



# 2024 Annual Ministry Report

## **Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church**

3580 North Benton Avenue

Helena, Montana 59602

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[www.ourredeemerlives.org](http://www.ourredeemerlives.org)

*A congregation of the Montana Synod  
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

## **Ministry Team**

Rev. Trina Johnsten	Lead Pastor
Lori Walter	Office Manager
Sarah Magee	Director of Finance
Jason Callon	Director of Worship and Music
Steph Richardson	Director of Youth Ministry
Liz Swenson	Director of Children and Family Ministry
Carol Will	Deacon
Linda Keim	Organist
David McHaley	Custodian

## **Lay Ministry Associates**

Lori Bigwood-Pecarina  
Jan Martin  
Jeff Martin  
Kevin Mathews  
Lisa Williams-Mathews

## **Preschool Team**

Brenda Stoltz	Director
Marie Grissom	Teacher
Kristen Sapp	Teacher
Wendy Vukonich	Teacher

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**Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church  
Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda  
February 9, 2025**

- Call to Order
- Opening Prayer
- Adopt Agenda as Presented
- Approval of 2025 Ministry Plan Meeting Minutes,  
December 2024
- Financial Report
- Ministry Reports
- Congregational Committee Reports
- Solar Committee Presentation
- Elections
  - Congregation Council Members
  - FLBC Representatives
  - Montana Synod Annual Meeting Voting Representatives
- Recognition of Council Members Concluding Service
- Closing Prayer

**2025 Our Redeemer's  
Council and Committee  
Nominees**

**At Large Council Members**  
(three positions available)

- Charlie Gorman
- Charlotte Neill
- Jack Palmer

**Flathead Delegates**

- Mike & Trudy Burke

**Synod Assembly Delegate**  
(three positions available)

- Attila Felnagy
- Nelson Bock
- Abigail McLane

**Perpetual Fund**

- Tom Naegele

## Our Redeemer's Annual Meeting Sunday, January 28, 2024

Following a potluck meal, President Kevin Mathews called the meeting to order at 12:30pm. Ninety-three members were present. Pastor Trina Johnsten opened the meeting with prayer.

### **Adoption of Agenda**

Ed Johnson moved to adopt the agenda. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

### **Approval of Minutes** (as provided in annual report)

Tom Naegele moved to approve the minutes from last year's annual meeting of January 29, 2023.

This motion was approved.

Kris Thatcher moved to approve the minutes of the 2024 Ministry Plan meeting, which was held on December 17, 2023. This meeting outlined the budget and spending plan for 2024. This motion was approved.

President Kevin Mathews explained that per Robert's Rules of Order, the Council could approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting on behalf of the congregation so that the minutes are not waiting to be approved a year after the meeting has been held. This was put to the congregation, which approved it.

### **Financial Report** (available in supplemental handout)

Tracey Tintinger, Treasurer, presented a summary of the 2023 financial report, which was available in a separate handout. Details of the 2023 ministry plan and its expenses were explained. Expenses were less than the ministry plan by over \$86,000, largely because the church has not yet hired an associate pastor. Offering donations increased 3.3% from 2022. Giving has been on an upward trend since 2021. Giving to the Building Fund decreased last year. And Tracey reminded the congregation that the balance on the mortgage is now \$1,178,112. Tracey also highlighted benevolence giving for this year. These gifts include donations to Helena Food Share, God's Love, Family Promise, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran World Hunger, Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp, and Tanzania Mission Fund.

### **Congregational Committees and staff reports**

All these reports were made available in the written annual report.

### **Committee and Council Delegate Elections**

The following nominations were presented from the Nominating Committee:

- Congregation Council Members-Attila Foinagy (at-large member)

Kevin explained that the Nominating Committee did not present a name for 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President. Several people were asked to serve in this position, but each declined. Kevin explained that unless a nomination was presented from the floor, the Council would name a person to this position in accordance with the constitutional procedure for filling a vacancy between annual meetings. Since no names were presented, the Council will name a first vice-President.

- Personnel Committee - Julie Peck and Larry Crowder
- Gifts and Memorials Committee - Lisa Williams-Mathews
- FLBC Representatives - Mike and Trudy Burke
- Montana Synod Annual Meeting Voting Representatives - Ingrid Childress, Kevin Mathews

Written ballots were distributed and collected. Kevin moved to recess for 15 minutes while ballots were counted. That motion was approved. After the 15 minutes, it was announced that the entire slate of nominees was approved by those present.

### **Recognition of Council Members Concluding Their Service**

Kevin recognized both Lynn Voss and Cody Salo, who are concluding their terms of service on the Council. Kevin thanked these two individuals for their years of service to the Council, to a round of applause by those in attendance.

Kevin also thanked Ingrid Childress for assuming the duty of President in 2024, and thanked the current members of Council. He also recognized church staff and thanked them for their service.

In closing, he recognized all those who were present, thanking them for their loyal service to the congregation. Those present, in response, thanked Kevin for his loyal service, as well. Kevin then led the group with the Lord's Prayer to close the meeting.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Jeff Downhour. The motion passed.

Minutes submitted by Linda Nelson, Secretary.

**Congregational Meeting:  
Proposed 2025 Ministry Plan (Budget)  
December 15, 2024**

**Call to Order**

The special Congregational Meeting was called to order at 9:45am with a quorum of 86 members present. Copies of the proposed ministry plan were available to all who were present.

**Opening with Prayer**

Pastor Trina opened the meeting with prayer.

**Summary of Ministry Plan - Tracey Tintinger, Council Treasurer**

Tracey introduced the plan, explaining the difference between the 2024 ministry plan and the 2025 proposed ministry plan. The 2025 plan would be a 4.5% increase over the 2024 plan. Significant increases include facilities administration (due to increased maintenance expenses, insurance, power, custodial services and building supplies) and Christian education.

Changes in the organization of Christian Education have occurred, and this increase provides payment for Vacation Bible School musicians and the purchase of t-shirts for VBS participants. Worship and music increases are due to increased use of guest musicians and paying them according market value in the community. Office administration and staff development increased slightly because of increased costs in technology support and copier costs. Cost for the annual post-Easter pastors' retreat was put back into Pastor's continuing education budget after a pandemic hiatus of the event.

Pastor and staff were given a 5.41% COLA increase. Ministry plan also includes salary for an associate pastor. In the meantime, two part-time employees are contracted for some of these duties. These contracts will be terminated once an associate pastor is hired. Our Redeemer's continues to assist the preschool, providing 10.5% of the entire preschool budget.

The Building Fund donations are not included in the ministry plan. The present mortgage balance is \$1,130,041.

Dedicated funds are also not included in the ministry plan. These are in specific accounts designated by the giver. Under the category of Benevolence, it is noted that the church has given \$18,352 to the Montana Synod, as well as \$500 to Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. A variety of other off-budget benevolence items were highlighted, indicating thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours donated to needs in the community and beyond. Generous donations in 2024 have allowed our congregation to grow and flourish and have exceeded 2023 giving. This proposed ministry plan for 2025 calls for an increase in giving of \$124,171 over estimated 2024 giving.

Thanks was expressed to Tracey and to Sarah Magee for her hard work as Director of Finance.

**Motion for Approval**

Blair Krumm moved to approve the ministry plan. The motion was seconded, and the ministry plan for 2025 was approved unanimously.

**Lead Pastor**  
**Rev. Trina Johnsten**

**Where to start  
when reviewing our 2024 together?**

Shall I begin with the amazing financial stewardship shown by the congregation?

With the many young people given the opportunity to experience a truly welcoming place in our Sunday school and youth programming each week?

With how you cared for those who lost beloved ones this year and rejoiced with the many who joined our life together?

With all those who stepped up to sing or read or teach, to paint or clean or cook, to tend to the garden or tend to preschoolers, to send kids to camp or buy milk for their weekends?

As I look back at 2024, I am overwhelmed with the many ways Our Redeemer's has been Christ to others.

**Stewardship, and not just financial**

You may have heard me say at some point this year that I can no longer share our stewardship activity freely with colleagues. It's been so amazing as to bring out the little green demon in some!

The Stewardship Committee started out the year asking us to support the *All Kids to Camp in 2024* Campaign. The goal was \$15,000. You gave over \$25,000. In June the Technology Team had Aaron Fisher of Montana Pro Audio give a demo of the D&B sound system, as they did some planning for the future. The difference between what we had and what they demonstrated was so significant that an excited Technology Team proposed that we have a second demo and see if the congregation would get behind this upgrade now instead of as a future dream. In just a few short weeks you gave enough to cover the \$46,000 price, and in September we began to enjoy much better sound in live worship and our online gathering. Summer brought the annual Milk Campaign on behalf of Helena Food Share, garnering over \$26,000 once donations and grants were totaled up. And in Advent you gave another \$9000 to upgrade our paraments.

And all this on top of maintaining your weekly giving to our ministry fund and the mortgage fund. Your joyful

giving also inspired one among us to start a new endowed fund. Gordon Blomquist gave \$50,000, the earnings on which will go to fund children and youth activities, particularly attending camp. If this is also an interest of yours, consider a gift to the Blomquist Fund for Children and Youth.

But stewardship is much more than money. Dinner with some of our young adults brought the suggestion that we have some stewardship events that allow people to give of their time and skills, so that everyone could feel like they were part of supporting the ministries at Our Redeemer's. We already have a group of men that meets weekly for fellowship and then often fans out across the building and grounds to tend to our campus, so under their guidance and led by Jerry Hoover, we had a Stewardship Work Day in September. It was a great success, bringing together all ages and getting through many needed projects. Look for another Stewardship Work Day in the spring and join others in tending to our facility and grounds.

**Worship**

Jason Callon's report is a good reflection on worship in 2024. Of interest, is the continued increase in our online viewing. The Council, the Long-Range Planning Team and other leaders at Our Redeemer's have made outreach through our livestream worship a priority going forward, and it was validating to see that we continue to grow in this area. And Jason's connection to area musicians has certainly blessed our worship, as we welcomed in many different professional artists this past year. Not only does it greatly enhance our worship experience, but I like that we are supporting area musicians and valuing the many years of training they have by providing additional opportunities for them to share their talents.

I second Jason's thanks to the many people involved in our weekly gathering, particularly those who regularly provide musical leadership. Please thank those you see participating in worship, be it Autumn on the piano, the Johnson brothers greeting you at the door, our LMAs who regularly write the prayers and assist, those who bake the bread and pour the wine each week under the leadership of Lisa, our kids who love to hold the baskets, or our custodian David who makes sure the floors shine. And try to figure out how you can join this cadre of folks...sing with the choir, sign up to read

the lessons, stand at the door and say welcome, staff the coffee cart...it takes us all to make it work and it's more fun if we all play a role.

A worship opportunity that I'd like to make you more aware of in 2025 is the monthly service we offer at Touchmark. Usually led by Lori Bigwood-Pecarina with Sharlene Kolb on the piano, this communion service is attended by many of our members who live at Touchmark, but is also a favorite among other residents. Held the third Tuesday of the month at 10:00am, your presence would be a gift to others. Touchmark is located at 915 Saddle Drive.

### **Education**

It has been a joy to watch what's going on in our children's ministry. Fifty-nine different children accessed KidTime during worship and 44 children gave Sunday School a try, making Sunday School a riotous, joyful, gaggle of kids, with lots of new preschoolers this year. Liz Swenson, with the help of Jason for music, oversaw our first Christmas program in several years. I will always remember the unattended sheep wandering off and the giggles between Mary and Joseph...and the wonderful singing of 29 children bringing us the good news of the birth of Christ. Vacation Bible School is one of the primary projects of the congregation each year and a great outreach to our community. We had over 100 kids this year, with two-thirds of them being folks who aren't part of Our Redeemer's. Mark your calendars for June 23-26 and join with the 50+ folks who help with this fun programming.

Our middle school and high school programs continue to grow, with kids actually bringing friends to confirmation. Dennis Trotter has been teaching this class on Wednesday nights and Sunday between services, with 54 youth having attended at some point this year. Retreats in the fall and winter help build community which then transfers into their class time. The fall retreats are offered without cost to our families, and the three-day winter retreat at FLBC costs \$100, with assistance offered so everyone who wants to attend is able. Thanks to all of you who support our weekly programming through your weekly offering.

Steph has honed the Wednesday evening time with our youth so it runs like clockwork. We begin each week with a meal together, followed by a short worship time that includes singing, scripture, prayer and lots of candles. The youth then break into groups, confirmation-aged going with Dennis and Liz, and high school-aged with Steph.

Adult education continues to be an area in need of more attention. I am very grateful to the Hunger

Team's organization of our Lenten book study and occasional offerings from Nelson Bock, Jason Callon, Dennis Trotter and Pastor Brad Ulgenes. A hope for once we're fully staffed again is a full and vibrant schedule of offerings for adults. Many of you have expressed a desire for this.

### **Staffing**

And speaking of being fully staffed, filling the associate pastor position has continued to allude us in 2024, despite the excellent efforts of the Call Committee. I am hopeful for 2025. In the meantime, the Council approved the hire of two people to help with the workload. Jane Peachey is functioning as Care Coordinator, reaching out to our homebound members, those experiencing health issues, and others as needed. I have been so appreciative of her work, finally feeling that folks aren't falling through the cracks and connections are being made. Dennis Trotter has been formally given oversight of the teaching portion of confirmation, and continues in his advisory role for the Stewardship Committee and the Long-Range Planning Team. He will also be offering some adult education offerings and work with the young adult ministry that Baird Linke established.

### **Preschool**

I have spent many hours on preschool-related activities this year, as we hired a new director and did significant planning for the future. I am pleased to report that the current preschool board is made up of a dynamic group of parents and members of the congregation who bring lots of outside experience to our planning.

In May, we bid farewell to Kris Thatcher, who had served as Interim Director of the Preschool for two years and done wonderful work continuing to bring stability to this program post-pandemic. We wish her well as she and Mark move to Billings to be closer to family. We happily welcomed Brenda Stoltz as our new Director, joining us just a few days before the preschool year started. She handled this eleventh-hour start very well, learning on the job, and brought great experience as a teacher and administrator in the public schools with her.

