

Elim Lutheran Church

Annual Report for 2023



Contents

Opening Litany.....	3
From the Pastor	4
From the Council President	7
Program Staff Reports.....	7
Children, Youth & Family Coordinator – Vanessa Carpenter.....	7
Organist/Accompanist and Media Specialist – Brian Voss	8
Choir Director – Janet Beckman	10
Handbell Choir Director – Joan Detzler.....	10
Office Staff Report	10
Worship Attendance, Membership, and Homebound Report	11
Finance/Stewardship Committee	12
Elim Lutheran Church Financial Report	14
Organ Committee	18
Property Committee	19
Elim’s Scandia/Marine Food Shelf.....	20
Elim Foundation.....	20
Elim Foundation Financial Report 2023	21
Elim W/ELCA Financial Report 2023	23
Elim Cemetery Committee.....	24
Elim Cemetery and Columbarium Financial Report 2023	25
Barton Johnson Park Fund Financial Report 2023	29
Scandia Preschool	30
Scandia Preschool Financial Report 2023	31
From the St. Paul Area Synod	32
From the ELCA	35

Opening Litany

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

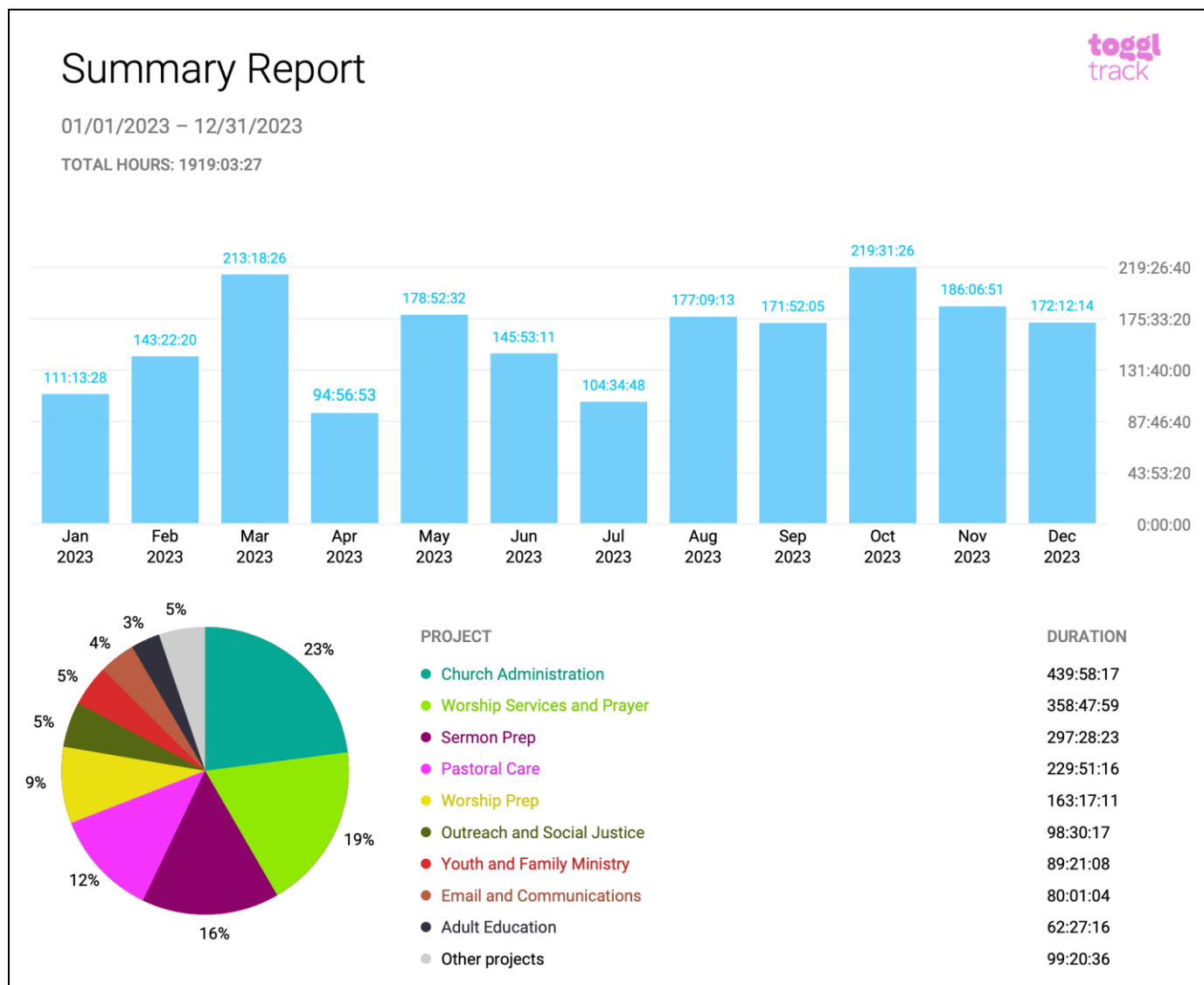
As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

From the Pastor

Logged Pastoral Hours

These are my pastoral hours, of which I track both the duration and nature of my work. I document the number of hours spent and the specific tasks undertaken. The result is a comprehensive month-to-month breakdown of the hours invested and a pie chart illustrating the distribution of tasks based on frequency.



What did we do in 2023?



17 New Members

7 Baptisms

103 Pastoral Visitations

\$1750 in grants

\$8416 amount of dollars
in Caring and Sharing
funds given out to the
community

2 Weddings

9 Funerals

As I reflect back on 2023, the most appropriate scripture that comes to mind is The Road to Emmaus. The resurrected Jesus comes to the disciples in disguise. It is only when Jesus breaks bread with the disciples that he is revealed to be the risen Christ. At Elim, we have journeyed on the road this year. We were surprised by Christ. I am glad that attendance is up. I am encouraged that youth and Sunday School enrollment is up. We have a lot to celebrate and a few things to improve upon as well. Think of all of this when you read this as a devotion.

Luke 24:32-34 They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed!'

One of the highlights of the 2023 was the successful recruitment of a Youth and Family Ministry Coordinator. We continue to build a thriving youth program. Vanessa accomplished a lot this year. The launch of a Lenten Mental Health Campaign during Lent emerged as a noteworthy initiative, proving to be an effective means of outreach to the surrounding community. The momentum of the campaign continued throughout the year.

Our council retreat was a chance for reflection and evaluation, shedding light on the areas of significant growth within our congregation. As a result attempts were made to establish numerous committees; however, coordination difficulties and volunteer recruitment posed hurdles.

May and June were dedicated to a pastoral visitation campaign. At the same time, the Care Team ministry group actively engaged in visitations, extending our outreach by delivering communion to shut-ins.

Personnel improvements were implemented when we purchased a punch clock for hourly staff. Every staff member had a yearly review in the fall of 2023. We have yet to update every employment contract. This is still a work in progress.

The New Member class garnered enthusiastic attendance, signaling growth in our community. New member Sunday introduced new congregants to our community.

Summer 2023 was an incredibly demanding summer on office staff and volunteers. Weddings, Funerals and interments were incredibly frequent. We have identified a need for a kitchen helper as a result of the high demand for facilities use. We created a job description for a position focused on dishwashing and kitchen cleanup, although the role remains unfilled.

I assisted the organ committee in discerning the purchase of used pipes and a console. Council approved the purchase in the Summer of 2023. The organ pipes were purchased at a discount and are being stored for free.

I spent one week studying at Holden Village retreat center. I spent my other continuing education leave at the 2023 Festival of Homiletics in Minneapolis. The Elim Foundation is generously funding my upcoming participation in the 2024 Festival of Homiletics in Pittsburgh. I am grateful for our commitment to ongoing pastoral education and enrichment.

