



2023

Annual Report

Grace Lutheran Church ~ Fremont, Ohio

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

February 4, 2024

Grace Lutheran Church
Fremont, Ohio

Meeting Arrangements:

The business meeting will begin at 10:15 a.m. in the sanctuary.
This meeting can be attended In person or via ZOOM.

Please Note: The reports of the Pastors, Church Council, Auxiliaries, Treasurer, The Proposed Budget for 2024, and the Proposed Resolutions for the 2024 Annual Congregational Meeting are printed for you in this Annual Report. Please study the Annual Report carefully.

It will be helpful to you to have this copy in front of you during the Congregational Meeting.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of Grace Lutheran Church is to *“Present the Light of Christ”*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Jerry Moses
Vice-President	David Cooper
Secretary	Connie Amor
Treasurer	Ruthann House

TERM ENDING 2024

Annette Fisher	Judy Overmyer
Jerry Moses	RaeAnn Cooper <i>(Completing term of Cindy Scranton)</i>

TERM ENDING 2025

David Cooper	John Burmeister
Sarah Auen <i>(Completing term of Bill Auxter)</i>	Cornelia Star <i>(Completing term of Nelda Bauer)</i>

TERM ENDING 2026

Connie Amor	Ruthann House
Greg Jess	Cecilia Boucher

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Christian Missions/Outreach Committee	Annette Fisher
Christian Worship Committee	Judy Overmyer
Christian Property Committee	Greg Jess
Christian Stewardship Committee	Cecilia Boucher
Christian Youth/Growth Committee	Sarah Auen

Standing Committees meet monthly at a time designated by that Committee.

Church Council meets the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

ANNUAL MEETING
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
FEBRUARY 4, 2024

Business Meeting10:15 a.m.

1. OPENING DEVOTIONS

2. 2023 CONGREGATIONAL MINUTES.....page 6

3. REPORTS

A. Pastoral Staff

1) Pastor Mark Bogen, Intentional Interim.....page 11

2) Maureen Pump.....page 13

3) Pastor Paul Bailie, LIFT.....page 15

4) Pastoral Acts Report.....page 18

B. Church Council

1) President.....page 19

2) Christian Mission/Outreach Committee.....page 20

3) Christian Youth/Growth Committee.....page 22

a) Youth Minister.....page 24

b) Noah's Ark Preschool.....page 25

c) Cub Scout Pack 302.....page 26

4) Christian Worship Committeepage 31

a) Altar Guild.....page 32

5) Christian Stewardship Committee.....page 33

6) Christian Property Committee.....page 34

- C. Auxiliaries of Grace Lutheran Church
 - 1) Grace Lutheran Church Women (GLCW).....page 36
 - 2) Radio Ministry.....page 38
 - 3) Soup Kitchen.....page 39
- D. Endowment Board.....page 40
- 4. FINANCIAL REPORTS
 - A. Noah’s Ark Preschool.....page 42-42a
 - B. Grace Lutheran Church.....pages 43-49
- 5. RESOLUTIONS
 - A. Resolution #1 - Church Budget.....page 50
 - Vote taken by Ballot
 - B. Resolution #2 - Church Volunteers.....page 50
 - C. Resolution #3 - Church Staff.....page 50
- 6. L.I.F.T. Operating Agreementpages 51-59
 - Re-approval
- 7. ELECTIONS
 - A. Endowment Board - need to fill 2 seats
 - 1st Seat - Re-election to 2 year term - Al Mehlow
 - 2nd Seat - VACANT, candidate needed
 - B. Synod Assembly Representatives
 - David Cooper, Kaitlyn Fisher, Maureen Pump
- 8. OTHER
- 9. ADJOURNMENT
 - A. Closing Prayer

Grace Lutheran Church

Annual Meeting of the Congregation January 29, 2023

President Jerry Moses called the January 29, 2023 congregational meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. in the sanctuary of Grace Lutheran Church with 46 congregants in attendance (3 of the individuals joining via Zoom).

1. Opening Devotions

Interim Pastor Mark Bogen led the members present in a responsive Opening Litany for Congregational Annual Meeting to focus our thoughts and discussion.

2. Congregational Meeting Minutes from January 30, 2022

Les Widmer moved to accept the congregational meeting minutes from January 30, 2022. Sarah Auen seconded. Vote was taken. Motion carried.

3. Reports

Janet Dorr moved to accept the combined pastoral staff reports included in the annual report document. Ed Muffler seconded. Vote was taken. Motion carried.

Mary Nossaman moved to accept the combined reports of the Church Council. John Avers seconded. Vote was taken. Motion carried.

Beth Muffler moved to accept the combined auxiliary services reports included in the Annual Report. Pam Pelphrey seconded. Vote was taken. Motion carried.

Richard Bauer moved to accept the Endowment Report. Pam Pelphrey seconded. Vote was taken. Motion carried.

4. Financial Reports

The combined Noah's Ark Preschool and overall Grace Lutheran Church budgets were addressed next. President Jerry Moses invited questions and discussion concerning both proposed budgets.

Harry Anspacher directed members' attention to page 42 of the Annual Report, inquiring whether or not the \$99,000 designated for a pastoral salary and benefits package is an appropriate amount. Ed Muffler, as a member of the Call Committee, shared that the Synod provides estimates according to a required salary table based on years of experience, and the projected amount aligns with the lower end of the 5-10 years' experience salary range.

Harry then asked about the deficit realized in the actual expenses (\$53,000) at the end of 2022. The next year's projected deficit is \$23,000 (end-of-year 2023 projection). Specifically, he wanted to know if the deficits are cumulative... thus in 2 years would the amounts indeed result in an incremental deficit (\$76,000). Additionally, he added that he'd like to know how that deficit will be remedied. Jerry explained that yes, the amounts would be cumulative, however the hope is that funding from the back page accounts would now be adjusted and moved in order to cover the 2022 annual deficit, now that the 2022 income and expense figures are finalized. Over the next year, the hope is that giving will increase to offset the projected 2023 annual deficit.

Larry McElfresh and Jim Scranton requested clarification concerning the General Fund difference between the 2021 and 2022 Balances (page 37). Jerry explained that a one million undesignated gift was received thanks to a gracious bequest. The individual involved wished to remain anonymous, and because there were administrative details that needed to be worked out behind the scenes (receipt and processing), the amount could not be posted to the 2022 Balance until the last minute. The Council Executive Team plans to meet in February to make decisions on how to apply the funding in accordance with the wishes of the estate.

Ballots were distributed and counted. Motion carried.

5. Resolutions

Resolution #1: Church Budget

Richard Bauer moved to accept the resolution. Pam Pelphrey seconded. Vote was taken. Motion carried.

Resolution #2: Church Volunteers

John Avers moved to accept the resolution. Jan Harris seconded. Vote was taken. Motion carried.

Resolution #3: Church Staff

Connie Amor moved to accept. Les Widmer seconded. Vote was taken. Motion carried.

Following the official motion, Harry Anspacher invited the congregation to join him in a round of applause to celebrate our hardworking church staff!

6. L.I.F.T. Re-Approval

The L.I.F.T. Operation Agreement was shared in the Annual Report document. President Jerry Moses invited questions and discussion concerning the information contained therein.

Harry Asnpacher, although he admittedly has not attended a L.I.F.T. event lately, pointed out that Lay Associate Minister Maureen Pump's activities as a full-time pastor appears extremely numerous compared to the activities shared and listed in Pastor Paul Bailie's report. Reviewing this, it seems possible that if, the full-time pastors all chipped in a little bit, that the church-connected pastors could cover these activities and replace the need for the L.I.F.T. pastor. This would greatly reduce costs and the need to support a separate L.I.F.T. operation. Harry also proposed that the congregations could chip in order to support a pastor that could shepherd and preach St. Mark's instead of supporting St. Mark's through the L.I.F.T. organization.

Interim Pastor Bogen shared thoughts as "an outsider." He believes L.I.F.T. is a very good collaborative operation, along with being a financial challenge. Trinity, following their closure, contributed financial support in 2022, but were not able to continue support in 2023. Grace Lutheran's contribution has been reduced by \$13,000 for 2023 compared to 2022, thus ability to support has been adjusted, and those funds are redirected internally. L.I.F.T. also experienced a savings during the salary gap between Pastor Scott and Pastor Paul.

Larry McElfresh offered that endowment funding has been used to support our contribution to the L.I.F.T. operation over the past few years.

Pastor Bogen added that the hope is that additional congregations will join forces to support L.I.F.T. financially in the future.

Richard Bauer requested access to the detailed L.I.F.T. financial statements in order to better understand how funding is assigned and distributed to events and various expenses. Linda Baumer shared that the financial statements can be made available at the Church Office within a month's time.

Pastor Bogen provided a general description of the \$124,000 budget designation: the L.I.F.T. called pastor, Bridge of Hope, and several part-time administrative positions. He also reminded the congregation that, to date, no collected offerings have been directed to the financial support of the operation.

Al Mehlow clarified that the Endowment funding is restricted to outreach functions. Due to recent market downturn, the Endowment funding available in the next few years may be limited. The available funds are based on a 3-4-year market average. The amount available next year is yet unknown.

Jerry Moses noted that it does not seem fair to "pull the rug out from under" the L.I.F.T. operation at this point, but the membership's desire for increased accountability is also fair. Cindy Scranton requested clarification, that the vote was to continue the agreement despite the questions and need for more details in the future.

Nelda Bauer moved to approve the L.I.F.T. Operation Agreement for 2023. Janet Dorr seconded. Vote was taken. Motion carried.

Kristen Lindsay respectfully recommended that the L.I.F.T. accountability discussion be addressed at the next Council meeting in a few weeks, to provide time for questions to be submitted and the receipt of feedback in a timely fashion.

7. Amendment to Constitution / Bylaws

Jerry Moses explained that the change concerning the Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary position adjustments (elimination from the list of officers outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws) is alignment to current practice. As the size of Council has been downsized over the past few years, and the difficulty of identifying multiple individuals amongst the Council members with financial talents rose, it was necessary to redirect efforts and identify non-Council members to fill these positions. This change provides for greater flexibility in carrying out financial secretary responsibilities.

Al Mehlow moved to accept the amendment. Janet Dorr seconded.

John Avers pointed out that, as listed in Chapter 12 (although not on the table for an adjustment at this time), the pastor should not possess voting membership on Council. As in line with other church operations that he is aware of, the pastor should be an ex-officio member only.

Linda Baumer interjected that the change cannot be made at this meeting due to the Constitutional requirement that the membership be presented with projected changes for a standard review period prior to voting to amend. The constitution requires prior notification.

Pastor Bogen offered a point of information, clarifying that the initial amendment was proposed at a previous congregational meeting, thus if this change were proposed it would need to follow the same procedure and be voted on at the next congregational meeting. The proposed changes in the Annual Report reflect items that were introduced at a previous congregational meeting.

John Avers moved to table the motion on the floor. Richard Bauer seconded. Point of information was provided and the members were reminded that a motion to table is not debatable.

Jerry Moses reminded the members present that Ruthann House could exit the Treasurer position with no other option than to appoint from a pool of current Council members, despite the fact that other members outside of Council may have greater financial acuity.

