls and Springfield on Reformation Weekend in October. A special meal was served at Springfield, and inmates were allowed to share the meal with their family that could attend.
- The annual special meal was held in Sioux Falls in August sponsored by Peace Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls.
- Worship switched to Tuesday evenings from 5:00 to 8:00 at Springfield. We have seen great participation by visitors to Springfield since this change occurred.
- Worship in Sioux Falls changed to Wednesday afternoons from 1:30 to 3:30. While this is not ideal, we have still had visitors attend very regularly.
- We have seen increasing engagement and attendance with our reentry work on the inside. Mitch Wilson worked with 244 individuals preparing to be released from incarceration.
- Accompanied 156 individuals once they were released to help them transition back into life on the outside.
- Mitch also worked in the Minnehaha County jail with 541 individuals housed there.
- Worked with the Department of Corrections and St Francis House to accompany 36 treatment women into work release.
- Over 3700 Christmas Treat Sacks were distributed the week before Christmas. Every person in the South Dakota Prison System received a sack, also people in the Minnehaha County and Yankton County jails.
- The Sioux Falls congregation again took up the challenge to support a ministry outside of themselves. All inmate offering goes to this fund, and for 2023, they will give Church on the Street a check for \$2271.
- The Springfield congregation took up the same challenge. They will distribute their funds after the January Inside Council Meeting. They will have approximately \$750 to distribute.
- I was able to visit 46 congregations to tell the story of St Dismas and worship together.

These are just a few of the ways God has been at work through St Dismas. I give thanks to God for the many gifts that the has entrusted to us. Through the faithful partnership of many of you, we continue to be able to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to this who need to hear it most; "setting the captives free..."



Grace and peace to you always,



Pastor Jeff Backer
Senior Pastor/Development Director



Church on the Street

Annual Report 2023

ChurchontheStreetsf.org

Church on the Street continues to show up with the good news of Jesus, especially where folks are experiencing homelessness and poverty. You'll find us on the streets, visiting folks in shelters, cars, hospitals, laundry mats, and jails. This year, our offices moved to 515 N. Main. Ave inside the Multi-Cultural Center and are accessible through the Minnehaha County building, so more people are stopping by since they're already in the building for other things. Skylar Allen, Director of Organization, oversees record growth in food requests, with 242 families accessing the pantry during the year's first quarter and 885 families in the fourth quarter.

Also, this year, we and several of our partners worked with Sioux Falls Thrive to get the Eat Well Sioux Falls Mobile Market into food deserts in our town. Luke Senst is the Market Manager in addition to being our Director of Media Ministries. The mobile market is one example of how partnerships and collaborations are how we help share God's love in tangible ways.

Finally, it is a blessing to be Church together, sharing the best and worst of life and leaning on the promises of our Savior. Harriet Monson, Director of Laundry with Love, said it best: "One of the best moments for me this year was when the young single mom who moved into a place with a washer and dryer (so she doesn't need our services anymore) but she came back to visit."

Thank you for all the ways you are part of Church on the Street through your prayers, financial donations, in-kind donations, visits, and sharing our story. You are a blessing!

It's great to be Church together!

Rev. Chris Matson, Pastor & Mission Developer

515 N Main Ave

Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57104

Chris@churchonthestreetsf.org

605-215-1143

LUTHERANS OUTDOORS IN SOUTH DAKOTA



2023

CONGREGATIONAL REPORT

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Thank you, to all of the individuals and congregations that supported the ministry of Lutherans Outdoors(LO) with financial gifts. Also, thank you to all of the individuals who attended summer camps, retreats, and travel experiences. LO cannot be the ministry that welcomes all to explore and experience Christ's love in community and creation without you!

REIMAGINING LUTHERANS OUTDOORS

The Board of Lutherans Outdoors emphasis in 2023 was the **REIMAGINING** of Lutherans Outdoors. Eight Task Forces have met, and continue to meet, diving into eight audits of the ministry. These eight areas are Philosophy, Finance, Financial Development, Marketing, Governance, Facility, Program, and Staffing. Results so far include the development of new Core Values where we promise to **EXPLORE FAITH, WELCOME ALL, BUILD LEADERS,** and **CARE FOR ALL CREATION.**

There are nearly 100 recommendations that have resulted from these eight audits. The recommendations will provide guidance for the Strategic process LO will develop for the next several years. The final results of the **REIMAGINING** will be presented to the Board of Directors at their January meeting, with a presentation to the voting members at the LO 2023 Annual Meeting in June 2024.