As we look back on 2023, it is evident that Elim Lutheran Church has experienced significant growth, faced challenges with resilience, and remained dedicated to fostering a vibrant community. The journey continues into 2024 with a renewed sense of purpose and anticipation for what lies ahead.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Seth Perry

From the Council President

2023 has been a very busy year for Elim Lutheran Church and the church council.

Lots of progress was made by the organ committee, which has resulted in a modified proposal, which should fit our proposed capital campaign. We hired Nancy Speer to do a feasibility study for us, which has proven invaluable as we start planning for the campaign proposal.

We succeeded in hiring an amazing youth director. She has really stepped up and we now have a wonderful growing youth program and Sunday school.

The council and Elim were very involved in the Vinterfest of January 2023 and will be again even more so in 2024.

The council also supported the Spooky Music Concert for Halloween as well as 4 other concerts. The Elim Council also had a presence at Taco Daze.

We made huge progress with our new finance committee on the technical management of the church finances. We are doing a better job of reviewing the accounting and working to make sure we are following the best practices in that area.

We still have some challenges for 2024 but we have a capital campaign committee in place to develop the campaign and what the proposal will look like when we present it to the congregation.

We imitated quite a few new programs. We bought two tablets and one of our members programmed them to be really easy to hook up to our live stream church services for folks who cannot come to church. We have since added two more.

Our members of Elim have really stepped up and are doing a great job carrying on our mission under the wonderful direction of Pastor Seth Perry.

Thanks to all of you for all you are doing for Elim. We are indeed a wonderful church family. Praise be to the Lord.

Alan Bakke

Council president

Program Staff Reports

Children, Youth & Family Coordinator – Vanessa Carpenter

As the Youth and Family Coordinator at Elim Lutheran Church, the past year has been a journey filled with accomplishments, growth, and community engagement. This report highlights the key achievements and experiences that have shaped my first year here at Elim

The year kicked off with a memorable Lutheran Night at the Twins game in August. We had over 70 members from our congregation in attendance. A special moment was when one of our youth had the honor of throwing the first pitch. The Youth and Sunday School even made an appearance on the big screen before the 7th inning singing "Take me out to the ballgame." This event not only brought us together, but also set the stage for more exciting endeavors.

Our Youth Group has flourished, with many new faces and an average of 12 youths attending each Sunday. We delved into the study of Lutheran History and Catechism, deepening our understanding of faith. The active involvement of youth and parents in the demo and remodel of our Youth Room this summer showcased a strong sense of community and dedication.

Our Youth actively participated in community events, including the Scandia Taco Daze booth and parade float during which they threw out candy and represented Elim's Youth Group. Volunteer activities such as decorating and working at the Spooky Music Fun Fair, fundraising and buying gifts for the PCYC gift sale during Christmas, community trash clean-up, involvement in worship as ushers and acolytes, and Sunday School assistance showcased their sense of service, faith, and community spirit.

Sunday School saw an average of 11 students every Sunday, exploring themes like the lineage of Abraham's family and various Old Testament stories. The children's Christmas Play during the Christmas Eve service was a highlight, and their dedication and hard work were truly special.

As we reflect on the extraordinary achievements of this year, we eagerly anticipate the opportunities and growth that 2024 will bring. The Youth will be involved in fundraising at the chili cook-off at Vinterfest and organizing a pizzeria dinner for the Fireman's Ball in February. Plans for attending camp at Summer Festival at Gustavus are in motion. Sunday School will continue to offer enriching experiences for our children, along with VBS in early summer.

This past year has been filled with joy, learning, and community building. I am immensely proud of the accomplishments of our Youth and the engagement of our church community. As we look forward to the next year, I am excited about the continued growth, education, and shared experiences that will strengthen our bonds and make Elim Lutheran Church an even more vibrant place for all.

Organist/Accompanist and Media Specialist – Brian Voss

“Behold I am making all things new.” Revelation 21:5

This simple yet poignant bible verse has been calling at me throughout 2023 and burns even brighter going into 2024. With Pastor Seth fully on-board and taking charge of staff, I gained a solid sense of direction in many facets, and with greater clarity. Holding steadfast to many generations of traditions, I see new and positive direction in so many ways. This blessing cannot be overstated.

As many know, my role at Elim has become more encompassing. The following is a summary of my 2023 activities:

Organist – Accompanist

I thoroughly enjoy continuing my duties providing music for worship. In a sense, music in every worship service is ‘new’ because it is created live – there are no pre-recordings for music before, during and after the service. This is a blessing because it allows the Holy Spirit the opportunity to intervene and bring relevant meaning. There is value in allowing God's active presence to inspire and lead us – no “canned music” can adequately do that.

Behind the scenes, I work with pastor and staff to help develop our worship through intentional planning. This usually happens weekly via an online meeting. Next time you look at an order of worship in the bulletin, take note how everything ties together to support a common theme, whether it be a noteworthy Sunday on the church calendar, a sermon series, a current issue, or concern. We want you to get the most out of your worship experience.

Pipe Organ Project

The Pipe Organ Committee continued throughout 2023, serving at the pleasure of church council through many meetings, hours of research and undertaking various activities to help position Elim for a successful organ renovation and improvement project.

In early 2023 the Organ Committee's efforts focused on the possibility of acquiring an existing pipe organ in Seattle. This instrument would have outright replaced the current organ. While it would

have been phenomenal, the organ was ultimately determined to be a poor fit for Elim. The effort was immediately sidelined.

In June, I became aware of a large amount of pipe organ equipment that was available in nearby Wisconsin for a lucrative price. The value potential for Elim in this equipment was incredible and a rare opportunity, and after personally inspecting the collection with two organ committee members, the committee quickly appealed to council to propose its acquisition. With council's approval the equipment was purchased. I organized a small group to pick up the equipment and bring it to Scandia. The equipment has been cataloged and stored locally for future use in Elim's organ project.

In preparation for the capital campaign, with my leadership the organ committee collaborated with a reputable organ builder to develop a reasonable proposal to rebuild and expand the pipe organ using a substantial amount of the parts collection we acquired from Wisconsin. More details on this will be forthcoming at the appropriate time.

After dedicating thousands of hours of volunteer time, I am thrilled that Elim is closely reaching a point where the pipe organ can and will be rebuilt. There is so much potential for the new organ to greatly improve and enhance worship, better connect us to our Lutheran faith, and provide a new means for community outreach. I pray that Elim will remain faithful to the project and see it through to successful completion.

Music & Concert Series

2023 saw the second season for the Music and Concert Series with robust turnout at many events. The spring series included a string trio, Swedish music group, a local and growing ukulele group and more. The fall events included the return of Spooky Music and the Unexpected Company Chorale winter concert. The introduction of the Veterans Day concert was exceptionally well-received, so much so that we are compelled to make it an annual event.

As we continue this ministry outreach, I invite everyone to consider a modest financial contribution and volunteer support. While Elim offers most of these events free of charge, producing these events is not free. It also takes many volunteers to lighten the workload. Let us know if you can help!

Livestream, Website, Social Media and Communications

Elim's online resources continue to develop. Our livestream ministry is stable and reliably reaches dozens of members and online visitors weekly. I routinely keep the website and social media (Facebook) updated to keep a fresh, professional-looking public face.

As we continue into 2024, I encourage Elim to remain faithful in supporting and improving this ministry. The livestream team needs a better space to run the livestream. The livestream system itself needs more cameras to provide a better online view of the worship service. Part of the capital campaign includes provisions to improve the livestream and technology systems in the worship space (including lighting). And as always, more volunteers will help lighten the workload. If you know anyone who loves working with audio and video equipment, send them our way!