Harry Aspacher inquired after who completes the worship accounting, typically completed by the Financial Secretary? Linda Baumer shared that it is redistributed to an accounting team approved by Council who receives and tabulates weekly giving.

John Burmeister asked whether or not the Interim Pastor was considered full-time, and thus is granted all rights due a regular full-time pastor. It was clarified that interim, even though temporary, equates to full-time.

Les Widmer asked if the vote could be completed on part of the amendment, and not all of the amendment, to ease the work of the Council concerning the financial duties.

The amendment was presented as a package, and the motion includes the entire entry included in the Annual report. It cannot now be teased apart.

Vote to table the motion was taken. Motion carried. The amendment adjustment is tabled. Council members will need to consult constitutional requirements concerning reintroduction.

8. Elections

Jerry Moses shared that Lori Wise and Matt Moss are both interested in re-election to the Endowment Board. Harry Anspacher moved to elect both candidates. Jan Harris seconded. Vote was taken. Motion carried.

9. Adjournment

Richard Bauer moved to adjourn with prayer. Harry Anspacher seconded. Vote was taken. Motion carried. Pastor Bogen then shared a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Kristen Lindsay

Interim Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

Annual Meeting time is a good time to reflect on the year that has passed. 2023 was a busy year at Grace and LIFT, so allow me to do a quick summary by month:

January Heather and I accompanied LIFT confirmation youth on a weekend retreat to Hopewood Pines (formerly LMC, Lutheran Memorial Camp. Youth loved it, and we'll do something similar again this year. The Endowment Fund reported an ending value of \$1,175, 971, representing a loss of \$179,310 over the previous year. Linda, John Avers and I began monthly meetings to update the Grace Constitution.

February We continued our work to complete the Congregation Photo directory that we began last October with portraits taken by Dave Casperson. We used an online service called Instant Church Directory to upload photos and contact info to create an online directory. "Amazing Grace" was the theme for our 2023 Lenten midweek worship series.

March The Constitution Task Force continued its work. The congregation picture directory was published online. Grace hosted The Fisk Jubilee Singers, an historic black gospel choir from Fisk University in Nashville. This choir first performed in Fremont in 1882 when they sang for President Rutherford B. Hayes at his Spiegel Grove Home.

April A group of nine mostly 2nd grade boys and girls learned about Holy Communion and received for the first time on Palm Sunday. The Good Friday Fish Fry returned in support of the Soup Kitchen. 279 attended Easter worship.

May Becky Seibert joined a group from NW Ohio Synod to travel to Tanzania for installation of the new bishop of the Dodoma Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, one of our companion synods. This was Becky's 12th trip to Tanzania.

June Grace moved to holding one service on Sunday morning at 9:00 am. Council approved a campaign to purchase new Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnals. Heather spearheaded the third season of LIFT Park Tour. The Constitution Committee continued its work. A new summer musical activity was held for LIFT kids, Hearts and Hands and Voices Academy, held June 26-29. A LIFT group spent a Saturday packing food for the Children's Hunger Alliance food. The Chalfins and the Ohms families were received as new members, and Council members were installed.

July For the first time in a long time, Grace sent kids to camp (Hopewood Outdoors, aka LMC), a total of four. LIFT VBS was held at St. Mark with the theme God's Good Creation. LIFT Outdoor Worship was held at Birchard Park. Bathroom renovation was approved by Council, and the LIFT Park tour continued.

August A new LED Sign in the parking lot was installed and became operational. Heather led an informational meeting regarding the 2024 Youth Gathering, scheduled for July 16-20 in New Orleans. A group of about a dozen LIFT youth and adults will register for this faith-building event.

September For the first time, LIFT congregations participated in the ELCA-wide service day, God's Work Our Hands. After a tasty lunch at St. Mark, LIFT members participated in four service projects around the community, including mulching and weeding at Birchard Place homeless shelter, Clothes sorting at Alicia's Closet, card and letter writing for shut-ins, including prisoners, and food packing at Bridge of Hope, LIFT's food pantry. LIFT was blessed by a multi-week visit from Jana Jaroslav Marek from the Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia, another of our synod's companion synods.

October Fall Fest moved indoors because of the weather, but still a successful event that invited community participation. After the brutal attack by Hamas on October 7, Spirit Bible Study group spent some weeks learning about the history of modern Israel and the never-ending conflict between Israel and Palestinians. We launched our 2023 Stewardship Appeal with the theme "Blessed to Be a Blessing."

November "With Gratitude & Remembrance" was the theme for the 2023 Annual LIFT sponsored Choral Festival - Great Hymns of Faith. November 12 was our Stewardship Ingathering. To date, we have received 81 intents for giving in 2024 (same as last year) totaling \$236,184, a slight increase over last year. Projecting giving in 2024 is estimated at \$390, 884. We bid farewell to Tom with thanksgiving for his excellent musicianship on the organ and piano, and leadership in all things music at Grace over the past four years.

December New men's and women's restrooms at the back of the sanctuary were completed in time for the Toledo Symphony on December 1, a sold-out event. New cranberry colored Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnals were installed and dedicated. Midweek Advent worship was a LIFT event. "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed" was our theme, inspired by Isaiah 40:5. Worship attendance at two Christmas Eve Services totaled 223. Worship on December 30-31 was LIFT sponsored, Saturday at Grace and Sunday at Emmanuel.

As you can see, 2023 was a fruitful year. There is so much ministry that happens every day and every week at Grace and through LIFT that is not reflected in this summary, carried out by excellent staff and dedicated volunteer members. All a strong reminder that God has been good, all of the time. All of the time, God has been good.

I have indicated to Grace leadership and to the congregation in my January pastor's message in Grace & Truth that I will join Marcy in retirement in early May. In that message I also included some pastoral thoughts, which you can read in your hard copy, or at <https://bit.ly/47Vi1GH>

Allow me to close this message with words of appreciation for everything that you do as a congregation. I have very much enjoyed my service at Grace these past months.

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."
Philippians 1:3-6

Your friend in Christ,

Pastor Mark Bogen

Lay Associate Minister/ Synodically Authorized Minister

PROJECTS CURRENT AND COMPLETED

Continue to serve as the Synodical Authorized Minister for St. Mark and Grace (SAM)
Took Clinical Pastoral Education class through the fall.
Took Prepare and Enrich training for pre-marital counseling.
Took Boundaries Workshop
Led Funeral planning workshop.
Participated with Missions/Outreach team cleaning Habitat house.
Participated with Missions/Outreach team doing yard work at Liberty Center
Participated with Missions/Outreach team in food packing project.
Participated in LIFT outdoor worship.
Attended monthly SAM meetings.
Serve on the LIFT Executive Board
Continuing with Good Mornings with Moe. A morning devotional 4 days a week
Continue to lead Spousal Grief Support Group
Continuing to work with Noah's Ark teachers.
Attend the LIFT Leadership Meetings
Lead in the Book Study group in person and virtual (Book Worms)
Act as one of the managers of Church Face Book page
Continue to oversee the My Brother's Keeper ministry.
Continue to act as worship leader.
Lead 3-4 Bible studies each week.
Contact hospital 1 time each week
Review Welcome Cards
Preached 27 sermons.
Conducted 9 funerals.
Conducted 2 baptisms.
Conducted 3 weddings.
Co-ordinated the Love in Action Ministry
Act as staff representative to Missions/Outreach Committee
Attend LIFT gatherings.
Continue to lead a Juggling Act for women.
Keep up with our hospitalized, home bound and nursing home members.
Attend Endowment Board meetings.
Participate on Stewardship Committee

Participate on Worship Committee
Conduct interviews and write Grace Stories
Worked with Missions/Outreach on Family Valentine Party
Organized along with Missions/Outreach Committee and Linda Baumer the Fall Fest
Organized and participated, with Linda Baumer, the Women's Christmas Brunch
Participated in LIFT Drive Through Ashes
Oversee the Homebound Communion Ministry
Attended the Affirmations of Vows Service
Organized and participate in Grace Gathers
Led Joy Circle Bible Study
Attended LIFT Gathering for future planning.

This past year has been one filled with continuing education events for me. Some are required to maintain my SAM authorization such as Boundaries training and my CPE training was highly recommended. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is training me to minister to people in crisis and who are struggling. It is training me to use my own life experiences to relate to another person's struggle. To be a non-anxious presence who brings compassion and insight. This is a seminary level course that I have taken in 3 months. It was a stretch for me to do all the work involved and keep up with my ministry responsibilities. Pastor Mark was a life saver when he offered to do all the preaching for the last 3 months of the year.

My ministry continues to be a joy in my life. I am blessed to work with a talented and hardworking staff. We work hard and occasionally take a little time to have some fun together. Each of us has strengths in different areas and when we all come to the table offering what we have, the ministry at Grace is carried out well.

Pastor Mark has been a joy to work with. He is generous with his time and has guided me and supported my ministry every step of the way.

Pastor Henry Seibert is my SAM supervisor, and I am grateful for the wisdom he shares with me. When I have not known how to handle a situation Pastor Henry has been there to give me wise advice. To be supported and educated by these two pastors, each having over 40 years in ministry, has been a blessing to me.

And to the congregation I have been blessed to be a leader of, I can't say thank you enough. When I stand in the back waiting to come down the aisle before the Gathering hymn, I look out and am filled with love. I am not sure why God entrusted this position to me, but I am grateful He did. Yes, there are challenges from time to time. But even during those difficult times I know Grace is a place where love and grace abound.

God's Peace and Love,

Maureen Pump

Lay Associate Minister/ Synodical Authorized Minister

L.I.F.T. Pastor

LIFT (Living in Faith Together) is a unique collaboration of congregations working together in the Fremont area. Our full member congregations are Emmanuel, Grace, St. mark, and St. John's. Faith and Hayes memorial are associate members. Camino de Vida is a developing worshipping community. LIFT is primarily sustained by contributions from member congregations. Pastoral leaders from the congregations gather monthly for collaboration and collegiality. The LIFT Board meets bimonthly and consists of the pastors and two lay people from each full member congregation:

Pr. Paul Bailie	LIFT Pastor
Pr. Mark Bogen	Grace
Michelle Englehart	Trinity
Jan Harris	Grace
Kerri Hossang	St. Mark
Sue Lawrence	St. John's
Pr. Tim Miller	Faith
Eugene Nehls	Emmanuel
Pr. Mary Carmen Padilla	Camino de Vida
Maureen Pump	Grace
Wendy Ritzman	St. mark
Sara Sherick	St. John's
Pr. Dennis Wansitler	Emmanuel
Pr. Matthew Wheeler	St. John's
Pr. Joshua Wynn	Hayes
Traci Zoller	Trinity

In 2023, LIFT had a full-time pastor and three part-time employees:

Pastor Paul Bailie	LIFT Pastor
Annie Garcia	Bridge of Hope Coordinator
Doug Morris	Treasurer
Rebecca Myers	Ministry Assistant

LIFT's five mission priorities are: **Present in our community, Witnessing to God's love, Hearing the needs, Serving our neighbor, and Striving for justice.**

LIFT's partnership with Lutz Elementary is up and running for a second year. This is an exciting chance to partner in the community and meet some real hunger needs—filling gaps for kids to eat on the weekends when there is no school lunch program. We send a backpack home on weekends with some healthy snacks and food that kids can prepare on their own. School staff identifies students with food insecurity issues at home. An active team of volunteers organizes food donations and assembles the backpacks, and delivers them to Lutz. We are serving 45 families, for a total of 107 children. This is a 161% increase from last year! We are very grateful for the donations that help support this weekend food program.

