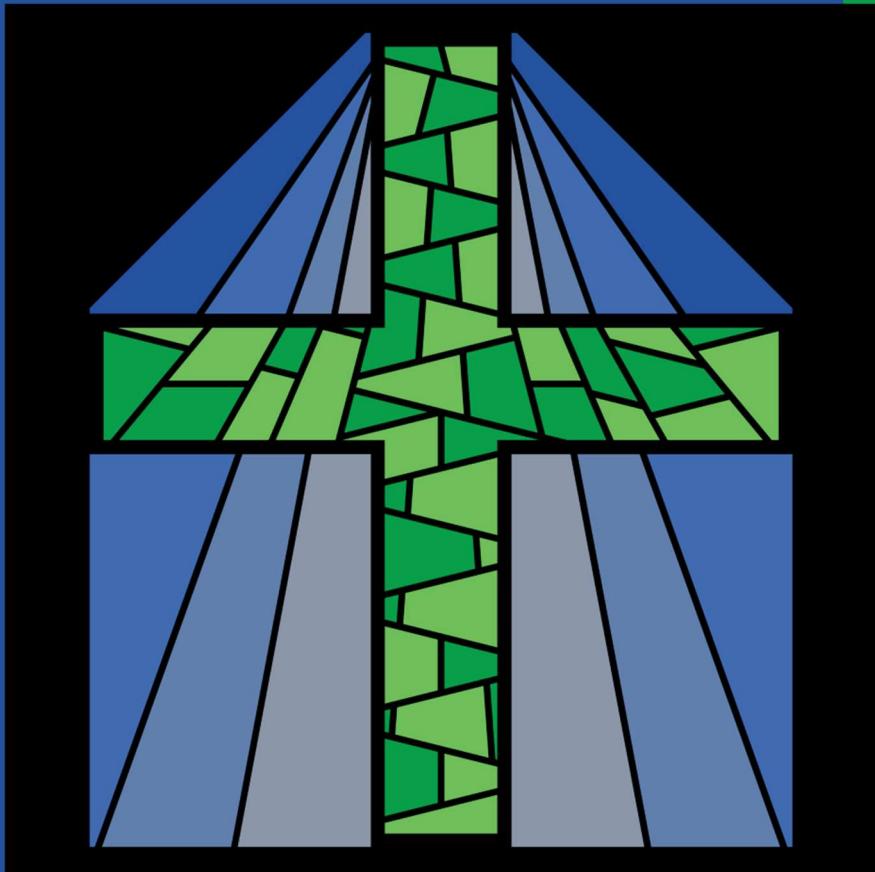


# BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

## 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



# OUR MISSION

*"We Reflect Christ in Message and Action."*

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.

We welcome and invite everyone.

We hope you find Bethany to be a warm and welcoming congregation when you visit.

We worship God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments.

We are a community of faith who prays, cares, comforts and encourages.

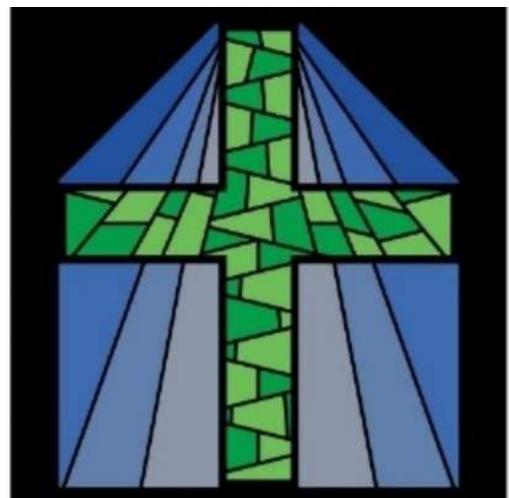
We joyfully give with generosity and open hearts.

We grow and share our faith through teaching and learning God's Word.

We faithfully serve our wider community and world.

## WELCOME STATEMENT

*"We are called by Jesus to love God and one another, to practice inclusive hospitality, and to serve all without stipulations. Each of us is a unique and beloved child of God. We welcome you just as you are, with all your differences and all your gifts. We affirm the sacredness of people of every race, culture, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, physical and mental ability, socioeconomic position, family status, background, and faith journey. We commit to the work of anti-racism, social and economic justice, and environmental care. We invite you to Bethany Lutheran Church as we embrace the diversity of God's creation and celebrate our oneness in Christ."*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bethany Lutheran Staff	page 3
Meeting Agenda	page 4
Minutes from January 26, 2025, Annual Congregational Meeting	page 5
Council President's Report	page 7
Pastors' Report	
Rev. Katherine Mueller, Associate Pastor	page 9
Rev. Paul Petersen, Interim Pastor	page 11
Pastoral Acts & Parish Statistics	page 13
Staff Reports	
Office Administrator	page 15
Director of Worship and Music	page 17
Director of Children and Family Ministries	page 20
Director of Communications and Events	page 23
Treasurer	
Treasurer's Annual Report	page 25
Statement of Income and Expenses	page 26
Standing Committee Annual Reports	
Property	page 29
Thoughts Prayers Action	page 30
Worship & Arts	page 34
Social Action	page 36
Other Committees, Boards and Ministries	
Memorial Committee	page 37
Hooks & Sticks	page 37
Endowment Fund Board	page 38
New Business	
Nominating Committee Report	page 42

# BETHANY LUTHERAN STAFF 2025

## Pastors:

Rev. Katie Mueller, Associate Pastor

Rev. Paul Petersen, Interim Pastor



## Staff:

Dr. Aaron Knodle, Director of Worship and Music

Dr. Ayesha Chetty, Collaborative Pianist

Jerry Larsen, Property Manager

Jody McKesson, Office Administrator

Kathy Picard, Director of Children & Family  
Ministries

Liz Quinn, Director of Communications & Events

## Council Members:

Cynara Pierzina, President

Peter O'Reilly, Vice President

Roger Wolfe, Treasurer

Kyle Nicholas, Secretary

Catherine Peterson

Clara Solak

Bob Schunter

Erin Smith

Ashley Szatkowski



Michelle Sprague

Dianne McCarter

Dave Hancock

# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AGENDA

Opening Prayer

Minutes from the January 26, 2025, Annual Congregational Meeting

President's Report

Pastor's Report

    Rev. Katie Mueller

    Rev. Paul Petersen

Pastoral Acts and Parish Statistics

Staff Reports

    Office Administrator

    Director of Worship and Music

    Director of Children and Family Ministries

    Director of Communication and Events

    Treasurer

    Statement of Income and Expenses

Standing Committee Annual Reports

    Property

    Thoughts Prayers & Action

    Worship Arts

    Social Action

Other Committees, Boards and Ministries

    Memorial Committee

    Hooks & Sticks

    Endowment Fund Board

New Business

    Nominating Committee Report

    2026 Budget (See Budget Packet)

Closing of Congregational Annual Meeting

# **BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

## **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

### **JANUARY 26, 2025**

Call to order: President Cynara Pierzina called the meeting to order at 10:22AM. Attendance was taken and it was established that we had a quorum of voting members present.

Opening Litany: Was given by Pastor Katie Mueller

#### **Approval of the minutes and Committee reports**

- Susan Dobbe motioned to accept the minutes of the annual meeting from January 28, 2024 and Sherry Bagby seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- Approval of minutes from September 15, 2024 special congregational meeting. Heidi Holman motioned to approve the minutes from the September 15, 2024 special congregational meeting. Dianne Mccarter seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- Cynara Pierzina presented the President's report. Pastor Cathy Daharesh Presented the pastor's report and Pastor Katie Mueller presented the associate pastor's report. Nichole Nordschow motioned to approve the president's and pastor's reports Christine Tickner seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- Cynara presented the Pastoral Acts and Parish statistics report. Mike Bagby motioned to approve the pastoral acts and parish statistics report Deb Burdis seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- Staff reports were presented for review. Christine Carpenter motioned to approve the staff reports Erin Smith seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- Roger Wolfe presented the Treasurer's report. Bob Schunter motioned to approve the Treasurer's report Marianne Anderson Seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- Standing committee reports were presented for review. Cathrine Peterson motioned to approve the standing committee reports. Sue Dobbe seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- Other Committee reports were submitted for review. Bob Schunter motioned to approve the other committee reports Dave Olsen seconded the motion and the motion was approved.
- Presentation of the RIC welcoming statement. Mike Bagby motioned to approve the RIC welcome statement. Mike Smith Seconded the motion. Ballots were collected and counted and the motion passed with 91% approval.