Respecting My Limitations

2023 proved that, as much as I would like to help out everywhere at Elim, I simply don't have enough time to do so. After bringing back the Rummage Sale, helping revive the Men's Bible Study, coordinating events such as the 2023 Chili Cook-off, Taco Daze tents, etc., I am grateful for Pastor Seth's guidance and leadership to help bring on additional staff and delegate others to help me focus on what I do best – music and online work.

I am so happy to be a part of Elim. Sometimes challenging, but always grateful and gratifying. Blessings to you all – let's continue Elim's forward movement in 2024!

Choir Director – Janet Beckman

It has been wonderful to return to a more "normal" year of singing! While our numbers are still smaller than they were pre-pandemic, we have had quite a few new participants rotating in to sing with us as they are able. Thank you to the loyal faces who have stuck with us through thick and thin, and thanks to all of you who have given choir a try and join us regularly. There is always room for more!

We've been taking advantage of the large music library that Elim has built over the years. I continually find 'new to us' pieces to fit with the weekly scripture and sermon theme. As a result, we've been able to concentrate our budget on a select few pieces while still providing a rich and beautiful variety of music.

I look forward to the coming year and continuing to bring meaningful music to our congregation. Please let Pastor Seth or me know of any suggestions you have to further enhance our vocal offerings.

Handbell Choir Director – Joan Detzler

In 2023, the handbells played in almost every month that bells are in session: January through May and September through December. While the group is still relatively small, they continue to be dedicated and hard working. I love working with them and bringing our music to you. We played a variety of music, from upbeat to solemn. In October, we provided a special welcome for our new congregational members. One of the goals I had for 2023 was to find ways to incorporate bells into the service. I attended a music clinic in July 2023, where one of the sessions was about enhancing scripture readings with musical elements. One of the examples provided was for the creation story. The Sunday School started the season learning about the Old Testament, with their first lesson being the creation story. This was the perfect opportunity to implement what I had learned at the clinic in a worship service. (God works in mysterious ways!)

As we move into 2024, I will continue to find ways to incorporate bells (and perhaps other musical elements) into the service. Another goal continues to be to grow the handbell choir. If being a part of the handbell choir is something you have been pondering, please get in touch with me. Even if you cannot not commit to the entire season, there would be opportunities for you to participate. I am hoping that I will be able to offer introductory sessions for bell playing this year. (Unfortunately, that didn't happen last year.)

I want to extend my thanks to the players for their hard work and dedication. I also want to extend my thanks to you, the congregation, for your support and encouragement. It has truly been a blessing for me to be able to provide this ministry for Elim.

Office Staff Report

1 Corinthians 12:4-6: *⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.*

As you are reading the 2023 Annual Report for Elim, you are seeing the overwhelming evidence of the varieties of gifts, services, and activities – not only from church staff, but also from you. This section focuses on the office staff: Joan Detzler, Office Administrator and Lisa Weigel, Financial Administrator. Lisa handles everything financial – receiving, depositing, and acknowledging contributions; paying bills; maintaining payroll-related records and processing payroll; responding to requests from council or members; and reconciling the books at the end of each month. Joan handles most everything else – responding to phone calls and walk-in visitors, producing the

weekly bulletin and monthly newsletter, maintaining member records within the church management software and the required paper records, working with Pastor Seth on funeral planning with families, producing funeral bulletins, working with Pastor Seth and the music staff on worship planning, and other general office-related duties.

Each of us has different gifts – most notably Lisa has the gift of numbers and Joan the gift of words. However, we each have the gift of being able to analyze various processes to find ways to improve them. During 2023, we have found ways to work more efficiently and effectively. Whether it is streamlining some of the manual processes, or leveraging the capabilities of our church management software, we have made improvements in many of our tasks. This is a continuous process, as we are always looking for areas to make improvements. Some of the process improvements include:

- Adding codes and other elements to the church management software to make record keeping and reporting easier.
- Analyzing offering envelope usage to reduce the waste of unused envelopes. Part of this also included leveraging the church management software so that the process will be easier for future years.
- Creating policies, procedures, and checklists to ensure all work is done consistently, accurately, and efficiently.
- Implementing a time card system to ensure time worked for hourly employees is accurately tracked.
- Acquiring a new printer/copier that is faster and retiring the Riso machine. This change also resulted in overall cost savings and a reduction in some of the manual work involved with producing newsletters and bulletins.

As activities within the church have increased throughout 2023 and into 2024, so has the workload in the office, so please be patient with us. Communication is also key as activities increase, whether it is communication with the Council, various groups or committees, other staff members, or with you – the congregation. Yet sometimes, things fall through the cracks. We are working to find ways to improve communication so that we can keep you informed.

We thank you for your support and encouragement.

Joan and Lisa

Worship Attendance, Membership, and Homebound Report

Sunday Worship Statistics

The table below shows a comparison of worship attendance for 2023 and 2022. Overall, attendance increased in 2023. Total in-person worship has increased by 14.6%. The total of online views has also increased by 26.7%.

Year	Total 8:00 a.m. Worship	Total 9:30 a.m. Worship	Total In-Person Worship	Total Online Views
2023	1,567	6,069	2,438	7,636
2022	1,367	4,662	1,655	6,029

Membership

2023 Beginning Membership	788
Members Added	
Baptized	3
Confirmed	0
New Members	14
Total Added	17
Members Removed	
Deaths	10
Removals	10
Transfers	3
Total Removed	23
Net Change	(6)
2023 Ending Membership	782

Homebound Members

Below is a list of our members who, based on information we have, are homebound – either at home or in care facilities.

Robin Booren	Marilyn Roe
Darlene Johnson	Marilyn Rosenquist
John & Chris Frankson	Arbutus Shalander
Janet Jackson	Johanna Swedberg
Darlene Johnson	Ruth Thiele
Merilee Larkey	Ruth Vogt
Robert Mattheisen	Hazel Walgren

Finance/Stewardship Committee

The current members of the Finance/Stewardship Committee are:

- Doug Thomas, (Treasurer of the Congregation)
- Tammy Peterson (Chair of the Committee)
- Warren Zenk (At Large Board Member, Stewardship representative)
- Jeff Garritsen (member of the congregation)
- Sylvia Mills (member of the congregation)

The committee's overall purpose is to assist the Church Council in fulfilling its general oversight of the congregation's accounting, financial reporting, and internal control systems. This year, the Charter was slightly changed to incorporate the responsibilities of the Stewardship Committee; therefore, this Committee has overall responsibility to create the church's budget and coordinate the church's Giving Campaign annually. Our monthly agendas provide for review of the past month's expenses and income, comparisons to budgeted expenses and cash flow review from previous periods.

This year, our committee strived to provide more financial information to the congregation through information in the bulletin and the *Messenger*. This year, we did not ask congregation members to complete an estimate of giving card. Our anticipated income is based on past giving and a 10% increase. The overall increase in giving from 2022 to 2023 was 8.6%; if we include the two special gifts totaling \$39,000, the increase was \$18%. Our committee encouraged the congregation to continue supporting the operating budget during 2023 through temple talks and we also began publishing information in the *Messenger* celebrating our many stewardship programs, most recently the Altar Guild and the Prayer Shawl Ministry.

In October, our committee began working on the budget, which was then presented to the congregation in the Annual Meeting, Part I in November. Two listening sessions were held, one in December and one in January. The final budget for 2024 will be available at the Annual Meeting, Part II in February. Final results as of 12-31-2023 are below:

Elim General Fund Cash Flow Report thru December 31, 2023

December 2023		Year-to-Date	2023 Budget	% Over/Under Budget
Income	\$72,197.92	\$513,176.11	\$509,111.00	1% Over Budget
Expenses	\$42,208.66	\$446,381.23	\$509,111.00	14% Under Budget
Total year to date Income includes individual gifts of \$34,000 in June, and \$5,000 in August to the general fund. The year 2023 ended with a positive cash balance due to strong support and giving in December.				