Enrollment at the preschool took a hit this fall due the new public school offering of free preschool for four-year olds (KinderSprouts). The preschool board, Brenda, Tracy Moseman (council rep) and I have worked on an updated schedule for Fall 2025 that offers more openings for 3-year-olds and some full week options for older students in the hope we can appeal to families for whom our former schedule of 2-4 days a week didn't work well. Thanks also to former director Trudy Burke for her input on these new offerings.



Wendy Vukonich, who has taught at the preschool for many years has announcement her departure at the end of this school year. She (and her significant institutional memory!) will be missed, but we rejoice with her as she becomes a grandmother and takes on new responsibilities there.

### **Odds and Ends**

There is always risk in naming things, because it's so easy to forget one thing or another that should be on the list. But I want to make sure I mention a few other things that were bright spots in our work together in 2024:

Our support of ministries in the Montana Synod that make a difference in the lives of young people, and are proven to develop and nurture them in hearing the call of the Holy Spirit into public ministry: Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp, Christikon, Emmaus Campus Ministry at the University of Montana, and Lutheran Campus Ministry at Montana State University.

Award winning singer/songwriter John Hermanson joined us several times this year, offering music at our June 30 outdoor worship, a concert to celebrate our new sound system, and weekly meditations on the prophetic voice of Isaiah the Thursdays in Advent. Thanks to those who helped fund these concerts; let me know if you'd like to help support his return next Advent.

A retreat in October that brought together three generations of Our Redeemer's women for social time (the movie, *Hidden Figures* and a gorgeous charcuterie spread) and an exploration of women in scripture with Pastor Julia Seymour from Big Timber Lutheran.

### **Final Words**

I am writing this on the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, and came across this lovely prayer with which to end this year and begin another. It's written by Howard Thurman, the 20th-century theologian, mystic, civil rights leader, and mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr. I absolutely love the line *Grant that I may pass through the coming year with a faithful heart.*

Grant that I may pass through the coming year with a faithful heart.

There will be much to test me  
and to make weak my strength  
before the year ends.  
In my confusion I shall often say the word  
that is not true

and do the thing of which I am ashamed.  
There will be errors of the mind  
and great inaccuracies of judgement  
which shall render me the victim  
of my own stupidities.

In seeking the light, I shall again and again  
find myself walking in darkness.

I shall mistake my light for Thy light  
and I shall shrink from the responsibility  
of the choice I make.

All of these things, and more, will be true for me  
because I have not yet learned  
how to keep my hand in Thy hand.

Nevertheless,  
grant that I may pass through the coming year  
with a faithful heart.

May I never give the approval of my heart  
to error, to falseness,  
to weakness, to vainglory, to sin.  
Though my days be marked with failures,  
stumbings, fallings,  
let my spirit be free so that Thou may set take it  
and redeem my moments  
in all the ways my needs reveal.  
Give me the quiet assurance of Thy Love  
and Thy Presence.

Grant that I may pass through the coming year  
with a faithful heart. Amen

Pastor Trina Johnsten  
Lead Pastor

**BAPTISMS**

Date	Name	Officiant
2/17/2024	Elias Martin Knutson	Pastors Lowell Anderson & Trina Johnsten
2/18/2024	Everly Anne Hanson	Pastor Trina Johnsten
2/18/2024	Lachlan Ben Hanson	Pastor Trina Johnsten
2/25/2024	Sadie Maye Connerton	Pastor Trina Johnsten
2/25/2024	Levi Richard DeLaHunt	Pastor Trina Johnsten
4/21/2024	Chloe Anne MacIntyre	Pastor Trina Johnsten
5/5/2024	Avery Lee Sitch	Pastor Trina Johnsten
9/1/2024	Chad Vernon Ripley	Jan Martin, LPA
12/29/2024	Cammie Jolie Wilson	Pastor Trina Johnsten

**FIRST COMMUNION - March 24, 2024**

Name	Officiant
Thomas Pasquale Guariglia	Pastor Trina
Charlotte Catherine MacIntyre	Pastor Trina
Bailey Mae Marble	Pastor Trina

**CONFIRMATION - May 5, 2024**

Letty Richardson	Pastor Trina Johnsten
Ryan Griffeth	Pastor Trina Johnsten

**DEATHS/FUNERALS**

Death Date	Deceased	Officiant	Member
1/3/2024	Linda Alice Huso	Pastor Trina Johnsten	Yes
1/19/2024	Betty Lou Brosten		Yes
1/21/2024	Thea Margaret Swenson	Pastor Trina Johnsten	Yes
4/1/2024	Norman Howard Rognlie	Baird Linke, MDiv	Yes
4/5/2024	Victoria Ann Poore	Pastor Trina Johnsten	Yes
4/9/2024	James Phillip Poore	Pastor Trina Johnsten	Yes
4/23/2024	Richard A. Oie	Pastor Trina Johnsten	No
5/8/2024	Michael George Edmund Caplis	Pastor Trina Johnsten	No
5/8/2024	Carla Augusta Christine Cronholm	Pastor Trina Johnsten	Yes
5/28/2024	Celia M. Senrud		Yes
6/13/2024	Phyllis Clarice Bauer	Pastor Trina Johnsten	Yes
6/20/2024	Mildred Katherine Johnson		No
7/1/2024	Isabelle Ann Mavis		Yes
7/7/2024	Noreen Marie Lacey		Yes
7/7/2024	Mark William Langdorf	Pastor Trina Johnsten	Yes
11/25/2024	Stephen Ollestad		No

**NEW MEMBERS**

Date	Member	Received by
4/28/2024	Janet Benson	Affirmation of Faith
4/28/2024	Matthew Haas	Affirmation of Faith
4/28/2024	Amber Jellison	Affirmation of Faith
4/28/2024	Chad Ripley	Affirmation of Faith
4/28/2024	Kris Vldic	Affirmation of Faith

## MEMBERS REMOVED OR MOVED TO INACTIVE

<b>Death</b>	
1.3.24	Linda Huso
1.19.24	Betty Brosten
1.21.24	Thea Swenson
4.1.24	Norman Rognlie
4.5.24	Victoria Poore
4.9.24	James Poore
5.8.24	Carla Cronholm
5.28.24	Celia Senrud
6.13.24	Phyllis Bauer
7.1.24	Isabelle Mavis
7.7.24	Noreen Lacey
7.7.24	Mark Langdorf
<b>Transfer</b>	
2.16.24	Ron & Marian Paulson - Faith Evangelical Lutheran in Waconia, MN
10.23.24	Nicole Evans - Atonement Lutheran in Billings, MT
<b>Moved</b>	
Choteau	Leona Williams
North Dakota	Tami Poore
Texas	Brad Johnson
Billings	Bob Amundson
Bonner	Baird Linke
<b>Request</b>	
4.15.24	Kari Christensen
10.7.24	Hermes, Emily, Sullivan & Vera Lynn
10.22.24	Clint & Mona Erb
10.20.24	Brenda (Olson) Valdez

<b>Inactive due to participation</b>
George, Charlotte, Cheyanne Nathanael Hafer
Brian, Amy, Elizabeth, Lauren, Britton Heuiser
Emma Hoover
Haley Horn
Jourdain Klinepeter
Rachel & Jenna Lauf
Jaden Maharg
Lora, Brock & Seth McDaid
Norm & Karen Midtlyng
Christine & Erin Mills
Shawn & McKenna Moore
Tracie Reddig
Karen Reinhart
Kelsi, Cody, Riley & Codie Rummel
Leon Sedlezky
Paula Strand
Julie Strong
Burt, Maureen, Louis & Dugan Ward
Lynn Worsech

## Congregational President's Report

It is with a grateful heart that I submit this report to the Congregation. 2024 has been a year of firsts, growth, and celebration. Also a few disappointments. But how blessed we are to be Jesus' hands, feet and voice in our community. And I have been blessed with the opportunity to grow and learn more about much of what goes on here.

We have seen the children's and youth ministries grow with new activities from generous gifts. More adult growth opportunities also emerged with book studies, Bible studies, current event classes and more. We've enjoyed special music from awesome guests and our own amazing musicians. What joyful Noise! And we were further blessed to see Baird Linke be ordained right here in his home church.

Alas, our property development is still being worked out, but the Property Development Team continues to work with partners to fulfill our dream of affordable housing. We also continue to wait and pray for the Call Committee as they seek an associate pastor.

This congregation is richly blessed with our Lay Ministry Associates and congregants willing to volunteer their valuable time, gifts and their specific skills and knowledge just when we seem to need them (engineers, attorneys, planners, architects, gardeners, caregivers, financial advisors - the list is endless). And the dedicated members of the Church Council carefully considers decisions to be made on behalf of the congregation. This Church comes together to do our Lord's work; to love, serve and care for all, just as Jesus instructed.

We have the best staff in the world! And they do it all while we are still short an associate pastor. They cannot, however, do it all by themselves. Each member of this congregation is important. We must continue to contribute our time, talents and resources. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Ingrid Childress  
President

## Director of Children and Family Ministry Liz Swenson

There are so many opportunities here at Our Redeemer's to see God working in our children and youth. We continue to stay busy throughout the year with weekly Christian educational offerings including Sunday School and KidTime, monthly fellowship and service events, occasional appearances by the Children's Choir in worship, the summer fun of Vacation Bible School, and the list goes on and on. Our youth are becoming more visible in the congregation and we are working to find more chances to get them involved. I continue to appreciate all the wonderful volunteers and my fellow ministry staff that help make it possible to serve the children and youth of Our Redeemer's. It's a blessing to lead our youngest on their faith journey!

Here are a few highlights from the last year:

### **KidTime**

Each week during worship we offer a time when children are invited to engage in the daily gospel lesson in an age-appropriate manner through storytelling and art. We had 59 children make use of this in 2024, some only once when they visited at a holiday, but most repeatedly throughout the year.

Stories covered included: Jesus's Baptism, God Calling Samuel, Jonah and the Big Fish, Jesus Heals, The Transfiguration, Noah's Ark, Abraham and Sarah's Visitors, The Ten Commandments, the Holy Week story, Doubting Thomas, The Great Commission, The Good Shepherd, Philip and the Ethiopian, The Holy Spirit Comes Down, Matthias the Apostle, Isaiah's Call, James and John, Peter's Faith, Adam and Eve, A Rich Man's Question, Bartimaeus Sees, Naomi and Ruth, The Widow's Offering, Christ the King, Zechariah, and John the Baptist.

The support from dedicated volunteers, including Kristi Antosh, Trudy Burke, Laura Gorman, Mary Robertson and Lisa Williams-Mathews was greatly appreciated. The children's enthusiasm for KidTime remained high throughout the year and continues to be a staple for most of our preschool and younger elementary youth during the service each week.

### **Sunday School**

There were 44 children who participated in this programming in 2024, with consistent attendance of 10-18 children each week, ranging from age three to grade five. In addition to storytelling, activities such as cooking, crafts, and games helped reinforce key biblical messages. The lessons were well-received by the children, who enjoyed interactive elements like making slingshot snacks when studying David and going on a nativity scavenger hunt around the church. The program offered engaging story rotations, and this year we learned about the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan,

the Lord's Prayer, Pentecost, David and Goliath, Jonah and the Whale, and the birth narrative. Special projects included the creation of "happiness rocks" which we placed around the community; a combined Veggie Tales movie day with middle and high school youth; and the Lutheran World Relief Kit build, where the children packed over 30 kits. The success of Sunday School was bolstered by volunteer leaders like Laura Gorman, who managed younger age groups, and music leaders Gretchen Krumm and Jason Callon.

### **Nursery**

A staffed nursery is offered most Sundays from 8:15-noon, as well as during special services and events throughout the year. Twenty-two different children visited the nursery this year, with most weeks seeing two - six children being cared for by our middle and high school youth. In the fall of 2024, we had ten attendants but lost a few to busy athletic and activity schedules, so are always looking for more youth (and adults!) who would like to be part of this ministry. Those who staff the nursery meet regularly for training on safety protocols, including bathroom safety and emergency response training. Our Redeemer's will sponsor any of the youth who wish to take the babysitter certification class through the Red Cross.

### **Vacation Bible School (VBS)**

Vacation Bible School, which took place June 10-14, was a major highlight of the year, with 103 children and nearly 50 middle school, high school and adult volunteers who participated in the scuba-themed program, *Diving into Friendship with God*. This was the largest group we have had for VBS since before Covid. We were pleased to see this many kids registered and learned a lot about how to better host this large of a group in 2025. The week-long event included underwater-themed crafts, science, games, Bible storytelling, music, snacks and puppet shows. The VBS offering raised over \$300 for Lutheran World Relief, allowing us to donate goats, hens, and chicks to families in need. The event's success was a result of the efforts of dedicated staff and volunteers. As always, it truly would not be possible without their time and devotion to the children of Our Redeemer's! We are already getting excited for VBS 2025, which will take place June 23-26, 9:00am-12pm. We are offering a four-day camp this year, as we've noticed over the past couple years that many families are off to other things on Friday. Registration will open in February. Invite your friends and neighbors!

### **Fellowship and Service Events**

Throughout the year, our ministry team organized various fellowship and service events to strengthen the community and engage children and youth:

Ice-Skating Night: It was a very cold and snowy night, but we still had 30 people (youth and parents) join us for this event.

Communion Bread Baking: Lisa Williams-Mathews graciously led our youth in making communion bread, that was then served by our youth on the following Sunday. We had ten join us to make bread and twelve joined us on Sunday to serve communion.

Bowling Day: We had 20 youth join for this fun event.

Broadwater Hot Springs Swim Day: A fun-filled swimming event that brought together 25 youth and families.

Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits: In April the elementary, middle and high school youth worked together to put personal care kits together for Lutheran World Relief. We were able to assemble 134 kits.

Last Chance Splash Swim Night: Despite stormy weather, 13 children and adults participated in this annual event.

Trunk or Treat: This Halloween event drew over 560 attendees (adults and children) as well as 22 volunteer trunks. The church offered a scavenger hunt, hot dogs, and a "haunted horse trailer". The event proved to be a valuable outreach opportunity and next year we plan to offer a half sheet with information about Our Redeemer's youth programming for interested families.

Baking Service Project: In November we baked and decorated over 100 cookies and made cards for the older adults in our congregation. More than 20 youth and parents participated.

Christmas Party & Game Night: In December the elementary, middle and high school youth and their families got together to celebrate the Christmas season with gingerbread cookie decorating, a Christmas sweater contest, Christmas-themed games, crafts, Christmas music bingo, and a lasagna dinner. There were 40 youth and parents in attendance. It was a great way to celebrate the season!