STAFF UPDATES

During 2023, Lutherans Outdoors said goodbye to Teri Gayer, who served many roles with LO during the past 30-plus years, most recently as the Director of Klein Ranch. During the celebration of 50 years of ministry at Klein Ranch last July, Teri was recognized for her ministry.

In May, LO said hello to Skylar Schwab, who assumed the Program Director position at Outlaw Ranch. Klaire Hudson resigned earlier in the spring from this position after serving in this role. Skylar jumped right into a busy summer and we are very excited she has joined the LO family!

SUMMER 2023 | SUMMER 2024

Our summer camper attendance increased by 15% as a whole in 2023. Outlaw Ranch saw a 22% increase boosted by nearly 100 more Family Campers. Klein Ranch saw a 19% increase. NeSoDak saw a 4% decrease in campers. The total camper number was nearly 1,350.

Our Adult Travel Experiences had over 60 participants to our two destinations: Holden Village and Branson. In 2024, Experiences will be to Minneapolis for a theatre event in April, to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in September, to the Smokie Mountains and Dollywood in October, and a return to Branson in November.

The new Horse Corral at Outlaw Ranch was completed in 2023. This great addition provides a wonderful place to care for the horses and a safe place for campers to begin their horse care education and rides each week.

**Join Lutherans Outdoors for Summer 2024 "Created To Be!" Register at losd.org.
"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well" Psalm 139:14**

In the Hills. On the Prairie. At the Water.

South Dakota Synod, ELCA
Proposed Mission Plan
02/01/2024 - 01/31/2025

	Adopted 2023	Revised 2023	Proposed 2024
Revenue			
Mission Support			
Undesignated Mission Support	1,870,465	1,750,576	1,803,094
SD Synod Mission Support	25,000	28,675	28,675
Total Mission Support-Congregations	1,895,465	1,779,251	1,831,769
Program Ministry Income			
Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center Income	45,000	45,000	45,000
Total Program Ministry Income			
Other Income			
DEM Support Staff Income	10,000	10,000	10,000
Interest Income	10,000	10,000	10,000
SDS Travel LLC Income	5,000	5,000	5,000
Misc Income	1,000	50,000	1,000
Total Other Income	26,000	75,000	26,000
Total Revenue	1,966,465	1,899,251	1,902,769
Expenses			
Churchwide Ministries	43%	43%	41%
Churchwide Support	804,300	752,748	739,269
Region III			
Region III Support	7,260	8,004	8,004
South Dakota Ministries			
South Dakota Partnership Ministries			
SD Ministries Support	10,750	12,330	11,757
Luther Seminary	74,492	69,925	71,989
Church Colleges (ELCA Pool)	6,445	6,049	6,228
Lutheran Social Services	74,492	69,925	71,989
Campus Ministry	131,356	123,302	126,942
Lutheran Outdoors	37,151	34,873	35,903
South Dakota Supported Ministries			
Heartland Ephphatha	6,445	6,049	6,228
Youth Ministry	3,600	9,600	7,200
Campus Ministry Capital	1,030	1,030	0
Good Samaritan Society	1	1	1
Chapel in the Hills	1	1	1
Woyatan Lutheran/Wambli Ska	19,000	19,000	19,000
Lutheran Planned Generosity	58,300	58,300	58,300
Total Shared Ministries	423,063	410,385	415,538