(LIFT Pastor continued.)

Bridge of Hope (Puente de Esperanza) is a LIFT ministry that operates a food pantry housed at Hayes Memorial United Methodist as well as offering outreach and support to local migrant worker communities. Over 200 welcome baskets for migrants were assembled and distributed. A community garden at Hayes complements and supplements food pantry donations. Bridge of Hope and Camino de Vida hosted two outreach events for the Hispanic community this holiday season: The Thanksgiving Feast and The Christmas Posada. LIFT congregations donated turkeys and toys, respectively, for these events. We give thanks for the work of outgoing coordinator Annie Garcia.

Worship is LIFT's primary way of proclaiming God's love. As LIFT Pastor, I am usually at St. Mark on Sunday mornings. In September, following the retirement of Pastor Dennis Wansitler, I began preaching at Emmanuel each week. In August, I covered preaching at Camino de Vida for several weeks. We gathered as a LIFT parish several times this year:

- Epiphany Lessons and Carols
- Ashes to Go
- Healing Service for Ascension
- Trinity Sunday at Trinity's site
- Outdoor worship at Croghan Park—Christmas in July.
- Blessing of the Animals
- Blue Christmas
- Advent Midweek service
- LIFT Lessons and Carols

In both Lent and Advent, I compiled devotional resources including reflections from members of LIFT congregations.

Students and leaders from Grace and St. John's gathered to learn key aspects of the Christian faith. I collaborated to teach confirmation during the 2022-2023 school year.

LIFT hosted the Easter Extravaganza on April at Grace. This was an event for families with kids preK-5 with games, crafts, and activities to help learn more about Easter. It included an egg hunt and an Easter photo backdrop.

After Easter, I led a six week study on faith and civic life on Wednesdays at Grace, using a resource from the ELCA.

During the summer, leaders from LIFT congregations gathered in local Fremont parks on Wednesday evenings as a way of being present in the community.

LIFT hosted two summer opportunities for children in our community to learn together. The Hearts, Hands, and Voices Arts Academy was held at Grace in June. Participants made music with choir, bells, recorders, and rhythm. LIFT VBS was held at St. Mark on July 10-13. Over 40 children learned about God's Good Creation. Our LIFT VBS offering was able to purchase two chicks, two pigs, two sets of honeybees, and a goat for families around the world through ELCA Good Gifts!

(LIFT Pastor continued.)

On September 10, LIFT marked God's Work Our Hands Sunday with a meal at St. Marks and a variety of service projects around Fremont:

Mulching and weeding at Birchard Place (FKA Community Fortress)

Clothes sorting at Alicia's Closet, a resource for foster families, housed at St. John's

A project with LIFT's Bridge of Hope pantry

Card and letter writing for shut-ins, advocacy, and the incarcerated

On Wednesdays starting September 13, LIFT offered a time for toddlers and their parents at 5:45 PM at Grace. Heather Hawn and I lead activities geared toward developing spiritual formation for this age group. This is one element of Grace's Spirit activities on Wednesday evenings.

LIFT hosted the Great Hymns of Faith Choral Event on November 5, 2023 at 4:00 PM at Grace Lutheran Church. Noted musical director Michael Shirtz conducted the assembled choir. Presented the week before Veteran's Day, the theme was "With Gratitude and Remembrance."

Before the pandemic, LIFT would send teams out to a local laundromat to be present in the community and pay for people's washing. The ministry continued several times this year, primarily with leaders from St. Mark.

LIFT has a Mercy Fund, which is available to help provide assistance to individuals in crisis situations.

LIFT also serves as the Fiscal Agent for Project LifeSaver a public safety program designed to protect and locate missing persons due to wandering.

Prayerfully submitted,

Pastor Paul Bailie

PASTORAL ACTS

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Baptisms			
Children	13	7	6
Adults	0	0	1
Confirmation - Youth	4	4	0
Marriages	0	3	3
Funerals			
Members	15	13	12
Non-Members	6	5	1
Saturday and Sunday Worship Services	122	153	127
Weekday Worship Services	14	19	12

MEMBERSHIP

Received by Baptism, Confirmation,
Letter of Transfer or Re-Profession

Baptized	21	11	10
Confirmed	5	4	3

Removed from roster by Death, Transfer,
Moving to other denominations & Inactivity

Baptized	32	22	14
Confirmed	22	22	14

Membership as of end of year

Baptized	948	927	917
Confirmed	655	632	617

OTHER ITEMS

Membership receiving custodial care	13	9	16
Shut-in residing in private homes	15	6	5
Avg. attendance in Saturday/Sunday Worship	93+	144	146
Avg. attendance in SS/Bible Study/Small Groups/Confirmation/Choirs	173++	206++	275++

+This number reflects the average attendance for **In-person worship held April 18—December 26, 2021**. Attendance numbers were not available for Drive-in Worship from January 3 through April 11, 2021.

++This number reflects the average attendance gathered from scheduled **in-person and online events throughout 2021, 2022, and 2023**.

Council President

Fellow members of Grace Lutheran Church,

As my six year term on church council draws to an end this year, I have taken some time to reflect on all that has transpired.

The challenges of Covid and the ability to work with St John's congregation to implement car church for several months, our online service which reaches so many people outside the walls of our sanctuary, social distancing in our church when allowed to return to in person worship, and the premature loss of Pastor Jody as our senior pastor are all challenges we have endured and tackled. This is proof that our congregation has always pulled together to move ahead and spread God's word.

As we move into the coming year with its new challenges, we should remember we are a church family and what we do for our church benefits everyone that worships here as well as the community we live and work in. Let's give thanks for the staff that keeps everything running smoothly from one Sunday to the next and our pastors who help us understand why life isn't always easy but our faith in God will always get us through.

Looking ahead as our Call Committee diligently works to find our next pastor, let's not overlook the dedication of our members, and pray that God may guide each of us to become a better person that enhances our family at Grace Lutheran.

Respectfully,

Jerry Moses, Jr.

Council President

CASH MANAGEMENT ACCOUNT (CMA) UPDATE (*Fund established to hold Memorials & Bequests*)

As a follow up to our November 2023 request in the bulletin and newsletter for input/ideas on the potential use of these funds, we received three formal responses as follows:

- 1) The Endowment Committee unanimously requested that 25% of the bequest be directed to the Endowment Fund.
- 2) Move forward with the air conditioning project in the church.
- 3) Invest in the ELCA Foundation's Ministry Growth Fund.

The Executive Committee and Council have not taken any action on the above three items at this point in time.

We did approve a \$2,000 gift from the CMA account to the ELCA Synod in support of their Micro Grant Initiative, whereby ELCA congregations can request a grant to start a new project in their respective community.

In addition, the finish work on the significant restroom renovations/additions continues.

Finally, the Executive Committee discussed the desire to continue to build our youth program.

Our most recent financial report for the CMA account (12/31/23) shows a balance of \$1,388.956. We project annual interest earnings to be approximately \$65,000 on this fund as it currently stands.

Christian Outreach/Mission Committee

Council Members: RaeAnn Cooper, Annette Fisher

At Large Member: Harry Aspacher, Barb Klohn, Vi Ohms, Connie Amor

Staff Liaison: Maureen Pump

We strive to carry the message of Grace Lutheran Church to our community, locally, and globally to represent our congregation in doing the will of our Lord Jesus Christ and to love our brothers and sisters in our church, community, nation, and the world.

We Support the following through direct assistance or dedicated Yellow Mission envelope offerings: Liberty Center, My Brother's Keeper (*our Member to Member Ministry*) which provided assistance for 7 people in 2023, Soup Kitchen, and Sandusky County Food Pantry. We support National and World Missions through Lutheran World Relief, ELCA World Hunger, and ELCA Global Missions.

We as a congregation join in financial support for ELCA Missionary Rev. David Brondos who is serving in Mexico City. Our budget includes \$1800 for his support. We also provide support for NW Ohio Synod, Global Mission Water Project of Mzagole, Tanzania, East Africa.

Programs - Bridge of Hope Ministry and Grace Bookworms reading group continue to meet. We have continued using our shopping carts located in the Narthex to continue the collection of food donations for our monthly Food Pantry Challenge. We continue collecting for the monthly Noisy Offering. Collections for the year 2023 were donated to the Soup Kitchen, Backpack Buddies, Liberty Center, and Noah's Ark Preschool.

Events of 2023 of our committee included a Valentine's Day Party in February which included food and games for our church community also including the children and families from Noah's Ark. An outside clean-up was made at the Liberty Center by members of our committee. We assisted with the welcoming of a family into a home built by Habitat for Humanity by helping with the final cleaning and gifting them a basket of cleaning essentials. In June, we helped pack food boxes for Children's Hunger Network. In September, we handed out bottled water and bags of popcorn (donated by Rural King) in front of the church during Fremont's Cruise-In Car Show. The month of October, we organized the Fall Fest which included our Soup Cook-Off, activities for the youth, a costume contest, and a car show in the west parking lot. A funeral planning event was led by Maureen to assist members in making arrangements for their funeral. In December, the women of the church enjoyed the Women's Christmas Brunch with an exchange of Christmas ornaments, a light lunch, and a Christmas Carol sing-along.

(Christian Outreach/Mission Committee)

Upcoming Events planned for 2024 will include a Family Valentine's Day party to take place in February. Grace Gathers will continue to meet the third Thursday evening of the month at area venues. BINGO will be added to our event planning with the first gathering to be held in the Spring.

We continue working on our committee's 2024 goals as well as incorporating new opportunities for missions, as they present themselves.

Our Committee thanks all of our members who have supported these missions. We ask our church family to continue to keep us in prayer as we continue to work together to bring God's work and word to the community of Fremont.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Fisher

Christian Youth/Growth Committee

Committee Members

Sarah Auen
Cornelia Star

The Youth/Growth Committee would like to thank all the children, parents, and volunteers for their help and involvement. We pray for your continued support and encouragement of all our programs for our youth.

Faith Education

The Children's Message, Children's Bulletins and Sunday School serve as the primary sources of faith education at Grace. Learning through games, crafts, and activities. This fall we tried to bring back a traditional Sunday School program, but the parents and children spoke and preferred to meet during the worship hour. Penny Russell and Danielle Wagner are our two Sunday School teachers.

Confirmation

Confirmation is being held following worship on a weekly basis. This year is a Catechism year. Due to the change in service time, we were no longer able to combine confirmation classes with LIFT. We have 5 students this fall. We did not confirm any students in the spring. We had one eligible, but they opted to wait and finish with the students this spring.

First Communion Training

A mini retreat was held for students and parents in March. Eight students received their first communion on Palm Sunday.