**Confirmation and Middle School Youth Group**  
Wednesday Confirmation Class: The Wednesday evening Confirmation class provided a space for middle school students to engage in faith-based learning. Attendance is usually seven to nine students, with lessons focused on the Book of Acts, Jesus' Parables, the Lutheran Catechism, and the Beatitudes. The program emphasized community-building through

shared meals, worship, and group activities. The students consistently ask thought-provoking questions, leading to rich discussions about faith. Dennis Trotter led the lessons, creating a welcoming and educational environment.

January Service/Fellowship on Wednesdays: In January we spent the month focusing on fellowship and service. We saw an average of 15 kids in attendance. Throughout the month we continued to offer dinner and worship at the beginning of the night. The activities offered encouraged our youth to get out of their comfort zone and try something new as well as help them make connections with new adults in our church community.

January 3, Kid Pack build at Helena Food Share – We had ten youth join us for this service event. We put together almost 900 Kid Packs for Helena youth in need.

January 10, Pottery – We had 16 youth gather to create pinch pots, led by Steph Richardson.

January 31, Craft Night – Our middle and high school youth got crafting and had a lot of fun conversation as they listened/sang to music. There were eleven youth who joined us for this activity.

FLBC Middle/High School Retreat: In February 15 youth and five adults attended the Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp retreat. The program focused on the Beatitudes and included activities like the Polar Plunge, sledding, and team-building games. The retreat provided opportunities for the youth to grow in their faith and build meaningful connections with peers. We are grateful to the volunteers who help to make this event possible, especially Dennis Trotter who provided three sessions on the Sermon on the Mount for the youth.

Confirmation Sunday: Confirmation for our two eighth graders, Ryan Griffeth and Letty Richardson, took place on Sunday, May 5. There was a brunch honoring them after worship which was attended by their families, staff and their confirmation classmates in grades six and seven.

Fall Middle School Retreat: The middle school retreat was held October 16-17 in Cascade, MT, in a beautiful Airbnb in the mountains. We had eleven youth attend this exciting, fun event. We enjoyed good food, fellowship, games, a devotional around the campfire, and a lesson about 'Zombies in the Bible'. The kids left with new and renewed friendships. As always it is such a joy and blessing to work together with Dennis and Steph to plan these events for our youth!

### **Communion Instruction Class**

Our communion instruction class for second through fourth graders was held March 17. We had three excited children and their parents join us. On Palm Sunday at the 11:00am service these children experienced their first communion. Due to when spring break was this year, we didn't have this as part of our Maundy Thursday worship but will return to that practice in 2025. Many from the congregation expressed how much they enjoyed this as part of a Sunday service, and we hope they will join us on Maundy Thursday this year to support our children in this milestone.

### **Sunday School Choir**

The children from Sunday School offered their musical gifts four times throughout the year. Despite some shyness among younger singers, they always do great, and the congregation expressed joy in seeing the children share their music. We appreciate Jason Callon's leadership in this area.

### **Faith Chest for Baptism**

You've probably noticed that we give faith chests to the newly baptized. Each chest includes an age-appropriate book. This year we gave out seven faith chests.

### **Easter Sunday**

Easter was a very busy day at Our Redeemer's, especially for our children!

Children's Parade: All children are invited to wave ribbons and parade around the sanctuary at the beginning of each worship service. As usual, this was a blast and we had 20+ children join us for this during each service (more than 50 in total), many of whom are visitors that day and love being included. We also had middle school youth processing the cross forward and lighting the altar and paschal candles. All this extra activity brings SO MUCH joy into the Easter service!

Sunday School Choir: Our Sunday School Choir offered music at the 8:30am service. There were seven loud and beautiful voices! Jason put together a beautiful piece that was a combination of *Amazing Grace* and *Jesus Loves Me*, which are both songs that the children know very well.

### **Blessing of the Backpacks**

In August, on the Sunday before school resumed, we blessed the backpacks of our children and youth. They were also presented with a small tag for their backpack as a reminder of God's love. Later, once preschool began at Our Redeemer's, we also shared these tags with all those enrolled. Between the church children and youth and the preschool kids we gave out over 90 backpack tags this year. This event brings so much life back to the church after the summer break.

### **Gift of Bibles and Walk Through the Bible**

On October 13 we gave our third graders new Bibles in worship and then held a Bible introduction class in the afternoon. We had four children and their parents join us for the class and six children who received their Bibles in worship. They received two Bibles, a Good News Bible and a Graphic Novel Bible. As always there was a lot of excitement about the Graphic Novel Bible. Pastor Trina led the children in the *Walk Through the Bible* class, and helped them to learn a little more about their new Bibles and how to use them. Thank you to the Women of the ELCA for providing our children with these Bibles!

### **Children's Christmas Program**

We decided to take the leap this year and bring back the Children's Christmas Program to Our Redeemer's. It was well received by the children, parents, staff and the congregation. The children offered the message and music at both services on December 22. Twenty-nine children, dressed as sheep, angels, visiting magi and the holy family acted out *The Birth of Jesus*, with middle schoolers narrating the story. The program was a highlight of the holiday season!

### **Hopes for the Future**

2025 will be another year of fostering a welcoming and educational environment for children and families! My goals include:

- Expanding volunteer involvement in KidTime, Sunday School, Trunk or Treat, the nursery and Vacation Bible School.
- Increasing outreach efforts through events like Trunk or Treat.
- Continuing safety and training initiatives for our nursery attendants.
- Offering more combined activities for Sunday School children and Confirmation students.
- Nursery attendant recruitment.

The Children and Family Ministry remains committed to supporting the spiritual growth of the congregation's youngest members through meaningful, faith-based programming. Thank you for the many ways you support us!

Liz Swenson  
Director of Children and Family Ministry

**Director of Youth Ministry**  
**Steph Richardson**

*God can do anything, you know—  
far more than you could ever imagine  
or guess or request in your wildest dreams!  
God does it not by pushing us around  
but by working within us,  
God's Spirit deeply and gently within us.  
~ Ephesians 3:20 (The Message)*

For the past 18 months, I have had the pleasure of being a part of the lives of many youth and their families in beautiful ways. About this time last year, I was asked to consider removing *Interim* from my job title. I had reservations because I was still getting to know the youth, the families, and what this position encompassed. I had thought about the ask for a while, but it was not until I went to Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp with youth of our congregation this past summer where I knew this was a position that I felt I could see myself in long term. Seeing youth in that environment, full of God's presence, made me feel overwhelmed with excitement and drive for this ministry. I enjoy developing and providing a trusting environment for youth to be themselves. Thank you for entrusting me with the youth ministry here at Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church. It is a pleasure to interact with these youth, their families, the lovely members of the church, and the invested staff. I am excited for what is to come. Here are some highlights from 2024:

**High School Youth Group**

Wednesday evenings are filled with dinner, a contemplative prayer service, lesson and activities/games. All of this is packed into an hour and a half (Spring 2024) and two hours (Fall 2024). Spring 2024, we dove into devotionals incorporating popular music that you would have heard on the radio. We have looked into songs like *Numb* by Linkin Park, *Learn to Fly* by the Foo Fighters, *The Sounds of Silence* by Disturbed, *Need a Favor* by Jelly Roll, *Beer with Jesus* by Thomas Rhett, and more. I enjoy music and it is always surrounding us in and outside of the church walls. It has been fun to bring everyday life into faith-filled conversations. The attendance on Wednesday nights has ranged between four to ten.

Fall 2024, the high school youth made suggestions about what they wanted to explore about faith and other religions. There were many Post-it notes of questions, some silly and others with honest questions. We've been exploring those questions this fall, things like:

What beliefs do we share with other faiths?

Was the cross in the shape of a T or an X, and how would that change how Jesus is represented?

If men didn't write the Bible, would Jesus be a girl?

Recently, I asked the youth my own question:  
Why do you come to youth group on Wednesday nights?

The answer was overwhelmingly that it's because of the people and it feels like a safe place. What a great tribute to the work staff and volunteers are doing to welcome our young people and encourage their exploration of faith.

**Middle School/Confirmation on Sunday Mornings**

Dennis Trotter is the primary teacher of our confirmation classes on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings, with Liz assisting on Wednesdays and I sit in on Sundays. We've had an interesting shift in our attendance patterns this year. We typically had five to six youth on Sundays, mostly those who had other commitments on Wednesday nights. However, this group has gotten small this fall, with three to four youth usually there. But it's not that kids are disappearing, they've shifted over to Wednesday due to the longer programming (meal, worship, class, game). We are starting to think about how to incorporate fifth graders into this Sunday morning loft group. Fifth graders are almost too old for Sunday School, and not old enough for confirmation, and we have a large group of fifth graders who are chomping at the bit to move on to older lessons and activities.

It is pretty cool to see the middle schoolers' younger siblings wander up to the Youth Loft after Sunday School and check in up there as well. They feel very comfortable and invited to be part of the youth community. We have begun using the loft in more younger children programming as well, with movies, service projects, and parties. The youth love having a space in the building dedicated to them.

The middle schoolers finished up New Testament lessons with Dennis in the spring and then started into the Book of Acts this fall. Dennis teaches the lessons and the youth enjoy what they are learning and how it is presented. On Wednesday nights all the youth



grades six through twelve start out the night together with dinner and prayer service. Then they divide up for their lessons. After that, they come back together for games and activities. The more youth, the more fun! The attendance on Wednesday nights for Middle School is between six and twelve youth. Many are bringing friends now as well.

### **Youth Fellowship and Service**

Kid Pack Builds at Food Share: There were four adults from the congregation helping the youth get organized in this endeavor. There were 13 youth and one parent who helped pack a total of four pallets of 224 bags each. This was a total of 896 bags.

Pinch Pots: There were 15 youth and some parents that made their own pinch pots to be used in February to grind up last years dried palms from Palm Sunday. These palms were then used to make the ashes for Ash Wednesday for the congregation and a Touchmark Ash Wednesday Service.

Ice Skating: Memorial Park was cold and snowy but 24 hardy souls came to skate. There were families of all ages that came out to play together.

Communion Bread Baking: Lisa Williams-Mathews helped and guided youth through this project. Ten youth on Wednesday night and five on Sunday made communion bread. Great questions arose regarding the meaning of communion, why we Lutherans do it, why we do it the way we do it, and what our theology and the Bible say about it. Dennis did a great job engaging the youth and their inquisitive minds. In addition, twelve youth helped serve communion that Sunday during both services.

Crafting: We did two different paper crafts, and while people worked on the projects it created an environment that offered a space for communication. There were eleven youth on Wednesday night and two more on Sunday that participated. In addition, we did a watercolor night, called Paint and Dip. There were five high schoolers at this event.

Middle School Ski Day: Since the ski season had been so off for Great Divide, we got a great deal on this January 22 event. There were six middle schoolers, five elementary siblings, one high school helper/chaperone and four parents that skied.

Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits: We packed 134 LWR Personal Care Kits with the help of middle schoolers and the Sunday school children. Many thanks to the congregation for donations that helped make this event happen!

Holiday Cookie Baking Service Project: Youth of the congregation got together to bake cookies for the elderly of our congregation that do not get out as much. A few parents helped make this possible by baking and keeping the flour contained. These cookies were delivered by members of the congregation that went to visit them. More than 20 youth and parents participated.

Family Christmas Party: Families were invited to celebrate the upcoming Christmas season together. We played Christmas Music Bingo, decorated gingerbread men, played Minute-to-Win-it, did a craft, and more. There were 40 youth and parents in attendance.

### **All Youth Winter Retreat**

With the help of Liz, Dennis, Baird, Pastor Trina and the Mays this was a great success! There were six high schoolers and eight middle schoolers who attended the retreat. Some highlights were the Blessing Service, Dennis' lessons on the Sermon on the Mount, low rope challenges, and the polar plunge. It was cool to see all the youth gather in a supportive environment full of faith. Here are some quotes from the youth who attended the retreat:

- Church is a safe place for all who come...  
Forgive like Him, love like Him,  
treat others like He would.  
Love like Him no matter who it is! (from a middle school student)
- FLBC is one of my favorite places on earth.  
There are so many emotions that you feel at this place.  
You grow more connected to God  
and feel like you are floating on a cloud full of emotions.  
I wish I could visit here every day,  
but since I am not able to,  
I look forward to coming here whenever I can.  
I LOVE FLBC!!!!!! (from a high school student)
- Camp helped me grow religiously, mentally, and socially.  
Camp is a place where the judgement disappears.  
(from a middle school student)

### **Fifth to Eighth Grade Lock-In**

Lock-Ins are always a youth favorite. In fact, I have already been asked by many of them when our Lock-Ins will be in 2025! Lock-Ins are difficult for any adult to wrap their heads around when we can sleep in our own beds and turn the lights out around 9:00pm. Lock-Ins are totally different. Last year, the middle schoolers requested a one at the end of the school year, so it was granted with the help of Dennis Trotter. There were 11 middle schoolers, with two high schoolers helping out. There were loads of games and activities, along with devotionals and a movie.

## **Fall Planning**

This past late summer and fall, I worked with Pastor Trina, Liz Swenson, Dennis Trotter, and Jason Callon to set up the year of confirmation, Wednesday night prayer service, service activities, fellowship activities, and more. All had a part in figuring out and influencing the middle school and high school calendar of events. 2024 looked similar to 2023, offering time for fellowship, service and learning every month. Liz and Dennis ran the confirmation class on Wednesday night while I was with the High Schoolers. Dennis and I ran the confirmation class on Sunday morning. The topics are determined by Pastor Trina. Jason helped steer the Wednesday night prayer service in regard to a little different structure. I was the one that pulled everyone's suggestions and critiques together in forming the youth evenings/activities.

What is different about Wednesday nights this year is that our prayer service has a lot more prayer, more conversation from the youth, a larger set up in the loft for the prayer service and it is a little longer. We still offer dinner, and the timeframe for Wednesday was lengthened by 30 minutes. Dennis, Liz and I felt that we were not getting enough fellowship time for the middle schoolers, and we did not want them to lose learning time for it. So now we start at 6:00pm rather than 6:30pm. We start with dinner, move into the prayer service, then middle school and high school separate for learning time. After learning time, we all gather for games and activities. It makes a difference to have many playing, rather than just a handful. That is why all the youth are together during this time.