South Dakota Synod, ELCA
Proposed Mission Plan
02/01/2024 - 01/31/2025

	Adopted 2023	Revised 2023	Proposed 2024
Executive Leadership			
Bishop	96,675	99,034	102,005
Assoc/Director of Ev Mission	6,375	10,533	10,849
Assoc-Mobility/Candidacy	79,909	82,132	84,596
Executive Staff Benefits	106,192	86,940	89,546
Exec Travel/Continuing Ed	34,800	36,800	36,800
Program Ministries			
Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center-Director	98,872	96,302	99,257
Youth Gathering Synod Coordinator	6,959	0	0
Companion Synod Coordinator	15,839	18,008	18,521
Support Staff and Office			
Support Staff Salaries/Benefit	167,359	171,874	176,980
Synod Office Expenses	69,264	70,681	66,791
Augustana University Occupancy Fee	27,876	30,108	30,108
Synod Committees			
Synod Council	3,000	6,000	5,000
Support to Ministries Committee	2,100	3,100	3,100
Candidacy Committee	2,250	7,000	6,000
Multi-Cultural Ministry Committee	1,550	1,000	1,000
Companion Synods Ministry Committee	200	200	200
Evangelical Outreach Committee	1,500	1,500	1,500
Mission & Outreach			
Mission Congregation Start-up	4,000	4,000	4,000
Mission Strategy Table	2,000	2,000	2,000
Contingency	5,122	902	1,705
Total South Dakota Ministries	731,842	728,114	739,958
Total Expenses	1,966,465	1,899,251	1,902,769
Net Total	0	0	0



South Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Dear South Dakota Synod,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Triune God!

On behalf of your close to 200 partners across the South Dakota Synod I come to you to say *thank you*. *Thank you* for your generosity! Your benevolence to the ministry of the South Dakota Synod doesn't just keep the lights on and pays salaries, but mainly supports ministry on the ground. Please take a look at the "2023 South Dakota Synod Ministry Celebrations" insert included in this annual report. You will notice that YOU showed up in many and various spaces. Sometimes your presence was felt close to home through a grant you may have received or a synod staff that came to visit. At other times your presence impacted ministry in other parts of the world, such as our companion partners in the Lutheran churches in Nicaragua and Cameroon. *Thank you* also for your generosity above and beyond your benevolence. Our partners in Cameroon appreciated the synod's \$52,000 gift to support putting roofs on churches. The generosity of the congregations in the synod never ceases to amaze me, and I give thanks for your continued generosity as we journey together in Christ!



While many places celebrated an abundant year of ministry, I also want to acknowledge that for other ministry sites 2023 has not been as hoped for. Our mission statement commits us to "Journeying Together in Christ" and is based on Luke 24:13-34. Two disciples are on the road post resurrection and ponder in disbelief all the things that have happened before their eyes. They were overwhelmed and didn't know what to make of it all. I have heard from many ministry sites a similar account about 2023. "Bishop, things in 2023 were not as we had expected and hoped for. What do we do now?" In Luke's story Jesus, unrecognized by them, joins them and walks alongside to listen and remind them of the promises in scripture. But it isn't until they sit down at the table, and Jesus breaks bread that their eyes are opened. They recognize who he is and that the 'holy heartburn' they had experienced along the way was a sign that their love for Jesus and the way he calls them to live has changed them forever.

How about your community of faith? Where do you hear the promises of scripture assure you that God's got a plan for you and your ministry? Where are you called to follow the 'holy heartburn' God's Spirit ignites in you as you are fed at the table of love? I pray that your annual meeting will be an experience where you can voice what you had wished for as well as lament the unmaterialized hopes. And at the same time, you can hear where God promises new life and renewed faith in your very own midst.

Your South Dakota Synod staff and partners across the church are committed to accompany you in your ministry ventures, whether it means to take small courageous steps or giant leaps of faith. We are here to journey with you in Christ. Therefore, it is with great joy and delight that I am announcing to you that we, the South Dakota Synod, are a recipient of a \$1,137,384 grant Endowment Inc. through its Thriving Congregations Initiative. Details about the grant can be accessed through the synod's website www.sdsynod.org as well as through the synod office. The STAR (Small Town and Rural) Table also offers two types of grants, which are only possible

through the generosity of the people and congregations of the SD Synod when we gather for rural ministry fundraisers. Again, details about the grant opportunities, and how you can apply for a grant are found on the synod's website www.sdsynod.org.

Last but not least, I would like to invite you to the 2024 Synod Assembly on May 31st and June 1st at Our Savior's in Sioux Falls, SD. We will gather under the theme of "(Re)Connect." It will be a celebration of the partnerships we share across the synod and the wider ELCA. Stay tuned for more information about the business coming before the assembly and the fun opportunities. I hope to be able to welcome you to the assembly in person, be in conversation with you and hear about ministry in your world and how you might best be accompanied as well as accompany your fellow members of the SD Synod and the ELCA.

Journeying with you in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "C. Hagmaier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Constanze Hagmaier
Bishop of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA