AGENDA & ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONGREGATION OF ST. ANDREW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH



2023

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"We welcome all people to share God's love and to be workers together in this mission of the Church"

AGENDA

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, February 11, 2024

Call to Order **Opening Prayer** President's Report...p.3-4 -Introduction of Officers and Council Members...p.5 **-Overview of Annual Meeting Format** Committee and Ministry Reports (as printed, open for discussion)...p.6-15,20 Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement...p.16 **New Business** -Action to approve the 2024 Budget as recommended by the Council Call Committee Report...p.17-19 The Rev. Paul Downing **Questions and Comments** Adjournment **Closing Prayer**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Tom Pernice, Congregation President

As we reflect on the past year and look forward with optimism, it is with great joy and gratitude that we present to you our first annual report for 2024. This report encapsulates the blessings, achievements, and progress we have experienced together as a faith community.

We certainly had our share of challenges and accomplishments in 2023. Receiving a phone call on the morning of Christmas Eve 2022 informing me that the church building was spewing smoke, and the fire department was on the scene, was enough to imagine what might lie ahead. While we were not actually on fire, we did have a malfunction with our heating system known as a puff-back. Those of you that attended a service on that day can attest to how difficult it was to breathe the oily fumes in the cold and sooty sanctuary. Some in our church family were on hand that morning and early afternoon using equipment and manual labor hoping to minimize the impact. It didn't take long to realize that it would require a major undertaking to restore our worship space.

The retirement of Pastor Susan was another late 2022 event that posed a challenge to the congregation. As it turned out, we were without permanent spiritual guidance and leadership for all of 2023, and to date. The time between losing a pastor and calling a new one can tell you a lot about the fortitude and culture of a congregation.

While we are placing blame on the prior year for setting up the challenges of 2023, let us also recall the lingering impact of the COVID pandemic during 2022 and how COVID, generally, has changed the way we practice our faith and experience church life. This transformational reality, while not unique to St. Andrew's, will challenge us in 2024 and beyond.

Finally, our faith is sometimes challenged as we try to make sense of our broken world. We grieved for the loss of loved ones in our family and church community in 2023. Thankfully, we place our trust in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who unites us and gives us the strength to navigate any and all challenges.

Now, let's look at the accomplishments of 2023, and there were many.

While the clean-up was underway and scaffolding was erected in the main church, we moved our Sunday worship across the parking lot to the parish hall. We were physically close to each other in the warm and inviting space of the parish hall, and we grew spiritually closer to each other. Mature families met young families - generation gaps were closed; longtime friendships were strengthened, and new ones formed during our worship and fellowship. In late March, we returned to the main church for the rededication of our beautiful sanctuary.

In the absence of a permanent pastor, we were blessed with wonderful visiting pastors as we looked to call a new pastor to St. Andrew's. We are people of God, and we were moved by the Holy Spirit to support each other during this difficult time. The time is near for us to welcome a new pastor to St. Andrew's.

Last July we held a special meeting of the Voters to vote on the adoption of the model ELCA Constitution to replace the constitution and bylaws that we had in place since 1987. The model was approved, and our organizational structure is now guided by the bylaws of our new

constitution. Under the constitution, we elected officers and members of the newly formed church council. In the short time that the council has been in place it has engaged in thoughtful discussions about various aspects of our church life, including worship, outreach, stewardship, fellowship, and children's and youth ministry. We are blessed to have such a dedicated group of individuals serving on the council, bringing a variety of skills, experiences, and perspectives to the table. We are building a spirit of close collaboration and common vision among ministries. As we work together in the coming months, our goal is to strengthen the relationships within our congregation and beyond to ensure the continued growth and life of St. Andrew's. Importantly, we will build on and expand our outreach ministry in 2024.

During the year, we got a sampling of the talent at St. Andrew's by experiencing our wonderful music ministry during worship. Our music ministry is such an important component of our worship, as in unites us and connects us to God in unique ways. We are thankful for our talented musicians and others that share their God given talents with our church community.

Our Sunday school is one of the most robust in the area, where children learn about Jesus and have fun and fellowship in an engaging setting. The Nursery Cooperative at St. Andrew's offer classes for 2- and 3-year-olds. In 2023, thanks to the time and talent of many volunteers, we brought back our popular, community-centered Vacation Bible Camp and German Festival.