## **Nominating Committee report and Nominations**

Pete O'Reilly presented the nominating committee report and presented the nominees for next year's council. Sue Dobbe moved to approve the nominees for the 2025 church council Sherry Bagby seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Election of the 2025 nominating committee. Larry Johnson motioned to approve the 2025 nominees for the nominating committee Mike Bagby seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Nominees for the 2025 Synod Assembly members. Sherry Bagby motioned to approve the 2025 Synod assembly members Dave Olsen seconded the motion and the motion passed.

## **Budget Report**

Roger Wolfe presents the budget for the fiscal year of 2025. The church council motions to approve the budget for the 2024 fiscal year Sue Dobbe seconded it, and it was approved.

## **Adjournment**

Motion for the Congregational meeting to be adjourned. Hiedi Holman motioned to adjourn Bob Schunter seconded the motion and the motion passed. The congregational meeting was adjourned at 12:25pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Hector Mendoza, Council Secretary

# COUNCIL PRESIDENT REPORT

Submitted by Cynara Pierzina

## Summary

In 2025, the work of the council continued to focus on strengthening Bethany's foundation while supporting meaningful ministry and discernment. I am grateful for the collaborative spirit, thoughtful conversations, and deep care for Bethany that council members have brought to their work this year.

Together, we have continued to see God at work as we move forward with intention, creativity, and hope.

## Accomplishments

- Bethany proudly became an official Reconciling In Christ congregation, publicly affirming our commitment to welcome, inclusion, and justice for all people.
- We continued strong partnerships with Head Start Preschool and the Ukrainian School, valuing the relationships and shared community that these partnerships bring to Bethany.
- The council completed the update of the Bethany Employee Handbook, an important step in providing clarity, consistency, and support for our staff.
- Significant progress was made on updating the Bethany Constitution. We are now at a point where the updated constitution can be introduced to the congregation. There will be time for people to review, reflect, and discuss the proposed updates before voting on adoption in the coming months.
- We continued the revitalization of the Bethany Youth Group, supporting opportunities for connection, faith formation, and engagement among our youth.
- Bethany renewed its commitment to the Bethany Arts Series through a partnership with the Summer Sundays Concert Series, bringing music and community together in meaningful ways.
- Progress was made on landscaping projects to remain in compliance with city ordinances while caring for Bethany's grounds as a welcoming and well-kept space.
- A fantastic Call Committee has been working diligently and prayerfully to discern Bethany's next steps in the call process.

## **Gratitude**

I am deeply thankful to the members of the church council for your faithfulness, care, and willingness to serve Bethany during this year. Your thoughtful engagement and commitment have made this work both meaningful and encouraging.

Thank you to the Call Committee for your dedication, prayerful discernment, and the time and energy you continue to give during this important season in Bethany's life.

I am also grateful for Bethany's staff, ministry leaders, and volunteers, whose daily work and dedication make all this possible.

Finally, thank you to the entire Bethany congregation for your trust, support, and participation in our shared ministry. It is a gift to serve alongside you.

Thanks be to God!



# PASTORS' REPORT

## ASSOCIATE PASTOR REPORT

Submitted by Rev. Katherine Mueller

A Year of Listening, Caring, and Hope 2025 has been a year of change, challenge, and remarkable grace at Bethany. Our community has spent the year intentionally listening, caring, and discerning where God is calling us next. It has been wild, faith-filled, and deeply meaningful. I am honored to walk alongside this congregation—people of generosity, creativity, and courage—and I am excited for the ways God is inviting us into the future.

Whether celebrating together, worshipping as a community, or serving in our neighborhoods, I have been reminded again and again why ministry at Bethany is a privilege. Our community gatherings, alongside everyday interactions in classrooms, worship, and fellowship, reveal the vibrant life of this congregation.

### Highlights from 2025

- Lenten Pancake Bazaar: joyfully brought the community together in faith & fun.
- Vacation Bible School: deep engagement of children and volunteers.
- High School Mission Trip (Des Moines): youth explored justice, service, and faith.
- September Apple Bash & Halloween Carnival / Chili Cookoff: community events bringing laughter and connection.
- Advent Choir Festival & Christmas Eve Services: beautiful worship experiences for all ages.

This year, Bethany has continued to be a community that centers joy, creativity, and care. Programs like Bible study and confirmation have expanded opportunities for learning and spiritual growth, while outreach and fellowship activities have strengthened connections across all ages. Our aim remains to nurture a place where people feel seen, supported, and called into service.

As we said farewell to Pastor Cathy Daharsh, we entered a season of discernment that called us to center our hearts and listen deeply to one another. We welcomed and said farewell to Bridge Pastor John Gerike and greeted Pastor Paul Petersen, who has worked compassionately with our call committee. I have been truly transformed by the love of everyone here, and I especially want to thank our amazing staff. Their creativity, kindness, and collaboration have shaped my ministry in profound ways.

I also extend my gratitude to our council, especially President Cynara Pierzina, for outstanding leadership, collaboration, and dedication. I appreciate each member, whether continuing in service or concluding their term, for their commitment to our community.

A heartfelt thanks also goes to our finance team, who carefully steward your generous contributions. Their guidance and integrity help us envision a future rooted in mission, care, and sustainability.

Finally, I thank every member of this congregation for the countless ways you contribute, support and bring projects to life. This church is about the people, and your dedication has meant so much to me.

### **Hopes for the Future**

Looking ahead, my hope is for Bethany to grow as a deeply listening and responsive community. In times of uncertainty, may we nurture care, presence, and trust across differences. I am inspired by the liberating love of Christ and desire that our congregation continually embody that love—welcoming all, serving all, and offering hope and healing in every interaction.



# INTERIM PASTOR REPORT

Submitted by Rev. Paul Petersen

Thank you to everyone for participating in the January “Community Conversations”! Over 110 people participated in these conversations which will give the Call Committee much to ponder. In addition to all the information the Call Committee has gathered together will be conversations with Pastor Katie and with our Bethany staff that will take place in early February. We have much to sift through and ponder over! There are a few questions I have been asked, and I will try to answer them here.

## **Question #1 – When will the Call Committee finish its work/when will you be leaving Bethany?**

A typical Intentional Interim Ministry usually lasts between 12-18 months. We are currently on target to be finished with our work in this time frame.

## **Question #2 – We are going to call another pastor...right?**

Maybe.

We have taken a different approach to the current vacancy at Bethany than the usual process of assessment. We are looking at two primary questions – *What are the areas of needs of Bethany Lutheran Church and the larger Crystal Lake community that new staffing at Bethany can address?* And *What amount and type of staffing can the current budget support?*

The answers to these questions fueled by your input are informing our thinking.

Many staffing possibilities exist, including calling another pastor to work with Pastor Katie and possibilities of multiple staff additions to address needs expressed in survey answers and the Community Conversations.



### Question #3 – What is next for the Call Committee?

The Call Committee will be entering a very intentional time of discernment. During this time of discernment, the flow of information from the Call Committee to the congregation will be minimal. We are grateful for all of your thoughtful, prayerful input, and now its time for us to talk extensively about it all and formulate a plan to discuss with the Church Council and the Synod.

Some final words of gratitude for this report...My time at Bethany has been filled with great joy! Thank you for your generous welcome, for the thoughtful conversations in group and private settings and for the silly humor exchanged!

To the Bethany Staff...you are an amazing collection of talent! I enjoy watching you work, your intentionality to spreading the message of Jesus and your care and concern for each other! I'm plotting as to how I can steal you all to take to my next church!

To Pastor Katie...Thank you for your partnership in ministry. Your talents for writing and leading the staff and preaching and teaching are great gifts to this community! It has been a great joy to serve with you!

Shalom,

Pastor Paul



## PASTORAL ACTS & PARISH STATISTICS

**6 Member Funeral Services:** Gene Bengston, Jack Heisler, Peter Kemmer, LeMount Lehrman, David Sweet, Ants Teetsov

**1 Non-Member Funeral Service:** Larry Reimer

**9 Baptisms:** Natalie Kate Cross, Vivian Elizabeth Drake, Maeve Erin Houghton, \*\*Elliana Mae Knaack, \*\*Sawyer William McKay, \*\*Noelle Grace Nuzzo, \*\* James Brooks O'Halleran, Emersyn Leigh Zeken, Hudson Matthew Zeken

\*\* members received through baptism

**9 Confirmed:** Ian Buxton, Addie Calanca, Keegan Carson, Thomas Gola, Jane Kluge, Leah Kluge, Travis Picard, Ellie Sprague, Nathan Wirth

Total 13 New Members Received

Total 457 Members Removed: (8 by Death, 16 Moved No Transfer, 248 Moved to Affiliate, 13 Adjustments, 172 Roll Updating

**Membership Year End 2025: 527 Baptized, 420 Confirmed**

### REMEMBERING THOSE WHO PASSED

Gene Bengston	LeMount Lehrman
Nancy Johnson	Larry Reimer
Jack Heisler	David Sweet
Peter Kemmer	Ants Teetsov

## ATTENDANCE

Weekly attendance is determined by adding the onsite attendance number to the number of households attending.

Average Weekly Worship Attendance – Sunday (excluding Easter & Christmas)	292
Largest Sunday Attendance (not Easter) 2/2/2025	468
Smallest Sunday Attendance 6/15/2024	116
Christmas Eve	627
<b>Lent 2024</b>	
▪ Ash Wednesday	174
▪ Lenten Mid-Week Average	117
▪ Palm Sunday	378
▪ Maundy Thursday	187
▪ Good Friday	158
▪ Easter	560
▪ Thanksgiving Eve	69
<b>Advent 2024</b>	N/A
Average Midweek (12/2, 12/9, 12/16)	N/A

# STAFF REPORTS

## OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR REPORT 2025

Submitted by Jody McKesson

2025 was a year of anticipation. We were all saddened by Pastor Cathy's departure, but we are also excited at the prospect of discerning what staff and programs we will need to move on to our next chapter at Bethany.

This year, I have worked with the staff to plan worship and events with enough lead time that we are ready for them without feeling frenzied at the last minute. Although we were not perfect, we are making appreciable progress in that area; for the first time in my tenure I finished printing all Christmas bulletins the week before Christmas, leaving us with more time to attend to last minute worship preparation details without stress.

I have also worked to contain costs within the office administrator budget over the past year. In addition to being a bit more thoughtful about ordering supplies for the office, I have been working with staff to decrease our printing costs through judicious use of printer settings. In the last six months of the year, we have realized savings of approximately \$150 per month.

I have updated the funeral planning forms and procedures over the last year, to reflect current funeral practices and policies, so pastors have streamlined forms with all the information they need to create meaningful funeral services. I also revamped the Funeral Coordinator's duties and responsibilities, so that our volunteer Funeral Coordinator, Kate Bailey, will have the information she needs to guide bereaved families through the funeral process. I am currently working on the same revamping for our baptism process.

My biggest wish for this year is to (finally!) clean out and overhaul our office filing system. It has much outdated information that can be cleared out, and the rest of the information needs to be organized in a manner that makes it easy for staff to find it. In clearing out the files, I will be using the ELCA's Records Retention Schedule, to ensure that we keep all files and records that are required, and that those records are stored in the correct manner. This endeavor will be a large task, and I may be asking for some volunteers to assist in the process.

I don't want to end without expressing my appreciation for the rest of the staff, or for the many volunteers who make my job easier. The weekly proofreaders, the Birthday Card writers, the Bulletin Crew, and especially Kathy Mayner, who comes to assist me on Mondays, and Annemarie Zubrzycki and Jill Frazier, who come in and assist me on Fridays – you are all wonderful, and I am so grateful!!

As always, I am in awe of the support I receive from the congregation – it is an honor to serve you!

Respectfully Submitted,

Jody McKesson



# **DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC 2025**

## Submitted by Dr. Aaron Knodle

### **About**

- 2025 made for yet another year of pivoting, resetting, and settling, particularly with multiple staff changes and interims. However, in conjunction with many of these changes, Bethany's music ministries continued to move forward in exciting ways, both old and new!

### **Accomplishments**

- We continued incorporating music into the Sunday School program, broadening engagement and experience.
  - The Sunday School program began regularly sharing their musical learnings with the congregation during the 9:00 a.m. service in 2025.
- The Bethany Youth Band made its second (and very successful) appearance in December, providing all the music for a 10:30 a.m. worship service.
- The *Summer Sundays* concert series enjoyed a successful third season that recruited artists from both Bethany and the broader community, and raised (through free-will donations at each of the three (3) concerts) nearly \$1500 all to benefit the Youth and Family Center of McHenry County (YFC), which provides a variety of services to area residents.
  - The *Summer Sundays* concert series received generous support from the *Bethany Arts Series*, which gave funding to provide stipends to the performing artists, all of whom had previously been volunteering their time and talent.
- The Bethany Choir (which welcomed new membership into its fold), along with our collaborative pianist, Dr. Ayesha Chetty, collaborated with the NIU Graduate Student String Quartet and a local music professional to mount a Festival Advent Worship experience.
  - This project was nearly one-year in the making, all the way from planning, organizing, recruiting, and rehearsing, to its final presentation in worship.
- Over the summer, the music ministry undertook the enormous task of reorganizing, combining, and digitizing all of Bethany's music libraries.
  - A huge shout-out to Stella Thome and Kavya Karthi who gave countless hours this Summer (and early Fall) to get a gigantic portion of this work accomplished!

## Changes

- We saw the departure of our part-time AV producer, Jake Atkinson, but also the rise of our new, volunteer AV coordinator: Todd Pierzina.
  - A huge shout-out to Todd – for the countless hours he has already given to coordinating our faithful AV Team *and* often plugging himself into an AV role for worship as well!
- Despite a range of (often predictable) hurdles, we have been (and will continue) intentionally working to broaden both our youth-volunteer base and our engagement of a broad range of musicians from both within Bethany and from the broader community as well.
- We continue to finesse the amount of music required of our bell choir and vocal choir so that, in the spirit of doing less better, we can continue to focus on strengthening the music ministry.
- We continued quietly finessing our 10:30 a.m. worship experience, which incorporates a simpler liturgical structure inspired by the Iona and Taizé Communities and seasonally-inspired aesthetic changes.

## Gratitude

- A thank-you to every volunteer who gives the gift of time and talent to Bethany's music ministry, its standing ensembles (The Bell Canto Ringers, The Bethany Choir), its programming (Sunday School Christmas Program, Bethany Youth Band, etc.), and all those who provide musical leadership during worship in any form. *You* are the music ministry. We could not do it without you!
- Another thank-you to those who volunteer to lead in worship as assisting ministers, readers, ushers, greeters, acolytes, AV technicians, communion assistants, baristas, Sunday Snack providers, etc. Again, your leadership is essential to our worship, fellowship, and community experiences and could not be done without your gifts.
- A final thank-you to those who serve on the Worship, Music, and Arts Committee, the Visual Liturgy Team, and the Altar Care Team. Your work in organizing, planning, preparing, and curating spaces and experiences for the community at Bethany (and by extension the broader community) is vital to our success and fundamental to how we engage with worship and programming at Bethany Lutheran Church.