Vacation Bible School

2023 VBS was held with LIFT at St. Mark's in July. We had an animal theme with live animals.
2023 VBS Numbers: Volunteers- 18; Students Registered- 42; Family Night- 100
Curriculum- ELCA World Hunger, God's Good Creation
Money Raised for ELCA Good Gifts- \$215

2023 Events

Little Lutherans (Children Pre-K- Fifth)

Creativity Club Wednesday Nights
(Jan-May)
Easter Extravaganza (with LIFT @ Grace)
Parent's Night Out (March & May)
Arts Academy
Family Game Night
Fall Fest Lego Derby
Christmas Program (20 students)

Royal Adventure Camp
First Communion Mini Retreat
Youth Led Service
Summer Park Tour
Vacation Bible School
Pray and Play
Breakfast in Bethlehem (with LIFT @ St. John's)

Youth

Remembrance Meal for Paige Russell
Confirmation Retreat
Easter Breakfast
Community Building Service Projects
Backpack Buddies Shopping
Sponsored a family for Community Christmas

2024 Youth Gathering Group formed
Graduate Recognition
Kayaking
Young Samaritans
Bell Ringing for Salvation Army
Lock-In

Additional Activities of Youth Director

Fremont City Schools Ace Mentoring
COR Cub Scouts at Grace
Event Calendar for School Year
Fall Fest Children's Activities
Assist with Photo directory
Craft & Crops to support Soup Kitchen
NWOS Youth Discipleship Network Member

Noah's Ark Chapel Time
Backpack Buddies
Tech support/Car Church/Livestream
Guns to Gardens Children Activities
Schedule Acolytes
Fremont City Community Cookouts
Joy Circle Bible Studies and Events

Tech Support and Streaming

I continue to assist with the Livestreaming with the help of George Dupey, Riley, Madison, & Libby Hawn. This past year we have streamed the weekly services, Midweek Lent & Advent, Holy Week and Great Hymns of Faith. I help transmit the Car Church service at the gam service.

Youth Minister

A Note from the Youth & Children's Minister

Thank you to all the parents and grandparents who bring their children to learn about Jesus and the word of God. I am blessed to be a part of their faith journey. This year we have worked to make worship easier on families with young children. The Children's Pray-ground corner came to life in the sanctuary. I also am committed to learning new and innovative ways to bring the word of God to the children. I listen to podcasts and attend webinars from professionals in my field. As we grow and the world changes around us, I look forward to continuing to share our faith with them. I love to watch them grow. They are a true gift from God.

To the congregation, God and you help make a Youth and Children's ministry possible. Thank you to all those willing to step in and volunteer and those who financially support our youth. The support I receive from the congregation makes my job easier and makes me proud to be a part of the family here at Grace.

As we look to 2024, I look forward to continue to grow the youth and children's programs here at Grace, connecting with young families and the ELCA Youth Gathering with our youth. While many things are in transition here at Grace we continue to move forward through these wilderness times. I am excited to see what 2024 brings and look forward to what God has in store for our congregation and community.

-Heather Hawn
Youth and Children's Minister

Noah's Ark Nursery School - 2023

Noah's Ark Preschool year starts the Monday after Labor Day and ends the Friday before Labor Day. The staff consists of the Administrator, Andrea Hirt, and teacher Susan Sawdo. We also have Chapel, with Heather Hawn, and the teachers now provide music once a week for the students.

We no longer have an advisory board but report monthly to Council and meet with the church office to go over things that are going on in the Preschool. We also meet and talk with our parents on a regular basis and get their advice about things that are going on as well.

In February we had our Noah's Ark Sunday at church. We had a lot of family members come and the children did great on their songs. We also had an amazing family night on May 25th. We used our mental health grant money to provide a fun and engaging family night for our previous year, this year and anyone signed up for 2023 families to come participate. The event was catered by The Victors Catering and Events and we also had a bouncy house and crafts. Everyone had a wonderful time! We ended our year with a picnic at Roger Young and painting poetry by Pottery Perfection.

At Noah's Ark we want everyone to understand the importance of mental health. We also understand the importance of family engagement in the school setting. We would love to provide a family fun night at the end of each of our school years. It really helps strengthen and promote wellness. We also love having people from our community involved in our classroom as well. We have some special guests coming up this next year!

We are in full swing this year. And we are very excited that each year we have gotten a few more kids. This year we are at nineteen total. With most of our three year olds coming back for our fours class, that makes it nice. We have a wonderful group of families and they have been amazing this year so far.

We also received another grant from the state. We were able to purchase a smartboard and tablets. Although we are not on them that much they are definitely nice to have around. As much as we don't want to admit the world is using a lot of technology. And now we can stay up with what the public schools are using.

Our program strives to provide these children with a deep love for learning. We love to make things fun and educational at the same time. We are designed to meet a child's social and emotional well being as well as preparing them for kindergarten. We hope everyone enjoys the program and is happy with the direction it is going. We will continue to work hard on getting enrollment up and get everyone talking about the great things happening here.

Sincerely,

Andrea Hirt, Administrator

CUB SCOUT PACK 302

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2023



CUBMASTER COMMENTS

A Brief History of Pack 302: Our First Annual Report

In this year's annual report, let's take a look at Pack 302's history. The Fremont, Ohio community once had five different packs, of which Pack 302 was the most established. In 2019, Pack 302 became the only Cub Scout Pack in Fremont affiliated with Hayes Memorial United Methodist Church. However, in 2022, we were informed that HMUMC would no longer offer support beyond a meeting place. So, we reached out to Grace Lutheran Church, which had a history with scouting, to inquire about chartering our pack and continuing our presence in Fremont. After a thorough review of the Charter agreement and numerous email exchanges, Linda initiated the process of our new Charter under Cub Scout Pack 302, allowing us to maintain our tenure of over 57 years, now under Grace Lutheran Church.

Outstanding Support from Church Community

Heather Hawn, our key contact, has been a constant presence in our monthly parents' meetings. With her encouragement, we strive to reach our goals, spread kindness, and support service projects. Heather has also played a vital role in connecting our pack with the church. Thanks to her assistance, we have developed a positive relationship with the front office staff, and Linda is always available to answer our questions about finances and scheduling.

We are also grateful for the support of Pastor Mark, who takes the time to visit us and even acts as a guest judge in some of our adventures at Grace Lutheran. The assistance we have received from the church community has been a refreshing source of encouragement.

DANIELLE WAGNER
Committee Chair - Acting Cubmaster

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Pack 302 is a bustling community with a variety of activities to offer. Our monthly Den meetings are organized based on the scouts' age/grade level and are focused on completing adventures. Additionally, we convene as a full pack once a month to take on more extensive adventures and engage in enjoyable activities, including hiking, campfire programs, family camping, Pinewood Derby, Scout Sunday, youth lock-in, ice-skating, and more. Take a glance at our year-round schedule of events below. Our aim is to provide scouts and their families with opportunities to participate in both traditional and new activities, keeping them active and engaged.



2023 ACTIVITIES

● WINTER

- Pinewood Derby 100% scout participation.
- Family Campout Camp Miakonda 50% participation
- Scout Sunday at Grace Lutheran Church 40% participation
- Annual Cross over for our 5th grade AOL Scouts to the Troop level: 95% scout participation

● SPRING

- Youth Lock-in and YMCA Field Day - 50% participation
- Hiking Club 30% participation
- Coffee/Tea Council Fundraiser 25% participation
- Toured the Fremont Fire Station.

● SUMMER

- Car Wash 60% participation
- Pool party 60% participation
- Cub Scout Day Camp 98% scout participation.
- Bowling Club monthly 50% participation
- Raise Craze Fundraiser - acts of kindness in the community.
- Fishing events in Fremont 40% scout participation

● FALL

- Donated Free Little Library to Grace Lutheran Church. Total 4 in Fremont, Ohio
- Doubled membership from 24 scouts to 48
- Assisted in fall clean up at Grace Lutheran
- Fall hiking 100% participation
- Fall Family Camping 40% participation.
- Scouting For Food collection - over 1000K items donated to the Soup Kitchen - 60% scout participation.

Our Scouts & Leaders



LEADERS

Leadership Structure of Cub Scout Pack 302

Cub Scout Pack 302 is privileged to have six dedicated registered leaders running its den and pack meetings. Here's a look at the team behind the program's success:

- Abigail Emerine: Lion Den (Kindergarteners) Leader
- Brittnae Biller: Tiger Den (1st Grade) Leader
- Jessica Le Maitre: Wolf Den (2nd Grade) Leader
- Lucas Eisenhauer: Bear Den (3rd Grade) Leader
- John Willey: WEBELO Den (4th Grade) Leader
- Carolin Hoskins: Arrow of Light Den (5th Grade) Leader



COMMITTEE

Pack 302 boasts a robust committee comprising both parents and registered leaders. The committee convenes monthly to deliberate on matters such as finances, events, membership, and other crucial aspects that keep the pack healthy and thriving. The committee comprises the following esteemed members:

- Committee Chair (outgoing) - Mandy Root
- Treasurer - Kara Eisenhauer
- Cubmaster (outgoing) - Danielle Wagner
- Secretary - Abigail Emerine
- COR - Heather Hawn

Additionally, all parents of Pack 302 are members of the committee.



CUB SCOUTS

Exploring Cub Scouting: Enhancing Children's Growth

Pack 302 saw a significant increase in its membership in the fall of 2023, swelling from 24 to 58 scouts. Cub Scouting, also known as Wolf Cubs or Cubs, offers a program designed for children aged 5-11. Groups of Cubs are called "Packs", and participants are known as Cubs. The program is designed to help kids develop essential skills such as public speaking and safety, form lasting bonds, and conquer their fears. Additionally, it promotes self-assurance, reinforces ethical values, and prepares them to give back to their communities. The Bobcat Badge is the first achievement awarded to Cub Scouts, except for Lions (Kindergarten). Most Cubs achieve the Bobcat rank within the first or second pack or den meeting.

THANK YOU



We express our gratitude for the exceptional experience you provided, making the transition seamless, and offering outstanding support in the year 2023. We are enthusiastic about the prospect of working together in upcoming service projects with Grace Lutheran Church in the next calendar year, such as the Free Little Library project, Scouting for Food, and community yard cleanups. We anticipate expanding our endeavors and achieving our goals with the unwavering support of Grace Lutheran Church and its staff.



Christian Worship Committee

Committee Members: Judy Overmyer, Chairperson
 Pastor Mark Bogen
 Maureen Pump
 Tricia Dabrunz
 Becky Seibert

The Worship committee meets monthly on the second Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. Our main focus is developing the worship service with liturgy, music, etc.

As we wait for a new organist, we are in a time of transition. We currently use a music service app which allows us to choose and download worship music for each service. Although this is not a permanent solution, this option has allowed us to keep the music in worship.

We welcome any questions, comments, or suggestions. Please feel free to contact any of the committee members.

Sincerely,

Judy Overmyer
Chairperson

Altar Guild 2023

The Altar Guild is a ministry of “quiet service.” It is behind the scenes, but a most critical act of service to the church. Altar Guild members are servants of God’s people as well as servants of God.

The Altar Guild’s tasks have a profound impact on the life of the church. The beauty of altar guild work has true theological value. It says something about how we care for what we do as well as how we care for people. It tells us that every detail has significance, and every task is important.