As we embark on another year filled with God's grace, let this annual report be a source of inspiration and encouragement for the journey that lies ahead. We look forward to your continued support, prayers, and active participation in the various ministries that make our church a beacon of hope and love.

May the Lord continue to guide and bless us as we journey together in faith.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL 2024

A special meeting was called on October 29, 2023 for the purpose of electing Church Officers and Council Members per the St. Andrew's Constitution adopted on July 9, 2023. The elected members serve a special term beginning from the special meeting date until the Annual Congregational Meeting to be held in February 2025. At that election, all terms of office will be for one year as specified in the constitution. The following are members of the Council:

Officers

Tom Pernice President
Leslee Mathieson Vice President
Priscilla Schwabe Secretary

Council Members

Rick Madarasz (Treasurer)

Darlene Klouda (Financial Secretary)

Cindy Davis
Barbara English
Mary Fjellstad
Julie Francis
Laura Gustavsen
Steve O'Hagan
John Sanzone

A Council member is elected by written ballot to serve for one (1) year*, or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than three full terms consecutively. Since the current members were all elected at the same time for the newly established council, we will look for the opportunity to stagger terms going forward. If anyone is interested in being on the Church Council or any of the committees, please let Tom Pernice know. We are also asking for volunteers to staff a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for suggesting the names of candidates for each office to be filled at the succeeding annual election.

*With the exception of the special term, as noted above.

Worship and Music Annual Report 2023

Cindy Davis, Laura Gustavsen

St. Andrew's welcomes all to join us in worship. Our in person and live streamed service is at 10:00 am Sunday mornings. Sunday School also meets at 10:00 am.

The choir sings at every service. It rehearses on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm.

We share a covenant with St. Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church to join in worship several times a year.

January 2023 began with a scramble to prepare the parish hall (the original church sanctuary) to once again hold worship services due to a puffback on Christmas Eve in the large church. Many thanks to those who worked every week to set up the room for worship, including a small altar and keyboard. We were able to hold worship there, including celebrating a few baptisms. After a number of months we were able to return to the main sanctuary with a celebratory service in time to celebrate Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday with two services both days.

Since then, attendance has improved slowly. Adding more frequent coffee hours contributed to a feeling of community as we moved forward. The extreme heat during the summer prevented us from scheduling an outdoor service but are still looking to add that worship experience. A full time pastor would also help in that regard for planning.

There was a wonderful welcome back to Sunday School in September and a blessing of the backpacks. St. Thomas invited St. Andrew members to join them for a service of prayer, readings, and meditation on the first Wednesday of the month as well as their weekly Wednesday services during Advent. All Saints Day was deeply moving for many of our church family.

Christmas Eve had two well attended services. As is most often the case, Christmas day was lightly attended.

The Sunday after Christmas, we again joined with St. Thomas in keeping with the long-standing tradition. We finished the year with a very joyous Family Worship with Vicar Jean. We will be reviewing feedback received.

Through all this, Nick has continued to provide a mix of traditional and more contemporary music. In addition, he continues to find appropriate anthems for a small but dedicated choir.

The Bell Choir has been re-energized under Laura's direction. Aiming to perform more frequently. In the absence of a pastor, the committee reviews and adapts the worship service to reflect the seasons of the church year and the festival days. We review the hymns selected on a monthly basis. In addition, we schedule the readers/servers, ushers, and Priscilla Guild for each month.

The Priscilla Guild prepares the altar paraments and banners for each season as well as preparing the bread and wine for consecration each week.

Looking forward, Laura and Nick are exploring the possibility of a cantata/concert fundraiser for the fall. We will continue to work with Sara Rose and Mary to create a more engaging family worship service.

Annual Report 2023

Grete Kraus, Darlene Klouda

<u>January</u> No Meeting

February 5th

- Discussed putting together an activity to welcome people back to the church building (after worship whenever we return to the "Big" Church).
- The committee is interested in reaching out to more members of the congregation, especially those who do not come often or stay mostly at home.
- Would like to have an event for the congregation (all ages) some time in the spring or summer (Scavenger hunt, etc.)