## Goals

- To continue to capitalize on current and seek further successful and sustainable models and practices for involving more children and youth in worship at Bethany, including increasing the frequency of Sunday School musical offerings at the 9:00 a.m. service.

- To continue to increase the variety of our musical offerings and programming (particularly those that also engage a broader community) with a keen eye towards the use of music by women, racially-minoritized persons, members of the queer community, and from a variety of different cultures.
- To continue to implement some larger-scale musical programming around All Saints, Advent, and (possibly) Holy Week.
- To find creative and sustainable ways to increase the volunteer base for all of our Worship, Music, and Arts ministries
- To complete the reorganization and digitization of Bethany's music libraries
- To continue implementing a broader variety of hymns in order to appeal to different demographics while also paying close attention to the language in hymns and engaging with those that use more current, inclusive theology.

It is my pleasure to be a part of the Bethany community, and I look forward to the coming year.

Peace,

Aaron



# **DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES**

## **2025**

### **Submitted by Kathy Picard**

Christian Education brings people together to learn, ask questions, and grow in faith. Through classes, groups, and take-home resources, we create welcoming spaces for our members and community to connect, learn, and deepen their faith.

**Accomplishments:** In 2025 Christian Education maintained or achieved the following:

- Served several hundred children and families through our many different ministries.
  - Welcome new students into SS classes through VBS and word of mouth.
  - Retained volunteers and welcomed new volunteers.
  - Served the community with Vacation Bible School and the Halloween Carnival.
  - Participated in connecting our youth to raise money for Rise Against Hunger.
  - Sunday School students contributed artwork in the gathering area, a collaborative art project made during Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast.
  - Bibles and Blessing gifted to our new students, preschoolers and third graders.
  - Continued to start Sunday School as a whole group gathering in the community room, using that time to practice our songs for our Sunday School Children's Choir, which shares their music with the congregation various times a year.
  - "The Christmas Quilt" Christmas program, written by Pastor Katie, was presented by our Sunday School students, supported by several adult and youth volunteers, and celebrated by all.
  - Bethany Kids Youth Group meets weekly on Wednesdays from 7-8pm
- Gifted many donations by the generosity of our Bethany community to help us serve these students and families.

**Changes:** In 2025 the following changes and new projects were achieved:

- Continued our efforts at revamping the Christian Education Wing and children's spaces in the church.
  - L4 & L5 was painted and new upper and lower cabinets & counters installed. Bible Study and Confirmation will now also utilize that space.
  - Organized and reduced to be better stewards of our materials.
  - The Children's Corner in Luther Hall was updated with a new washable rug, storage bins and a bulletin board for Children's Ministry Events.
  - Clipboards, colored pencils, and writing tablets were added to the Children's Worship Activities station for older kids.

- Transitioned from using Spirit and Truth to using Sparkhouse Online.
- Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast & Bazaar (an intergenerational event) was a reimagined Lenten Fair.
- Cocoa and Cookies Advent Kick Off Event was done in place of Advent Fair
- Bethany Bucks Incentive Program
  - Students earn “bucks” through Sunday School & Youth Group Attendance and various faith activities such as memorizing verses, completing projects, etc. that can be turned in for prizes.

**Gratitude:** We are thankful for everyone who shows up, lends a hand, shares a talent, or donates materials. From our youngest helpers to our most seasoned volunteers, you help create a place where faith, friendship, and fun truly come alive. We are incredibly grateful for the love, energy, and inspiration shared across generations that make our ministries and spaces so meaningful.



**Goals:** The following goals were set for the future:

- Continue to minister to the people of Bethany by providing opportunities for those of all ages to better understand the Bible, grow spiritually, and become more familiar with the ways our faith can and does impact our lives of discipleship.
- Continue to update our space for future growth in our ministries.
- Continue to enhance and modify current ministries (VBS, Bethany Kids YG, SS)
- Create new ways to have our students serve in our community and world.
- Continue to create more intergenerational opportunities and events.
- Continue to grow in volunteers and participants.

This year has been AMAZING! From the Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast to the Christmas program, it's been a joy to see so many generations coming together and creating countless smiles along the way. Watching the children's faith grow this year and singing and sharing their praises was truly awesome! It has also been wonderful to watch our ministries settle into and enjoy the updated L4 and L5 classrooms, which have truly become a welcoming educational wing downstairs—ready to support education in all its forms.

We are continually inspired by how the people of Bethany show up for one another, whether through donations, volunteering, or simply cheering on our programs. That shared support is what helps our Children and Family Ministries thrive. We praise God for the many opportunities to gather, serve, and grow together. Looking forward to 2026!



# **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATION & EVENTS**

## **Submitted by Liz Quinn**

Marked by my first full year at Bethany, 2025 was a year of becoming more rooted. I have valued getting to know the congregation and learning what matters to you, your families, and the ministries we share. These relationships shape communications and events, making them more meaningful and connected. Some of my favorite moments came when members shared ideas, like the Chili Challenge, and we worked together to bring them to life. Looking ahead, I hope to continue building relationships and supporting creative ideas that help Bethany remain a welcoming place to worship, connect, and grow together.

### **Communication & Connection**

This year, I continued building my skills to help keep everyone informed about what's happening at Bethany. That included regular updates through Sundays @ Six and Stay in the Loop, keeping the website current, and improving event visibility through Sunday slides and the church calendar. A special thank you to Susan Thome, whose eye for design keeps our graphics polished and whose work plays a key role in keeping the website aligned with changing seasons and themes.

I also coordinated volunteer schedules for Sunday worship and special services to make participation clear and accessible. A heartfelt thank you to those serving as Assisting Ministers, Ushers, Readers, and Communion Assistants, your time and dedication bring Sunday services to life. I especially appreciate how this group works together to cover roles when last-minute changes arise.

### **Events, Community Life, and Volunteer Support**

Gatherings and events are among the greatest joys of my role. In 2025, I supported the communication, planning, and coordination of major church seasons: Advent, Christmas, and Holy Week, as well as fellowship and community events including Soup Suppers, the Ice Cream Social, the Bethany Apple Bash (Lot Party), Cookies & Cocoa Advent Kickoff, Pie Fest, Las Posadas, Pride events, and God's Work, Our Hands. This work is only possible because people step forward, share ideas, and generously offer their time.

I especially want to recognize those whose ideas made events especially memorable, including: Terry Micklevitz and Dave Olsen for the Chili Challenge; Karen Boncosky, Lolly Kloepfer, and Corrine Zoellick for reviving the holiday Swing Choir celebration; Susan Gavle, Linnea Kountz, CaroLynn Whaples, Kate Bailey, and Kelsey Beer for supporting multiple events throughout the year. Their creativity and commitment, along with that of countless other volunteers, bring our community together in meaningful ways and make this work deeply rewarding.

## Goals for the Coming Year

- Continue to simplify and streamline event planning, promotion, and follow-up for better community engagement.
- Create a hard copy of our Calendar-at-a-Glance for consistent communication of events.
- Expand participation in **God's Work, Our Hands** by hosting a meal-packing event, including the needed fundraising.
- Create a picture directory to help members better know one another.
- Keep building relationships across the congregation to discover new and creative ways to strengthen community in fun and festive ways.

## In Closing & Gratitude

It is a reminder every time Bethany hosts an event how generous and committed this congregation is. I am grateful for the ideas, feedback, and energy you bring. It truly makes my work better. It is a privilege to support the life of this church by helping turn your ideas into moments of connection and community. I look forward to continuing this work alongside all of you, listening, collaborating, and celebrating what makes Bethany such a fun and welcoming place.



# TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2025

## Submitted by Roger Wolfe

Our Church had a very good year financially in 2025. On the next page, you will find a Statement of Income and Expense for the year compared to our budget and the prior year. Total income was \$746,031 which was below budget but above our expenses of \$736,018. The expenses were below budget across virtually every area as our staff and volunteers did a good job of being responsible with the congregation's gifts. Thus, the financial results produced a slight surplus for the year of \$10,013. This compares to a small deficit last year of (\$902).

Our benevolence giving is required by our constitution to be a minimum of 18% of the year's receipts. This is to be calculated as the percentage of Tithes & Offerings inclusive of Dedicated Funds intended for outreach, such as global missions, social action, and support of our Synod and the ELCA. The total adjusted income received in 2025 was \$733,976 and our total benevolence expenditures were \$138,903. This produced a percentage of payments to total adjusted receipts for 2025 of 18.9%.

Our Property Replacement Reserve began the year with a balance of \$113,688. In 2025 we contributed \$14,390 to this reserve. That amount is made up of our operating expense accrual of \$6,000 and building usage fees, mostly Head Start, of \$8,390. We spent \$42,145 from the reserve; most of which was to replace an HVAC roof unit that failed due to its age. The year-end balance ended at \$85,933.

Mortgage payments in 2025 totaled \$27,240, which is 12 monthly payments of \$2,270 each. The total was applied as follows: Principal \$7,266 and Interest \$19,974. The Mortgage balance at 12/31/25 is \$351,595; down from the beginning of the year's balance of \$358,861.

There are many volunteers to thank for their work in the finance area this year, but I especially want to thank the Financial Secretaries (Carolyn and Linnea), the Financial Administrators (Liz and Jennifer), the Bank Account Reconcilers (Stacie and Ashley), the Finance Committee (Ashley, Carolyn, Linnea, Mike B., and Mike S.), and the former Treasurer (Fred) for dedicating their time and talents to assure financial accuracy and controls, sound financial decision making, and fiscal accountability for our church. Thank you all for what you do!

# STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENSES

## For 2025 vs 2025 Budget and 2024 Actuals

### Submitted by Roger Wolfe

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH					
Statement of Income and Expenses for 2025 vs 2025 Budget and 2024 Actuals					
	Actual 2024	Budget 2025	Actual 2025	Variance Vs Budget	
<b>Income</b>					
Tithes & Offerings	\$770,526	\$802,940	\$744,302	(\$58,638)	
Other Income	\$1,526	\$2,000	\$1,729	(\$271)	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$772,052</b>	<b>\$804,940</b>	<b>\$746,031</b>	<b>(\$58,909)</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>					
<b>Benevolence</b>					
Mission Support	\$108,000	\$100,000	\$100,008	(\$8)	
Social Action	\$15,085	\$13,500	\$12,389	\$1,111	
Global Mission	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$0	
<b>Total Benevolence</b>	<b>\$125,485</b>	<b>\$115,900</b>	<b>\$114,797</b>	<b>\$1,103</b>	
<b>Staff</b>					
Ordained	\$172,247	\$197,029	\$184,137	\$12,892	
Support	\$217,207	\$209,183	\$202,456	\$6,727	
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>\$389,454</b>	<b>\$406,212</b>	<b>\$386,593</b>	<b>\$19,619</b>	
<b>Property</b>					
Total Fee Income	(\$26,539)	(\$25,275)	(\$25,170)	(\$105)	
Total Expense	\$178,163	\$194,681	\$170,915	\$23,766	
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$151,624</b>	<b>\$169,406</b>	<b>\$145,745</b>	<b>\$23,661</b>	
<b>Other Committees</b>					
IT Costs	\$17,561	\$15,130	\$12,844	\$2,286	
Office Expense	\$20,205	\$20,050	\$13,421	\$6,629	
Christian Education:	\$13,686	\$11,580	\$6,408	\$5,172	
Evangelism	\$7,118	\$9,300	\$7,269	\$2,031	
Worship & Music	\$17,247	\$18,052	\$13,298	\$4,754	
Youth Ministry	\$7,504	\$6,000	\$3,805	\$2,195	
Finance & Stewardship	\$23,070	\$33,310	\$31,837	\$1,473	
<b>Total Committees</b>	<b>\$106,391</b>	<b>\$113,422</b>	<b>\$88,882</b>	<b>\$24,540</b>	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$772,954</b>	<b>\$804,940</b>	<b>\$736,018</b>	<b>\$68,922</b>	
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(\$902)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$10,013</b>	<b>\$10,013</b>	





# STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

## PROPERTY Submitted Don Kountz

**"A life isn't significant except for its impact on others' lives."**

I would like to thank all of the volunteers we had in 2025: Sashire Ayares, Sherry Bagby, Larry Johnson, Larry Kohn, Jerry Larsen (Property Manager), Charley Lemond, and Pete O'Reily (Council). The Committee also gives a huge Thank You to all the members of the congregation who volunteered throughout the year to keep Bethany a warm and welcoming place.

**Accomplishments:** The most visible activities in 2025 working with the City of Crystal Lake to replace the three trees along Crystal Lake Avenue and the painting of the three Sunday School Rooms known as the Trinity Tribe rooms.

With regard to physical building maintenance, in December we had to replace the Roof Top Unit (RTU) responsible for providing heat and air conditioning to the office area and surrounding rooms and open space. This is the second RTU requiring replacement in the last two years. These units were installed during the building expansion led by Pastor Lindstrom in 2003. We continue the challenge to maintain the roof to keep it from leaking.

In 2026 we will complete the landscaping requirements requested by the City of Crystal Lake. We will be installing bushes along Crystal Lake Avenue from the driveway east and north along Caroline Street to the driveway. We will be replacing the fence enclosure around our trash and recycling bins. We are monitoring rebates from ComEd hoping to replace the fluorescent lights in Luther Hall with energy efficient LED lights.

# THOUGHTS PRAYERS ACTION TEAM

## Submitted by John Cunningham & Peggy Lemond

### MISSION STATEMENT



**Bethany Lutheran Church's Thoughts, Prayers and Actions (TPA) committee is an alignment with the ELCA vision of GOD'S LOVE MADE REAL and the ELCA's commitment to reflecting God's love with action.**

The TPA mission is to defend and support the members of our community who need us most, not just with thoughts and prayers, but with deliberate action. We believe we are called by God to serve our community and support and welcome all of God's children. We stand against bigotry and injustice. We oppose attempts to marginalize or harm vulnerable groups within our community. In the congregation, we educate members about issues, build awareness of community needs, and invite all to join in meeting these needs. In the community we work for social justice by advocating, walking with, and financially supporting our most vulnerable neighbors, so that our community reflects the kingdom of God.

Members: Peggy Lemond, Erin Smith, John Cunningham, Lanet Cunningham, Sue Schunter, Deb Berdis, Marianne Anderson, Cheryl Reimer, Hector Mendoza, Matt DeBall, Heidi Hohman, Liz Quinn, Abbey Nicholas, Sadie Hennen, Pastor Katie Mueller, Annmarie Zubrzycki, Pastor Paul Petersen, and Carol Heisler

**In 2025 much of TPA efforts have gone to the missions of Reconciling in Christ and supporting our immigrant neighbors.**

#### Reconciling In Christ

**January 2025** - At Bethany's Annual Meeting a resolution was passed calling for Bethany to become a Reconciling in Christ church, which adopted the following BLC Welcoming Statement found on BLC's website

<https://bethanylc.com/welcome-to-bethany/pages/our-inclusive-church--48>

We now join 49 other ELCA congregations from a 38-mile radius (which includes 14 Northern Synod churches), who are now Reconciling in Christ.