Refer to the Elim Financial Report (pages 14 to 17) for the combined balance sheet (general fund and memorial funds).

We thank the congregation for the continued support of Elim's ministry through your monetary gifts.

Submitted by:

Tammy Peterson, Finance Committee Chair

January 17, 2024

Elim Lutheran Church Financial Report

Elim Evangelical Lutheran Church

Balance Sheet

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Consolidated - December 2023

	Current Year
ASSETS	
CURRENT ASSETS	
CASH	
CHECKING ACCOUNTS	
Security Bank-General Fd	\$254,714.57
Security Bank - CC&S	3,838.49
Subtotal Checking Accounts	258,553.06
SAVINGS ACCOUNTS	
Security Bank-Memorial Fd	363,939.11
Subtotal Current Assets	622,492.17
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$622,492.17</u>
FUND BALANCE	
Fund Balance	<u>\$622,492.17</u>
TOTAL FUND BALANCE	622,492.17
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	<u>\$622,492.17</u>

Elim Evangelical Lutheran Church
Income and Expense Statement
Consolidated - December 2023

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	Current Period	Year to Date	YTD Prior Year
INCOME			
CONTRIBUTIONS			
General Fund	\$45,889.00	\$401,857.60	\$393,496.32
General Fund-Loose	7,569.00	70,043.58	17,027.28
General Fund-Special	9,750.00	21,610.00	6,066.00
Thanksgiving	20.00	557.00	1,476.00
Christmas	8,968.00	8,988.00	10,376.65
Easter/Lent	0.00	8,715.06	6,992.00
Subtotal Contributions	72,196.00	511,771.24	435,434.25
INVESTMENT INCOME			
Interest Income	49.68	415.12	129.13
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME			
Thrivent Choice Dollars	0.00	472.00	135.00
Rent - Church	0.00	912.06	1,375.00
Fund & Entity Income	27,566.50	259,730.29	207,013.32
Miscellaneous-Intl Wrld R	0.00	350.00	2,305.00
Miscellaneous-Dom Wrld Re	0.00	249.00	200.00
Subtotal Miscellaneous Income	27,566.50	261,713.35	211,028.32
TOTAL INCOME	99,812.18	773,899.71	646,591.70
EXPENSES			
GENERAL EXPENSES			
MISSIONS & BENEVOLENCE			
St. Paul Synod	\$2,295.00	\$28,040.00	\$29,993.00
World Relief/World Hunger	0.00	599.00	2,505.00
Luther Point Bible Camp	537.25	2,149.00	2,149.00
Lutheran Social Service	562.50	2,250.00	2,250.00
Iringa Diocese	14,605.00	14,605.00	17,605.00
Subtotal Missions & Benevolence	17,999.75	47,643.00	54,502.00
PAYROLL EXPENSE			
Salaries	21,038.09	254,007.12	250,802.69
Social Security	1,157.82	13,561.40	12,351.19
Reimburse frm Entities	-1,894.88	-18,324.17	-30,641.41
Subtotal Payroll Expense	20,301.03	249,244.35	232,512.47
PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES			
Pension, Health, & Dental	5,045.93	59,535.57	27,427.28
Auto Expense Reimbursemt	500.25	1,553.67	969.24
Periodicals/Magazines	57.80	147.75	147.75
Pastoral Cont. Education	0.00	1,000.00	30.00
Council Retreat	0.00	0.00	109.99
Office Supplies/Postage	501.20	9,587.35	13,956.38
Subtotal Professional Expenses	6,105.18	71,824.34	42,640.64
OPERATING EXPENSES			
ELECTRICITY			
Electricity-Church	963.63	12,637.65	10,772.52
Electricity-Parsonage	135.83	1,078.27	462.53
Subtotal Electricity	1,099.46	13,715.92	11,235.05

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Elim Evangelical Lutheran Church
Income and Expense Statement
Consolidated - December 2023

	Current Period	Year to Date	YTD Prior Year
GAS			
Gas-Church	1,226.88	17,217.23	19,065.82
Gas-Parsonage	55.95	1,938.65	1,767.69
Subtotal Gas	1,282.83	19,155.88	20,833.51
SEWER/WATER			
Sewer/Water-Church	0.00	5,216.48	2,907.88
TELEPHONE			
Telephone-Church	691.18	3,869.91	3,147.30
LOANS			
SN Bldg Loan Repayment	776.50	9,318.00	9,318.00
MISCELLANEOUS FEES			
Fees Paid	426.78	8,253.56	10,335.75
Subtotal Operating Expenses	4,276.75	59,529.75	57,777.49
INSURANCE			
Insurance	0.00	41,664.58	40,193.26
Reimburse frm Entities	0.00	-10,499.71	-6,455.59
Subtotal Insurance	0.00	31,164.87	33,737.67
DEPARTMENTAL MINISTRIES			
Christian Education-Adult	600.00	3,541.75	0.00
Christian Education-Child	30.31	633.87	200.83
Pastoral Supply	0.00	546.32	5,678.77
Archives	25.73	25.73	0.00
Social Concerns Ministry	4,007.59	49,837.06	32,120.71
Stewardship & Finance	419.90	704.85	1,349.57
Youth	2,798.95	9,611.92	0.00
Campership / Scholarships	0.00	0.00	540.00
Worship & Music	3,891.82	25,748.40	5,023.77
Janitor Supplies & Maint	325.05	4,147.87	3,368.27
Property Maint.-Church	166.33	9,700.02	8,616.60
Property Maint.-Parsonage	56.68	291.18	1,335.94
Subtotal Janitor Supplies & Maint	548.06	14,139.07	13,320.81
Altar Supplies	400.00	1,112.44	897.43
Communications	0.00	1,520.63	2,518.93
Technology	859.51	3,590.75	4,373.73
Subtotal Departmental Ministries	13,581.87	111,012.79	66,024.55
DISCRETIONARY			
Staff	0.00	0.00	74.48
Senior Pastor	0.00	0.00	80.75
Subtotal Discretionary	0.00	0.00	155.23
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS			
PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT			
Prop Imp/Contingency-Chur	704.25	16,736.50	17,945.03
Prop Imp/Contingency-Pars	0.00	0.00	12,258.39
Subtotal Property Improvement	704.25	16,736.50	30,203.42
Subtotal Capital Improvements	704.25	16,736.50	30,203.42

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Elim Evangelical Lutheran Church
Income and Expense Statement
Consolidated - December 2023

	Current Period	Year to Date	YTD Prior Year
MEMORIAL FUND EXPENDITURE			
Miscellaneous Fund Expens	9,269.00	29,733.70	33,106.72
TOTAL EXPENSES	72,237.83	616,889.30	550,660.19
EXCESS INCOME/EXPENSES	\$27,574.35	\$157,010.41	\$95,931.51