March 5th and 26th

- Made care packages containing jelly beans and jelly bean Easter prayer, and religious Easter cards for St. Andrew's students; the care packages will be sent out after St. Patrick's Day.
- Will put basket of cross lapel pins with small Happy Easter cards out for congregants to take on Easter Sunday and following Sundays in Easter as the items last.

April Gave out cross lapel pins on Easter Sunday – almost all 300 were taken.

May 30th Brainstorm upcoming plans.

June No Meeting

July No Meeting

August No Meeting

September German Fest Booth

October No Meeting

November Met to prepare for Lights of Love

December Sold 48 angels for Lights of Love. Approximately \$600 was raised.

Goals for 2024

Meet monthly to plan and discuss

March – April Lapel Cross Pins for Easter. We will add the church address and phone

number on the back of the card to share with others to generate

membership.

<u>May – June</u> (Cost permitting) Set up a table at the Smithtown Day Fair to generate

membership.

August – October

• "Pennies from Heaven" card (A penny with a cross punched out of it attached to a business sized card) to share with others to generate membership.

The "Pennies from Heaven" card says:

The Cross speaks of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is 1 cent (sent) to die and

set us free (Liberty) from our sins.

He rose from the dead so that we could be saved when "in God we trust."

Will this be "the year" of your salvation?

Set up a booth at the German Fest – distribute "Pennies from Heaven" cards.

November – December Lights of Love

Throughout the year:

"Care Bags" – For sick, shut ins, people in need. Contents can be adapted to welcome visitors, new members, etc.

The bag itself has a bible verse theme and is reusable.

Items included may be changed or added.

Items like hot chocolate, protein bars, devotional booklet, playing cards, hand sanitizer, mints, brain games, tissues, notepad and pen.

We will keep the bags in the Priscilla Guild room for easy access and distribution as needed.

Bags can either be hand delivered or mailed.

STEWARDSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Tom Pernice, Stewardship Committee

Our 2023 annual stewardship campaign was launched in February with a letter going to all "Households". As in prior years, a pledge card was included, and the letter highlighted instruction on how to give online. The timing of the mailing was moved over the last few years from the Fall of the prior year to early in the giving year. Generally, pledges and total giving have gone down over the three years ending December 2023. The biggest decline in pledges occurred in 2022, from 2021. In each of the last three years, total contributions by those households pledging exceeded the amount pledged. Pledging households tend to be the same households year after year. In 2023 they accounted for more than 50% of total contributions.

2024

Everyone should be receiving stewardship information and a pledge card shortly in the mail.

Stewardship requires an on-going promotion of giving to support the church's mission and ministries. In 2024, our stewardship plans for St. Andrew's should include a focus on fostering a sense of community, spiritual growth, and responsible budget management. We must enhance the congregation's engagement through meaningful worship experiences, educational programs, and outreach initiatives. Stewardship should extend beyond financial contributions, emphasizing the responsible use of time, talents, and treasures to support both the church community and broader social causes. Embracing transparency and communication, our plan should encourage active participation in church activities and encourage a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of the congregation and the greater community. Through these initiatives, we aspire to strengthen the bonds of faith, encourage individual spiritual development, and create a welcoming environment that reflects the principles of our Christian teachings. Ironically, it will be challenging to realize these aspirations without a commitment of time and talent from others in the congregation. Please consider how you might participate on the Stewardship Committee and speak to Tom Pernice.

EDUCATION

- -Sunday School
- -Book Club
- -Lady Bugs

Sunday School Annual Report 2023

Mary Fjellstad

Sunday School Report for 1st Annual Council Meeting February 11th, 2024

Sunday School Registration 2023-2024 School Year:

- 25 Families
- 39 Children Registered 42 Children attending.