During the past year, the candelabra oil filled candles have been replaced with battery operated candles. The reasoning for this change is multifold. Lighting the oil filled candles was a challenge for many acolytes or even an adult. Filling the oil candles was a challenge as well. Secondly this procedure could be considered a fire hazard. Also, the cost of oil has increased over the years. New battery-operated candles now fill the candelabras and are quite handsome. We will be using rechargeable batteries to defray the cost of replacement batteries.

The Altar Guild is responsible for tasks such as: Preparing the altar per the Church calendar year, Setting the table with the elements (bread and wine) to be administered during communion, Laundering and ironing altar and worship linens, polishing brass and silver, ensuring that all candles are in good operating order. Cleaning up after services and either preparing for another service or “closing down” for the day.

Pre-prepared individual wine/wafer sealed cups continue to be offered for those who wish to commune in the pew and for those attending car church.

We thank the men and women who have served this past year. We praise God with our service and invite all who are willing to serve the Lord in this capacity. There are many ways to serve. Some of which are preparing communion, changing the paraments as the church calendar dictates and keeping the candles in good working order. You are welcome to be a part of this quiet way of service. Service on altar guild is flexible to your schedule, serving either in preparation or conclusion of worship. You will be paired with an existing member and work in teams. This is a great opportunity to work with your son or daughter and a wonderful family experience in service. Please contact the church office or any Altar Guild member for any questions or to volunteer.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Seibert

Christian Stewardship Committee

Committee members: Cecilia Boucher, Council Member
Kathy Burmeister
John Avers
Ed Muffler
Maureen Pump
Pastor Mark Bogen

“In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:3)

The Stewardship committee theme this year was “Blessed to be a Blessing”, based on Genesis 12:3. Several months ago, planning began for our Fall appeal, which officially began on Sunday, October 15th, 2023. The following three weekends, temple talks were given by members sharing personal stories of how God has used them to share their time, talents, and resources for His glory.

Along with the temple talks, we informed members of our exciting ministry plans to meet needs in our community and here at Grace through letters, bulletin inserts, and intent cards.

We celebrated the end of our Fall campaign with refreshments on Sunday, November 19th, and continue to accept any intent cards in the future!

Our committee will continue to learn, research, and pray over our resources so as to build up the body of Christ here at Grace and in our community.

Thank you for your commitments, generosity, and prayers.

Respectfully submitted,

Cecilia Boucher

Christian Property Committee

Property Committee Members:

John Burmeister, Dave Cooper, Jerry Moses, Jim Post (Staff)

The Property Committee maintains and upgrades the property of Grace Lutheran Church. Our property is beautiful and full of history that requires regular upkeep and at times significant projects. Your Property Committee is also responsible for contracts that provide insurance, electric, and natural gas for the church. The committee encourages your ideas and concerns on how we may improve our property. Please feel free to contact any member.

COMPLETED PROJECTS FOR 2023

- Painting of front entrance handrailing's
- Painting of front entrance lamp posts
- Added a shed to house activity items for Noah's Ark Preschool
- Removed long pew near organ
- Secured snow removal service
- Installed digital message sign
- Remove pews and install floor tile entrance of sanctuary
- Repurpose/modify pews for balcony
- Manage and oversee basement and sanctuary restroom renovations
- Install new entrance doors (Baker St)
- Crack seal all three parking lots
- Add Programmable timer for entrance lights

(Christian Property Committee continued.)

FUTURE PROJECTS *(not in priority order)*

- Replace Kitchen lighting fixtures with LED fixtures
- Convert dining room light fixtures to LED
- Update outlying Grace signage
- Offer CPR training to office staff/deacons/congregation
- Install church security system that will include smoke and water detection
- Seal and restripe all three parking lots

Property would like to thank everyone who has given time and energy on some of the completed projects, and to those working behind the scenes to keep our church maintained. Special thank you to Jerry Moses Jr, for leading the restroom renovation project and dedicating his time to ensuring this was completed by the scheduled date. The committee asks that you continue to donate your time and talents continuing making Grace a welcome place of worship.

Donations are welcome and can be received using the “Building for Our Future” envelopes.

Greg Jess, Chairman, Property Committee

GLCW - Grace Lutheran Church Women

President: Jan Harris
Secretary:
Treasurer: Janet Dorr
Mission Action -
Project Day/
Lutheran World Relief: Jan Harris

The mission statement for the women of the ELCA:

To mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

GLCW is made up of the GLCW Board and Joy Circle. The Board meets only as needed throughout the year. Joy Circle meets on the third Tuesday of the month, January through June, and September through November. In July, they usually have a retreat with entertainment and a work project. At Christmas time, they collect money and donate it to an agency that supports helping others. Joy Circle is a great group of approximately 14 women who meet in the church Lounge for Bible study and fellowship. They are a friendly group always ready to welcome new members at anytime.

Project Day volunteers meet the first and third Mondays each month at 9am, January through May and September through December. New volunteers are always welcome! Come when you are able! The Project Day ladies continue to create beautiful quilts from the donated fabrics and sheets. The quilts decorate the pews in the sanctuary on Thankoffering weekend in September. These quilts along with donated items for personal care, baby care, and school kits are then packed and shipped to LWR centers. This past year 2023, we shipped 16 baby care kits, 24 personal care kits, and 31 quilts. The support of this congregation towards this mission is amazing - THANK YOU!

All women of Grace Lutheran Church are invited to participate in all GLCW functions. We are always looking for more women to get involved with our GLCW activities.

GLCW continues to support the various ministries of Grace Lutheran Church, our community, and our world by donating time, talents, and financial support as we are able. If we see a need, we try to find the means to offer support helping to make our community and world a better place by loving our neighbors - both near and far.

As we look forward to 2024, please consider getting involved with the GLCW family. All are welcome to come and be a part using the gifts God gave us to do His work.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Harris, GLCW President

GLCW - Treasurer's Report 2023

2022 Carry Over Balance		\$ 714.11
INCOME:		
Worship offerings	\$ 230.71	
Funeral dinner donations	350.00	
Thank Offering donations	520.00	
Shimer Estate donations:		
Mission	1,000.00	
Project Day supplies/shipping	2,000.00	
Donation for LWR kits	<u>170.00</u>	
	4,270.71	\$ <u>4,270.71</u>
		\$ 4,984.82
EXPENSES:		
Women of the ELCA		
60% Worship offerings to Synod	138.42	
Batting for LWR quilts	153.92	
Thank Offering donations to		
Women of the ELCA	520.00	
Men In Mission (2) radio broadcasts	145.00	
ELCA Spring Conference donation	50.00	
Siebert Mission trip donation	150.00	
Liberty Center Birthday Project	97.63	
ELCA Shipping	300.00	
Gifts of \$50 each to: Genacross, LSS, Filling		
Home of Mercy, Lutheran Home of		
Mercy, and Grace Soup Kitchen	<u>250.00</u>	
	\$ 1,804.97	\$ <u>1,804.97</u>
		\$ 3,179.85
Balance on Hand	December 31st, 2023	\$ 3,179.85

Janet Dorr, Treasurer
Grace Lutheran Church Women

Men in Mission Radio Ministry

The Radio Ministry for Grace Lutheran Church continues to play a role in providing different alternatives for individuals to experience church worship services.

A great big THANK YOU to those who have so graciously sponsored broadcasts in memory of or in honor of someone they love or for some special occasion during the past year. We continue to have good interest and feedback from the congregation for the radio ministry.

With the new digital equipment that has been installed, the Sunday morning 9 AM service at Grace is now streamed live to the Fremont Eagle 99.1 station and then is played on the radio at 9AM on Sunday morning.

This is a positive ministry and benefit for a number of people in our community.

Anyone wishing to sponsor a radio broadcast, the cost remains at \$72.50. Please contact Les or Marcella Widmer at the following e-mail or phone numbers. If you want specific Sundays, you can reserve those in advance.

Les; 419-341-1850; widmerleslie@gmail.com; Marcella: 419-307-5227

Sincerely;

Les Widmer

Soup Kitchen

2023 was a great year for the Soup Kitchen. We were open for 46 weeks and served over 1,850 meals. On average, 40 meals per week. None of this would be possible without our many faithful volunteers as well as many donations whether it be food or monetary.

Our volunteers work tirelessly with complete dedication. Our core group of volunteers consist of 6 to 8 individuals. St. Joe's and Memorial Hospital both have teams of volunteers that help monthly. All volunteers serve a vital part of the soup kitchen. We couldn't do what we do without them.

Donations are always welcome. This past year, we received 100's of donations. Individuals gave turkeys, hams, chicken, and canned goods. We were also recipients of two major food drives. Postal workers with their annual Stamp Out Hunger, collected many food items; it was simply amazing. Cub Scout Pack #302 blessed us with many items from their annual food drive. Their effort and hard work brought tears to my eyes. Great job boys and girls!

Some other groups and businesses which helped us this year: Kroger, Polter Realty, Howard Hanna Realty, Russell Real Estate, Memorial Hospital, Grace Lutheran, Sandusky County Food pantry... we are so grateful!

Thank you everyone! We are truly blessed. I'm looking forward to 2024 and what will be accomplished.

Serving our God and community,

Nancy Mae Ewing

Soup Kitchen Manager

Endowment Board - 2023

Endowment Board - 2023

Mark Bogen Interim Pastor (ex-officio)
Ruthann House, appointed by Church Council
Barry Luse, Vice Chair, appointed Investment Advisor
Al Mehlow, Chair, elected by the Congregation
Matt Moss, Secretary, elected by the Congregation
Maureen Pump, Lay Associate Minister (ex-officio)
Bill Wingard, Treasurer, appointed Legal Representative
Lori Wise, elected by the Congregation

The Endowment Fund was established in response to the blessings and abundance of gifts provided to Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Endowment Fund recognizes the need to extend the Life, Mission, and Outreach of the Church through financial support to the congregation, the community, and worldwide organizations. Contributions are received for investment and the return on that investment is used to support a variety activities. The actual 2023 disbursements and the planned disbursements in 2024 are as follow:

<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	
\$28,000	\$28,000	LIFT – supports LIFT pastor, Camino de Vida, and Bridge of Hope
11,450	10,450	Sent with the Spirit to Serve Others – Grace Lutheran Church mission outreach
3,750	3,750	Lutheran Home Society (Genacross) - senior living, youth care, outpatient services
4,500	4,500	Lutheran Social Services - assistance and counseling programs
1,800	1,800	Mexico City Missionary - supports Pastor Brondos
500	500	Special Festival - disciple celebration

Additionally, a matching contribution of \$125,000 to the Capital Campaign (Preserving Our Past and Embracing Our Future) was approved by the Endowment Board in 2019. This amount will be distributed in 2024 to help fund ongoing capital projects.