01/19/2024 02:16 PM Page: 1

Elim Evangelical Lutheran Church
Accounting Fund Balances
December 2023

Fund	Beginning Balance	Direct Transactions	Income	Expense	Ending Balance
01 - GENERAL FUND	224,725.31	0.00	72,197.92	42,208.66	254,714.57
02 - LOGOS	3,181.64	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,181.64
03 - NOT DESIGNATED MEM. FUNDS	804.58	0.00	47.76	0.00	852.34
04 - FACILITIES IMPROV MAINT.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
05 - ALTAR GUILD	272.97	0.00	400.00	400.00	272.97
06 - CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY	6,554.11	0.00	1,025.00	2,675.60	4,903.51
07 - CAMPSHIP / SCHOLARSHIPS	729.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	729.55
08 - CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ADULT	1,009.41	0.00	750.00	0.00	1,759.41
09 - ARCHIVES	1,820.67	0.00	0.00	25.73	1,794.94
10 - ELIM MUSIC	70.00	0.00	10.00	80.00	0.00
11 - SOCIAL CONCERNS MINISTRY	430.21	0.00	25.00	0.00	455.21
12 - OFFICE EQUIPMENT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
14 - YOUTH TRIPS	2,138.74	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,138.74
15 - LIBRARY	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
16 - SPECIAL NEEDS - BUILDING	115,961.65	0.00	1,916.50	704.25	117,173.90
17 - SPECIAL NEEDS - MISSIONS	4,310.52	0.00	255.00	0.00	4,565.52
20 - QUILTMAKERS	2,677.80	0.00	0.00	663.44	2,014.36
21 - FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN	2,298.00	0.00	745.00	0.00	3,043.00
22 - TECHNOLOGY	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00
24 - SUPPLEMENTARY SYNOD/ELCA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
26 - MUSIC ORGAN FUND	107,950.46	0.00	6,275.00	2,817.00	111,408.46
27 - ELIM GARDEN GUILD	1,491.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,491.13
29 - KIVALAMO (BEGA-KWA-BEGA)	15,757.89	0.00	0.00	10,000.00	5,757.89
30 - CAPITAL CAMPAIGN	100,894.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100,894.00
31 - ENGQUIST MUSIC ACCT	1,327.54	0.00	175.00	0.00	1,502.54
32 - VISUAL IMPACT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
33 - SALARIES & UTILITIES	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
34 - ELIM GROWS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
40 - FOOD SHELF	0.00	0.00	3,230.00	3,230.00	0.00
41 - ELCA WORLD HUNGER	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
42 - COMM CARING & SHARING HDS	461.64	0.00	3,491.00	114.15	3,838.49
50 - CEMETERY	0.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00
51 - FOUNDATION	0.00	0.00	8,555.00	8,555.00	0.00
52 - MUSEUM	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
53 - PARK	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
54 - PRE SCHOOL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
55 - WELCA	0.00	0.00	514.00	514.00	0.00
X1 - TRANSPORTATION EXPENSE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
X2 - J BOOREN S.S. EQUIP.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
X3 - SUPPLEMENTARY LSS FUND	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
X4 - NLCC-AFRICA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Totals	594,917.82	0.00	99,812.18	72,237.83	622,492.17

Organ Committee

The Organ Committee continued its work through 2023, serving at the pleasure of church council through many meetings, hours of research and undertaking various activities to help prepare Elim to achieve a successful pipe organ renovation and expansion.

In early 2023 the Organ Committee's efforts focused on the possibility of acquiring an existing pipe organ in Seattle. This instrument would have outright replaced the current organ. While it would have been a phenomenal organ, it was determined to be a poor fit for Elim. The committee reconsidered all options that were available and concluded that rebuilding and expanding the existing instrument is in Elim's best interest. This option takes advantage of the valuable resource Elim already has – the existing pipe organ – and renew it to suit our needs well into the future.

Rebuilding and expanding the existing instrument offers a substantial cost savings compared to building a brand-new instrument. New instruments suitable for Elim start at \$1 million and increase in price based on the organ's size and features. The cost for rebuilding varies and is dependent on the scope and intensity of work needed.

Elim's organ has already been rebuilt once and it is not economical to rebuild the existing internal components again. Because of this, low-end proposals under \$400,000 are not suitable for Elim's long-term needs. The committee is recommending a combination of rebuilding and expanding the organ's tonal resources at a cost not to exceed \$700,000. This aligns very closely with the recommendations from the recently completed feasibility study.

In June the committee became aware of a large amount of pipe organ equipment that was available in nearby Wisconsin for a very low price. The value for Elim in acquiring this equipment was that it contains almost all the needed additional pipework to expand the organ as desired. Two organ committee members inspected the collection along with organist Brian Voss, and the committee quickly agreed to petition council to acquire the collection. With council's approval, the equipment was purchased and is currently stored nearby.

In preparation for the capital campaign, and with advice from organist Brian Voss, the organ committee collaborated with a reputable organ builder to develop a reasonable proposal to rebuild and expand the pipe organ using a substantial amount of the parts collection acquired from Wisconsin. More details on this will be forthcoming at the appropriate time.

The organ committee is pleased with the progress that Elim is making. We look forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in 2024 and prayerfully hope to see the organ's fully funded renewal as part of an upcoming capital campaign.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Strusinski

Property Committee

The property committee experienced a quieter year in 2023; however, numerous projects were addressed:

Parsonage:

- Replaced outside water faucet
- Re-routed air conditioner drainage tube to eliminate water leakage

Church:

- Installed dishwasher in youth room
- Replaced kitchen ice maker
- Maintained and upgraded kitchen fire suppression system
- Replaced fluorescent light bulbs with LED bulbs when needed
- Provided support and attention to future organ rebuilding project
- Completed roof maintenance and water leak repairs
- Consulted flat roof companies, gaining knowledge and obtaining estimates for our 2024 flat roof replacement project
- Removed snow, thanks to the numerous hours by dedicated volunteers
- Purchased new snow blower
- Replaced Firenet alarm system

The team's goal remains to be proactive and cost effective in reviewing maintenance issues of the property. The committee has been tracking expenditures to ensure dollars are spent wisely and to provide an accurate budget to the council to meet future building needs.

Several projects needing attention for 2024 are:

- Upgrading exterior door locks and installing security cameras
- Replacing toilets in women's restroom
- Working with Xcel Energy in upgrading our lighting fixtures to LED
- Interviewing, consulting, and obtaining final estimates from roofing companies to determine the best company that would meet our 2024 roof replacement project
- Providing support and attention to organ rebuilding project

Thank you to the congregation, the property committee members, volunteers, and the church council for their support in accomplishing these projects. These projects could not have been accomplished without the hours of service by volunteers and the generous financial support of the congregation.

This committee welcomes additional members at any time. We rely on the dedication, knowledge, and expertise that members bring to this committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Glen Sackmann

Elim's Scandia/Marine Food Shelf

2023 has been a very busy year. There has been much more need and our expenses were high. The number of people served increased 47%. By the end of the year, we will have supplied about 1132 persons with non-perishable food (11,122 pounds, 53% more than last year) and given vouchers for perishable food valued at \$16,395 (65% more than last year's amount). The vouchers are redeemable at the local market in Scandia. This includes groceries for complete dinners at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas for those in need.

The Green Grocery Shares Program for the Scandia Farmer's Market, which helps needy people purchase fresh produce during the months the Farmer's Market operates, has now come under the umbrella of the Food Shelf.

Thank you to Elim for providing space for a community food shelf. Thank you to the Scandia/Marine Lions for their support with food drives throughout the year and for providing the funds to give out complete holiday dinner boxes to needy families. Thank you to the Andersen Foundation for their yearly donation, to Christ Lutheran, Scandia/Marine Lions and various businesses and neighborhoods for their food drives and financial support, and to the Elim Congregation for your generous giving whenever it is needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy and Warren Zenk

Elim Foundation

A Ministry of Generosity

Generosity: The action to share resources (time, talent, monetary) with someone who has need without the expectation of thanks. This value is encouraged in all the major religions in the world. The act of sharing/giving is known to release positive chemical changes in both the donor and the recipient. Giving is good for everyone!