## **Youth-Led Worship in September**

Pastor Trina, Liz and I worked together to prepare youth to share about their time at camp, their attendance at the National Youth Gathering, and to bless backpacks as kids headed back to school. The Blessing of the Backpacks had a great turnout! There were tons of kids receiving their blessings tag with and without their backpacks. In addition, there were eight youth and one parent who talked about their time at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. With many thanks, and comments about camp food, the point got across that their time at camp, supported by funds from Our Redeemer's, was an effective use of your gifts to the *All Kids to Camp in 2024* campaign.

## **Slip N Slide Kickball Kickoff**

In the beginning of the school year, we had a kickoff party. We played Slip N Slide Kickball and ate ice cream. This event was very well received by the families. This year we decided to open this event to all youth for the beginning kick off of the school year. Liz provided water activities for the younger ones, Dennis

managed the kickball, and I got everything ready and served ice cream. There were over 30 kids there that night with their parents. Plus, we had a bunch of neighborhood kids come and get involved too. It was a great start to the new school year!

## **First Sunday of the Month Art Nights**

Over the summer of 2023, several youth shared that they would love a time and place to sit together and do some crafts or art. They said that the best night would likely be Sunday. With that knowledge, I offered an Art Night for three months. The first offering was in October where we were making string art. There were four youth there, along with a parent (two elementary, one middle school, one high school). The next two months, no one showed up. I am glad I tried. It was requested, so I listened to the youth. But in the end, it did not work out, which is just fine. If we don't try new things, how do we know what will work?

## **Middle School Fall Retreat**

The middle school retreat was led by Dennis, Liz and me. We had ten middle schoolers join us at a house in Cascade, MT. I secured the location, organized the flow and structure of the retreat, communicated with the families, figured out meals and more. The youth played Nerf Wars, were lead through a devotional by Liz, watched a movie, ate a bunch of goodies and more! Dennis' lessons were based on Zombies in the Bible. It was on point with the season (Halloween), age of youth, and it was very interesting. For example, a Bible story that we looked at was raising Lazarus from the dead.

## **High School Fall Retreat**

The high schoolers have not had a fall retreat in the past, as they helped lead the middle school retreat. But this year they requested their own retreat, so we reserved the Airbnb in Cascade for an extra night, and after returning the middle schoolers to town, I turned around and brought the high schoolers back for an overnight retreat. Thanks to David Hanson for helping me chaperone this new event. Eight high schoolers enjoyed Nerf Wars, sardines in the dark with glow sticks, watched the movie *Napoleon Dynamite*, were led through a devotional, ate a bunch of goodies and more! I led them through a Bible study based on the movie they'd watched that had to do with friendships, family and being yourself.

## **Trunk or Treat**

We again held a Trunk or Treat for the community this fall, keeping the event entirely outside with trunks, a scavenger hunt, hot dogs, and cocoa and cider for all to enjoy. Words of thanks were received from the trick or treaters. All seemed to have a wonderful time. This is Our Redeemer's largest outreach event we have for the

community. There were over 560 people who came through. Thank you to all those who decorated their trunks and donated extra candy. Special thanks to Blair and Hildegard Krumm for making hot dogs, youth for staffing the scavenger hunt, and Jason Callon for the great spooky music. Liz headed up the organizational piece to this event, and as always, she did a great job!

### **Fundraisers**

Each year, youth work together to fundraise for summer youth trips, ski trips, Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp, and more! Here is a recap of their efforts:

Carroll College Concessions: We had four opportunities for youth to fundraise through Carroll College concessions, raising \$1,704.43. One day was very large, being a Saturday football game.

Christmas Poinsettias: We did this fundraiser again this year, selling poinsettias from High Country Growers and raising \$361.80.

### **Summer Camp**

Our Redeemer's supported 24 youth campers at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp this summer, with over \$8000 from the *All Kids to Camp in 2024* campaign used to offset their cost. We had two members on staff (Baird Linke and Isaac Penner), and six members volunteered their time (Steph Richardson, Brad and Elaine Ulgenes, Linda Coty, Kathy Olson, and Tonya Griffeth). Two youth also went to Christikon, and we hope for more this coming summer. It is truly amazing to see the generosity of this congregation!

### **National Youth Gathering**

Morgan May joined the youth of St. John's Lutheran for this trip to New Orleans in the summer of 2024. She had a wonderful time! She is already encouraging youth to go on the next one being held in Minneapolis in 2027.

Stephanie Richardson  
Director of Youth Ministries

## Director of Worship and Music Jason Callon

This year has been busy for our church family! We have raised thousands of dollars for those in need, installed a new high-end sound system, continued to broadcast livestream worship worldwide, and invited some truly wonderful guest musicians to share their craft in our worship space.

I thank those who donated to and facilitated the installation of our new sound system. This ministry helps us all engage in worship more fully but especially helps those with hearing issues. Since the installation, we seem to be relying less on our *listening assistance system*, as both speech and music are much more intelligible than before. This task required a lot of time and expertise from many individuals and will serve us for many years to come!

Our livestream service broadcast over YouTube continues to reach those who cannot be with us in person for worship. This includes those away from home, family members, those living in faraway places, and those infirmed or who otherwise cannot attend worship. I hope that these individuals feel like a part of our church community. Aside from accessibility, our livestream allows us to maintain relevance in an ever-changing worship landscape. Worship looks different today than it did when I was a child, and I am proud to be working with so many individuals who embrace these changes and continue to ask, "How can we continue to be the church in a changing world?" This year's livestream ministry brought on a Carroll College student with a background in live sound. Valerie is making sure the online experience is dynamic for us. This year, our channel received 11,600 views (up 15% from 2023), was watched for 1,300 hours (up 34% from 2023), and gathered 57 new subscribers. Aside from Sunday worship, our livestream also broadcasted the ordination of Baird Linke and several memorial services.

I am so grateful to be part of a church community that values music in worship. The support of this congregation allows us to invite professional musicians to elevate worship experiences. In 2024, I started a new program during our Lenten Holden Evening Prayer. Each week, a different group of musicians led music. This allowed us to engage with the prayer service in a new and different way each time. I hope this was impactful, as we heard Holden on harp, cello, flute, guitar, piano, and more! This is something we plan to continue in 2025.

Other guest musicians included several concerts from John Hermanson, a folk band during outdoor worship, the VBS kids shared their special music with us last summer, a jazz big band brought us through our All Saint's worship service, Easter and Christmas services featured brass players from the Helena Symphony and a harp, a solo cello for Good Friday, a string ensemble for Palm Sunday, and more. In addition to this, our bell choir shared beautiful music with us on several occasions (led by Autumn Keller), and our choir sang throughout the year (led by Jim Penner). Again, I want to express my gratitude for the congregation's generous funding of guest musicians. I am so happy to be able to network with professional musicians from around Montana.

Vacation Bible School this year was a wonderful celebration. I worked to put together a 'calypso' band to match our summer theme. I invited some of my percussion students and those in the Helena Youth Orchestra to join us to great effect; it made a real impact on the children. We were able to share some new music with the children and some of that music (especially "My Lighthouse") I have heard them singing off-handedly throughout the year. What an impact we are having together!

Our own Baird Linke was ordained in our sanctuary last September. I am honored to have directed the music for this service. It was the culmination of many years of work for Baird, who now serves his own church in Bonner!

Christmas Eve worship featured our traditional organ service at 10:00am, followed by 3:00pm and 5:00pm services with a brass quartet and keyboard, and harp and guitar at 8:00pm. The respective attendance numbers were: 77, 291, 150, and 171. Note: we changed the times to balance the numbers better, and since our late 10:00pm service was not well attended, we tried an 8:00pm service instead. The high turnout at 8:00pm was helped by Tess Flammond, the harp player we invited to accompany us. Our attendance numbers were down about 5% from 2023, but still up from 2022 by about 15%.

This is the second year of our new Wednesday evening youth programming format. This replaced the "Worship on Wednesday (WOW)" format, including dinner, a short prayer service, and programming for middle and high school youth. I am grateful to be able

to lead the music at our short prayer service, to invite in all youth, and to collaborate with student musicians. We have learned new songs, reinforced old favorites, and grown closer together in faith. This programming occurs on Wednesdays from 6:00-8:00pm during the school year.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all those who helped make worship possible. At the risk of missing someone who deserves acknowledgement (there are so, so many), I would like to thank:

- Our organist, Linda Keim.
- Members of our Rejoice band: Mark Ellzey, Autumn Keller, Kevin Mathews, and Mark Robertson.
- Toni Guay, who plays during communion, helps select hymns, and more.
- Chas Elliott is a frequent guest and substitute musician.
- Lisa Williams-Mathews and her whole team of volunteers who serve as our altar guild.
- Our LMA's: Lori Bigwood-Pecarina, Jan Martin, Jeff Martin, Kevin Mathews, and Lisa Williams-Mathews. They fill in for Pastor Trina and do other pastoral work around our community.
- Jim Penner who leads our choir.
- Autumn Keller who leads our bell choir.
- Valerie Fritz who runs our livestream.
- Isaac Penner who ran our livestream.
- Gretchen Krumm, who plays guitar with our children on Sunday mornings.

- Charlene Mayala and other volunteers who help decorate the sanctuary.
- Jerry Hoover and the men that help with various tasks around the church.
- All our computer operators, who joyfully facilitate last-minute changes.
- Our ushers, greeters, tech operators, communion servers, lectors, and so many others who are involved in worship.
- All those who work in other ministries around the church.

I have faced many technical challenges these past several months. These make my job more challenging and add stress to the ministries I serve. These include learning curves for various new equipment associated with the sound system, sporadic loud 'pop'-ing in the new sound system that occur during worship (I suspect the dry heat is causing static electricity build-up, but have not identified the exact source(s)), noises coming from the organ amplifier (unrelated to the new sound system) that make it sound like rainfall during worship, stuttering and cutting out of the livestream, a poor connection in camera #3 of the livestream that makes it cut out, and more. I continue to work through and address these challenges. I am also working on a 'manual' that includes step-by-step instructions for all my work.

Thank you for your continued support of the ministries I serve at Our Redeemer's!

Jason Callon  
Director of Worship and Music

## Our Redeemer's Lutheran Preschool Brenda Stoltz

This is my first year as director at Our Redeemer's Preschool, and it is an honor to help provide care, nurturing, and share God's love with the 50 precious students we have enrolled.

Our teachers do an excellent job in structuring their classes to provide learning through both play and instructional methods. The children are discovering, growing, and developing lasting skills.

### Highlights of the Year

At the beginning of **January 2024**, the preschool web page was updated with new registration information and forms for the 2024-2025 school year. At the end of January, Parent-Teacher conferences were held, which provided a valuable opportunity to connect with the parents one-on-one and share progress and any areas that need a little more attention. Year-end statements were printed and given to families.

Registration for the upcoming school year began in **February**. Currently enrolled families, alumni preschool families, and congregation members were allowed to enroll beginning February 6; the following week registration was opened to the public. Plans began for the preschool's Silent Auction to be held later in the spring and a March fundraiser with Crumbl Cookie was set. We scheduled our Family Fun Day at the Carousel; we had great attendance! These are typically scheduled one Friday a month and provide a nice opportunity for our preschool families to come together for an hour or two in an informal setting.

During **March**, plans were finalized for the preschool Silent Auction fundraiser which was scheduled for April. Dates were determined for the Summer Preschool Fun camps; teachers and an assistant were secured. A review of registrations for the upcoming preschool year showed 44 students were preregistered. Our Family Fun Day was at Exploration Works. We had good attendance and a fun time!

**April** was busy with the Silent Auction. It was an amazing fundraiser, bringing in \$5,388.00! We began preparations for the preschool art show in May, along with the annual preschool singing in church. T-shirts were ordered for summer camp attendees. An online survey of our preschool program was set up and parents were encouraged to participate and give their feedback.

**May** concluded the end of another successful school year. The art show was a hit, and it is always rewarding to see how much the children have advanced in their skills over nine months. Preschool singing in church was fun and well-received. Preregistration for fall was at 50 children. Summer camps were filling up quickly. The preschool budget for the upcoming year was approved.

We received 34 survey responses; all were very supportive of our program and staff.

**June and July** were busy with the summer camps. Four sessions were offered, two in June and two in July. The camps provide a week each morning of indoor and outdoor play. The children enjoy crafts and activities, interacting with their friends, and meeting and making new friends. This is also an important fundraiser for our Preschool. Preschool registration notices were posted at the Helena Library and various businesses; emails were sent to Helena area churches advising of our preschool and requesting their referral to our program for any parents looking for a preschool. An informational preschool letter along with a welcoming letter from Pastor Trina was sent to registered families.

**August** brought a new director, me! This month was a whirlwind! Orientation with parents, teachers, and soon-to-start students. 51 students were registered.

**September** brought a great start to the school year. Students and teachers were excited to get to know one another. Our first Family Fun Day was at Spring Meadow Lake. It was a beautiful day with many families in attendance.

In **October** we had picture day and the Panda Express fundraiser which brought in \$300. Class Dojo was introduced to families as a quick way of correspondence. We got our first Bookmobile of the year, our Family Fun Day of Trunk or Treat, and lots of fun costumes for the preschool Halloween parades.

In **November** we had another fundraiser, magazine sales, which brought in \$950. The Family Fun Day was Charlie Brown's Thanksgiving movie and popcorn. The tradition of donating food to the Helena Food Share was a success. Progress Reports were sent out at the end of the month.

**December** was a lively month with Christmas programs, the creation of festive crafts, and the many blessings this time of year provides. Kevin and Lisa Mathews sang Christmas carols for our Family Fun Day.

We are extremely fortunate to provide this service and program to our community. It is a blessing and a joy for each of us to have this opportunity. This ministry has a very positive influence on

children. We could not provide this service without the support of the Church Council and our Congregation.

Love and Blessings,

Brenda Stoltz, Director  
Kristen Sapp, Teacher and Lunch Bunch Supervisor  
Marie Grissom, Teacher  
Wendy Vukonich, Teacher

## Call Committee

### 2024 year in review

In November of 2022, the Council took nominations from the congregation to create a Call Committee to fill the vacant associate pastor position. From that group, the council then appointed six members of Our Redeemer's to the call committee, along with two alternates. Over the course of time our committee has changed a bit with alternates becoming full-fledged members. After discussions with the congregation and reviewing past survey data, in April of 2023, the call committee prepared a Ministry Site Profile (MSP) and submitted it to the Montana Synod staff, which announced our open position and provided details on our location, our many ministries, what gifts and skills we most want in a pastor, and our hopes for the future.