Al Mehlow, Chair

Account Name: Grace Lutheran Church Endowment

January 01, 2023 through December 31, 2023

ACCOUNT SUMMARY

Beginning Market Value: \$1,175,971.20

Receipts:

Cash Deposits: 0.00

Asset Deposits: 0.00

Total Receipts: 0.00

Payments:

Disbursements: -50,245.67

Withdrawals and Distributions: 0.00

Administrative Expenses: - 8,221.57

Total Payments: - 58,467.24

Investment Income:

Tax Free Income: 0.00

Taxable Interest: 47,208.00

Dividends: 35,379.88

Return of Capital: 0.00

Other Income: 0.00

Total Investment Income: 82,587.88

Investment Growth: 19,432.97

Total Investment Growth: 19,432.97

Ending Market Value: \$1,219,524.81

NOAH'S ARK PRESCHOOL 2022-2023
SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS

Bank Balance as of August 1, 2022		
Checking	\$ 44,502.52	
Certificate of Deposit	\$ -	
		\$ 44,502.52

Sources

Tuition	\$ 22,670.00	
Registration	\$ 375.00	
Art Fees	\$ 825.00	
Fundraiser/Class Pictures/Videos	\$ 81.00	
Donations/Late Fees	\$ 555.00	
Interest Income	\$ -	
Grant	\$ 63,999.00	
Total Receipts		\$ 88,505.00

Uses

Salaries (Net)	\$ 26,599.78	
Payroll Withholding Taxes & Workers Comp	\$ 6,866.08	
School Supplies	\$ 15,299.65	
Fundraiser Costs	\$ -	
Office Supplies	\$ 1,991.57	
Miscellaneous	\$ 15,517.07	
Staff Seminar/Training	\$ 1,450.00	
Advertising	\$ 1,613.41	
Payroll Service	\$ 300.00	
Total Disbursements		<u>\$ 69,637.56</u>

Bank balance as of July 31, 2023 * \$ 63,369.96 *

Checking	\$ 63,369.96
CD	\$ -
	<u><u>\$ 63,369.96</u></u>

Respectfully submitted,

Linda L. Baumer, Treasurer

* Includes Tuition Assistance Fund Balance \$ 3,014.08

**TREASURER'S REPORT
TWELVE MONTHS ENDING DECEMBER 31
2023**

BALANCE IN GENERAL FUND JANUARY 1, 2023 \$ 1,088,604.50

RECEIPTS:

Envelopes, Pledges	\$	380,037.25
Loose Offering	\$	6,927.92
Sunday School	\$	-
Seasonal Offerings	\$	5,559.00
Noisy Offering	\$	2,435.00
General Fund-Undesignated	\$	22,982.06
Endowment Gift	\$	50,000.00
Checking/Investment Interest	\$	5,175.43
GWG Interest	\$	-
PPP Loan Forgiveness	\$	-
Released from Dedicated Accounts	\$	353,422.68
Total Receipts	\$	<u>826,539.34</u>

Total Receipts plus Beg. Balance \$ 1,915,143.84

Deposits in clearing acct	\$	391,503.05
December Net Dedicated Funds cash activity to transfer	\$	93,112.12
Employee Taxes Withheld & Pension Withheld	\$	<u>43,508.30</u>

Total Receipts, Taxes, Withholding, and Balance \$ 2,443,267.31

DISBURSEMENTS:

Payments from clearing acct	\$	1,420,292.00
Budget Items (actual expenses)	\$	852,693.97
End of Year Transfer to Contingency Reserve	\$	-
Employee Taxes Remitted & Pension pd	\$	44,222.73
Total Expenditures	\$	<u>2,317,208.70</u>

BALANCE IN GENERAL FUND DECEMBER 31, 2023 \$ 126,058.61

FOR PURPOSES OF COMPARISON

	<u>2022 BALANCES</u>	<u>2023 BALANCES</u>
General Fund	\$ 1,088,604.50	\$ 126,058.61
Special and Misc.	\$ 396,362.67	\$ 1,485,186.63
Contingency Reserve	\$ 141,360.22	\$ 141,360.22
Tressel Memorial Scholarship	\$ 1,528.66	\$ 1,278.66
My Brothers Keeper	\$ 2,636.77	\$ 2,086.77
	<u>\$ 1,630,492.82</u>	<u>\$ 1,755,970.89</u>

2023
FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND CHARITABLE GIVING

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Giving</u>
ELCA Synod & Churchwide	\$ 25,500.00	\$ 25,500.00
Hispanic Ministry / Pastor Brondos	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 1,800.00
L.I.F.T.	\$ 28,000.00	\$ 28,000.00
Lutheran Homes Society	\$ 3,750.00	\$ 3,750.00
Lutheran Social Services	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 4,500.00
Total	<u>\$ 63,550.00</u>	<u>\$ 63,550.00</u>

CONTINGENCY RESERVE FUND

BALANCE, JANUARY 1, 2023		\$ 141,360.22
RECEIPTS:		
	\$ -	
Total Receipts	\$ -	
TOTAL RECEIPTS, INTEREST & BALANCE		\$ 141,360.22
DISBURSEMENTS		
	\$ -	
	\$ -	
Total Expenses	\$ -	
BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 2023		<u>\$ 141,360.22</u>

TRESSEL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

BALANCE, JANUARY 1, 2023		\$ 1,528.66
RECEIPTS:		
Interest	\$ -	
Member gift	\$ 250.00	
Total Receipts	\$ 250.00	
TOTAL RECEIPTS, INTEREST & BALANCE		\$ 1,778.66
DISBURSEMENTS		
Pastor Education/Retreat	\$ 500.00	
Total Expenses	\$ 500.00	
BALANCE, DECEMBER 31, 2023		<u>\$ 1,278.66</u>

SPECIAL AND MISCELLANEOUS FUNDS

Fund	Ending Balance 12/31/22	Receipts	Expenses	Ending Balance 12/31/23
Charity	285.00	179.00	285.00	179.00
Library	621.31	0.00	49.95	571.36
World Hunger	0.00	216.00	216.00	0.00
Flowers/Landscaping	524.48	0.00	0.00	524.48
Organ Fund	0.00	16,000.00	0.00	16,000.00
Music Miscellaneous	617.00	1,595.00	332.00	1,880.00
Sunday School Mission Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Youth Fund	45,160.28	4,452.84	7,769.94	41,843.18
Toledo Symphony Sponsorship	27,809.49	20,879.00	16,911.71	31,776.78
Global Mission-Yellow Env.	1,340.00	1,353.00	1,330.00	1,363.00
My Brother's Keeper	32,835.88	2,651.00	4,306.00	31,180.88
Funeral Meals	191.04	2,141.61	2,183.91	148.74
Wm. F. Beck Caring Fund	1,795.87	0.00	536.61	1,259.26
IN/OUT	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00
Weddings	1,044.26	820.00	900.00	964.26
Sanctuary Air Conditioning	41,985.65	74,865.76	0.00	116,851.41
Kitchen Air Conditioning	7,058.14	0.00	0.00	7,058.14
Capital Campaign Fund	84,393.72	3,120.00	87,513.72	0.00
Building for the Future	14,545.64	5,750.00	0.00	20,295.64
Soup Kitchen	8,248.64	14,621.48	16,991.94	5,878.18
Capital Campaign Pledges	115,557.72	650.00	115,957.72	250.00
Altar Guild	348.93	380.00	174.97	553.96
Technology	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
GLC General Scholarship	8,065.82	0.00	1,500.00	6,565.82
Special Events	3,883.80	738.48	3,044.98	1,577.30
Memorials	0.00	1,361,651.37	117,143.36	1,244,508.01
New Hymnals	0.00	6,551.50	6,300.83	250.67
TOTAL	\$ 396,362.67	\$ 1,518,616.04	\$ 383,498.64	1,531,480.07

2023 PATTERN OF ANNUAL GIVING

2022 DONORS	2023 DONORS	AMOUNT
22	20	0.01 to 50.00
13	8	50.01 to 100.00
49	53	100.01 to 500.00
31	29	500.01 to 1000.00
64	60	1000.01 to 3000.00
18	27	3000.01 to 5000.00
4	10	5000.01 to 7000.00
4	1	7000.01 to 10000.00
1	6	10000.01 to 15000.00

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
2024 PROPOSED BUDGET**

		2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
INCOME				
10-01	Offerings	\$ 400,000	\$ 380,037	\$ 410,000
10-02	Loose	\$ 4,200	\$ 6,928	\$ 7,000
10-25	Sunday School	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
10-30	Seasonal	\$ 11,000	\$ 5,559	\$ 6,000
10-32	Noisy Offering	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,435	\$ 2,500
10-33	Gen Fund undesignated	\$ 20,000	\$ 22,982	\$ 6,000
10-34	Endowment Gift	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 49,000
10-35	Checking/Investment Int.	\$ 300	\$ 5,159	\$ 4,800
10-36	GWG Interest	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
20-20	Released from Designated	\$ 13,700	\$ 353,423	\$ 29,400
	Total Income	\$ 501,700	\$ 826,523	\$ 514,700
	Total Income	\$ 501,700	\$ 826,523	\$ 514,700
EXPENSES				
Minor 10 - World Mission				
10	ELCA Synod	\$ 25,500	\$ 25,500	\$ 25,500
20	Lutheran Homes	\$ 3,750	\$ 3,750	\$ 3,750
30	Lutheran Social Services	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500
40	Local Mission/Noisy Offering	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,435	\$ 2,500
41	Missionary Support	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,800
42	Disciple Celebration	\$ 500	\$ 256	\$ 500
43	Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Total World Mission	\$ 38,550	\$ 38,241	\$ 38,550
Minor 20 - Local Mission				
15	Spirit	\$ -	\$ 1,132	\$ -
20	Youth	\$ 7,200	\$ 6,747	\$ 23,700
35	Christian Missions/Outreach Committee	\$ 1,000	\$ 307	\$ 1,000
40	Stewardship	\$ 500	\$ 3,076	\$ 500
41	L.I.F.T.	\$ 28,000	\$ 28,000	\$ 28,000
62	My Brothers Keeper	\$ 1,200	\$ 4,306	\$ 1,200
	Total Local Mission	\$ 37,900	\$ 43,568	\$ 54,400
Minor 30 - Worship				
20	Bulletin, Church Lit.	\$ 700	\$ 300	\$ 700
30	Contribution Env., Certif.	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,466	\$ 1,000
40	Altar & Sacramental	\$ 700	\$ 945	\$ 700
60	Music / Vestment / Maintenance	\$ 4,000	\$ 1,871	\$ 3,200
75	Worship Expenses	\$ 1,298	\$ 9,286	\$ 1,298
80	Christian Worship Committee	\$ 240	\$ 45	\$ 240
	Total Worship	\$ 7,938	\$ 13,913	\$ 7,138
Minor 40 - Christian Education				
21	Cont. Edu - Pastors	\$ 240	\$ 75	\$ 240
50	Misc. Christian Edu	\$ 240	\$ 381	\$ 240
	Total Christian Edu.	\$ 480	\$ 456	\$ 480