Sunday School Events for 2023- 2024 School Year to date:

- Sunday School Kick-Off 1st Day Group Event: 9/10/2023
- Family Worship Backpack Blessing in Lieu of SS: 9/17/2023
- Registration & Donations to date: \$947.00
- Reformation Group Event: 11/05/2023
- Operation Christmas Child boxes: total of 64 donated by Church & Sunday School Families.
- Gingerbread Extravaganza 12/05/2023: Sunday School, Confirmation & friends attended.
- Christmas Pageant in Lieu of SS: 12/17/2023 27 children participated.
- Family Worship in Lieu of SS: 1/27/2024

Sunday School Future Events for 2023-2024 School Year:

- Family Worship Committee formed to plan a revised Family Worship: first meeting 1/11/2024.
- Easter Egg Hunt with St. Thomas: TBD possibly 3/23/2024
- Last Day of SS Group Event: 5/19/2024
- First Communion Parent / Student classes: 2 TBD 7 children and parents
- First Communion Workshop: 6/08/2024
- First Communion Worship: 6/9/2024, Pastor Kiefler, presiding.
- VBC 2024 Scuba: 7/8/ 2024 -7/12/2024

Book Club Annual Report 2023

Priscilla Schwabe

St. Andrew's Book Club met on the third Tuesday of each month in 2023 (except July & August) at 7:00 PM on Zoom for book discussion and conversation. This schedule will continue in

2024. The books we read are chosen in advance from suggestions by the group. Each month's book is featured in the church newsletter and the zoom link is provided there for anyone to join in. Because we meet remotely on zoom, there are former members now living in other states on our e-mail roster of 12 people. An average of eight people participated each month in 2023.

The Book Club is a community of Christians who ask as we read. "Where is God in this story? How do these situations and characters speak to our faith?"

A goal for 2024 is to involve more people in growing their faith through our shared responses to the books we read. It is also a goal to revive awareness and use of the St. Andrew's Library, which contains shelves of books which have been read and donated by the Book Club members, and are available for borrowing.

Lady Bugs Annual Report 2023

Mary Fjellstad

Women's Ministry / Bible Study held on Tuesday evenings in the Footprint's room

We Saved You a Seat - Bible Study on Friendship - Feb 7 - Aug 22, 2023

Made felt hearts - for Sunday School children for Backpack Sunday

Refresh Renew Pamper - Bible Study on Self Care - Oct 3, 2023

Rock Painting - Bible Study on Stones in the Bible - Oct 18, 2023

Angels of Christmas - Bible Study on Angels & Advent – Nov 7 - Dec 12, 2023

Outreach Ministries Annual Report 2023

Julie Francis, Laura Gustavsen

2023

Last year, St. Andrews members gave their time and resources to support many organizations, both locally and globally.

- Smithtown Food Pantry
 - Provided over 156,000 meals to 7,454 individuals!
 - Of those individuals, 63% were local residents and 37% came from outside the area, mainly from Central Islip and Brentwood. This is a shift from previous years, where 85-90% were local and 10-15% came from outside the Smithtown community.
 - St. Andrews is back in the rotation of the 7 churches for volunteering. In 2023, our months to volunteer were August and December. Many St. Andrews members donated their time to help during these months!
 - Collected approximately 460 Holiday Boxes of Food, most of which were distributed prior to Thanksgiving.
- Metropolitan New York Synod
 - St. Andrews contributed \$3,000 to the Synod Mission Support Fund. These funds support people in ministry, to keep the ministry strong.
- Operation Christmas Child/ Samaritan's Purse
 - 64 total shoeboxes were filled and donated to children in need. These boxes provide both necessities like hygiene items, as well as fun surprises like toys, games, crayons and paper.
 - In addition to the boxes, St. Andrews families also donated over \$410 to go towards shipping costs to send the shoeboxes internationally!
- Trinity Lutheran Church, Wyandanch received donations of essential items for those in need, in and around the Wyandanch, NY community.
- VBC Mission collected summer clothes for kids in Ghana, West Africa.

2024:

In an effort to broaden our outreach and ministry at St. Andrews, several other organizations are being considered for support in 2024. This is in addition to the organizations that we continue to support.