During 2023, the 26th year of generosity for the Elim Foundation these were some highlights:

- Offered a Legacy Workshop in April, open to the community, to help people make end of life plans for health and wealth decisions.
- Accepted, with gratitude, a large estate gift to enhance the amount of giving year after year after year for the Elim Foundation.
- Received memorials and honorariums from family and friends of Dick and MaryAnn Bjorkman, Mike Callas, Louise Engstrom, Audrey Hawkinson, Phyllis Johnson, Joyce Leslie, Edryce Lund and Peter Nora.
- Provided \$58,500.00 in grants to 18 organizations (11 domestic and 7 international) and 2 post secondary scholarships for Elim members.
- Continued to provide \$50.00 baptismal gifts for families to start secondary education savings accounts for Elim member children or grandchildren.

The main goal is always to grow the Elim Foundation to continue to be a Ministry of Generosity to Christian based organizations. Be sure to look at the growth graph of grant totals and the value of the Elim Foundation these past 26 years.

We welcome your suggestions, gifts, and grant nominations.

Thanks to these Elim members who serve on the Board: Greg Isaacson, Lynne Moratzka, David Olson, Tracey Thomas, Rick Sandager

Lynne Moratzka, President

Elim Foundation Financial Report 2023

ELIM FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT- Fiscal 2023

October 1 2022-September 30 2023

"Sharing the Love of Jesus Christ Through Christian Outreach"

Debits and Credits Overview

	<u>FY2022</u>	<u>FY2023</u>
Starting Assets	\$1,197,742	\$999,570
+ Change in Investment Value	-\$167,429	\$84,476
+ Donations	\$32,861	\$112,698
- Grants Paid	<u>-\$63,091</u>	<u>-\$50,000</u>
- Expenses (From Coffee Earnings)	<u>-\$513</u>	<u>-\$58</u>
Ending Assets	\$999,570	\$1,146,686

Balance Sheet

	<u>End FY2022</u>	<u>End FY2023</u>
Total Equities	\$367,899	\$423,750
Total Bonds and Bond Funds	\$596,205	\$638,061
<u>Total Cash and Money Market</u>	<u>\$35,466</u>	<u>\$84,875</u>
Ending Assets Value Month	\$999,570	\$1,146,686

F2022 Grant Recipients (Paid in Q1 F2023 based on F2022 Ending Assets)

Domestic

Arrive Ministries
Lakes Area Mobile Pack- Feed My Starving Children
Missionary Evangelism to Corrections
Lutheran Campus Ministry
Tree House Sandstone
EICA Disastere Relief
Changing Gaits

International

One Vision
Food for His Childrten
New Life Community Center
Eastern European Crisis Response
World Vision
Bega Kwa Bega

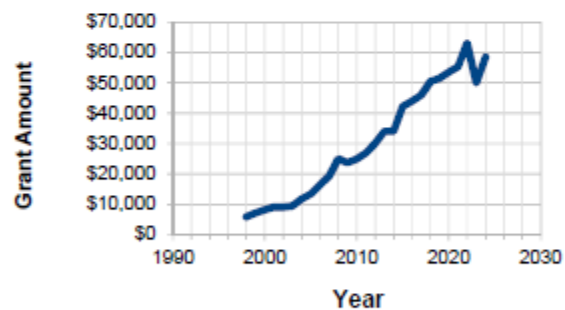
Educational Grants

Carthage College- (Emma Newcomb)
Gustavus Adolphus College

Foundation History

Fiscal Year	End of Year Fiscal Assets	Grants Paid Based on Previous Years Ending Asset Value
1997	\$113,960	
1998	\$144,440	\$5,950
1999	\$166,220	\$7,200
2000	\$181,880	\$8,300
2001	\$181,939	\$9,100
2002	\$190,180	\$9,100
2003	\$234,448	\$9,500
2004	\$267,725	\$11,800
2005	\$319,983	\$13,400
2006	\$385,359	\$16,500
2007	\$501,727	\$19,300
2008	\$468,581	\$25,030
2009	\$495,504	\$23,776
2010	\$534,053	\$25,000
2011	\$587,321	\$27,000
2012	\$662,100	\$30,000
2013	\$723,094	\$34,000
2014	\$804,805	\$34,154
2015	\$874,955	\$42,250
2016	\$917,034	\$44,000
2017	\$1,002,244	\$46,000
2018	\$1,017,974	\$50,500
2019	\$1,066,609	\$51,500
2020	\$1,104,527	\$53,500
2021	\$1,197,742	\$55,300
2022	\$999,570	\$63,091
2023	\$1,146,686	\$50,000
2024		\$58,500
Total Grants thru F23		\$823,751

Foundation Grants by Year



(includes Special Ukraine Gift)

(Paid Q1 2024)

Foundation books were reviewed by Jeff Sandager on 1/9/2024 and all financial dealings looked appropriate.

Elim W/ELCA Financial Report 2023

ELIM WOMEN OF THE ELCA 2023 TREASURER'S REPORT

January 1 through December 31, 2023

Laurie Carlson, Treasurer

<u>BEGINNING CHECKBOOK BALANCE JAN. 1, 2023</u>		\$ 8,110.75
Receipts:		
Sunday coffee fund & offerings	1,323.00	
Donations	898.00	
Funerals Served	2,400.00	
<i>Total Receipts</i>	<u>\$4,621.00</u>	12,731.75
Disbursements:		
Bible Study guides	200.00	
Donations	0.00	
Funerals Served	1,668.83	
Kitchen/FellowshipHall Supplies (Includes new ice maker)	2,922.33	
<i>Total Disbursements:</i>	<u>\$ 4,791.16</u>	(4,791.16)
Checking Account Balance Dec. 31, 2023		\$ 7,940.59

General Fund Balance	4,654.38
Dedicated Kitchen Fund Balance (future equipment needs)	<u>3,286.21</u>
TOTAL W/ELCA ASSETS Dec. 31, 2023	\$ 7,940.59

*The WELCA report was
reviewed by Peg Simpson
on 1/22/2024.*

Elim Cemetery Committee

It was a busy year in Elim's cemeteries... We assisted in fourteen burials in the cemeteries and seven commitments in the columbarium. In addition, there were seven grave lots and four niches sold.

Two major projects were started last year. The electrical wiring on the top of the north cemetery was totally replaced. At the same time, again on the top of the north cemetery, we replaced the old water lines with new pipes, standpipes and spigots. We will continue this work in the south cemetery this coming year.

We are currently working on clarifying the rules for the south cemetery. These will be shared this spring with the congregation and public.

There are now 205 veterans in our cemeteries that we recognize with Bronze Stars and Flags on Memorial Day.

If you're interested in helping with the cemetery work, please contact Scott Walcker at 651-592-3349 or send an email to elimcemetery@gmail.com

Sincerely,

The Cemetery Committee

Elim Cemetery and Columbarium Financial Report 2023

ELIM CEMETERY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

CEMETERY CHECKING ACCOUNT

Beginning Balance January 1, 2023	\$61,138.85
Total Receipts	16,118.15
Total Disbursements	<u>28,893.40</u>
Ending Balance December 31, 2023	\$48,463.60

RECEIPTS

CD Interest	\$ 457.51
Bank Interest	5.61
Interments	4,975.00
Gifts	585.03
Lot Sales	9,800.00
Deed Transfers	75.00
Staking Fee	<u>220.00</u>
Total Receipts	\$16,118.15

DISBURSEMENTS

Salaries – Lawn Care	\$ 5,855.00
Salaries – All Other	975.00
Electricity	500.10
Grave Openings	2,810.00
Water	229.05
Gas/Supplies	1,904.56
Safe Deposit Box	45.00
Snow Removal	600.00
Perpetual Care	1,100.00
Insurance	2,205.00
Gift Certificate	250.00
Tree Removal	1,300.00
Lot Return	400.00
Reimburse Columbarium	1,950.00
Staking Fee	115.00
Scandia Electric – wiring	8,240.00
Black Dirt	<u>414.69</u>
Total Disbursements	\$28,893.40

