

Annual Report

May 2023- April 2024



The Lutheran Church of Saint Mark

in joy we share Christ's truth



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Agenda

The Lutheran Church of Saint Mark Annual Meeting April 28, 2024 Agenda

1. Reading of February minutes
2. Review of Annual Reports
3. Election of Council members
4. Other New Business

Council Positions for 2024

Nominating Committee members: Mark Gresens, John Marschhausen and Carol Weber

Church Council Proposed Positions Two year assignments running from May 5, 2024 to May 2, 2026

Nominated for First Terms

Outreach—Elaine Auger
Member at Large—Betsy Crayton

Nominated for Second Terms

President—Ray Frick
Vice President—Mike Davis
Education—Jan Frick

Open Positions: Secretary, Fellowship, Missions

Council President's Report—Ray Frick

Introduction

This annual report is analogous to a public corporation's (i.e. St. Mark) annual report to its stockholders (congregation). This report contains our financials: income, expenses, assets, and audit results. It contains a message from our Pastor on our performance last year in carrying out our mission. Finally it contains reports from our committees and staff on highlights from their work.

Just like in a corporation, where the stockholders have the ultimate authority, the congregation holds the authority to: call a pastor, approve a budget, and sell/buy property or assets. However, the church council provides the day-to-day management of our community. The church council is a combination of a corporate board, and management.

As a board, the council has:

- * Held a retreat in June to establish what will be the focus or theme for the year. We concluded that we need change our mindset from what we were used to many years ago, and adapt to our current social norms. We have been mindfully looking at and embracing new ideas (see committee reports). We are now broadcasting and posting our services, having mid-week services, having the folk group playing regularly, doing more ecumenical cooperation, increasing the use of our building (small Baptist church now meeting here), and expanding our vegetable and pollinator gardens.
- * Staff and Pastor evaluations are conducted annually. In addition, the council reviewed its performance.
- * A grant request was submitted for Pastor's 2025 sabbatical.
- * The council has decided to create a committee to imagine the future: what we imagine and want to be, and how to realize it.
- * While the congregation has the final authority, the council does formulate the budget for approval.
- * Worked with the developer of a proposed rear development to negotiate a favorable contract with us for a land exchange, monies, and new parking lot. The congregation approved the contract.
- * The council has also decided to review the council structure that appears to no longer be optimum for our community.

As management, the council has:

- * Met regularly to review the committees' work. One particular emphasis has been encouraging committees to work together. For example, the Cabaret was a fellowship event raising mission money. In fact, most events have a fellowship attribute. Our picnic is a fellowship, worship and music, and outreach event.
- * Overseen the work of the Executive, Audit, Nominating, and Financial committees (see reports).
- * Approved authorized expenditures for building improvements, and needed repairs (see property report).
- * Approved building usage requests.

Obviously, I tried to provide an overview of the council's function. I strongly encourage

Continued next page

President's Report—*continued*

you to read this entire report to get all the details. The members of council and other standing committees do this work voluntarily to the glory of God, but definitely let them know how much you appreciate their time and efforts. A little thanks will go a long way. Please support the committees' work by volunteering your time and participating.

Ray Frick
Council President

Pastor's Report—The Reverend Cheryl Hoffman

I write this having just returned from my In Search of Paul trip to Türkiye and Greece. After being asked if it was a good trip and whether I had fun, I am usually asked about what the best part was or what did I enjoy most. There are a few sites that stick out, but in all honesty, the best part was getting to know 19 new people from all over the US and Toronto. Listening to their stories, hearing about the ministry they are doing, talking about how what we were seeing related to the church today, supporting each other in our faith journeys as people and servants of Christ. This is what it means to be the Body, the Church of Christ. And if you just happen to be touring ancient sites while you are doing it, a double blessing.

Listening, doing ministry, relating the gospel to our world today, supporting each other along the way. This is what it means to be Church, wherever we are. It takes time. It takes practice. It requires patience. It requires an open heart and mind. It means suspending judgement. It means inviting the stranger to be your friend.

As you read through this year's report you will see many places where we have sought to be the Church over the past twelve months – sometimes very successfully, sometimes, maybe, not so much. But God doesn't call us to be successful so much as to be faithful. It is not those that fall short who are most judged in scripture, but those that do not try at all. And no experience from which we can learn is worthless. For the record, I have yet to encounter an experience that has been of no worth at all.

I encourage you to read through this report prayerfully, looking for the ways in which we encourage others to share their stories. Can you count the different ways we do ministry? How do we make the words and love of God known to the people in our community? How are we supporting each other and our brothers and sisters – near and far away in their faith journey?