In the ELCA, pastors who are interested in new positions first contact the synod office, and then the synod office provides them with the information the call committee has prepared (MSP) and in turn, the call committee receives a similar set of information about the candidate. Additionally, if it is a first call candidate, the synod makes the recommendation directly to the candidate and the recommended church. We have had three candidates presented to us by the synod staff in 2024, two of whom we fully interviewed. (We also had one candidate in 2023.) Each candidate has gone through the same process of virtual, then in-person interviews, combined with a review of their relevant sermons and materials, as well as reference checks by the call committee. For differing reasons in each candidate's personal scenario, the call committee has not proceeded with offering a call to any of these candidates.

So where did this bring us at the end of 2024? You may have read the letter sent to the congregation which gave an update of what had occurred so far. The call committee is committed to finding the right person to join Our Redeemer's. Despite ending the year feeling a little weary and a bit disappointed, we also see great hope in the interest that we have had. We have interviewed two candidates, but also had interest from a third - all in 2024. Although the third candidate decided that Montana would not work for him, we feel like the mission and work at Our Redeemer's is well reflected in our MSP posted online. Recently, our introductory paragraph has also gotten some interest among a pastoral group online. Our unique and interesting posting piqued interest and positive comments about how interesting and compelling the write up is. We hope it may also garner some additional applicants. So although we are aware there are challenges that come with moving to Montana, we continue our work listening to the Holy Spirit and seeing what God has in store for Our Redeemer's. We have not changed what we are looking for in an associate pastor. The job description and the Ministry Site Profile remain the same, although with our rewritten and more exciting summary paragraph. But, as a call committee, we continue opening our minds and our hearts to whomever the Holy Spirit may bring us!

Abigail McLane (chair)  
Kristi Antosh  
Lori Chase  
Dee Dee Fischer  
Shauna Helfert  
Craig Linke

## **Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (WELCA)**

Our Redeemer's Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church have had a busy year. We meet together in fellowship, growth and service, participating in so many areas of ministry. Our activities included Sew In Love, Lutheran World Relief Quilting, Care Teams, Bible Study gatherings, Women's Retreat, our Annual Holiday Bazaar, and our Holiday Women's Gathering.

Our two Bible Study groups joined forces earlier this year and now meet as one group once a month on the third Wednesday of the month at 1:00pm at the church. We are looking for someone in 2025 who might be interested in starting another monthly Bible Study for our younger working women possibly in the evening or on the weekend. If you think you might be interested in this ministry please contact a member of the WELCA board.

Our quilting groups, Sew In Love (SNL) and Lutheran World Relief (LWR) work tirelessly each week providing services for both our community and people in need all over the world. Sew In Love provides services for The Friendship Center, YWCA and participates with sales at our annual holiday bazaar. The needs of individuals in our community continues to rise and our services provide so much love and care to those in need. SNL meets on Thursday mornings at 9:30am. Our LWR team meets on Tuesday mornings at 9:00am to make, bind and produce their quilts. We also provide services through LWR in the way of care kits. In 2024, we produced six boxes of Baby Care Kits, 46 boxes of quilts, eight boxes of Personal Care Kits and nine boxes of School Kits. The estimated weight of these quilts and kits was 1535 lbs.

We also have a funeral reception committee which provides food and loving fellowship for funerals held at the church, along with a kitchen committee who help in the kitchen, keeping it clean and organized throughout the year. We are always looking for more individuals who might like to participate in this ministry.

This year our funds, which we make from an occasional garage sale and our annual holiday bazaar, were spent in many loving ways. In 2024, we gave funding to the Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp Campership fund; two Bibles to each fifth grade student plus any other child who needed one; Middle School youth; quilting supplies for our quilters, and financial donations to Family Promise, God's Love, YWCA, our new parament fund raiser, Florence Crittenton Home and the Our Redeemer's Hunger Team. God has been good and we are so happy that we give back in so many ways.

Our \$1,000 scholarship winner this year was Dane Quinn, son of Kim and Patrick Quinn. He is attending Carroll College in Helena.

The WELCA board meets the second Tuesday of each month at 10:30am in the church office's small meeting room. We are currently looking for others to add to our board to help us with planning and organizing more activities for the future of WELCA at Our Redeemer's. Won't you join us!

Current members are Charlene Mayala, Jan Martin, Hildegard Krumm and Kay Patterson.

In Christ's Service,

Charlene Mayala, WELCA President



**Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Treasurer's Report**

Beginning Balance	\$13,196.87
Income	
Circle Offering	\$405.00
Pool of Living Water	\$67.02
Thank Offering	\$0.00
Donations	\$72.00
Garage Sale	\$3,051.25
Fall Bazaar	\$8,945.50
Storage Cabinet Fund	\$200.00
Lutheran World Relief	\$58.00
Interest	\$2.19
Total Income	\$12,800.96
Expenses	
Our Redeemer's	
Bibles	\$818.42
FLBC Camperships	\$2,500.00
Scholarship	\$1,000.00
Middle School Retreat	\$200.00
Paraments Fund	\$500.00
Emergency Assistance	\$750.00
Quilt Supplies	\$1,320.68
LWR shipping	\$232.60
Sew in Love	\$1,489.50
Fund Raising Expenses	\$707.89
Kitchen supplies	\$42.85
Donations	
Hunger Team for Family Promise	\$500.00
YWCA	\$500.00
Florence Crittenton	\$500.00
Christmas Books	\$68.64
Total Expenses	\$11,130.58
Net Income	\$1,670.38
Bank Balance 12/31/24	\$14,867.25
Fund Balances	
General Fund	\$13,408.71
Kitchen Fund	\$1,042.29
Cabinet Fund	\$200.00
Pool of Living Water	\$158.25
Luther World Relief Fund	\$58.00
Total	\$14,867.25

## Perpetual Fund Committee

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church (ORLC) established an endowment fund titled Perpetual Fund to receive and administer gifts from wills and other bequests in January 1991. Gifts are invested with income earned from the investments available for grants as approved by the Perpetual Fund Trustees. Trustees are appointed by the Our Redeemer's congregational Council for a three-year term and can serve only two consecutive terms. There are two sub-funds of the Perpetual fund, a Facility Debt/Service Fund, and a Seminary Scholarship fund. The Perpetual Fund Trustees announce the availability of grants in the church bulletin, and the Voice during the month of April. Grant applications are reviewed with approved grants funded thereafter. The funds investment balance at the end of the year can be found in the investment category of the balance sheet in the annual financial report.

### **Perpetual Fund: Seminary Scholarship Fund:**

Trustees approved a \$2,000 award for Shawn Juers to be used towards support for his internship year.

### **Perpetual Fund: Endowment Fund:**

Trustees approved a one-time grant request totaling \$5,000 to be used towards the replacement of the sanctuary sound system equipment.

### **Additional Funds:**

In November, a \$51,000 Blomquist Fund for Children and Youth was established. The funds were given by Gordon Blomquist to establish proceeds of which will help kids go to camp for many generations.

Respectfully submitted,

Trustees: Karen Caplis, Christopher May, Darbie Hess, Jim Penner, Lori Chase (chair person)

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## Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee extends a very heartfelt and sincere thank you for your generosity in 2024. Your prayers, support, and participation have truly made a difference. Your stewardship has blessed this congregation, our community, and the world at large!

Committee members thank all Building Fund donors for their continued effort to help pay the monthly mortgage of \$10,903. The remaining mortgage balance is \$1.13 million. The Building Fund monies are kept totally separate from the Ministry Fund.

The year started with an *All Kids to Camp in 2024* campaign that provided funds for a record number of youth to attend camp this summer. This ministry's effort was further aided by a \$51,000 donation establishing the Blomquist Fund for Children and Youth. Funds were also raised to upgrade the sound system, the Hunger Team led another Milk Money campaign, the Perpetual Fund made grants to our seminarian and the Sound System campaign, and in December donations were accepted to replace the paraments that grace our sanctuary. All this happened while the General Ministry and Building Funds contributions exceeded last year's amounts.

Generosity from our congregation to the local community includes food grown in our garden and assembly of Kid Packs for Helena Foodshare, personal care and school kits for the YWCA & Friendship Center, WELCA and Sew in Love activities, Family Promise hosting, and continued support of God's Love.

The world at large has also benefitted from your gifts. More than 200 quilts were made by Our Redeemer's quilters for Luther World Relief. Our Redeemer's members generously gave cash to the World Hunger Appeal, Lutheran World Relief, and Lutheran Disaster Relief in 2024.

Readers are encouraged to view a complete list of all contributions found in the 2024 Annual Financial Report.

Thank you for blessing our church, our community, and the world with your time, talents, and treasures. You truly make a difference!

Karen Armstrong  
Pastor Trina Johnsten  
Kris Thatcher

Ingrid Childress  
Jan Martin  
Tracey Tinting

Craig Erickson  
Lon Bechtel  
Dennis Trotter

Gary Fischer  
Jim Penner

## Personnel Committee Report

The Personnel Committee met twice a month throughout the year to review the existing Personnel Policy Manual. The latest iteration was written in 2017, with a minor revision in 2021. Our goal was to identify policies, procedures, and processes that needed updating, revision, or inclusion to support church staff. Most of our time was spent on thoroughly reviewing and updating the Manual.

As we worked toward this goal, we researched policy manuals from other Lutheran churches in Montana and similar in size to Our Redeemer's. We used these for comparison as we developed a more comprehensive and current Policy Manual, compliant with state and federal labor laws. We attended three Council meetings and presented some of the updates. We are continuing to work with a subcommittee from the church council to finalize changes, addressing questions and concerns brought to us by that subcommittee. Since the Preschool is included in the Policy Manual we were compelled to learn more about their specific policies and procedures. Julie Peck, former Preschool Director, shared a wealth of information and collaborated with Kris Thatcher to clarify questions the Personnel Committee raised.

An area of concern was the alignment of tasks required of the committee within the church constitution and what had been occurring in years past. Reviewing and writing job descriptions, advertising, interviewing and recommending persons for hire had been part of the work of the personnel committee previously. However, these areas are not written into the constitution. According to the Constitution, the Personnel Committee is to "function as an advisory group regarding responsibilities of human resources matters." This includes the "review and development of policies with submission to the Council for approval". It also includes "assisting the Council in researching annual compensation and benefit recommendations for designated staff, conducting surveys and research that affirms and promotes compassionate human resource policies enabling the recruitment and retention of highly qualified ministry leaders and staff, and reporting to the Congregational Council twice a year, and annually to the Congregation." It is the desire of this Committee to continue our work to strengthen the "partnership role of staff and the congregation to meet ministry goals." (Please see the Constitution on the Our Redeemer's website for more information.)

The members of the committee are Lynda Hanson (chair), Lori Chase, Sharon Haugen, Larry Crowder and Julie Peck. We are pleased to have the knowledge Lori and Julie bring from their many experiences at Our Redeemer's and the perspective of our newer members, Sharon and Larry. They both bring expertise from their careers that is valuable as we incorporate necessary new policies.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynda Hanson

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## Financial Review Committee

The Financial Review Committee is annually re-established by the Council President. The Executive Council served as the Financial Review Committee. It met the second Tuesday of every month and reviewed documents pertaining to the Church's financial status, advised the Council with respect to budget issues, advised the Council treasurer on bookkeeping issues and proper accounting procedures and responded to the Audit Committee's annual review. The Financial Review Committee members in 2024 were Ingrid Childress, Kevin Mathews, Tracy Moseman, Attila Felnagy, Linda Nelson, Tracey Tintinger, and Pastor Trina.

In Christ's Service,  
Tracey Tintinger,  
Council Treasurer

## Hunger Team

The Hunger Team had a Busy Year in 2024!

### Family Promise

Our Redeemer's hosted Families in February, May, August, and November, providing sleeping space at the church with overnight hosts and meals for the families during the Week. The congregation also donated funds to sponsor fun activities like Splash Park passes or donated balls, bikes, and squirt guns for summer fun.

### Food Share

- **Kid Packs** - Many members meet at Helena Food Share on Tuesdays from October to April to assemble Kid Packs for school kids. In 2024, 24,366 Kid Packs were assembled by our crew, which filled 3,065 crates.
- **Milk campaign** - Our Redeemer's donated \$26,573 to Food Share during this year's Milk Campaign. \$10,800 was from grants from Washington foundation (\$5,000), Town Pump (\$5,000) and the Synod (\$800) and the rest was from congregation donations.
- **Holiday Meal donation** - 1,370 pounds of food was donated by the congregation, then sorted and crated for Food Share to pick up for their holiday meals before Thanksgiving.
- **Our Redeemer's Garden** - The garden produced 1,166 pounds of food that was donated to Food Share. Many hands helped plant and tend the garden all summer. Boy Scouts, Vacation Bible School participants, Carroll College students and Hunger Team members and friends all planted, tended or harvested. Vicki Downhour has been the leader of the garden activities and will be moving so we are looking for a new organizer of garden activities. Church and community members continue to rent plots for their own summer gardens as well.

### Other Activities

- **Lenten Study** - The Hunger Team organized and many members lead the five week small group study of the book *Meeting Jesus at the Table*.
- **Tomato Fest** - Our Redeemer's, in coordination with Carroll College, hosted a Tomato Fest in September. This was a tomato tasting of over 80 varieties of tomatoes. The goal was to fundraise and split the proceeds to the Our Redeemer's Garden and a Carroll class. Estimated 75 participants and \$740.00 was the split for Our Redeemer's garden. This will go toward seeds and supplies for next year.
- **Homeless awareness** - A photo display of the unhoused, video of "Why Should I Care" and discussion on the book *Rough Sleepers* was shown in October.
- **Kendra Wilde Funds** - are dispersed quarterly and were dispersed to God's Love, United Way Helena Inn Campaign, Amy's Mess - feeding the unsheltered, and Food Share. These disbursements ranged between \$280.00 - \$315.00.
- **God's Love** - Our Hunger Team representative for the God's Love shelter stepped down and we currently are not supporting that agency with time or donations.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Colegrove

## **Report of the Audit Committee For calendar year 2023**

The financial audit of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church (ORLC) for calendar year 2023 was conducted by Paula Marble, Jan Martin, Mike Burke.