<https://www.reconcilingworks.org/ric/findric/>

**March 2025** – some TPA members attended the Illinois Synod’s Congregational Resourcing Event @ at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, Illinois

**Summer 2025:**

TPA again participated in local Pride Events (**6/1/25 Crystal Lake Pride Walk and 6/15/25 Woodstock Pride Parade and Festival**). We joined local ELCA (Grace Lutheran, St. Barnabas, Living Waters, Nativity), and a growing number of other local denominations in these events (First Presbyterian of Woodstock, Tree of Life Unitarian, Ridgefield Presbyterian, St. Paul UCC Barrington, First Congregational C L, McHenry First United Methodist, St. Trinity Episcopal).

**Northern Illinois Synod RIC Update:**

At the June 2025 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly, a resolution was passed calling for the Northern Illinois Synod to become a Reconciling in Christ Synod.

<https://nisynod.org/programs/reconciling-in-christ>

**Sept 2025** - Peggy met with St. Barnabas’s RIC committee in Sept to collaborate during their preparation for their vote to become an RIC congregation.

**November 2025** – Pastor Katie led a 1<sup>st</sup> annual TDOR (Trans Day of Remembrance) service at St. Barnabas, which included BLC TPA members.

## Local Immigrants

**Families:**

Through the TPA committee Bethany supported and advocated for two families who are legally seeking asylum in McHenry County. BLC worked with St. Ann’s Episcopal and St. Mary’s Episcopal churches (now Trinity Episcopal Parish) and some members of Resurrection Catholic Church in a mission called “Neighbors McHenry County” to support one of these families. In addition, TPA members have provided advocacy and financial support to a second family legally seeking asylum. (see John Cunningham’s family updates)

**April 2025** - BLC hosted a very successful silent auction for Neighbors of McHenry County on April 26, 2025, which raised \$6,248.

**Sept 2025** - Savers donation fundraiser to help support the families legally seeking asylum. We started a letter-writing campaign to local elected officials and police departments to voice support for the IL Trust Act. TPA member attended Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church’s outreach ministry committee to learn more how we can work together to support immigrants and other vulnerable communities.

**November 2025** – BLC hosted two community in services - *Know Your Rights* and *Introduction to the Rapid Response Team*, which were presented by the McHenry County Rapid Response Team.

**December 2025** - Bethany hosted a third annual event Dec 2025 which Celebrated Las Posadas with the local community and San Andres Lutheran Church of West Chicago. TPA members provided Christmas gifts to a struggling family whose father was detained.

TPA's goals for 2026

- To establish a day to celebrate our commitment to our partnership with the RIC faith community
- To assess more ways that we can expand our support to the most vulnerable communities
- To network with more churches to collaborate and pull together our resources to best serve those in need

#### **TPA – for 2026 annual report: 2026 report on families seeking asylum**

(NOTE: The Episcopalian training for support of asylum seekers and refugees provided Neighbors McHenry County with guidance and requirements for this work. In keeping with these, to protect privacy, names and addresses etc. are not included in this report).

Last year's (2025) annual report described Bethany's role in organizing the ecumenical Neighbors McHenry County and the decision to support a family legally seeking asylum, for one year. ICDI (Illinois Community for Displaced Immigrants) has been a consultant and provided a case worker after recommending a family. This family (father, mother, and three children) has been supported since their arrival in Crystal Lake in October 2024.

Since then Bethany and the Neighbors group have provided financial support including for housing and utilities and basic living expenses, as well as donations of food, clothing, household furnishings, and other items. Also much help was provided in transportation and connections to services such as the Crystal Lake Food Pantry, schools, employment agencies, drivers license, and medical care. In all, over \$30,000 was raised by Neighbors and used in support. Bethany members have contributed significantly—financially, with donations of items, and in giving time.

This first family is now able to be on their own – even though the father decided to return to Columbia. The mother and children are glad to be here. She is working and the older two children are in school. The older son is a good soccer player and has received a lot of support (such as equipment, fees, and transportation) for that.

Meanwhile, just before Christmas last year the Neighbors group became aware that the mother's sister, with an infant child and the father, were on the verge of homelessness because the shelter in Chicago where they had been staying had closed. The Neighbors group decided not to take on

this additional commitment because they first wanted to be sure to carry through with the commitments to the original family.

However, three families from the Neighbors group decided to take on the support of this second family. This was possible in large part because of the immediate availability of a low cost apartment (rent with utilities included!) and Pr. Cathy Daharesh suggested that Bethany's Nancy Peterson memorial could provide some of the financial support. Pr. Cathy also made a contact and received \$1,000 toward the effort. Subsequently Bethany's Thoughts Prayers, Actions team has agreed to help. A few months later, Bethany's Endowment Fund agreed to provide for two months' rent/utilities.

And once again, Bethany members (and a few others) have stepped up to provide for the needs. The apartment was furnished within weeks. Other items were donated, and also transportation. There were significant anonymous financial donations to the Nancy Peterson Memorial. Dr. Burseth provided free dental care, and when it turned out two root canals were needed, the endodontist unexpectedly provided them at a much reduced cost. More recently a surprise anonymous donation covered the cost to pay off their car.

This second family has been paying partial rent and is now able to be on their own. The child will soon be in daycare so both parents can work. They are extremely grateful for the support they have received.

Both families were at this year's Las Posadas event and enjoyed it very much.

Words cannot express the THANKS due to Bethany and specifically to many members for their support in various ways!



## **WORSHIP AND ARTS COMMITTEE**

**Submitted by Bethany Gola & Matt DeBall**

Our committee is adapting and growing to accommodate the life changes of members on our team and the needs of Bethany. We meet quarterly for planning and reporting. Persons attending the meetings represent all facets of Worship and Arts including Altar Care, Flowers, Visual Liturgy, Worship Supply, Home Communion, Media, Director of Worship & Music, Director of AV (vacant), and our Council Representative. We continue to affirm through our conversations and actions how to walk and worship within the overarching goals and mission of Bethany Lutheran Church. With that foundation, we work together to enhance our worship experience for members and visitors now and those who will join us in the future.

### Communion, Altar Care, & Worship Supply

- We continue to offer a hybrid format of Communion during Sunday services and bring communion to those who are who are bound.

### Sanctuary AV & Digital Media

- With the leaving of our AV Director, we continue to search for a replacement.
- Todd Pierzina has led all things AV since the vacancy. We are grateful for Todd and his team who serve faithfully behind the scenes.
- Our website and media deliver consistent messaging including live stream/video recording, newsletters, and current information congruent with worship.

### Worship Lectionary and Model

- We continue with the Narrative Lectionary (since September 8, 2024) which allows for us to complete reading and studying full books of the Bible in a four-year cycle.
- The worship team carefully crafts relevant and poignant themes to connect the readings and studies.
- Our 10:30 am Sunday service continues to offer a unique experience for those who attend regularly or occasionally. It offers multiple openings for youth to serve and lead worship, includes repeating opening and closing hymns to build familiarity and offer contemplative rhythms that change seasonally, and features lowered lights to compliment this reflective service.

## Visual Liturgy

- Continues to visually support the current worship themes in the sanctuary. The team is thankful for the many gifts of memorials to purchase various banners, furniture, and paraments for the sanctuary.

## Volunteers

- We are thankful for our numerous volunteers who help each Sunday and for Liz Quinn and Jody McKesson, who coordinate and inform volunteers throughout the year. The invitation to serve found in weekly worship bulletins brought new people as: communion servers, readers, ushers, assisting ministers, choir, visual liturgy, AV, baptism hosts, and more!



## **SOCIAL ACTION 2025**

The Social Action Committee continues to live out our congregation's commitment to generosity and care for our local community. This past year, the committee provided support to a variety of neighborhood nonprofits and local causes, reflecting our ongoing dedication to giving where it is most needed.