Of course, there is always room for growth and more that can be done. So, when you have finished reading through the reports, read them again, this time prayerfully asking what is missing? Who is missing? How can we grow in faith? How can we be a better Church, a more faithful Body of Christ, in our community?

Finally, if you do nothing else, do this one thing: pray, pray, pray, and pray some more! We can do nothing without the help of God. So, pray for our leaders. Pray for our members. Pray for those groups that use the church building. Pray for those who are seeking a

Continued next page

Pastor's Report—*continued*

church home. Pray for those who are seeking God. Pray for yourself and a desire to grow in faith and a willingness to be part of God's plan for his Church in the community of Glastonbury, CT. Then dare to believe that God answers prayer and let us see on what adventure God will lead us over the next 12 months. (Look for the update next year.)

In Christ,
Pastor Cheryl Hoffman

Executive & Financial Committees

The executive committee consists of the church officers (president, vice-president, secretary, financial secretary, and treasurer) and the Pastor. It is responsible for preparing items needing council approval and for approving such business items (i.e. staff vacations) necessary for the efficient management of the church. Actions of the committee are shared with the council. The committee is responsible for both the Pastor's and council's annual evaluation.

The finance committee consists of the executive committee plus 2 other members. It is responsible for monthly financial reports, preparing a proposed budget, and managing the endowment fund (separate report included). Again, the council has final approval of financial matters.

Mutual Ministry Committee

Last year, the council authorized the formation of a Mutual Ministry Committee. How did it get its name? As you know, the Pastor has certain defined duties including, for example, preaching the word, administering sacraments, conducting worship, etc. Likewise, the members have certain defined duties including, for example, financial, care of the property, participating in mission work, etc. So, the ministry of St. Mark falls on both the Pastor and us; mutually we carry out the ministry.

In carrying out our mutual ministry, there may be some bumps-in-the-road. Anyone who has a parent, spouse, sibling, good friend, or offspring (is that everyone?) knows that sometimes disagreements or conflict can occur. Therefore, the purpose of this committee is to help resolve issues arising between the Pastor and a congregant, or between congregants. *The committee will address concerns discreetly and confidentially.*

The members of this committee are Pastor, Dave Obedzinski, Anne Davis, and Bernie Clark. A member may bring up a concern or issue with any committee member. However, any issues or concerns regarding the staff will continue to be handled by the staff support committee.

Minister of Music's Report—Martin Smith

"We can mention only one point (which experience confirms) namely, that next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise." - Martin Luther

"Praise to the Lord, the almighty the king of creation" says the familiar hymn text of the same title, and that is what we do week in and week out, over and over, singing praise and thanks to God. How many ways we find to do that! The familiar words of this hymn, the seasonal words of Advent (Lord Jesus, quickly come) and Christmas (O come let us adore) and the more challenging penitent strains of Lent (have mercy / forgive us / save us) toward the festive acclamations of Easter (Christ is risen indeed! **Alleluia**) all help us to express what is in our hearts: the overflowing love of God. Our ministry as music makers, Pastor, choirs, folk group singers and instrumentalists is rooted deep in our being. We love what we do!

We continue to explore new music as well as returning to 'old favorites.' I am blessed by the talents of our parish family who give of themselves in time and talent to make our worship more beautiful. I am doubly blessed that they accept the challenges which I occasionally throw at them in new music - most of the time very successfully - so that we experience new expressions of the praise of God. And I celebrate you, the congregation, who also find yourselves challenged by a new hymn, response or acclamation (or one that has been buried in the ELW for years) and you rise to the occasion.

We have been eagerly planning for a few months now for joining with 4 other choirs from Glastonbury to present a hymn-based concert. The planning process: first a date, then the music, then where to sing - each has involved discussions and compromises - and now choirs have been rehearsing the music. We hope you will join in support of our music ministry on **Friday, May 10 at 7:00 pm** at **Saint Paul Church** (Saint Isidore and Maria parish). The concert will feature the 5 choirs as well as the Constitution Brass Quintet and timpani, handbells and oboe (First Church). We are very excited and enriched by this experience. The last time we did this was in 2017 at Saint Mark with 3 choirs.

May God be praised in all our work!



Cuatro Puntos Concert 2/22/24
Eclectica Concert 2/3/24
Saint Mark Choir, Easter Sunday



Worship and Music Report—Dottie Marschhausen, Chair

Ashes-to-Go was the initiative that began Lent 2023. It was a success and a gift to many of our community friends and neighbors. In the 2023 Lenten season Wednesday evening Vespers were at 5:00 pm followed by a soup and bread supper. Matins and Vespers adopted AN EASTER BOOK OF DAYS as our devotional material. Pastor Marschhausen led a daytime, in-person, Bible Study on The Passion of Our Lord according to St. Matthew. Holy Week was in collaboration with our two neighboring Episcopal parishes, each congregation hosted a Lenten service.