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
2024 PROPOSED BUDGET

		2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
Minor 50 - Operations & Maintenance				
20	Janitor Supplies	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,100
30	Utilities - Natural Gas	\$ 19,250	\$ 14,083	\$ 17,250
35	Utilities - Electric	\$ 17,400	\$ 16,577	\$ 16,500
36	Utilities - Water	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,213	\$ 2,400
37	Utilities - Waste Disposal	\$ 1,740	\$ 2,274	\$ 1,740
40	Telephone	\$ 1,536	\$ 1,439	\$ 1,536
50	Insurance	\$ 22,786	\$ 22,059	\$ 23,302
65	Property, Repairs and Maint.	\$ 15,159	\$ 350,988	\$ 13,593
	Total Operations & Maint	\$ 82,671	\$ 411,633	\$ 78,421
Minor 60 - Salaries & Related				
10	Senior Pastor Salary	\$ 44,284	\$ 49,956	\$ 41,474
11	Senior Pastor Housing	\$ 31,004	\$ 32,000	\$ 28,542
12	Senior Pastor Travel	\$ 600	\$ 227	\$ 600
13	Senior Pastor Pen & Med	\$ 24,014	\$ 10,927	\$ 25,531
30	Visitation Pastor Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
31	Visitation Pastor Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
55	Clergy/Organist Substitute	\$ 1,338	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,338
65	Staff Payroll	\$ 218,139	\$ 214,173	\$ 222,492
72	Staff Pension	\$ 6,937	\$ 6,937	\$ 7,077
	Total Salaries & Related	\$ 326,316	\$ 315,220	\$ 327,054
Minor 70 - Administration				
20	Postage	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,206	\$ 2,400
25	Payroll Service	\$ 1,860	\$ 1,705	\$ 1,860
30	Office Equipment & Maint.	\$ 3,828	\$ 4,273	\$ 3,828
40	Office Supplies	\$ 2,700	\$ 2,624	\$ 2,700
45	Technology Support/Maint.	\$ 2,414	\$ 2,790	\$ 2,414
	Total Administration	\$ 13,202	\$ 13,598	\$ 13,202
Minor 80 - Miscellaneous				
10	FICA & Worker's Comp	\$ 17,722	\$ 17,759	\$ 18,055
15	Synod Assembly	\$ 300	\$ -	\$ 300
22	Employee Mileage	\$ 300	\$ 169	\$ 300
40	Miscellaneous	\$ 300	\$ 122	\$ 300
	Total Misc	\$ 18,622	\$ 18,050	\$ 18,955
	Total Expenses	\$ 525,679	\$ 854,678	\$ 538,200
	Income less expenses	\$ (23,979)	\$ (28,155)	\$ (23,500)

RESOLUTION #1 – CHURCH BUDGET

Whereas, the Executive Committee and the Church Council have proposed a budget for the 2024 calendar year after careful review, discussion, and prayer; and

Whereas, the input of the Congregation has been sought;

Therefore, be it resolved that the 2024 Proposed Budget be adopted at this Congregational Meeting, and that we, as Grace Lutheran Church and its individual members, respond faithfully and responsibly with our offerings so that this budget may be met.

RESOLUTION #2 – CHURCH VOLUNTEERS

Whereas, this Congregation depends upon its people to share their time, energy, and enthusiasm to advance the ministry of the Church and its mission; and

Whereas, these people deserve our acknowledgment, appreciation, and respect;

Therefore, be it firmly resolved that we thank our many volunteers for their gracious hours of service, which have contributed to the ministry of Grace Lutheran Church in education, music, youth, worship, evangelism, property, finance, and office administration during the 2023 calendar year.

RESOLUTION #3 – CHURCH STAFF

Whereas, the following individuals have sought to serve their Lord through their work at Grace Lutheran Church, Noah's Ark Preschool, and LIFT, as paid staff members: and

Whereas, our congregation should acknowledge and appreciate their efforts;

Therefore, be it resolved that we extend our sincere gratitude to all members of these staffs for their faithfulness and dedication for the 2023 calendar year. They are, as named below,

Pr. Paul Bailie, Linda Baumer, Pr. Mark Bogen, Tom Curry, Tricia Dabrunz, Nancy Ewing, Kaitlyn Fisher, Michaelle Goodman, Heather Hawn, Andrea Hirt, Gregg Kinsey, Doug Morris, Jim Post, Susan Sawdo, Maureen Pump.

And be it further resolved that we acknowledge with gratitude the efforts of the following people who served on the staff of Grace and whose time of service came to an end during 2023:

Tom Curry, Kaitlyn Fisher

And be it further resolved that we continue to support, pray for, and work in partnership together as a Congregation and church staff to the Glory of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lift Parish LLC
Operating Agreement

Approved by all Full Member Congregations and
in force as of 2/2020

Fundamental Charitable Purpose. Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, the organization is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. All provisions herein shall be subject to such purpose.

1) Definitions

- a) **"LIFT"** means "Living In Faith Together"
- b) **"Grace"** means Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fremont, Ohio
- c) **"St. John's"** means St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fremont, Ohio
- d) **"Faith"** means Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fremont, Ohio
- e) **"St. Mark"** means St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fremont, Ohio
- f) **"Trinity"** means Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kingsway, Ohio
- g) **"Emmanuel"** means Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Hessville, Ohio
- h) **"Ministry Teams"** means the members of the congregations of LIFT who regularly help to plan and carry out mission and/or mission support activities in a particular area
- i) **"ELCA"** means the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor body
- j) **"NWOS"** means the Northwest Ohio Synod of the ELCA, or its successor body
- k) **"Worshiping Community"** means a group of persons regularly gathered around word and sacrament
- l) **"LIFT Parish"** means the sum of all those congregations and worshiping communities that have approved these Articles of Agreement pursuant according to its terms
- m) **"LIFT Parish Board"** **"LIFT Board"** or **"Board"** shall mean the managing Council responsible for managing the cooperative ministry of the LIFT Parish under this agreement.
- n) **"Code"** means the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended ("Code").

2) Name of Organization

The organization shall be known as **"Lift Parish, LLC,"** but may be referred to internally as "LIFT Cooperative Ministry Parish" or "LIFT Parish".

3) Purpose

The purpose of the organization is to further Code Sec. 501(c)(3) exempt religious, charitable, and educational purposes allowable under Code Sec. 501(c)(3) of its members by sharing resources and opportunities for mission and ministry, to grow disciples of Jesus Christ, to discern a shared vision for God's mission in the Greater Fremont area, and to share the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ with our community and with the world.

4) Membership Eligibility & Forfeiture

- (a) Eligibility. Any member organization must be organized and operated under Code Sec. 501(c)(3) exclusively for religious, charitable, or educational purposes, or be an agency or instrumentality of the United States, any State or political subdivision thereof.
- (b) Forfeiture. Should a member cease to be organized and operated under Code Sec. 501(c)(3) exclusively for religious, charitable, or educational purposes then it shall forfeit

its membership.

5) Membership Transfer Prohibition

No member may transfer its membership without the prior written consent of the other members; provided always, any transferee shall be organized and operated under Code Sec. 501(c)(3) exclusively for religious, charitable, or educational purposes, or be an agency or instrumentality of the United States, any State or political subdivision thereof.

6) Enforcement by Members

The members shall expeditiously and vigorously enforce all of their rights in the organization and pursue all legal and equitable remedies to protect their interests in the organization.

7) Prohibitions

- (a) No part of the earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, directors, officers or other private persons, except that the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for goods and services rendered.
- (b) No substantial part of the activities of the organization may consist of carrying on propaganda or attempting to influence legislation.
- (c) The organization shall not participate in, or otherwise intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

8) Transfer of Assets - Fair Market Value Required

- (a) Transfer of Assets to Non-Member. Any asset of the organization may only be transferred (directly or indirectly) for fair market value to any non-member organization that is not a Code Sec. 501(c)(3) organization or an agency or instrumentality of the United States, any State or political subdivision thereof.
- (b) Transfer to Former Member. Any asset of the organization may only be transferred (directly or indirectly) for fair market value to a former member organization that ceases to be a Code Sec. 501(c)(3) organization or an agency or instrumentality of the United States, any State or political subdivision thereof.

9) Guidelines

In pursuit of this purpose, we will:

- (a) proclaim Jesus as Lord in word and deed
- (b) be guided by scripture and led by the Holy Spirit
- (c) be open to God's work in and around us
- (d) love one another, respect one another and pray for one another
- (e) pray and worship together regularly
- (f) speak the truth in love and listen to one another in love
- (g) be flexible and open to change
- (h) respect and honor the gifts of each congregation and the gifts and ministries of the parish as a whole

- (i) maintain a cooperative relationship with the overall area mission strategy of the Eastern Conference and Northwest Ohio Synod of the ELCA.
- 10) Parish Administration / Management**
- a) LIFT Parish Board. The LIFT Cooperative Ministry Parish shall be managed by the LIFT Parish Board. The voting members of the LIFT Parish Board shall include the following:
 - (1) Two lay members each from congregations participating as full members of the LIFT Parish.
 - (2) One lay member total from among worshipping communities not part of a congregation.
 - (3) All of the pastors of LIFT and LIFT full member congregations, ex officio.
 - b) In general, each lay member shall serve for a two-year term. However, at the initiation of this agreement, half the lay members of the LIFT Parish Board shall be elected to a two-year term and the other half to a three-year term. Thereafter, each lay LIFT Board member will be selected annually, to a two-year term.
 - c) Term Limit. Members may serve consecutive terms, except that no one elected under section a) (1) shall serve more than 3 consecutive terms.
 - d) Associate Membership. Upon request, the LIFT Board may designate a congregation or worshipping community cooperating in any LIFT ministries as an Associate Member of the LIFT Parish. When so designated, a lay representative and pastor of the Associate Member may attend Board meetings and have voice but not vote. Where funds are exchanged; or joint staff hired or called, the terms of cooperation will be described in a written cooperative ministry plan. LIFT congregations may continue to participate in LIFT ministries as an associate member of the Parish even if the congregation does not vote to become a LIFT Parish Member under the terms of Section 7.
 - (e) Quorum. A quorum of the LIFT Board is a majority of LIFT Board voting members.
 - (f) Responsibilities. The LIFT Parish Board will:
 - (i) oversee and provide for the administration of this parish to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission,
 - (ii) promote peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, endeavor to foster mutual understanding,
 - (iii) have general oversight of the life and activities of this parish,
 - (iv) lead this parish by stating its mission, doing long-range planning, setting goals and priorities, and evaluating its activities in light of its mission and goals,
 - (v) provide for incorporation as a nonprofit Limited Liability Corporation,
 - (g) Frequency. The LIFT Parish board will meet at least quarterly.
 - (h) Officers
 - (i) The LIFT Board will elect a vice- chairperson annually to serve one year as vice-chair and one year as chair.
 - (ii) The LIFT Board will elect a secretary annually.
 - (iii) The treasurer shall be elected by a 2/3 majority of the LIFT board. The treasurer shall

serve a two-year term. The treasurer need not be a member of the LIFT board, and if not a member, shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the LIFT board.

- (iv) The Treasurer shall:
 - (A) prepare and submit regular financial reports to the LIFT Parish Board.
 - (B) assist in the preparation of the annual budget of the parish.
 - (C) keep the bank accounts for the parish.
 - (D) keep the books of account of the parish.
 - (E) disburse all funds on proper orders as designated by the LIFT Board.
 - (F) take the necessary steps to protect this LIFT Board and its members from liability.
- (v) An independent audit of the books of the parish shall be conducted annually.