- Seafarers International House the Lutheran response to the urgent needs of vulnerable seafarers and immigrants. St. Andrews has donated \$500 to this organization in January 2024.
- Lighthouse Mission, Bellport, NY committed to feeding the poor, with a goal of empowering people to overcome poverty and live purpose-filled lives. Easter baskets, after school program (takes kids directly to the Mission after school), Winter Camp

- · Peanut Butter Gang/Hospitality Too
- Long Island Farmworker Co-op
- UNICEF USA | K.I.N.D. (Kids In Need Of Desks) provides desks to eager, young learners in Malawi that currently struggle to learn while sitting on the ground.
- UNICEF USA | Gender Equality helping to ensure every girl and woman, worldwide, can live free from violence, attend and complete school, receive health care, choose if, when and whom she marries and earn equal pay for equal work.
- Camp Koinonia, Highland Lake, NY "Koinonia is where God transforms and prepares people in an outdoor environment to love and serve one another."

Congregational Outreach

Leslee Mathieson

In the absence of a pastor, we have tried to take care and remember our members who are in need. While Pastor Shelhart was here, we began sending pick-me-up baskets to members who were going through difficult times. We have continued to do that and in 2023, six pick-me-up baskets were sent. If you know of someone in need, please contact the church office.

In 2018 a Card Ministry was restarted at St. Andrew's. We now have three volunteers who write birthday cards each month and mail to our members. For one reason or another, some members' birthdays are not recorded in our database – so please tell us if we are missing someone who would like to be included on our lists.

Pastor Paul Downing, our coverage pastor, was contacted when I was made aware of someone needing a pastoral call or visit. Pastor Downing has reached out several times to members in 2023. He has also presided at Funerals and has spoken with families seeking to have their child baptized or couples who are planning their wedding in 2024.

Property Report 2023

Steve O'Hagan

This past year started with recovering from an unexpected situation involving a puffback from our heating system. The following months were occupied with arranging the cleanup and necessary repairs. Following the return to use of our church building, our time was spent with responding to unexpected issues in the buildings and surrounding property. It was more of a reactive time than a proactive time. As events started to pop up on our calendar, we would spend our time and energy with assisting and supporting the leaders of those events (such as Vacation Bible School and the German Festival). There were "grassroots" movements organized by Barbara English to get the outside landscaping up to par for spring and summer along with some tree trimming and stump removal. One of the only serious repairs made since the puffback was the removal and installation of a new hot water heater in the parish hall.

Looking ahead to the upcoming year, our overall goal is to take a more proactive approach to the property and grounds of St Andrews. This will have to be done in stages as we have fallen into a reactive mode (as mentioned). We will try to accomplish the following:

- Perform a walkthrough of buildings and the property compiling a list of issues that need attending to
- Organize that list into approachable/simple fixes and more complex fixes
- Control spending and use of funds
- Establish a list of church members (and friends of St Andrews) that we could call on to assist us
- Establish a method for people to report needs/concerns in a more straightforward way
- Try to address at least one of the ongoing, larger issues that have plagued St Andrews (example: we are reviewing a proposal that was submitted to address an A/C concern in the church)

Respectfully submitted,

Steve O'Hagan

Financial Statements and 2024 Budget

Rick Madarasz, Treasurer

Financial Report

During 2023 St. Andrew's received contributions to our General Fund of \$188,017. Our operational expenses paid out of the General Fund during 2023 were \$193,600. In addition to these expenses, the Congregation paid bills related to the Christmas Eve 2022 boiler fire in the church in the amount of \$9,870, an amount we expect to recover in 2024 when the insurance claim is finalized. Monies from German Fest, Vacation Bible Camp and \$5,000 from the Endowment Fund helped in covering any cash short fall during 2023.

St. Andrew's closed out 2023 with \$15,838 available for 2024 operational expenses in General Fund accounts. This amount includes excess German Fest receipts.

Contributions to the Building Fund during 2023 totaled \$35,824, allowing us to make monthly mortgage payments totaling \$32,603. At the end of 2023 our mortgage balance was \$82,034, down from the original \$380,258 mortgage taken in 2012 when substantial renovations were made to our buildings. We had \$4,920 in the Building Fund accounts at the end of 2023.

The St. Andrew's Endowment Fund closed out 2023 with a balance of \$260,035.