“Dads and Grads” was celebrated on June 18. We were also blessed to celebrate the baptism of Leo and Bea Brekka on the 18th. Leo and Bea are the children of Laura (Taylor) and Bill Brekka.

Our flowers, weekly and special occasion plants, are now being provided by THE FLOWER BOX – 580 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY, WETHERSFIELD. They’ve done a wonderful job for us. The flowers are fresh and always colorful. Please think about calling Kathy for your floral needs (860) 529-6843. Do mention that you’re from St. Mark, Glastonbury.

Our new worship bulletin has been well received. We will continue printing the entire service in the weekly bulletin. If you would like to contribute paper to this project, Ellen will always welcome 8½x11 copy paper. If you’d like to make a monetary contribution, please use one of the envelopes provided at the usher table in the narthex.

We hosted a joint communion service and luncheon for our brothers and sisters at St. James and St. Luke’s on October 8 at JB Williams Park. Worship was led by Pastor Hoffman. St. Mark’s own “terrific trio”(Anne, Elaine, and Carol) provided a delicious meal. Martin, Linda Hilliard and the folk group provided music for the event.

On November 21, 2023, we participated in the Community Thanksgiving Service, which was pulled together and co-led by Pastor Hoffman.

Advent began on December 3. We continued to observe our prayer offices during Advent. Vespers was shared on Thursday evening at 7:00pm. Vespers was preceded by a “brown bag” supper in the parish hall at 6:15. Worship and Music provided the desserts and wine.

It was a particularly busy Christmas season. On Sunday morning December 24, Pastor led worship with a special service of music and scripture with communion. A traditional Christmas Eve service was held at 5:00 pm on Christmas Eve. A morning service was held on Christmas Day.

On Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024, Pastor Hoffman again distributed Ashes to the greater Glastonbury community. Zoom Matins continued during Lent. In-person Vespers were held on Wednesday evenings. Our Lenten observances were based on *WANDERING HEART – Figuring out Faith with Peter*. The poetry, devotional material and Good Friday service were well received.



Christian Education Report—Jan Frick, Chair

During May 2023, Sunday Evening Bible Study group started reading Bishop James Hazelwood's book, "Everyday Spirituality – Discover a Life of Hope, Peace and Meaning". The group enjoyed the interesting and thought-provoking stories and ways that one could think about living a more spirit-filled life every day.

Pastor John Marschhausen led a five weeks bible study about "What Does It Mean to Be a Lutheran?". The sessions were great refreshers as to our Lutheran background and practices in comparison to other denominations. The study was held mid-week during the day and was well attended. Many thanks go to John for preparing and leading such a timely and engaging study.

For the Sundays after Easter 2023, the Education Committee displayed information relating to each Sunday's theme in Easter in the lounge area where people could read it during fellowship. Also, a bible passage was posted on the Narthex door, so that as people enter/leave church, they could reflect on it. The intent was for this to be extra spiritual equipping for all of us, and our community friends, as we come and go into the world.

On Pentecost, people wore headbands with tongues of flames that symbolized that the Holy Spirit still can work in and through us.

St. Mark held a 'Dads and Grads' celebration on June 18, 2023. Cards were set out after service for members to sign and write notes of encouragement and congratulations to Brigette Cote, Emily Marschhausen, and Kate Obedzinski.

In October, Sunday Evening Bible Study group began reading the book "The Messianic Message" written by Rev. Dr. R. Reed Lessing and Rev. Dr. Andrew E. Steinmann. The book focuses on prophetic writings in the Old Testament and how these point to the Messiah. There are numerous references in the New Testament as to Jesus Christ fulfilling the prophecies, and this book helped the group to explore those. This book was quite enlightening as to both Old and New Testament scripture.

For Advent 2023, the Education Committee invited the congregation to help put together 'Christmas Joy Bags' for anyone who comes into St. Mark for our community groups or other activities. People had such a great time putting the Christmas Joy bags together that we did this again on March 17, 2024 for Easter.

In March 2024, the Education Committee presented bibles to three young individuals, Landon, Antonio, and Santiago, who've been attending services recently.

During Lent 2024, Pastor Hoffman led the congregation in following St. Peter's footsteps with a study called "Wandering Heart". The study included inspirational worship materials, daily devotional readings and prayers, a weekly devotional booklet, and a mid-week bible study, which were quite engaging and well attended. A special word of appreciation goes to Pastor John Marschhausen for stepping in to hold the mid-week sessions in Pastor Hoffman's absence.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Frick
Education Committee Chair

Missions Report

The Mother's Day Plant Sale and Silent Auction held on Sunday, May 14, 2023 were a huge success. A word of thanks and appreciation go to Thrivent for approving an action grant that helped to offset plant costs for both the sale and for St. Mark's garden. Proceeds from the sale were split between ELCA World Hunger and other expenses for the garden.