This internal audit is intended to provide the oversight necessary to promote a strong financial control environment and to afford reasonable assurance that good stewardship is being used in handling and accounting for the assets of the congregation. It was not an audit performed by professionals in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles but rather following the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Congregational Audit Guide. The ELCA Audit Guide provides step-by-step areas auditors can review and test and therefore in some cases the auditors have used their best judgement to determine what is the most important task to perform and the amount of review and testing that is needed.

The following areas were reviewed:

- Bank reconciliations, petty cash, benevolence, offering counting, fund designation, financial reporting, signature control, documentation and process controls, payment controls, vendor payment controls, purchase orders, vendor payments, governance and administration, notes payable, payroll, independent contractors, insurance, and financial reporting
- Working papers, attachments, emails, and correspondence of the auditors are available with the final audit report in the church's office

### **Bank Reconciliation - Mike Burke**

Reviewed bank statements and investments accounts. Checked, beginning and ending balance amounts. Review Glacier, Mission Invest Funds, ELCA Endow Pooled Trust, Vanco for reconciliations. Some statements missing such as ELCA Funds in May, July, August but most records complete. The Director of Finance responded via email saying that statements missing are saved to server in folder; she sent those statements via email.

No findings.

### **Petty Cash - Jan Martin**

Petty cash was counted and balanced on October 21, 2024.

No findings.

### **Benevolence - Jan Martin**

Payments sent to Montana Synod in 2023 are accurately reflected on the financial statement.

No findings.

### **Offerings - Jan Martin**

Letters were sent to members of the congregation in July 2023 and January of 2024. Lori Walter reports that she did not receive any corrections to the letters from members of the congregation.

No findings.

### **Receipting and Reconciling - Jan Martin**

Letters sent have the correct statement on them.

No findings.

### **Offering Counting - Jan Martin**

Observed counting on October 20, 2024.

No findings.

Recommendation - When there is a special offering such as for campus ministry, use a separate deposit slip for this and note the designated fund.

### **Special Events and Other Income - Jan Martin**

No events created other income for the congregation, nothing to observe.

### **Designated Income - Jan Martin**

Donations to designated funds are noted by the money counters on a separate report. The information is documented and retained with the weekly deposit documentation.

No findings

### **Disbursements (Documentation and Process Control, Duplicate Payment, Vendor Payment Controls, Purchase Orders, Vendor Payments) - Paula Marble**

Selected 40 check numbers excluding payroll from ministry checking account and reviewed for signature control, documentation, process controls, and purchase orders.

Finding - Noted that check support was missing, or invoice was not included. Also noted expense requests in excess of \$250 that did not include the Lead Pastor or other Council member's secondary signature.

Recommendation - Clear explanations, (such as "see March 2023 Council Minutes for authorization", or "See Guest Musician agreed upon rates schedule", etc.) Recommend ensuring all expenses in excess of \$250 include a secondary signature on the form as set forth in the policy, and that expenses paid to the Lead Pastor include a separate council member's secondary signature.

Finding - Found instances when an authorized signer has access to check stock in order to facilitate printing checks, if needed.

Recommendation - Ensure that authorized check signers do not have access to blank check stock.

Finding - Noted there were check numbers not included in the accounting system's check register.

Recommendation - Recommend including voided checks in the accounting systems' check register as a \$0 amount in order to account for all check numbers. May consider creating a GL account for voided checks that would easily identify which checks were voided and would always have \$0 balance.

### **Credit Card Transactions - Paula Marble**

Reviewed credit card statements for January to June 2023.

Finding - Noted a few instances of missing invoices and charges in excess of \$250 that did not include a secondary signature.

Recommendation - Ensure that all credit card charge request forms in excess of \$250 include a second signature and that there is a clear explanation for any support without an invoice.

### **Governance and Administration - Jan Martin**

Review the Council minutes notebook for 2023; the following is a list of findings.

Finding - No financial report in the notebook.

May: Donations to the Building Fund were sent to MIF, a donation of \$2,416.07 was sent to Montana Synod, donations to Designated Funds were **not** sent to MIF. There was no explanation in the minutes as to why designated donations were not sent to MIF before any money was donated to the synod. The Council has an obligation to ensure that designated donations are used only for the intended purpose. Minutes reflect approval of a new router for the church but do not state the cost or which account was to be debited for the expense.

June: Minutes state a project to have new signs for the church cost \$4,286.14. There was no indication the Council approved this expense. If it was a special donation, that should be so noted in the minutes.

July: Minutes were from 2022, no minutes for the 2023 meeting were observed.

August: Minutes do not show a motion to approve the cost of \$4,639.00 for new door locks.

November: No financial report in the notebook.

Recommendation - When there is a special congregational donation request such as Food Share Milk Money or All Kids to Camp in 2024, the committee making the request should first present the donation request to the Church Council. This should also apply to youth mission trips.

The Council should discuss how records of its meetings and all reports associated with the meetings will be kept in the future. If they are to be kept as paper or electronic and who is responsible for ensuring that all documents are kept.

#### **Notes Payable - Paula Marble & Mike Burke**

Reviewed the December 2023 loan statement and agreed to the balance of \$1,178,111.90 as of December 31, 2023. Additionally, Paula Marble verbally confirmed the December 2023 balance with Devin Burg at Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA on November 13, 2024.

No findings.

#### **Payroll (Verify Compensation, Quarterly Federal Tax Return, Sample Employee Payroll, Benefit Plan and Policy) - Mike Burke**

Reviewed personnel policy manual - no issues, when an employee is hired, they must read and signoff that they understand policies. Per Ingrid, there might be some parts of the personnel policy that are being reviewed and updated.

Reviewed quarterly federal tax return. Returns matched the amounts the Director of Finance had posted in the church's records.

Reviewed a sampling of one employee's pay records.

Finding - Records were only available hardcopy in the payroll files stored at the church through June. As of July, there was no printed pay journal in the pay records. Unable to verify all the pay records for the sample since they were not available hardcopy. Understood the records were now being stored electronically and not via hardcopy.

#### **Independent Contractors - Paula Marble**

Obtained 1099 report and reviewed a list of vendors that did not receive a 1099.

Finding - Noted payment for services in excess of \$600 that would require a 1099 to be issued.

Recommendation – Ensure all required 1099s are issued and consider a secondary review of the vendors and amounts that were paid to each vendor during the year to provide support to the Director of Finance prior to issuing final 1099 reports.

#### **Insurance - Mike Burke**

Contacted Jamie Toombs March McLennan Agency, Billings. Discussed policy coverage. Asked if church policy coverage increased as values rose, and Jamie said that was part of this policy. Reviewed Memorandums of Insurance (MOI) issued by United Church Insurance Assoc. Policy period, in effect 01/01/2023 to 01/01/2024. Commercial, General Aggregate Limit- \$5,000,000 and various other limits. Crisis Response - \$50,000 per participant. Crime - \$1,000,000 or less, various incidents, Professional Liability, \$2,000,000, Commercial Auto Liability, Not owned - \$2,000,000 or less.

No findings.

### **Follow up on 2022 Questions/Recommendations**

Recommendation that a professional audit of all ORLC's financial transactions and assets be completed.

Response - The church is aware of this and when the funds are available a professional audit will be conducted.

Has an inventory of church assets been completed?

Response - The Director of Finance said there has not been an inventory of assets. The church does not have an accounting of what is on the books for fixed assets. When the church was constructed, there was possibly one big entry made to assets. There is not an accurate number at this time of the assets. The church doesn't record depreciation and new items purchased are not recorded to assets because most have a limited life such as computers, technology, etc.

### **Audit Committee Recommendations**

As noted by Jan Martin above, the committee recommends that the Council should discuss how records of its meetings and all reports associated with the meetings will be kept in the future. If they are to be kept as paper or electronic and who is the responsible party for ensuring that all documents are kept. Recommend that the church provide a policy that clearly outlines this recommendation. Additionally, it was noted by auditors that the committee discussed how recording of approved spending is sometimes unclear in the Council minutes. It is recommended that these decisions be made clear and noted in the minutes so there is no question as to what the Council approved or did not approve.

Since no printed, electronic or photographic inventory has been done for church assets, audit committee members Jan Martin and Mike Burke are willing to assist in doing this work for the church in 2025. This would be prudent to have a saved file in church records with an additional copy kept offsite in the event of theft or a catastrophic event.

We thank all the staff members for their cooperation and assistance in the performance of the 2023 calendar year audit and especially recognize Sarah Magee, Lori Walter, and Council members for their prompt response to the numerous requests we made while conducting this audit.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paula Marble, Jan Martin, Mike Burke



## Property Development Team

The Our Redeemer's Property Development Committee has been on a long and educational journey, and we are profoundly grateful for the support and patience this congregation has granted us along the way.

It was over five years ago that we as a congregation started earnestly exploring ways in which our land could be used to serve a community need. We the church are landowners, but we are not developers, and so the pursuit began for a mission-driven development partner whose mission aligned with the church's. Seeing the housing crisis we are now in approaching five years ago, this committee reached out to various community partners working in the affordable housing realm. These partners and the relationships established have been significant and life-giving to this committee and the congregation. Community relationships created in this process have led to new church memberships and engagement on this committee. It has been an engaging process and much has been gained and learned through it.

As a reminder, Our Redeemer's entered a partnership with Rocky Mountain Development Council (RMDC), Helena Area Habitat for Humanity, the YWCA, and the City of Helena to apply for a Department of Commerce planning grant back in 2020 which we were awarded. This allowed the partnership to engage in extensive conversation and planning to develop a master plan for the property and resulted in adding Trust Montana, a community land trust, to the partnership. The information developed through this grant served as the basis for a grant application to the City of Helena in 2023 made by RMDC, the selected lead developer, on behalf of the partnership. The grant request made was for \$2.4 million in seed money for RMDC to purchase the land from the church and to install Horseshoe Bend Rd. to access the property and realize the city's requirement that Benton Ave. and Green Meadow Dr. be linked by this connector road. The city granted RMDC \$1.58M for the project. This funding was welcomed but fell short of the projected need. In the interim period several additional headwinds have come into play.

Helena Area Habitat for Humanity has been able to acquire 107 acres of land in East Helena where they are visioning a mixed-income neighborhood of up to 1,700 homes. It is the largest land development project by a Habitat for Humanity affiliate in the world! We rejoice in this and fully support their efforts to create affordable housing in our community. At the same time, it means that their staff and board are fully engaged on a much larger and extremely challenging project. Additionally, the YWCA's executive director has left her post, and the organization is currently being led by an interim director. They have their hands full maintaining their existing programs and building. Lastly, as we have all seen, the economy does not look the same as it did five years ago. Construction costs, interest rates, insurance rates, utility costs, maintenance costs, labor rates, and property taxes have all risen significantly. At the same time, the funding mechanisms used by affordable housing developers have not kept pace.

The reality of these headwinds has led us to the point where RMDC has determined they are unable to move forward on the project. The committee has been in communication with two alternative affordable housing developers who have given us the same message – the project requires somewhere between \$5-\$7.5M of capital upfront to realize. Through these conversations we have learned a lot. We have a renewed respect for the complex financing models these affordable housing developers navigate and continued respect for their efforts. We respect the work of each of our partners and understand that each one of them must move forward in their missions on a clearly navigable path.

This committee is disheartened but not disbanding. We are open to where the Holy Spirit is leading this congregation. We will continue to learn all we can about property development and will continue to reach out to potential partners and learn from similar projects. We believe that someday the vision for this property will become clear and the path forward straight. We pray for that discernment.

Gretchen Krumm

## Long-Range Planning Committee

The Long-Range Planning Committee has been very busy this past year analyzing and assessing lots of data from the 2017 Strategic Plan, the 2016 and 2021 “Holy Cow” Surveys, Our Redeemer’s historical data, nation-wide religious trends, synod trends, demographic trends, other church/congregation visits, other nonprofit organizations, community needs (homelessness, affordable housing, food insecurity, and tutoring), internal Our Redeemer’s programs, membership trends, stewardship and giving patterns, and church size dynamics.

The committee discussed that, as we move forward, our long-range plan must be flexible and creative to meet future needs and goals such as affordable housing development, additional staffing, supporting outside groups using the facility, and growth and expansion of the congregation and youth programs. Additional mission expansion ideas have included helping other Lutheran churches without pastors by conducting service/confirmation/youth programs online, including necessary technology upgrades those congregations may need, and exploring options for a licensed daycare or after-school program capable of tapping into other state-funded programs.

The committee is currently still in the analysis and assessment phase conducting research, interviews, and now entering the last stage of this phase: “Listening” to the congregation. So be sure to get with a committee member if you have questions, comments, needs, or concerns. Over the past few months, committee members have fanned out, visiting with most of the groups that meet regularly in the building and joining tables during Sunday fellowship to ask:

What is working well at Our Redeemer’s right now?

What isn’t? What could be improved upon?

What are your hopes for the future?

Are there areas individuals or groups are hoping to move into in the future / are there any plans you’d like to share with us?

In early 2025, members of the congregation will be advised about the dates and processes for participating in the next “Holy Cow” survey.

Your committee members include: Lonnie Cook (co-chair), Gretchen Krumm (co-chair), Pastor Trina Johnsten, Dennis Trotter, Ingrid Childress (council president), Sharon Haugen, Tracy Moseman, Clayton Schenck, and Ryan Swenson

## Men's Group and Facility Maintenance Team

Together, with the Stewardship Team the Facility Maintenance Team conducted a Stewardship Work Day whereby 36 members volunteered a Saturday to repair, replace and generally "spruce up" the exterior and interior campus. Thirty-three job tasks were assigned to individuals and teams, and in addition to completing those they also completed a few extra jobs.

Recently, members of the FMT have joined with members of the Creation Care Team, Stewardship Team, Financial Review Team, and Long-Range Planning Team to review and prepare recommendations for the installation of solar panels. We are continuing that discussion with solar installation vendors and will have a report prepared early in 2025.

We sincerely thank Lori Walter for assuming many of the facility management responsibilities with Sarah Magee's relocation.