As we are in the process of calling a full-time pastor, when looking at projected expenses for 2024 there is a budgeted range of total expenses to consider that varies greatly depending on when and how that call process is fulfilled. The point in the year 2024 that a pastor is called and candidate's years of service and health insurance requirements impact the cost of a minister, therefore for 2024 we need to consider a low and high end of budgeted expenses. The low end would be a situation where we were unable to call a pastor in 2024 and continued with part-time pastoral coverage, in which case budgeted expenses for 2024 would be \$198,425. The high end would be a situation where we called a minister on April 1 with five years of experience and in need of health insurance, in which case budgeted expense could be \$276,600. The timing of and the profile of a pastor to be called is unknown at this point, as such the most likely scenario is that we would end up with actual expenses in 2024 somewhere between the low- and highend points of this budgeted range.

Call Committee Report for St. Andrew's Annual Meeting Submitted January 26, 2024

Below is a brief recap of the significant events of the current call process.

October, 2022

Pastor Shelhart presided at her last service at St. Andrew's

November, 2022

• Pastor Mietlowski, Assistant to the Bishop, speaks at our Voter's assembly about fasttracking the call process and by-passing certain procedural requirements

December, 2022

January, 2023

February, 2023

• Call Committee is established

March 2023

Executive Committee submits Ministry Site Profile to MNSY for review and approvaL

April, 2023

• Pastor Mietlowski acknowledges the MSP is on his desk and informs us that no candidates will be referred to St Andrew's until we adopt the ELCA Model Constitution

May, 2023

June, 2023

July, 2023

• St. Andrew's Adopts the ELCA Model Constitution

August, 2023

• Pastor Mietlowski is no longer Assistant to the Bishop for our conference. Pastor Shannon now has that responsibility. We learn that she is on a leave of absence due to illness.

September, 2023

Pastor Shannon returns to work and contacts the call committee

October, 2023

- Pastor Shannon meets with Call Committee via zoom. We learn several of the procedural requirements that Pastor Mietlowski said would be by-passed will now be required by the Bishop. These include submission of church financial reports, candidate compensation data, retaining the services of a licensed professional to conduct an assessment of our buildings, and anti-bias anti-racism training for the call committee and church council.
- Nomination by the Bishop of a candidate to be interviewed by Call Committee. The Call Committee was given six weeks to interview the candidate and decide if we wanted to continue with, or permanently release the candidate from consideration.

November, 2023

• Call Committee interviews candidate. After a period of discernment, the Call Committee informed the Synod that we wish to continue through the process with the nominated candidate. Accordingly, St. Andrew's cannot consider another candidate, nor can the candidate consider another congregation until the call process concludes.

December, 2023

- Financial, compensation, and building assessment reports are submitted to MNYS
- Church Council finalizes a formal job description for the next Pastor

January, 2024

- Anti-racism/Anti-bias training for the Call Committee/Council completed
- Call Committee sends job description to nominated candidate

- Call Committee receives approval from the synod to proceed to the next step in the call process - participate in worship to experience the candidate's preaching and worship leadership skills
- Call Committee watches candidate lead a worship service and meets to discuss observations
- Call Committee conducts second interview with candidate. This includes a review of the job description
- Call Committee votes to proceed with candidate
- Call Committee consults with Bishop's Office
- Bishop's Office order's a background check on candidate

We expect to make a formal recommendation to the Congregation Council in early February.

Respectfully submitted,

St. Andrew's Call Committee Lorna Bosak Dorothy Graf Darlene Klouda Joe Kostecki- chair Sara Rose Myers Janis Raineri

Community Outreach 2023

Barbara English

The German Fall Festival was held on September 16, 2023

- -63 St. Andrew's members helped out with the event
- -20 German Honor Society students helped on the day of the event
- -37 Craft vendors
- -6 different outside drink and food vendors
- -Over 12 companies sponsored the event
- 1,000 2,000 people attended the event

The 7th Annual German Fall Festival will be Saturday, September 21, 2024 from 11am to 5pm.

2023 Membership and Parish Records

Members received by Baptism: 12

Members received by Transfer/Affirmation of Faith: 7

Total Members Received: 19

Members removed by Death: 2

Members removed by Transfer/Request: 3

Total Members Removed: 5

Total Members: 802

Total Church Family Membership 2023: 329

Total Average Sunday Attendance: 74