St. Mark Garden 2023 Recap: The garden produced quite well despite early season cold temperatures and dry conditions. Thankfully, as the summer warmed up and rain came, the garden yielded loads of beans, zucchini, acorn and butternut squashes, peppers, tomatoes, and kale. Additionally, several herbs were very prolific: parsley, thyme, oregano, chives, basil, and sage. All the produce was donated to the Manchester Area Conference of Churches (MACC) Food Pantry. Many thanks go to all the volunteers who helped plant, weed, and harvest the garden.

Care Bags: Linda Hilliard organized volunteers to purchase personal care items and assemble care bags that could be given to individuals seeking assistance.

Scrip Cards: Leslie O'Rourke took over handling scrip card sales that generate funds that can be used for charitable contributions and Missions projects.

Lutheran Immigration Refugee Services (LIRS): Over the course of three Sundays in October, 175 Christmas cards were written and signed by congregational members. These cards were sent to LIRS on Monday October 30th, along with a donation of \$175 from Mission Funds (\$1 per card as requested by LIRS).

Thrivent's Feed Northeast Challenge: A total 620 non-perishable food items were collected during the month of October and delivered to Manchester Area Conference of Churches (MACC) Food Pantry on Friday, November 3, 2023. Special thanks goes to Elaine & Jake Auger, Ellen Zerillo, and Ray, Ryder, and Jan Frick for their assistance with soliciting food at Stop & Shop on Saturday, October 28th, and to the Auger's and Frick's for helping deliver the food to MACC. In addition to the food, \$57 of cash was received, and \$250 from a Thrivent Action Team grant. All this went towards food. And if that wasn't incredible enough, MACC also received an additional \$500 from Thrivent because St. Mark donated more than 500 non-perishable food items. It was a fantastic effort to help those facing food insecurity!!

Christmas-at-Sea: In November 2023, St. Mark successfully raised funds to provide 16 satchels for Christmas gifts to seafaring crews on container ships.

Community Child Guidance Clinic in Manchester: Another great fund raising effort was held to provide art-themed kits for CCGC students for Christmas 2023.

Coat Donations: During winter, Deb Gresen organized collecting coats that were donated to St. James' outreach ministry, Carol's Closet.

Thrivent
Feed NorthEast Challenge



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Missions Report—*continued*

Food Donations: Once a month, St. Mark donates and delivers food to the elementary schools for children who are at risk of not having sufficient food for the weekend. Additionally, St. Mark collects and donates food to the Glastonbury Food Pantry and makes financial contributions to Glastonbury Links Together.

St. Mark Garden 2024 Preparation: This year's garden got underway on Saturday, April 6, 2024. Nine volunteers braved breezy, cool temperatures and cloudy skies and prepared the beds for planting and expanded another section of the garden along the fence. Several people have started vegetable and flower seeds for the garden. Another garden work session is scheduled for Saturday, April 27th starting at 10am, weather permitting.

Care For Creation Report—Eleanor Tunney, Chair

Pollinator Garden

The Pollinator Garden was moved from the east side of the property by the fence to the west side just outside the windows of the Office Manager's office and the Pastor's study. This enabled us to have more space and to be able to have access to water from a rain barrel attached to the church. In addition to multiple varieties of pollinator plants, the garden features a moss-covered rock fountain that serves as a birdbath for butterflies and bees, a bee house for a winter home, and ceramic flower petals for a raised-bed herb garden. Since it is a bit off the beaten track with no walkway or path, it is designed to be viewed from inside windows in the offices.

Pollinator Garden Talk

Eleanor gave a brief talk about the importance of pollinator plants, gardens, and the need to preserve all of the plant species God created, no matter how humble.

Growing Plants From Seeds

Bernie wrote an article describing techniques for growing your own vegetables from seed.

Rain Barrels

Deb wrote an article on rain barrels and how she uses them to water plants on her deck and vegetable garden.

Blessed be God who is our bread; may all the world be clothed and fed.

Bernie Clark, Deb Gresens, Eleanor Tunney, chair



Fellowship Report—Linda Hilliard, Chair

This is a list of our activities from Easter to Easter:

Many thanks to the committee members who helped, especially those from other committees: Betsy Crayton, Anne Davis, Jan Frick, JaneMarie Galiette, Deb Gresens, Lee Hilliard (auxiliary), Linda Obedzinski, Eleanor Tunney, Valerie Taff.