Report Prepared 1/11/2024
Sally Dalluhn, Treasurer

*Reviewed by
Scott Walcker
1/18/24*

2023 ANNUAL REPORTS

COLUMBARIUM ACCOUNT 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Beginning Balance 1/1/2023	\$45,895.31
Total Receipts	6,989.91
Total Disbursements	<u>1,059.29</u>
Ending Balance December 31, 2023	\$51,825.93

Receipts

Interest	\$ 4.91
Niche Sales	5,050.00
Engraving	500.00
Burials	<u>1,435.00</u>
	\$ 6,989.91

Expenses

Postage	\$ 89.29
Perpetual Care	100.00
Burials	600.00
Inscriptions	<u>270.00</u>
	\$1,059.29

Report Prepared 1/11/2024
Sally Dalluhn, Treasurer

*Reviewed by
Scott Walcker
1/18/24*

PERPETUAL CARE CD BALANCE

Beginning Balance January 1, 2023	\$105,671.55
Interest	25.34
Less Transfers	<u>(25.34)</u>
Balance December 31, 2023	\$105,621.55

PERPETUAL CARE MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT

Beginning Balance January 1, 2023	\$33,797.19
Receipts	<u>1,242.49</u>
Ending Balance December 31, 2023	\$35,039.68

RECEIPTS

Interest	\$ 42.49
Lot Sales	<u>1,200.00</u>
	\$ 1,242.49

Report Prepared 1/11/2024
Sally Dalluhn, Treasurer

Reviewed by
Scott Walcker
1/18/24

PERPETUAL CARE CD BALANCE

Beginning Balance January 1, 2023	\$105,671.55
Interest	25.34
Less Transfers	<u>(25.34)</u>
Balance December 31, 2023	\$105,621.55

PERPEUTAL CARE MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT

Beginning Balance January 1, 2023	\$33,797.19
Receipts	<u>1,242.49</u>
Ending Balance December 31.2023	\$35,039.68

RECEIPTS

Interest	\$ 42.49
Lot Sales	<u>1,200.00</u>
	\$ 1,242.49

CMETERY FUND CD BALANCE

Beginning Balance January 1, 2023	\$21,752.53
Interest	<u>146.58</u>
Ending Balance December 31, 2023	\$21,859.41

Report Prepared 1/11/2024
Sally Dalluhn, Treasurer

Reviewed by
Scott Walcker
1/18/24

Barton Johnson Park Fund Financial Report 2023

BARTON JOHNSON PARK FUND 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

PARK FUND CHECKING ACCOUNT

Balance Forward January 1, 2023	\$18,268.15
Total Receipts	5,847.92
Total Disbursements	<u>3,946.85</u>
Ending Balance December 31, 2022	\$20,169.22

RECEIPTS

CD Interest (Park & Park Endowment Fund	\$ 3,621.72
Bank Interest	2.20
Gifts	<u>2,224.00</u>
Total Receipts	\$ 5,847.92

DISBURSEMENTS

Salaries – Lawn Care	\$2,015.00
Salaries – All Other	300.00
Portable Toilets	436.85
Insurance	<u>1,195.00</u>
Total Disbursements	\$3,946.85

PARK ENDOWMENT FUND

Beginning Balance January 1, 2023	\$139,821.67
Interest	17.30
Interest Transferable	1,568.68
Interest Disbursement	<u>(1,568.68)</u>
Ending Balance December 31, 2023	\$139,838.97

Report Prepared 1/11/2024

Sally Dalluhn, Treasurer

*Reviewed by
Scott Walcker
1/18/24*

Scandia Preschool

Scandia Preschool is a Christian Ministry of Elim Lutheran Church. Our objectives are to provide positive experiences to help young children develop spiritually, physically, emotionally, cognitively, and socially.

Our staff consists of, Amy Majeski our Teacher/Director, as well as, Sarah Reeves our Teacher Aide.

Our curriculum includes a wide variety of topics; colors, shapes, numbers, patterns, and letters. Each week has a letter theme where the Bible stories, children's books, art projects, and many activities revolve around the letter of the week. Our curriculum also includes outdoor exploration. The class may take a nature hike, or enjoy recreation time on Elim's sledding hill, or at the playground at Gammelgården Museum.

Our current board consists of the following: Jackie Chaves (President), Arlene Swenson (Treasurer), Katie Thomas (Member at-large) and Connie Jemelka (Community Member). We always encourage participation and are actively seeking new members to join the board.

Our enrollment numbers for the 2023-2024 school year are 10 kids in total. Of those 10 students 9 are enrolled in our program with the Pre-K add-on (Tues-Thurs)

Tuition for the school year is Tuesday/Thursday tuition at \$140/month and the Wednesday (Pre-K add-on) tuition at \$185/month. We will continue to offer a scholarship program for those families in financial need.

This school year's fundraising efforts consisted of one large fundraising event. We hosted a Bake Sale during the Christmas season with one coffee hour. We are thankful for the continued support of our community.

The Scandia Preschool Board and dedicated staff are looking forward to continuing to provide a structured Christian learning environment for our children to grow and develop. This school year's goals are to watch and guide each child as they improve their social and emotional skills.

Scandia Preschool Board President
Jackie Chaves



Scandia Preschool Financial Report 2023

2023 Scandia Preschool Financial Statement

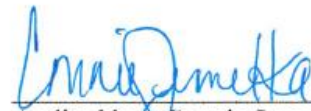
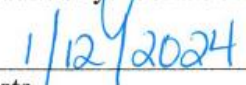
Checking Balance Forward Dec 31, 2022	\$ 6,334.75
Savings/Scholarship Balance Forward Dec 31, 2022	\$ 6,309.53

Income

Tuition	\$ 13,688.00	
Reimburse State of MN	\$ 60.00	
Donations/Gifts	\$ 450.00	
Fundraising	\$ 888.00	
Interest	\$ 4.81	
Total Carryforward & Income		27,735.09

Expenses

Payroll	\$ 18,565.14	
Supplies & Teaching Materials	\$ 230.39	
Field Trips	\$ 324.00	
Technology	\$ 779.72	
Training	\$ 370.00	
Total Expenses		-20,269.25
Balance of Accounts December 31, 2023	\$ 7,465.84	


Audited by: Connie Jemelka

Date

From the St. Paul Area Synod



*You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty.
Psalm 65:11 (ELW)*

The year 2023 brought us again to in-person worship and events after the long disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. What we did not do as a synod was to return to everything as it had been before. Recognizing that God always calls us forward into a new future, congregations discovered myriad ways to build on the lessons and new practices learned during the pandemic. Likewise, the synod embraced new ways of doing familiar things and experimented with new ideas and programs.

Here are some highlights of the investment of time and energy by the synod office during 2023. All these are made possible because of the generous financial support that passes from congregations to the synod. Thank you for helping us be a church together as we all find ways to be faithful to our callings in a changing and complex world.

An undeniable highlight was the presentation of a check for \$1,000,000 to Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota during Synod Assembly last May. The check is for renovations to a building that will house the Families Together East Side Preschool on the lower level of Grace Lutheran Church in St. Paul. This partnership is one of the pillars of The Planting Hope Campaign, which has raised \$1,473,861 to date at the end of December 2023. This is one half of our overall campaign goal.

In addition to this transformational work with LSS-MN, in 2023 we also launched the first summer of paid internships, funded through The Planting Hope Campaign. From June through August, nine young adults served in a variety of congregations and Lutheran agencies. We are grateful for the work of Pastor Bristol Reading (St. Luke, St. Paul) in overseeing this project. Also, we gave significant financial support to congregational vitality through the campaign. Those investments are detailed later in this report.