Jerry Hoover

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## Creation Care Team

Dear friends in Christ at Our Redeemer's,

We are pleased to provide this report on our ministry activities in 2024.

In January, we presented two adult education sessions on climate change, including a video about Svaalbord, Norway, the northernmost human settlement on the globe and the place being most drastically impacted by the effect of climate change.

The Creation Care Team sponsored the Earth Week Worship Service at Our Redeemer's on April 21, with leadership provided by Baird Linke.

We also led the second annual Global Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation prayer vigil and community prayer service at Our Redeemer's on Friday, August 30.

We presented two adult education sessions in early October on "The Story of Stuff", an informational video about the environmental, social, and economic impacts of our system of production and consumption of consumer goods, and its unsustainability.

Beginning in January, we began a process of researching the feasibility of installing a solar power system on our facility.

We thank God and the congregation of Our Redeemer's for the opportunity to engage in ministry on behalf of Creation and thus better fulfill our vocation from God as stewards of this beautiful and precious planet we call home.

We would love to add more members to our team. Please let us know if you are interested.

Yours in Christ, the Our Redeemer's Creation Care Team, Nelson Bock (chair), Brad Ulgenes, Elaine Ulgenes, Tom Naegele, Phyllis Michelson.

## A Summary of Solar Research, Proposals, Interviews and Recommendation

January 22, 2025

In the Spring of 2023, the Creation Care Team solicited on behalf of Our Redeemer's a proposal from a local vendor for a Solar Photovoltaic Electrical Generating System. The proposal was very compelling in many ways, including the conservation of energy, financial savings, and the promotion of a sustainable energy savings initiative.

Since then, the idea gained support among other teams at Our Redeemer's, including Stewardship, Property Development, Financial Review, and Long-Range Planning, as well as many members of the congregation. So much so, that last fall an ad hoc team was populated with at least one member from each of the above-mentioned teams. It is referred to as the Solar and More Team.

This Team of ten then solicited proposals from four reputable solar companies, two from the Helena area and two from outside the area: Bozeman and Missoula. The "outside Helena" selections were based upon their having a significant presence in the Helena area. Three firms responded with proposals.

The Solar and More Team interviewed the three firms and based upon ten specific criteria determined that Bozeman Green Build, Inc. provided the most comprehensive and financially viable proposal for Our Redeemer's.

### System Costs

Most reasonable cost:	\$162,546
Less Northwestern Energy Grant:	-\$81,273
Less Inflation Reduction Act Direct Pay Grant:	-\$48,764
System Net Cost:	<u>\$32,509</u>

### System Savings

Annual Savings	\$17,864
Lifetime Monetary Gain	\$526,291
Number of Payback Years	2

### System Financing

Construction Loan	\$170,000
Interest Rate	5.85%
Loan Term	12 months
Certificate of Deposit	\$177,000
CD Interest Rate	3.85%
CD Term	12 months
Net Interest Cost	2%

**Recommendation:** Secure a loan of \$170,00 and execute a contract with Bozeman Green Build for the installation of a Solar PV System on the roof of Our Redeemer's.

**Creation Care Team:** Nelson Bock, Brad and Elaine Ulgenes, Tom Naegele and Phyllis Michaelson. **Ad hoc members:** Jim Penner, Herb Kulow, Dennis Trotter, Clayton Schenck, Jerry Hoover. **Ex-officio members:** Ingrid Childress, Trina Johnsten

## Biographies of Council Members

### Ingrid Childress

Ingrid Childress is a long-time member of Our Redeemer's. She and her husband, Don, are both retired and enjoy outdoor activities such as gardening, hiking with their dog, camping, and fishing. Ingrid is a member of the Grace Notes Handbell Choir; she enjoys making a "joyful noise" with the rest of the choir.

### Jennifer Colegrove

Jennifer has been a member of Our Redeemer's for 25 years and has attended Lutheran churches all her life. She played the organ for her hometown church in Idaho in high school. Jennifer taught Sunday School and Confirmation classes in the past. Currently, at Our Redeemer's, she is on the Hunger Team and plays with the Grace Notes Bell Choir. Jennifer is a Dietitian Manager at St. Pete's Health, where she has worked for 25 years. She retired from reffing and running the local recreation soccer programs. She loves cooking, gardening, skiing, hiking, biking, adventuring with friends, and hanging out with her family.

### Attila Felnagy

My wife (Heidi) and children (Hildegard and Abner) have worshiped at Our Redeemer's for approximately seven years. As a family, we enjoy being outdoors hiking, biking, boating, skiing, and camping. During the week, I work as a Hydrologist Supervisor with the Montana DNRC. My favorite part of my job is representing the citizens of Montana by serving on multiple committees and working with public stakeholders to protect, utilize, and understand water resources. I'm honored to serve and share my experiences on Our Redeemer's Church Council and I look forward to continuing to listen and learn from the congregation.

### Charlie Gorman

Charlie has a long career in public service to include positions as a law enforcement officer, supervisor, and manager. He has also served as a municipal emergency manager and for the past three years he has been the manager of Montana's State Emergency Coordination Center at Montana Disaster & Emergency Services at Fort Harrison.

He is a professional crime prevention and emergency preparedness practitioner and has provided planning, education, and training in community resilience. He has worked as a liaison to church and educational organizations and has assisted in creating all hazards safety response plans for them.

He has Masters in Public Administration (MPA) degree with a concentration in Emergency Management from Anna Maria College. He also has a Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management from Northwest

University and an Associate of Arts degree in the Administration of Justice from Gavilan College. He is a graduate of the National Emergency Management Academy and Northwestern University's School of Police Staff and Command.

Charlie is a life-long Christian and has been a member of Our Redeemer's for the past two years with his wife Laura. They have three adult children and five grandchildren. They also have two horses, two border collies, and a cat. In his spare time, you can find Charlie walking with his dogs, helping Laura with the horses, and serving in various ways during the 11:00am church services.

### Ed Johnson

I was born in St. John's Hospital (Rodney St.) on Father's Day 1962 and was the tenth kid out of thirteen (youngest boy). Our family grew up on a small farm outside of Helena/East Helena where my father was also a hydro-geologist for the USGS. My father transferred his church membership from St. John's Lutheran to Our Redeemer's in the late 1950s, and I was baptized at age two years by Pastor I. C. Gronneberg on December 23, 1964, at Our Redeemer's on Stuart Street. I attended church school throughout grade school years into high school. My learning years were under the direction of Pastor Lowell Anderson. I married Millie Senecal from Elliston, MT in 1988 and we moved to Elliston in 1989. We raised four children: Seth Edward, Shelby Elizabeth, Sutton Eric and Sawyer Eli within the community. Millie and the kids all attended St. Theodore's Catholic Church in Avon, MT. I graduated from MSU in 1985 with a B.S. in construction engineering and worked for Morrison-Knudsen Engineering for 1 1/2 years in NY City then spent 20 years with Tetra-Tech Consulting here in Helena. I have been with the City of Helena Building Department for the last 16 years as the Senior Plans Examiner.

### Charlotte Neill

Charlotte Neill grew up in St. Paul, MN and Helena. She married a Helena man and they raised their three children in Great Falls. Charlotte began her working life as a 6th grade teacher in Missoula and ended it as an adjunct professor of religion at Waldorf College in Forest City, Iowa. In the intervening years she was a salesperson selling everything from radio advertising to financial services. In 2004, she received a Masters Degree in Islamic Studies from Luther Seminary. She later participated in a Religious Studies program through Hartford Seminary. She moved back to Helena in 2013. Charlotte is excited about her new role as a council member at Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church.

**Linda Nelson**

Linda is a retired educator, Licensed Professional Counselor, writer, and Registered Drama Therapist. She has lived in Helena for 14 years and been a member of Our Redeemer's for 10 years. She has served on the Hunger Team since its inception and been a member of the Grace Notes handbell choir for most of her time at Our Redeemer's. Linda has also taught several adult education classes at the church on a variety of social and theological issues. Although she grew up as Presbyterian, she was attracted to Our Redeemer's because of the warm welcome she received and the strong commitment of the laity. Her family includes her daughter Gretchen Krumm, son-in-law Blair, and granddaughter, Ella. In addition to other community involvements, she is a member of the Knitters for Peace, a group that provides hand knitted times for a variety of charitable organizations both here and abroad. She also enjoys reading and gardening in her spare time.

**John (Jack) Palmer**

Jack was born in Spokane but was raised in Helena and graduated from St. Andrew School. After graduation he joined the Marine Corps and after one five-year enlistment, in which he met his now wife, he came back to Montana. He and Claire now live in East Helena and are expecting a baby girl in March!

**Sarah Sampson**

Sarah grew up in Shelby, MT, and came to Helena to attend and graduate from Carroll College. She works at Triple Tree Engineering here in Helena. Sarah and her husband, Pat, have three boys: Shane, Bryce, and Chase. All three boys attended Our Redeemer's Preschool, and during that time, Sarah also served on the Preschool Board for nine years. Now the boys

participate in Confirmation and Sunday School at Our Redeemer's. They have made Our Redeemer's their church home since 2010. Their family loves to spend time outside snow skiing, hiking, fishing, and golfing. The boys are very busy with all their sporting activities (football, basketball, soccer, track, & baseball). Their family is blessed to be a part of Our Redeemer's.

**Tracey Tintinger**

Tracey recognized the importance of a Christ-centered life, church community, and its connection to family as she and her husband, Ben, began raising kids. She and her family joined Our Redeemer's about 25 years ago. Growing up in Helena, she first attended Our Redeemer's as a fifth grader in 1978. Tracey has had the joy of teaching Sunday School and Confirmation classes at Our Redeemer's as her children were growing up. Through our church community, she discovered Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. Seventeen years of attending family camp at FLBC also solidified tradition, memories, and spirituality in her and her family.

Through a combination of stay-at-home mom and part time office manager for Mosaic Architecture, Tracey has had a well balanced home/work life. This was particularly helpful in raising four kids. Now that those kids are adults, they deeply appreciate the family values and church communities that Tracey instilled in them.

Tracey enjoys reading, hanging out with friends, traveling, and traipsing about on the mountain trails with her husband and three dogs. She also looks forward to volunteering more time where needed in the community and helping Our Redeemer's.

## Report of the Director of Finance Sarah Magee

It is hard to believe another year has passed. I am very grateful to the members of Our Redeemer's and my wonderful colleagues in the church and preschool for their encouragement and support of my role as Finance Director, especially as I have transitioned to working remotely from Arizona. I wouldn't be able to manage the many chores and tasks of my job if not for the dedication, service, and countless hours of volunteer work by so many members and families. Without the ongoing stewardship of its members, Our Redeemer's wouldn't have the financial resources to sustain and increase its ministries.

### Highlights from 2024:

- Revenues and receipts for the Ministry Fund, including special services, totaled \$605,917 in 2024 compared to \$579,175 in 2023. Giving for Dedicated Funds (Building Fund, Memorials, the Endowment Funds and Other Designated Gifts) totaled \$362,535 in 2024 compared to \$223,349 in 2023. Total revenue for 2024 was \$967,165 compared to \$802,524 in 2023.
  - Ministry Fund giving was well below our 2024 Ministry Funding Plan goals for the year. However, lower than expected expenses and carry forward of donations from 2023 covered the shortfall.
  - The Building Fund received donations of \$120,057.
  - There were no notable improvement to our Benton Avenue facility in 2024.
- We began 2024 with a mortgage balance of \$1,178,112 with annual debt service (interest and principal) of \$130,836. Our year-end mortgage balance was reduced to \$ 1,125,407.

### Opportunities and Goals for 2025:

- Pass the financial audit. It is very important that we complete a financial audit every year, and ensure that we maintain the discipline to continue this process on an annual basis.
- Continue work with the Property Development Committee to find opportunities for the use of our land.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve at Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church. I am confident that the members will continue to be good stewards of the financial resources that support the many ministries of our church.

Sarah Magee  
Director of Finance

## 2024 Congregational Parochial Report Congregational Membership

	Baptized Members	Confirmed Members
January 1, 2024	818	525
Gained	9	4
Lost	5	67
December 31, 2024	822	462

### Worship Attendance

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Average Weekly Attendance	Unavailable	204	250	263	305*
*average in person attendance = 193					
average online attendance = 112					
The 2024 attendance number includes Sundays only. In previous years, it included holidays and special occasions.					
Average Weekly Offering	\$14,448	\$14,679	\$16,066	\$15,433	\$18,705

### Congregational Stewardship

Below is a breakdown of the average giving *per year* in 2024 by the contributing members of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church to the ministries of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church.

# Giving Units	Amount Per Year
16	0.01 - 50.00
14	50.01 - 100.00
46	100.01 - 500.00
37	500.01 - 1000.00
58	1000.01 - 3000.00
24	3000.01 - 5000.00
21	5000.01 - 7000.00
13	7000.01 - 10000.00
10	10000.01 - 15000.00
6	15000.01 - 20000.00
2	20000.01 - 25000.00



**Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church  
2024 and 2025 Ministry Spending Plan**

**Approved December 15, 2024 Budget Meeting**

	2024 MSP	2024 Actual	2025 MSP
<b>Income</b>			
Offerings	722,519	603,550	754,961
Other Receipts	960	2,367	960
	<hr/>		
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>723,479</b>	<b>605,917</b>	<b>755,921</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
Building & Facilities	137,722	131,879	141,573
Christian Education	30,821	18,836	33,360
Worship & Music	12,825	18,962	17,139
Benevolence	28,307	18,852	30,698
Committees	4,700	2,224	4,700
Office Administration	38,879	39,702	43,208
Salaries & Benefits	449,502	354,726	462,496
Payroll Tax, Workers Comp, Unemp. Ins.	17,373	17,833	17,997
Staff Development	3,350	2,588	4,750
	<hr/>		
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>723,479</b>	<b>605,602</b>	<b>755,921</b>
 <b>Income Less Expenses</b>	 -	 315	 -
 <b>Net Cash Flow</b>	 -	 315	 -

Debt service (interest & principal) in 2024 was \$130,836. Principal payments in 2024 totaled \$52,705 .The 2024 Building Fund giving was \$120,057.

Other Income includes building use fees.

**Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**December 2024**

	Jan 1, 2024	Dec 31, 2024
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Ministry Checking	8,219	14,023
Dedicated Accounts Money Mkt	111,836	166,172
Petty Cash Office	50	50
Building Fund MIF	284,892	261,397
Youth Trip Account	1,548	1,548
<b>Sub total Current Assets</b>	<b>406,545</b>	<b>443,190</b>
<b>Investments</b>		
Endowment Fund	117,929	120,564
Seminary Scholarship Fund	135,310	148,634
Debt Service Fund	96,743	120,614
Blomquist Fund for Children & Youth	-	50,076
Kendra Wilde Hunger Endowment	31,716	35,239
<b>Sub total Investments</b>	<b>381,698</b>	<b>475,127</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Storage Building (shed)	21,500	21,500
3580 Benton Land	390,290	390,290
3580 Benton Building	3,727,627	3,722,127
3580 Benton Furnishings	328,328	328,328
<b>Sub Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>4,467,745</b>	<b>4,462,245</b>
<b>Dedicated Funds Receivable</b>	-	-
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>5,255,988</b>	<b>5,380,562</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
MIF Mortgage	1,178,112	1,125,407
Dedicated Funds Payable	779,935	904,194
<b>Subtotal Liabilities</b>	<b>1,958,047</b>	<b>2,029,601</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Net Worth	1,542,611	1,542,612
Fund Balance	1,755,330	1,808,349
<b>Sub Total Equity</b>	<b>3,297,941</b>	<b>3,350,960</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Equity</b>	<b>5,255,988</b>	<b>5,380,562</b>

<b>Ministry Fund Offerings</b>					
<b>Month</b>	<b>2024 Ministry Fund Offerings</b>	<b>2023 Ministry Fund Offerings</b>	<b>2024 Budgeted Ministry Offerings</b>	<b>Ministry Fund Variation (2024 v 2023)</b>	<b>Ministry Fund Variation to 2024 Plan</b>
January	60,083.75	54,023.48	71,324.04	6,060.27	(11,240.29)
February	44,972.10	44,869.34	66,916.76	102.76	(21,944.66)
March	66,447.08	39,488.97	59,515.08	26,958.11	6,932.00
April	70,913.58	60,401.87	56,003.00	10,511.71	14,910.58
May	43,390.54	45,101.92	64,671.40	(1,711.38)	(21,280.86)
June	37,247.44	30,878.07	60,147.40	6,369.37	(22,899.96)
July	49,288.01	54,096.05	64,181.45	(4,808.04)	(14,893.44)
August	34,429.07	36,676.45	50,786.36	(2,247.38)	(16,357.29)
September	52,990.45	41,054.17	57,131.40	11,936.28	(4,140.95)
October	42,803.02	43,488.71	54,781.00	(685.69)	(11,977.98)
November	37,211.56	47,681.99	61,021.00	(10,470.43)	(23,809.44)
December	64,832.80	81,413.93	57,000.36	(16,581.13)	7,832.44
<b>Year-to-date</b>	<b>604,609.40</b>	<b>579,174.95</b>	<b>723,479.25</b>	<b>25,434.45</b>	<b>(118,869.85)</b>

Totals	-	579,174.95	723,479.25	-	-
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<b>Building Fund Offerings</b>					
<b>Month</b>	<b>2024 Building Fund Offerings</b>	<b>2023 Building Fund Offerings</b>	<b>2024 Monthly Mortgage Payment</b>	<b>Building Fund Variation (2024 v 2023)</b>	<b>Building Fund Variation to 2024 Plan</b>
January	13,239.08	7,533.13	10,903.00	5,705.95	2,336.08
February	7,407.10	21,842.08	10,903.00	(14,434.98)	(3,495.90)
March	17,234.70	6,412.78	10,903.00	10,821.92	6,331.70
April	11,019.72	8,736.24	10,903.00	2,283.48	116.72
May	7,814.72	8,716.24	10,903.00	(901.52)	(3,088.28)
June	11,364.72	5,321.24	10,903.00	6,043.48	461.72
July	6,009.72	10,881.27	10,903.00	(4,871.55)	(4,893.28)
August	6,238.22	7,882.12	10,903.00	(1,643.90)	(4,664.78)
September	5,804.22	4,920.74	10,903.00	883.48	(5,098.78)
October	6,179.72	7,317.78	10,903.00	(1,138.06)	(4,723.28)
November	13,859.72	6,380.78	10,903.00	7,478.94	2,956.72
December	13,885.22	8,748.33	10,903.00	5,136.89	2,982.22
<b>Year-to-date</b>	<b>120,056.86</b>	<b>104,692.73</b>	<b>130,836.00</b>	<b>15,364.13</b>	<b>(10,779.14)</b>

Totals		104,692.73	130,836.00		
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**Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church**  
**Dedicated Accounts**  
**December, Fiscal Year 2024**

Account	Beginning Balance	Year-To-Date		Current Balance
		Receipts	Expenses	
<b>Minor 01 - Unleashed</b>				
Building Fund Reserved	66,628.05	120,056.86	130,836.00	55,848.91
Building Fund Interest	21,196.92	6,553.90	-	27,750.82
Horseshoe Bend Rd	196,823.23	-	19,230.25	177,592.98
Building Furnishings 103	204.21	-	-	204.21
Totals	<b>284,852.41</b>	<b>126,610.76</b>	<b>150,066.25</b>	<b>261,396.92</b>
<b>Minor 02 - ENDOWMENT FUNDS</b>				
Perpetual Fund	84,384.00	-	5,000.00	79,384.00
Perpetual Fund Earnings	11,664.38	4,469.00	5,000.00	11,133.38
Perpetual-Mkt Val Change	21,880.50	15,038.71	6,872.49	30,046.72
Seminary Scholarship Fund	98,007.31	-	-	98,007.31
Scholarship Earnings	4,362.82	5,431.20	2,000.00	7,794.02
Scholars-Mkt Value Change	32,939.94	18,271.21	8,378.72	42,832.43
Perpetual Fund Debt/Maint	76,529.49	12,181.16	-	88,710.65
Perpetual DS MkValChge	14,210.54	14,301.19	6,688.77	21,822.96
Perpetual DS Income	6,003.57	4,257.90	181.16	10,080.31
K Wilde Hunger Endowment	34,426.76	1,243.00	-	35,669.76
KW Hunger Endowment Value Chg	(2,710.72)	4,235.51	1,955.64	(430.85)
Blomquist Fund for Children and Youth	-	51,000.00	-	51,000.00
Blomquist Fund Endow Earnings	-	-	923.85	(923.85)
Totals	<b>381,698.59</b>	<b>130,428.88</b>	<b>37,000.63</b>	<b>475,126.84</b>
<b>Minor 03 - MEMORIALS</b>				
Sunday School Memorials	0.43	-	-	0.43
Youth/Transport Memorials	-	-	-	-
Bell Choir Memorials	720.00	-	-	720.00
Worship & Music Memorials	1,222.76	-	82.00	1,140.76
General Memorial Fund	7,898.84	4,266.38	-	12,165.22
Memorial Fund Interest	3,026.68	788.01	-	3,814.69
Totals	<b>12,868.71</b>	<b>5,054.39</b>	<b>82.00</b>	<b>17,841.10</b>
<b>Minor 04 - COUNCIL FUNDS</b>				
Emergency Assistance	14,032.63	4,752.00	495.61	18,289.02
WELCA	42.00	657.00	699.00	-
Family Promise	1,693.47	500.00	320.00	1,873.47
Children's Ministry	4,600.39	1,482.63	-	6,083.02
Youth Mission Trip	-	-	-	-
High School Youth (Ded)	5,112.58	1,031.15	1,583.23	4,560.50
Middle School Youth (Ded)	3,194.91	215.00	-	3,409.91
MS Retreat Scholarship	4,847.00	1,300.00	-	6,147.00
High School Fundraiser	1,481.45	1,728.42	358.20	2,851.67
VBS Materials	495.63	1,269.37	1,586.00	179.00
Funeral Fund	3,176.96	1,652.89	1,635.62	3,194.23
Chancel Choir	301.01	-	30.53	270.48
Musical Instruments/Supp	19.02	-	-	19.02
Piano Tuning	-	-	-	-
Guest Musicians	(50.00)	955.00	400.00	505.00
Technology	5,000.00	42,401.38	46,502.56	898.82
Deferred Maintenance	19,340.03	12,000.00	-	31,340.03

**Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church**  
**Dedicated Accounts-Continued**  
**December, Fiscal Year 2024**

Account	Beginning Balance	Year-To-Date		Current Balance
		Receipts	Expenses	
Rejoice Team	-	-	-	-
All Kids To Camp	-	25,515.51	7,645.99	17,869.52
FLBC Camperships	962.46	-	86.35	876.11
Unawarded Perpetual Fund Earnings	1,126.93	5,000.00	6,126.93	-
Unawarded Scholarship Fund Earnings	500.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	500.00
Home Nursery	190.07	-	-	190.07
Care Team Ministry	-	-	-	-
Sew in Love	2,197.94	2,046.50	250.91	3,993.53
Quilting for LWR	496.81	265.00	444.27	317.54
Sanctuary Decorations	372.78	4,000.00	451.00	3,921.78
Community Garden Fund	337.53	1,890.00	893.05	1,334.48
Coffee Fund	1,286.33	811.74	424.45	1,673.62
Thrivent Choice Funds	14,424.26	9,106.00	7,949.38	15,580.88
Dedicated Fund Interest	2,488.19	2,799.92	-	5,288.11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>87,670.38</b>	<b>123,379.51</b>	<b>79,883.08</b>	<b>131,166.81</b>
<b>Minor 05 - DESIGNATED BENEVOLENCE</b>				
World Hunger Appeal	-	1,081.00	1,081.00	-
Lutheran World Relief	-	131.85	131.85	-
Helena Foodshare	-	71.02	71.02	-
ELCA Disaster Relief	-	375.00	375.00	-
Tanzania Mission Fund	-	5,975.00	5,975.00	-
God's Love	-	37.40	37.40	-
KW Hunger Endowment Earnings	294.80	1,263.60	926.60	631.80
Milk Money	-	31,573.03	31,573.03	-
Columbarium/Memorial Gar.	2,515.00	-	-	2,515.00
Other External Gifts	8,487.16	39,388.17	33,908.34	13,966.99
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11,296.96</b>	<b>79,896.07</b>	<b>74,079.25</b>	<b>17,113.79</b>
<b>Minor 08 - OTHER</b>				
027-00-05-00 Youth Gift Card	1,548.13			1,548.13
<b>Fund 02 - General</b>	<b>779,935.18</b>	<b>465,369.61</b>	<b>341,111.21</b>	<b>904,193.59</b>

**Our Redeemer's Lutheran Preschool**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**2024**

	<b>Jan 1, 2024</b>	<b>Dec 31, 2024</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Preschool Checking	16,526	13,424
Petty Cash Office	75	65
Accounts Receivable		
Preschool Savings	34,981	42,778
<b>Subtotal Current Assets</b>	<b>51,582</b>	<b>52,267</b>
 <b>Total Assets</b>	 <b>51,582</b>	 <b>52,267</b>
 <b>Liabilities</b>		
Dedicated Funds Payable	34,981	42,778
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>34,981</b>	<b>42,778</b>
 <b>Net Worth</b>		
Net Worth	16,601	13,489
Prior Year Adjustments		
<b>Sub Total Equity</b>	<b>16,601</b>	<b>13,489</b>
 <b>Total Liabilities and Net Worth</b>	 <b>51,582</b>	 <b>52,267</b>

**Our Redeemer's Lutheran Preschool**  
**Dedicated Accounts**  
**December 2024**

Account	Beginning Balance	Year-To-Date		Current Balance
		Receipts	Expenses	
Gifts and Fundraisers	9,281.33	8,307.05	997.72	16,590.66
Scholarship	680.33	406.00	-	1,086.33
Contingency Fund	20,721.21	-	-	20,721.21
Enrichment	667.69	-	560.08	667.69
Money Market Interest	171.05	81.77	-	252.82
Training	1,330.75	-	-	1,330.75
Accrued Sub Pay	853.51	-	-	853.51
Maintenance	1,275.28	-	-	1,275.28
Totals	<b>34,981.15</b>	<b>8,794.82</b>	<b>997.72</b>	<b>42,778.25</b>

**Our Redeemer's Lutheran Preschool**  
**Income Statement**  
**December 2024**

	2024 Budget	2024 Actual
<b>Income</b>		
<b>Tuition &amp; Other</b>	151,385	140,496
<b>Expense</b>		
<b>Program Expenses</b>	13,598	11,402
<b>Staff Salaries</b>	130,422	132,206
<b>Total Expense</b>	144,020	143,608
<b>Income-Expense</b>	7,365	(3,112)

<b>Preschool Budget 2024/2025</b>			
<b>Income</b>		<b>Expenses</b>	
<b>Supply/Snack Fees</b>			
62 Students@ \$100/year	6,200	Start up supplies (consumables)	2,500
62 Students (Snack fee)	2,795	Snacks	2,075
<b>Tuition</b>		Monthly Supplies (\$420x10 mo.)	4,200
Threes: 20 students @ \$159/mo	28,620	Sub Pay for 2024-2025 Days	1,230
Fours: 21 students @ \$208/mo.	39,312	Sub Pay for P-T Conf./Staff Meetings	200
PreK: 21 students @ \$270/mo.	51,030	Teacher/Director Training	1,600
Lunch Bunch Tuition	12,000	Advertising	250
<b>Sub-Total Tuition Income</b>	<b>130,962</b>	Professional Memberships	425
		Computer/Technology	1,000
<b>Registration + Tuition</b>	<b>139,957</b>	Family Events	500
		Lunch Bunch Expenses (\$15x10 mo.)	150
		<b>SubTotal Operating Expenses</b>	<b>14,130</b>
Discount for Board/Siblings	(400)	<b>Employee Expenses ( 3% Increase over 23-24)</b>	
Discount for Staff (50% tuition)	-	Sub Total Salary	127,058
Church Contribution (\$1,240.38/mo.)	14,885	3% Pension	3,409
Summer Preschool Fun	1,500	<b>Sub Total Salary+ Potential Pension</b>	<b>130,467</b>
<b>Sub-Total other income</b>	<b>15,985</b>		
<b>TOTAL OF ALL INCOME</b>	<b>155,942</b>	<b>TOTAL OF ALL EXPENSES</b>	<b>144,596</b>
		Variance	11,346