Thank you, Pastor Hoffman, for entertaining ideas new and old, as we try new things and maintain traditions. I appreciate your willingness to brainstorm together and find the best way to do things.

Thank you, also, Pastor Hoffman and others, for re-structuring the Sunday morning coffee hour groups in a new way. It has been fun to work together in new combinations, to provide for weekly fellowship time.

A big thank you to Ellen Topel Dougherty, our office manager, for all the extra time, advice, and skill that you bring to all our projects, posters, extra bulletins and flyers, mail chimp, and especially for your cheerful, can-do attitude!

Thank you, Ray Frick, our council president, who supports all our committee efforts, even to the point where he is, at this writing, planning the platform for the fellowship table in the garden, so people won't sink into the ground while sipping their coffee together.

Sunday, April 23rd Brunch for Hunger after church, with health kits assembled.

Saturday, June 24th Welcome Summer Hike around reservoir in Manchester, with lunch on the Hilliard's deck

Sunday, August 13th Artist's Tea featuring Stephanie Taff and Elisa Schroth discussing their costume design and choreography careers and ministries

Friday, August 25th *RENT* performed by White Rabbit Theatre at Cheney Hall in Manchester. Twelve people from St. Mark attended.

October 8th Combined Church Picnic with St. James and St. Luke's at J.B. Williams Park

November 17th, 18th, 19th Women's Retreat at Calumet

Sunday, December 3rd *Ahava* Ballet at Middletown High School, presented by Ekklesia. Twelve people attended this Advent performance, directed by Elisa Schroth

Monday, December 4th Women's Christmas Party and Yankee Swap at Hilliard's Men's Revels at Dave Taylors, same evening

Christmas For Everyone flyer, listing the Christmas services and celebrations of St. Mark, St. James, St. Lukes, Concordia Lutheran, Manchester and Emanuel Lutheran, Manchester was posted at each church.

Sunday, January 22nd Chili Cookoff 5:30 at church, with awards for Most Creative, Best all-around, and Hottest. The winners? Dottie Marschhausen, most creative with Chili con Carne with Vegetables; Jan Frick, best all around with Ruth's Recipe, and David Obedzinski, hottest with 4 Pepper Chili.

Sunday, February 18th Tea: Dreaming of Spring, featuring Eleanor Tunney and Jan Frick with presentations about the Pollinator Garden and the Vegetable and Flower Garden.

Fellowship Report—*continued*

Opportunities were offered to sign up and help out with this year's gardens. Very informative and fun! (I have planted my milk weed, and zinnia and marigold seedlings are in the living room waiting for the warmer days).

Saturday, February 24th Jacob's Well Cabaret fundraiser, featuring White Rabbit Theater. Thank you to all who gave so generously of your time, talent and treasure to reach our goals for helping ELCA World Hunger Projects. Thank you, Adam Tortorello.

Sunday, March 31st Easter Sunday coffee and muffins. Christ is Risen, Alleluia!

Linda Hilliard, Fellowship Chair

Fellowship
Photos



Property Committee Report—Deb Gresens, Chair

Building and Structure Maintenance:

The Property Committee reports the following:

Members of the Property Committee and Sexton, Dan Dickau work together to maintain the interior of St. Mark.

Jule Beer and Dave Rutz ensure facility inspections (i.e., boiler and alarm system) are up to date.

Dave Rutz manages the capital improvement plan. He provides a timeline that reflects completed projects and projections for the next three (3) to five (5) years. As part of the capital improvement plan, Associated Crafts & Willet Hauser, Architectural Glass was hired for the stained-glass window project. Each window was cleaned, and a new protective cover was placed on each window.

Landscape and Property Maintenance:

Landscape Improvement: Volunteers maintain the lawn, flower beds, community garden, pollinator garden and other plantings on the property. Members donate vegetable plants, perennials and annuals for the church gardens.

Property Maintenance: Mowing teams maintained the church lawn throughout the mowing season and will continue in 2024.

Successful Fall and spring “clean-up” days involved many volunteers.

Building Use:

Several community support groups continue to use our facility on Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday at various times.

White Rabbit Theater group, Cuatro Puntos, Gonzalo Cortes, flutist and Eclectica musical groups, Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet have used the Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary for rehearsals and performances/concerts.

VRABE (Vernon Regional Adult Based Education) continues to provide classes for ESL students (English as a Second Language), GED (Graduate Equivalency Degree) and Literacy classes have been added. A nursery/preschool is available for parents and/or caregivers attending class on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Glastonbury Baptist Church is using rooms in the lower level to hold worship services on Sunday morning and evening and a Bible study class on Wednesday evenings.

All applications for community use of St. Mark’s facilities are reviewed by the Property Committee and recommendations are presented to the Council

Personnel:

Committee Members: Dave Rutz, Jule Beer, Leslie O’Rourke, Andrea Clark and Deb Gresens.