Alongside the work of The Planting Hope Campaign, congregations like yours continue to contribute toward our budget of \$1,885,000 in mission support. Fiscal Year 2023 ends on January 31, 2024 and we hope to be at the goal by then. Again, thank you for seeing how your congregation's work is supported and expanded through our common funding of synod and ELCA churchwide ministries. Despite needing to navigate new realities in a post-pandemic world, God continues to crown our efforts with God's abundance. The synod's financial work is guided by David Roinas.

During 2023 there were 28 persons in the candidacy process, preparing to serve the wider church as pastors or deacons. Currently, 22 persons are serving their first call in the Saint Paul Area Synod. They also participate in a structured program of First Call Theological Education (FCTE). Both candidacy work and FCTE are led by Deacon Krista Lind. This past year two candidates received calls in other synods. As you might imagine, this work is important for the church today and for the church in the coming years.

Candidates ordained in 2023 include Pastor Jennifer Luong, Pastor Jua Jay Her, Pastor Carrie Stiles, Pastor Amy Vigesaa, Pastor Reed Fowler, Deacon Katherine Lindberg. We also received Pastor Stanley Ayashim, recently ordained in the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, as a first call pastor through our partnership with the Lutheran World Federation. We welcome these seven new rostered ministers.

In addition to first call candidates, the synod staff works with call committees in more than two dozen congregations each year. In addition, the call manual was revised this past year and new protocols were developed to assist congregations to be open and ready to receive candidates who are persons of color or from the LGBTQIA community. As a synod, we know how important the gifts of all leaders are to the work of God's church.

During times of transition, the synod finds pastors and deacons to serve in interim roles. Those serving in interim ministry meet monthly for prayer, mutual support and learning and are directed by Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer. With Rachel Holsten, front office administrator and registrar, Rolf coordinated the Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders in February, which brought together 165 participants from 52 congregations. The two most attended workshops addressed issues of racism and implicit bias, issues which matter to all of us in this synod. In 2023, the synod also inaugurated the Deeper Dive series, a Zoom gathering for presidents and vice presidents. Twenty-four congregations participated in this inaugural series of monthly leadership training and support.

The synod also provides other initiatives to address congregational vitality. These workshops, which include Tools for the Church, Spiritual Gifts, Stewardship for All Seasons, Building a Culture of Generosity, and Liberating Structures, are led by Pastor Justin Grimm and members of the vitality team. In 2023, participants numbered more than 300.

Serving as mission developers and redevelopers during 2023 were Pastor Liz Eide, Lutheran Church of Peace; Pastor Jon Yurk, Christ the Servant; Pastor Thomas Tsen, Minnesota Faith Chinese; Pastor Dale Stiles, St. Paul in Wyoming; Pastor William Siong and Pastor Jua Jay Her at Eternal Flame; Pastor Gilo Agwa, Foundation of Life; Pastor Jodi Houge, Humble Walk; Deacon Kari Olson, Shobi's Table; and Pastor Ana Becerra, Cristo Rey. Pastors Ben and Kristen Eisele (Farmington Lutheran) completed an exploration for mission possibilities in Rosemount. When asked what is new (or renewed) in this synod, it's easy to see fresh ideas in all these settings.

During 2023 church groups were again able to travel to our partner churches in Guatemala and Tanzania. Five congregational groups were hosted by the Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala (ILAG). Two members of the Guatemala Committee, Janet Metcalfe and Jennifer Reinhardt, participated in an ELCA Global Mission international consultation in November. In 2023, 200 individuals from 16 congregations, nine affiliate organizations and two colleges traveled to the Iringa Diocese. As bishop, I was also thankful to be with our partners in Tanzania this past November.

The generosity of members of the synod supports our global companions with scholarships, emergency aid, congregation-to-congregation partnerships, and through prayer. Staff members Kirsten Levorson and Susan Seidel oversee the work of Bega Kwa Bega, which we undertake with our siblings in Tanzania.

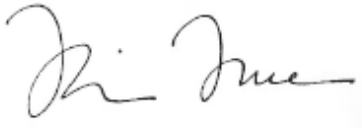
A grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. allowed additional opportunities for pastors to be well equipped for today's challenges. Synod pastors of color and the synod program staff participated in a facilitated retreat in Sedona, Ariz., in February. In addition, this past year 19 pastors, deacons, mentors, and a facilitator were a part of the Second Act cohort for rostered ministers in their fourth through tenth years of service. Our Lilly grant programs are directed by Leslie Ortiz.

Behind the scenes, Mary Smith oversaw the launch of our new website (spas-elca.org), along with 51 editions of the weekly *News and Events* newsletter, 40 companion synod newsletters, 300 social media posts, and other essential communication from the synod. (You can sign up to receive our newsletters at spas-elca.org/subscribe-to-synod-news.)

With all this creative work of the synod staff, you may wonder what the bishop does. As bishop, I work on governance with the Synod Council and Executive Committee, as well as meeting with the finance committee. I ordain new pastors and deacons and preach regularly (29 times in congregations, synod and churchwide events in 2023). I help plan the Bishop's Theological Conference and gatherings of the ministerium. I represent the synod on institutional boards and at ecumenical and inter-religious gatherings. I am a member of the Conference of Bishops and through 2023 served as a liaison bishop on the ELCA Church Council, as well as co-chairing the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue. I work with congregations in times of conflict and oversee the discipline of rostered ministers, when needed. Best of all, I serve as a pastor for the pastors and deacons in this synod, meeting regularly with individual leaders.

If you have visited the synod office, you know that we are not a large-scale operation; but if you think about the range of ministry we do together in this synod, you know our collective impact is mighty. We can do so much because of the dedicated talent of the individuals on the synod staff. I am grateful for all that Rachel, Mary, David, Kirsten, Susan, Rolf, Justin, Krista and Leslie have accomplished this past year. I am also grateful for the work Ryan and Astine Bose did in the first half of the year as our short-term volunteers in Iringa. I hope you will join me in thanking the synod staff when you see or speak to them.

Yours in God's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Lull". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "L".

Bishop Patricia Lull

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

Over the past year we have continued to experience changes in the world around us. Even as our church finds ways to adapt to this changing world, we find hope in the unchanging and always present promise of God's love through Jesus Christ. We change and adapt not to conform to the world but because we believe that the gift of God's Son is for the world, and that our congregations and worshiping communities are places to gather and be sent into the world, where we will tell the story of God's love in word and deed.

The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the churchwide organization provide ways for the church to move beyond the boundaries of structures and geography and to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, our cities, our country and beyond. We engage in this ministry knowing that our church walks by faith, trusting in God's promise in the gospel, and that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word. In John 15:5, Jesus reminds us, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." We are connected by the promise that we do all through Christ and can do nothing apart from him.

God gives the Holy Spirit, who uses gospel proclamation — in preaching and sacraments, in forgiveness and in healing conversations — to create and sustain this faith. Just as we rely on God to sustain our faith, we rely on each other to sustain the ministries that offer God's love to the world. Through your generosity to each expression

of this church — your congregation, your synod and your churchwide organization — you add to our collective voice proclaiming God's love for all.

I am grateful for your generosity over this last year. My gratitude spreads far beyond your generous financial gifts. You've shared your gifts of time through countless hours of volunteering, serving and accompanying. You've shared the gifts of your voices as we've tried to discover and learn how God is calling us to be the church now and into the future. And, finally, dear church, you have shared the gift of the realness of God's love with the world around you. Be well, dear church, and stand steadfast in the promise of God's love and grace as you take that promise with you into the world.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” —John 15:5