### **Organizations Supported in 2025:**

- Good Samaritan
- Caring Vine
- Lutheran Social Service of Illinois (LSSI)
- Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center
- Lutherford
- Kids in Need
- Piecers
- Gigi Playhouse
- HPA Hope Foundation
- CL Pantry
- Home of the Sparrow
- Habitat for Humanity Fox Valley
- Turning Point
- Mental Health Thresholds
- Mission Save a Smile
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of McHenry County
- College Care Cards
- Senior Care Volunteers Network
- Family Health Partnership Clinic
- CASA of McHenry County
- Sheltered Village
- Vets Path to Hope
- PADS (local) Pioneer Center
- Blue Banner (local)
- New Directions
- CL Strikers

In addition to financial support, the committee has been planting seeds for future ministry initiatives. Conversations with Pastor Katie and Liz Quinn explored how hospitality, welcome, and care for those in life transitions might be renewed as a vital part of our faith community. These discussions mark the beginning of imagining new ways to serve and support those navigating change, keeping compassion and neighbor-love at the heart of our work.

The committee also continued beloved traditions, including the Sheltered Village Christmas stockings and other activities throughout the year, bringing joy and support to local families during the holiday season.

We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve our neighborhood, strengthen connections, and give generously to so many local organizations. Looking ahead, the committee is excited to explore fresh ideas and new opportunities for service, ensuring that our social action ministry continues to thrive and evolve in the years to come.

# **OTHER COMMITTEES, BOARDS, & MINISTRIES**

## **MEMORIAL COMMITTEE 2025**

**Submitted By Carol Heisler and Susan Gavle**

A thank you to our active committee members who strive to use the designated memorials to fund the ministries of Bethany in a meaningful way. The committee is composed of the following Bethany members: Gene Bengston, Karen Boncosky, Carol Heisler, Susan Gavle, Linnea Kountz, Sharon Larson, David Skjerven, Sandi Teiken.

On All Saints Sunday the following memorial projects were lifted up with gratitude: Christian Education, John Baldwin; Blessing Box, Caryn Skjerven, Diane Newbold, Huberto Boje; Christian Education, Shirley Coss; Blessing Box, Clarence Fleming; Sunday School Renovations, Ruby Ehlert, Rev. Robert Linstrom, Joyce Morris, Dave Sweet; Gathering Area and Office furniture, Ruby Ehlert; Landscaping/Trees, David Zoellick, Dick Schwebke, Geoff Odean; Visual Liturgy, Diane Uramkin; Usher Stand, Caryn Skjerven; Fine Arts Series, Judy Nordschow; Thoughts Prayers Action, Nancy Peterson; Family Christmas Project, Nancy Peterson. "This year over \$10,000 of designated memorial funds were used to support ministries."

If you would like to give a memorial or honor someone with a living memorial gift, please contact the office.

## **HOOKS AND STICKS 2025**

**Submitted By Lanet Cunningham**

Hooks and Sticks makes Prayer Shawls to be given to those who are going through difficult times, and prayer patches for anyone who wants one.

This year, in addition to the prayer shawls and patches, we made about 250 hats. Some you have seen by the Blessing Box. Others went to Husmann School, the Food Pantry, and Family Health Partnership Clinic.

Hooks and Sticks members use supplies purchased by individuals in the group or donated to the church. We appreciate the donations. The only small cost to the church is the printing of tags for the prayer shawls and prayer patches and copies of patterns we share.

If you like to knit or crochet you are welcome to be part of our group. Some of us meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 9:00 to 11:00 at church while others prefer to knit or crochet at home. Either way, we would encourage you to join the group. Please contact the church office if you're interested.

## **BLC MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND**

**Submitted by Peggy Boncosky, BLC Mission Endowment Fund Board of Trustees Chair**

### **2025 BLC MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND ANNUAL REPORT**

**Submitted by Peggy Boncosky, BLC Mission Endowment Fund Board of Trustees Chair**

The Bethany Lutheran Church Mission Endowment Fund was established in 2002 with a portion of the Agnes and Clarence Carlson Bequest and by a generous bequest from the Art and Marie Boncosky Estate in 2007. The fund is overseen by a dedicated board of trustees who uphold their stewardship responsibilities with care, ensuring that the fund continues to advance the mission of our church.

The purpose of the Endowment Fund is to extend and enhance the mission of Bethany Lutheran Church beyond and apart from the programs, ministries, and work of the congregation, which are normally supported through regular offerings and pledges. The Fund is not used for BLC's annual operating budget or the general debts, liabilities, and obligations of our congregation or those of outside organizations.

The Endowment Board helps others partner in Christ by supporting mission activities, not only within our congregation, but also with 501(c)3 organizations outside of our church, in projects that will stimulate and facilitate God's work in our community and beyond. In 2019 our Board of Trustees decided to support ELCA Seminarians. At that time, a decision was made to devote 30% of our annual budget to support growth in the number of ELCA pastors.

Accomplishments in 2025: Application requests in 2025 were plentiful, and thankfully our Board was able to direct funds within our church as well as to programs within many 501(c)3 organizations.

Perhaps the most exciting development in 2025 was the return of seminarian applicants. The Endowment Board had not reviewed a seminarian application since 2021, and we reviewed three in 2025. Even more exciting was that all three seminarian applications were from members of our congregation. The Endowment Board was able to direct funds to help Pastor Katie Mueller with student loan debt as well as Hector Mendoza Jr. and Matt DeBall as they each begin their individual journey of candidacy with the Northern Illinois Synod. We look forward to hearing both Hector and Matt speak about their experiences during services in the coming months.

Applications approved for funding, in progress, or completed on 12/11/2025: Total \$38,746.03

- Seminarian Support

The Endowment Board was presented with three applications this year: Pastor Katie Mueller (\$3,206.03), Hector Mendoza Jr. (\$5,000.00), and Matt DeBall (\$500.00)

- Pastor John Cunningham's Application on behalf of an Asylum Seeking Family

Funding to support a family from Venezuela legally seeking asylum. (\$3,000.00)

- BLC Youth Gathering

Funding to support expenses related to the 2025 Youth Mission trip to Des Moines. (\$1,340.00)

- KIDS in Need (KIN) of McHenry County

Funding to support the purchase of diapers to ensure kids in need have this basic essential. (\$3,000.00)

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) McHenry County

Funding to support NAMI's new Living Room, an alternative to the emergency room for those in crisis, as well as a Drop-in Center, a space created to develop a sense of community for those with mental illness. (\$5,000.00)

- CASA of McHenry County

Funding to support a new Transportation Program. This program is utilized to safely transport children in foster care to medical appointments, school functions, parent visits and more. (\$3,000.00)

- Mission Save a Smile

Funding to provide a Vatech EzRay X-ray machine and carrying case to expand mission work for dental care in Panama. (\$5,000.00)

- Grief Guide

Funding retreats through the Grief Guide program which provides a safe space for individuals to find comfort, healing, and connection with others who share similar experiences. (\$3,000.00)

- The Joshua Mission, Inc.

Funding to provide medical, transportation, and volunteer supplies for medical care on a mission trip to Jamaica. (\$5,000.00)

- American Legion Post 171

Funding for wreathes to be placed on veterans' headstones in Union Cemetery in Crystal Lake on December 13, 2025, as part of the Wreathes Across America program. The American Legion Post 171 is working in cooperation with VFW Post 12014, Marine Corps League, Veterans Assistance Commission, Veterans Path to Hope, and the City of Crystal Lake to remember, honor, and teach. (\$1,700.00)

**2025 Preliminary Financial Report**

**Total 2025 Budget = \$45,858 of which \$39,440 is expended and \$948 is encumbered**

**Remaining Budget Balance (12-11-25) = \$5,470**

<b><u>ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust:</u></b>	Beginning Balance. (01-01-25)	\$410,982.91
	Interest/Reinvest. (10-31-25)	11,365.80
	Change in Value (12-11-25)	46,885.21
	Transfers to checking (10-08-25)	<u>(50,000.00)</u>
	Balance (12-11-25)	\$419,233.92
<b><u>BMO Harris Bank Money Market:</u></b> (Cash Reserves)	Beginning Balance (01-01-25)	\$ 18,392.38
	Interest Earned (12-11-25)	439.21
	Deposits-ELCA Trust (10-08-25)	50,000.00
	Expenses Paid (12-11-25)	<u>39,440.03</u>
	Balance (12-11-25)	\$ 29,391.56

Thank you to the Endowment Fund Board of Trustees for their time and commitment: Jack Heisler, whom we all miss dearly as a friend and board member, Tom Leahy, Wayne Mitchell, Stacie Freeman, and Pastor Katie (advisory). Additional thanks to board members and congregation members who got the word out and encouraged organizations to apply for funds.