Audit Committee Report

The Audit Committee reviewed documented procedures, bank statements, income received by category, and financial reports of the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Mission Endowment Fund and the Scrip program. A random sample of 5 percent was taken of expenditures and deposits on bank records with over sampling in expenditures over \$1,000. Expenditures were verified to have been authorized by the adopted budget or motion by the Congregation Council. Invoices and receipts were examined and compared to payments. Income deposits were verified against counting sheets and the computer records maintained by the Office Manager. Total income and expenditures were compared to the end-of-year reports of the Treasurer and Financial Secretary.

Based on audit work performed, the books and records appear to be materially accurate in all respects. Testing performed also found that the controls governing the financial operations process appear to be in place and operating as intended. Although controls over financial operations appear to be adequate, additional work is needed in the following areas:

- A person other than the Treasurer or President should reconcile the bank statements.
- Pre-paid capital funds should be treated the same way as general fund pre-paid pledges.
- A process should be established between the Financial Secretary and the Office Manager to make adjustments and corrections.
- The Scrip financial records and inventory should be reconciled twice yearly by the Treasurer or another appointed person not managing the program.
- Guidelines should be developed on the use of Memorial Funds.
- A current listing of fixed assets should be developed.

The Audit Committee would like to thank Karin Reinhardt, Linda Obedzinski, David Taylor and Ellen Topel Dougherty for all of their time and work explaining procedures, gathering documents and data thereby making the Audit Committee's task much easier and more enjoyable. Implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report would help strengthen existing controls and provide additional efficiencies.

Committee Members:

Ronald Kraatz

Ellen Zerillo

Mark Crayton

Member at Large—Elaine Auger

As Member At Large, my duties are to support Council Members in various tasks and bring Members' concerns (while preserving their confidentiality) to Council.

My primary duties have been to file copies of the bills, employee timesheets and requests for reimbursements paid by the Treasurer. I also secured J.B. Williams Park for our multi-church picnic to be held September 22, 2024 and continue to work on the picnic committee.

Mission Endowment Fund Report—Endowment Investment Committee

MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND 2023 REPORT

Provision D of the St. Mark's Mission Endowment Fund Policy requires that the Endowment Investment Committee (EIC) report Fund balances, investment performance and material investment recommendations to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting following Council's formal review and approval.

NOTE: Within the ELCA Foundation the name of the fund where our fund is invested in the "Ministry Growth Fund".

FUND BALANCE: The St. Mark investment account began 2023 with a balance of \$56,716.68 and ended the year with a balance of \$64,727.15. Due to an error, I believe on my part, I did not make a request to the fund for \$2,000 for mission grants to be made by St. Mark. **These grants were: \$1,000 for Lutheran World Relief in response to earthquakes in Syria and Turkey, \$500 to MACC, \$250 to Carol's Closet, and \$250 to the Glastonbury Food Bank.** The church made these grants and will receive compensation from the fund in 2024 for these grants.

PERFORMANCE: See page 2 of this report which provides statistical information directly from the ELCA and its investment firm.

MATERIAL INVESTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS: There are no recommendations at this time. The Fund continues to focus on the longer term, adhering to its overall strategic asset allocation, seeking to deliver solid, long-term results through a blend of asset classes. See page 2 for more information.

GIFTS MADE TO THE FUND BY MEMBERS: There were no individual gifts made to the endowment by members or others in 2023. For more information about how to make a gift to the fund see the text below. There are quarterly fund earnings that are folded back into the principal of the fund annually and help it grow.

MISSION GRANT IMPACT OF OUR FUND: Having exceeded the \$50,000 minimum required by our church for a withdrawal we were once again able to fulfill the Fund's purpose to support and enhance the mission of our Church. With the 2023 grants of \$2,000 the Fund has generated a total of \$17,900 for Missions work/grants since the Fund's viability in 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A 2024 WITHDRAWAL: I would recommend to the Finance Committee and Board making a withdrawal of \$2,000 to pay the church back for its outlay in 2023 and another \$2,500 for this year's selection of grants to be made.