11) Authority

- a) Parish. The authority of the LIFT Parish rests with the LIFT Parish Board, who is responsible to develop parish ministry plans and strive to implement those plans. The LIFT Board has authority to set the compensation package for parish staff in accordance with the compensation guidelines of the Northwest Ohio Synod of the ELCA.
- b) Congregations. Nothing in this agreement shall diminish or undermine the identity and authority of a participating congregation, including the authority to make its own decisions, hire its own staff, call its own pastor or make other decisions regarding their individual congregations.
- c) Worshiping Communities not part of Congregations. LIFT Worshiping Communities which are not a part of any LIFT congregation shall have the autonomy and authority and representation as defined in a written ministry plan approved by the LIFT Board, as it may be revised from time to time.

12) Entry

A 2/3 majority vote of the members present and voting at a congregational meeting called in accordance with that congregation's constitution shall be required for that congregation to adopt these Agreement and enter the LIFT Parish. After the formation of the LIFT Parish, a majority vote of the members of the LIFT Parish Board shall be required for a church to enter the LIFT Parish, in consultation with the synod staff.

OR

A majority vote to adopt this agreement according to the polity of the church requesting membership in the LIFT Parish must be obtained. A majority vote of the members of the LIFT Parish Board shall be required for a church to enter the LIFT Parish, in consultation with the synod staff.

13) Effective Date

The organization's secretary shall certify the effective date of this agreement.

14) Responsibilities

- a) Pastoral Responsibilities. In keeping with the responsibilities of pastors as defined in the constitutions of the ELCA and the Letter of Call to Ordained Ministry, the pastors of this parish shall:

- i) Lead worship, including preaching, administration of the sacraments, marriages and funerals. Pastors may train and supervise lay assistants to assist them in these activities. Pastors shall rotate in their worship leadership in each of the congregations of the parish,
 - ii) Provide for and coordinate pastoral care, including visitation of and care for the sick, the homebound, the grieving, inactive and prospective members, and members of the broader community as appropriate,
 - iii) Engage in continuing education and professional development and share insights learned within the parish,
 - iv) Nurture relationships with and between the members of the parish,
 - v) Equip all the baptized to share in ministry and mission,
 - vi) Provide for Christian education in order to foster spiritual growth and discipleship, including confirmation/catechism classes, new member classes, regular Bible study, and teaching and modeling spiritual disciplines (prayer, tithing, fasting, meditation, etc.),
 - vii) Ensure that the records and rosters of the congregations and Parish are maintained annually.
- b) Congregational Responsibilities. The congregations of this parish shall:
- i) Practice wide-open and active hospitality, inviting others to participate in the life of the parish and welcoming guests in the name of Christ.
 - ii) Nurture relationships with one another and with the community at large.
 - iii) Engage in community outreach, including feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and caring for the least, the last, the lost and the lonely in the spirit of Matthew 25:31-46.
 - iv) Participate actively in the shared ministries of the parish and actively seek opportunities to share ministry with each other.
 - v) Engage in self-study to identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth.
 - vi) Actively seek to communicate to their members and to other congregations within the parish about their mission and ministry.
 - vii) Commit to welcoming and loving treatment of rostered leaders and their families and honor the ministries of all leaders within the parish.
 - viii) Seek to grow faithfully in their Mission Support to the Northwest Ohio Synod and the ministries of the broader church.
 - ix) Be good stewards of and make faithful use of buildings, grounds and other congregational assets.
 - x) Be accountable to one another in love as fellow workers in Christ.

- c) Responsibilities of All Baptized Members. Governed by a spirit of love, mercy and compassion in our life together, every baptized member will be encouraged to:
- (i) Attend worship regularly
 - (ii) Participate actively in the ministries of the parish and congregations
 - (iii) Participate in the Ministry Teams of the Lift Parish
(with the teams providing reports to the board)
 - A. Children, Youth and Family
 - B. Caring for Members and the Community
 - C. Worship and Music
 - D. Evangelism and Outreach
 - E. Hospitality and Fellowship
 - F. Property Support
 - G. Finance, Administration and Leadership Support
 - H. Stewardship
 - (iv) Participate in the Prayer and Discipleship groups of the Lift Parish
 - A. Faith Engagement
 - B. Equipping
 - C. Welcoming Diversity
 - D. Justice for our Neighbors
 - E. Sustainable Connections
 - (v) Grow in faith through:
 - A. daily prayer
 - B. regular study of Scripture
 - C. service in the congregations, community and wider world
 - D. generous giving and the intentional practice of Christian discipleship
 - E. be open-minded and willing to change

As followers of Jesus Christ, we will commit to love one another, serve one another, listen to one another, be honest with one another, care for one another, trust one another, challenge one another, encourage one another, hold one another accountable and receive every person as we would receive Jesus Christ.

15) **Call Process**

The call of a pastor to serve the parish shall be under the guidance of the Office of the Bishop of the Northwest Ohio Synod. There shall be a call committee for the parish, consisting of the senior pastors of each participating congregation and at least one lay member from each worshipping community, with no less than six nor more than twelve total members. The members of the call committee shall be elected by the respective congregation councils. A 2/3 majority vote of those present and voting at a combined Parish meeting called in accordance with each congregation's constitution for a congregational meeting shall be necessary for approval of the pastoral candidate. If the call is approved, the congregations authorize the LIFT Parish Board to issue the call. Mutual Ministry Committee

There shall be a Mutual Ministry Committee consisting of at least one member from each worshipping community in the parish, and no fewer than six nor more than 10 members. The members of the committee shall be selected in consultation between the rostered leaders and LIFT Board. The Mutual Ministry Committee will be affirmed by the LIFT Parish Board. The Mutual Ministry Committee shall facilitate communication and assist the rostered leaders of the parish and congregations in reviewing the ministry goals of the parish and the respective

congregations.

16) Shared Expenses

- a) The parish may share staff expenses as appropriate, including the compensation and benefits for:
 - i) rostered leaders, if applicable
 - ii) shared administrative staff, if applicable
 - iii) shared programmatic staff, if applicable
 - iv) shared musicians, if applicable
 - v) shared music director, if applicable

- b) The parish will seek, as much as possible, to share expenses related to programming of mission and ministry, such as, but not limited to:
 - i) office equipment and supplies
 - ii) software and licensing
 - iii) confirmation instruction
 - iv) youth ministry
 - v) music
 - vi) special events
 - vii) vehicles
 - viii) internet presence
 - ix) property management and insurance, as applicable
 - x) preschool

17) Pastor's Compensation

Compensation of pastors and rostered leaders serving the parish will be consistent with the Northwest Ohio Synod's Compensation Guidelines.

18) Finances

- (a) There shall be a parish treasury out of which the parish treasurer shall pay all expenses. An annual audit will be conducted independently and shared with the parish board and all congregations of the parish.

- (b) For the 2016 calendar year, the participating congregations will commit to contribute financially to the parish in specified amounts as determined by a budget committee, comprising at least the senior pastors and treasurers of each participating congregation, and presented at the congregation's annual meeting together with a description of the use of those funds.

19) Congregational contributions for future years will be established through annual Parish Congregational Budgets adopted by December 1 for the subsequent calendar year. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the parish may be called by the LIFT Board chairperson in consultation with the individual congregational council presidents and the pastors, or by any two board members.

20) Review and Changes

- (a) Method of Change. The participating congregations agree to an annual review of this agreement to be conducted in consultation with the senior pastors, the councils of the participating congregations and the Office of Bishop of the Northwest Ohio Synod. Changes or modifications to these Articles of Agreement may be made by a 2/3 vote of members of each congregation present and voting at congregational meetings or a parish-wide meeting, called in accordance with congregational constitutions. All proposals for changes shall be recommended by the parish board to each congregation council for congregational vote.
- (b) Limitation on Change. Any amendment to this agreement, or other governing document of the organization, shall comply with the rules, requirements, and limitations of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

21) Terms of Dissolution/Termination

After consultation with the Office of the Bishop, termination of this agreement and dissolution of the organization by a congregation shall be by a 2/3 majority vote of the members of the congregation present and voting at a congregational meeting called in accordance with that congregation's constitution. Written notice will be given to the LIFT Board by July 1 of a congregation's intention to withdraw from the parish for the following calendar year.

22) Distribution of Assets Upon Dissolution/Termination

Upon termination and dissolution of the organization, all the assets of the organization shall be distributed either to: The Northwest Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or its successor, provided such organization is then organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, or religious purposes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, or (ii) any other organization(s) which then qualifies as a exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

23) Merger / Conversion

The organization is prohibited from merging with any organization who is not exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code. Likewise, should the organization ever convert to another form of entity, such conversion is limited to an entity which qualifies as an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

24) Specific Arrangements/Other

Worship times shall be established in consultation between the congregations of the parish and the LIFT Board.

25) Incorporation

The LIFT Parish shall be incorporated under the laws of Ohio as a nonprofit limited liability corporation (LLC). This LIFT Parish, LLC shall be the congregation of record for any individuals within LIFT not otherwise members of any congregation of LIFT.

26) Merger

Merger of a participating congregation with this LIFT Parish, LLC shall require approval by the LIFT Board and each LIFT member congregation council.

LIFT Parish By Laws

Delegation of Authority

The Board hereby delegates to the Executive Committee (comprising the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and LIFT pastors) the taking of executive action on behalf of the Company, provided that:

- 1) the Board is notified of significant actions in advance
- 2) no board member requests full Board review.

The Board hereby delegates to the Finance and Administration mission support team, the taking of all routine administrative actions on behalf of the Company, provided the Executive Committee is kept informed and no member of that Executive Committee or the Board requests full review.

The Board hereby delegates to each Mission Team the taking of all actions within their area of responsibility, provided they keep the Executive Committee informed and coordinate and cooperate with the other mission teams that may be affected. Any Board member or alternate can request Board review and decision at any time, for any issue, where that person believes there may be a significant difference of opinion about the right decision, or where further consideration would be necessary or useful, and the request is made in writing to any member of the Executive Committee.

Approved by LIFT Board January 26, 2016

NOAH'S ARK PRESCHOOL - 2023
SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS

Bank Balance as of January 1, 2023

Checking	\$ 99,781.27	
Certificate of Deposit	\$ -	
		\$ 99,781.27

Sources

Tuition	\$ 27,684.75	
Registration	\$ 550.00	
Art Fees	\$ 1,095.00	
Fundraiser/Class Pictures/Videos	\$ 104.80	
Donations/Late Fees	\$ 500.00	
Tuition Assistance	\$ 189.00	
Grant	\$ 26,550.00	
Total Receipts		\$ 56,673.55

Uses

Salaries (Net)	\$ 26,207.55	
Payroll Withholding Taxes & Workers Comp	\$ 7,620.13	
School Supplies	\$ 10,731.17	
Fundraiser Costs	\$ -	
Office Supplies	\$ 2,062.98	
Miscellaneous	\$ 15,338.06	
Staff Seminar/Training	\$ (1,188.00)	
Advertising	\$ 1,566.07	
Payroll Service	\$ 300.00	
Total Disbursements		\$ 62,637.96

Bank balance as of December 31, 2023 *		\$ 93,816.86 *
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Checking	\$ 93,816.86	
CD	\$ -	
		\$ 93,816.86

Respectfully submitted,

Linda L. Baumer, Treasurer

* Includes Tuition Assistance Fund Balance		\$ 3,014.08
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