**Goals for 2026:**

- Determine the best way to encourage and support our Seminarian candidates
- Continue to expand Community Outreach to provide opportunities for mission support
- Encourage new ideas and applications from Bethany Members

As stewards of God's countless gifts, we are called to faithfully manage and generously share all that He gifts to us. We thank you for your support in spreading awareness of the funding available through our Endowment Fund and ask you to continue that support. We ask that if you know of a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a need that aligns with the Mission Statement and Guiding Principles of Bethany Lutheran Church, that you direct them to our website's Resources Tab for information and applications (bethanylc.com).

**Bethany Lutheran Church**  
**Endowment Board of Trustees**  
**Financial Report – 2025 Year End (in progress)**

BMO Harris Bank Money Market (Checking Account) - Cash Reserves							
	Date		1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Year to Date
Beginning Balance	1/1 to 12/31		\$ 18,392.38	\$ 12,285.76	\$ 26,407.03	\$ 11,677.46	\$ 18,392.38
Interest Income	1/1 to 9/30		\$ 99.41	\$ 121.27	\$ 110.43	\$ 108.10	\$ 439.21
From Endowment Trust	5/6/2025, 10/8/25			\$ 25,000.00		\$25,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Total Deposits(Money In)							\$ 50,439.21
Sub-Total			18,491.79	37,407.03	26,517.46	36,785.56	68,831.59
Check Register	Date	Check #	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount	
LSTC	2/5/2025	1176	\$3,206.03				\$3,206.03
Kids in Need of McHenry County	2/26/2025	1177	\$3,000.00				\$3,000.00
Bethany Lutheran Church (Asylum family)	5/4/2025	1178		\$ 3,000.00			\$ 3,000.00
CASA of McHenry County	5/4/2025	1179		\$ 3,000.00			\$ 3,000.00
NAMI of McHenry County	5/4/2025	1180		\$ 5,000.00			\$ 5,000.00
Mission Save A Smile	7/28/2025	1181			\$ 5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00
Bethany Lutheran Church (Youth Mission Fun)	7/28/2025	1182			\$ 1,340.00		\$ 1,340.00
Greif Guide	7/28/2025	1183			\$ 3,000.00		\$ 3,000.00
Northern Ill Synod of ELCA	7/28/2025	1184			\$ 500.00		\$ 500.00
Wartburg Seminary	9/10/2025	1185			\$ 5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00
American Legion Post 171 (Wreathes Across America)	10/29/2025	1186				\$ 1,700.00	\$ 1,700.00
The Joshua Mission Inc	11/2/2025	1187				\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Benson Electrical Contracting, Inc	11/19/2025	1188				\$ 694.00	\$ 694.00
Total Expenses			\$6,206.03	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 14,840.00	\$ 7,394.00	\$ 39,440.03
Ending Balance			\$12,285.76	\$ 26,407.03	\$ 11,677.46	\$ 29,391.56	\$ 29,391.56

ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust							
			1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	
Beginning Balance	1/1/2025		\$410,982.91	\$409,117.75	\$415,184.17	\$439,199.25	\$410,982.91
Interest(Reinvestment)			\$3,911.90	\$3,709.70	\$3,744.20		\$ 11,365.80
Change in Value			(\$5,777.06)	\$27,356.72	\$20,270.88	\$5,034.67	\$46,885.21
To Checking	5/6/2025, 10/8/25			\$ 25,000.00		\$25,000.00	\$ (50,000.00)
Ending Balance			\$409,117.75	\$415,184.17	\$439,199.25		\$419,233.92

Year to date Financial Balances, current checking acct balance plus ELCA Pooled Trust (as of 12/11/25)	\$ 448,625.48
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2025 Endowment Budget Determination			
	Carry Over	Net Income	2025 Budget
	\$ 24,976	\$ 20,882	\$ 45,858
Endowment 2025 Budget Summary			
2025 Budget Amount		\$ 45,858	
Expended Amount		\$ 39,440	
2025 Committed Funds		\$ 948	
2025 Not Committed		\$ 5,470	

2025 Net Income Determination		
12/31/2022	\$391,936	Fund Total
12/31/2023	\$431,630	Fund Total
12/31/2024	\$429,375	Fund Total
3 Yr Avg	\$417,647	
5% of 3Yr Avg		\$ 20,882
Seminarian Support (30%)		\$6,265

Committed Funds: Open List							
Application	Application Approval Date	Approved Amount		YTD Paid	Prior Years Pd (Carry Over)	Total Paid	Remaining Balance
Seminarian Support 2025 *	2025	\$8,706		\$8,706	\$0	\$8,706	\$0
BLC Prayer Garden	1/22/24	\$18,500		\$694	\$16,858	\$17,552	\$948

\* \$3,206 paid to LSTC for Pastor Katie's Seminarian tuition bill (check 1176), and \$5K to Wartburg (check 1185) and \$500 to NI Synod of ELCA (check 1184) 12/11/2025  
Revised 12/11/2025

# New Business

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The Nominating Committee consists of voting members of Bethany Lutheran Church. The committee's purpose is to encourage and select members of the congregation to volunteer their time and talents to serve on the Bethany Lutheran Council and other positions. At the time of printing, the Nominating Committee has been in ongoing discernment regarding leadership roles. Final nominations and recommendations will be brought to the congregational meeting.

### 2025 Nominating Committee Members:

Katie Mueller, Pete O'Reilly, Cynara Pierzina, Catherine Peterson, Dianne McCarter

### Positions Nominated to be Elected by Congregation

#### Church Council:

Kate Bailey (term expires January 2029)  
Brian Garrison (term expires January 2029)  
Walt Gola (term expires January 2029)  
Council Member Vacancy – Update and action

### 2026 Nominating Committee

Katie Mueller  
Cynara Pierzina  
Ashley Szatkowski  
Kyle Nicholas  
Michelle Sprague

### Synod Assembly

Pastor Katie Mueller, Cynara Pierzina, Hector Mendoza, Matt DeBall, plus 1 youth member TBA

### Positions Approved and Elected by Council

**Council Recording Secretary** – Kyle Nicholas (no term requirements)  
**Treasurer** – Update and action

### Continuing Positions

#### Council Members

Cynara Pierzina (term expires January 2027)  
Ashley Szatkowski (term expires January 2027)  
Kyle Nicholas (term expires January 2027)  
Michelle Sprague (term expires January 2027)  
Bob Schunter (term expires January 2028)  
Clara Solak (term expires 2028)

**Audit Committee**

Brad Boncosky (term expires January 2027)  
Jason Coates (term expires January 2027)  
Greg Cole (term expires January 2027)  
Sharon Larson (term expires January 2027)

**Financial Secretary/Assistant Financial Secretaries**

Carolyn Lundine (term expires January 2027)

**Assistant Financial Secretaries**

Linnea Kountz (term expires January 2027)

**Endowment Fund Board of Trustees**

Peggy Boncosky (2028), Chairperson  
Tom Leahy (2026), Recording Secretary  
Wayne Mitchell (2027), Financial Secretary  
Stacie Freeman (2029)  
Dave Skjern (2029)  
Pastor, Advisory Trustee









# NOTES