Member Reminder About Contributions – Congregation members can make contributions to our Mission Endowment Fund at anytime by designating a gift to the ***Mission Endowment Fund*** in gifts to Saint Mark. Additionally, members may also designate a gift to the fund in their estate plans which will eventually add to the fund and allow us to make more of an impact with our Mission work locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Contact David J. Obedzinski, (Hofstrafan@msn.com/860-805-8198) - Finance Committee Representative to the Mission Endowment Fund – April 14, 2024

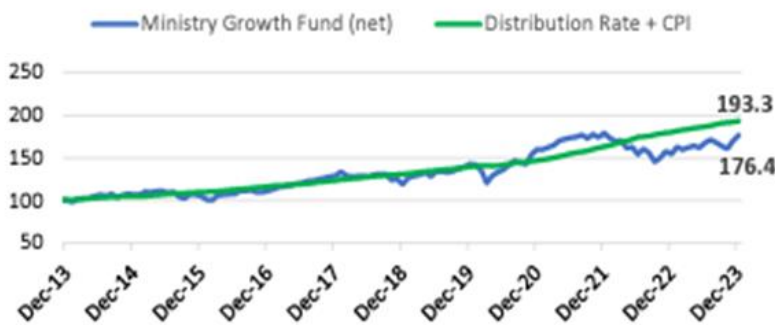
Mission Endowment Fund Report—continued



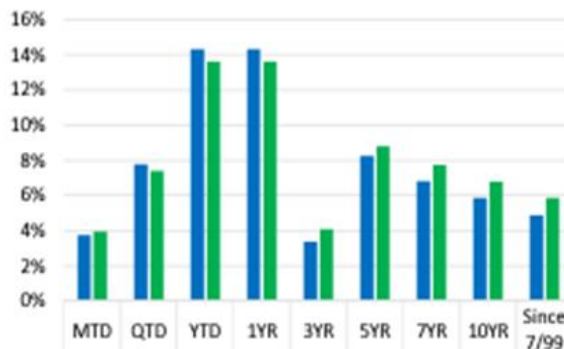
MINISTRY GROWTH FUND¹

Data as of December 31, 2023

Growth of \$100 (10 Years Performance Analysis)²



Multi-Period Performance Analysis



Period	Ministry Growth Fund (net)	Target Benchmark
MTD	3.7%	3.9%
QTD	7.7%	7.4%
YTD	14.3%	13.6%
1YR	14.3%	13.6%
3YR	3.4%	4.1%
5YR	8.2%	8.8%
7YR	6.8%	7.7%
10YR	5.8%	6.8%
Since 7/99	4.9%	5.8%

10 Years Risk / Return Performance Analysis



	Return	Standard Deviation	Sharpe Ratio	Maximum Drawdown	Alpha	Beta
Ministry Growth Fund (net)	5.8	10.9	0.4	-18.9	-0.8	1.0
Target Benchmark ⁴	6.8	11.1	0.5	-17.3	0.0	1.0

Fund Overview

DESCRIPTION

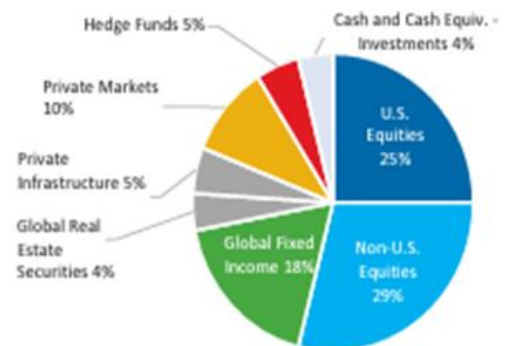
The ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust (Ministry Growth Fund, or the Fund), was established to allow for the collective long-term investment of funds belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), its congregations, synods, seminaries and other eligible affiliated entities. To the extent practicable, the Fund pursues investment objectives in line with the Economic Social Criteria Investment Screens approved by the ELCA Church Council. Incorporated into the Fund's accounting are unitization and quarterly endowment distributions. The ELCA Foundation administers the Fund.

Only ELCA-related institutions can be eligible to participate in this investment fund that is exempt from most security registration requirements in accordance with the Philanthropy Protection Act of 1995.

ABOUT PERFORMANCE

The investment results depicted herein represent historical net performance after the deduction of investment manager and custodian fees and expenses as well as the Foundation's administrative fee of 60 basis points (0.60%). Refer to the Disclosure Statement for total fees and expenses. Prior to July 2017, the total fee was 100 basis points (1.00%). Annual, cumulative and annualized total returns are calculated assuming reinvestment of dividends and income plus capital appreciation. Performance for periods greater than one year is annualized. Underlying returns were provided by the Fund's respective managers. **Past performance is not a guarantee of future results.**

TARGET ALLOCATION³



Financial Secretary's Report—Dave Taylor

In addition to the operating income listed, we received \$1,280 for local missions, \$13,400 for capital improvements and \$4,138 for ELCA World Hunger. Thank you to all members of the St. Mark family for your continuing generosity.

Lutheran Church of St. Mark

Income History

Operating Income	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual
Pledged	161,104	175,600	175,600
Unpledged	6,500	7,562	7,056
Community Donations	2,520	5,146	6,600
Holiday Envelopes	3,600	2,493	3,610
Thrivent Choice	3,032	1,852	1,934
Loose Plate	84	597	65
Flowers & Bulletins	315	950	1545
Utilities, Snowflakes	150	970	20
Developers			1,500
Total	177,305	195,170	197,930

Treasurer's Report—Linda Obedzinski

2023 Operating Expenses

Expenses by Category	2023 Actual <u>Expenses</u>	2022 Actual <u>Expenses</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Ministry	137,015	129,981	7,034
Missions	12,000	11,670	330
Committees	6,991	6,508	483
Operating	62,877	56,010	6,867
Other	1,652	2,323	- 671
Total	220,535	206,492	14,043

Additionally, \$12,000 was expended on mission projects off-budget.

Continued next page

Treasurer's Report—*continued*

Lutheran Church of Saint Mark

Total Asset Balance Sheet

	12/31/2023	3/31/2024	Change from prior quarter	Notes
ASSETS				
---Cash and Bank Accounts				
St Mark Checking Account (082)	\$ 22,491	\$ 42,383	\$ 19,892	
St Mark Savings	\$ 59,288	\$ 47,294	\$ (11,994)	
CD at TD Bank	\$ 20,513	\$ 20,707	\$ 194	
ELCA Mission Endowment Fund	\$ 64,727	\$ 67,332	\$ 2,605	
TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts	\$ 167,019	\$ 177,716	\$ 10,697	Fully paid 2024 pledges boost this total
LIABILITIES				
Key Deposit	\$ 1,166	\$ 1,166	\$ -	
Memorial Fd Liability	\$ 6,441	\$ 6,441	\$ -	
Memorial Fund Rindi Taylor	\$ 1,586	\$ 1,586	\$ -	
Memorial Fund Wes Clark	\$ 4,551	\$ 4,551	\$ -	
Mission Endowment Fund	\$ 64,727	\$ 67,332	\$ 2,605	
Organ fund Liability	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Restricted - Capital Campaign	\$ 27,975	\$ 19,431	\$ (8,544)	Payments made for stained glass project
Restricted - Mission	\$ 6,554	\$ 6,604	\$ 50	
Restricted gifts World Hunger	\$ 501	\$ -	\$ (501)	Balance of funds was sent to World Hunger
Restricted-Next Year Pledges	\$ 24,545	\$ -	\$ (24,545)	Moved into checking
Restricted-Youth Group	\$ 8,162	\$ 8,162	\$ -	
Special Funds Held	\$ 2,639	\$ 2,150	\$ (489)	
Pastor's CE - accrual of unused funds	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ (3,000)	Used for April 2024 educational travel
Sabbatical Funds - Pastor plus church	\$ 558	\$ 558	\$ -	
Glastonbury Links Together	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Pastor's Discretionary fund	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,800	\$ (200)	For hardship assistance
			\$ -	
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 154,405	\$ 119,781	\$ (34,624)	
Equity (assets less liabilities)	\$ 12,614	\$ 57,935	\$ 45,321	Fully paid 2024 pledges boost this total

Stewardship Report—Ronald Kraatz

The Stewardship campaign for the 2024 church year was based on the theme “God has all the Donuts”. R. Kraatz led an exercise of “Stretching” during the worship service on October 15. An article was placed in the October Messenger to introduce the theme and announce the “Breakfast Church” on November 5. We used a recorded presentation by J John in lieu of a sermon to provide context for the theme. R. Kraatz distributed pledge forms focusing on time, talents and treasures (Donuts) and asked members to “stretch” in their commitments to Saint Mark.

Pledges were received on November 19 with follow-up spanning the next three weeks. The summarized results of financial commitments are given below. The time and talents commitments were summarized and distributed to Council.

Continued next page

Stewardship Report—*continued*

Pledges Received:	28
Repeat from prior year	26
New	2
Pledged prior year, not yet received	2
Pledged for 2024	\$ 174,874
Pledged prior year, not yet received	\$ 14,600
Repeat pledges total increase	\$ 9,268
Percentage increase	5.3 %
Capital Funds Pledged 2024	\$ 13,557
Capital Funds Pledged 2023	\$ 13,720

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who serves on Church Council. The gifts of time and leadership are among the most valuable gifts one can share with a congregation. A special thank you to outgoing members — Outreach Chair, Anne Davis; Member-at-Large, Elaine Auger (who will be the new Outreach Chair); Secretary, Carol Weber and Fellowship Chair, Linda Hilliard. Thank you, and all who serve and support Saint Mark’s ministry, for your dedication, your leadership and your service!

Pastor Hoffman & the members of Saint Mark



The Lutheran Church
of Saint Mark

In joy we share Christ's truth.
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