



# COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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6517 Finzel Road, Whitehouse, Ohio 43571

## **2024 Church Council Annual Meeting Minutes December 8, 2024**

**Call to Order and Opening Devotions:** President of Council Kara Yokum called the meeting to order at 11:21 am. Pastor Steve Bond led the congregation in prayer.

Quorum: 75+ Members were in attendance.

**Opening Remarks:** Kara Yokum opened with a summary of the highlights of the past year and her time as president, including standouts such as – the 56 people who got involved in leading and participating in ministries, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration that exceeded its fund-raising goal of \$50,000, and the bed-build. She thanked all for their roles.

**Election of Church Council Leadership:** Vice President Michael Abraham introduced the nominees chosen by the Nominating Task Force:

Matt Britsch  
Fred Doering  
Marlene LaChine  
Dean Nofzinger

There were no additional candidates from the floor.

*Motion to approve the entire slate of nominees as presented was made by Brian Jones and seconded by Stephanie Phillips. Motion carried.*

Members finishing their term (year elected)

Becky King (2022, term completed 2024)  
Don Schroeder (2022, term completed 2024)  
Kathryn Whitacre (2022, term completed 2024)  
Kara Yokum (2022, term completed 2024)

Members continuing on 2025 Council (year elected)

Pam Davis (2023, term complete 2025)  
Laurie Dewitz (2023, term complete 2025)  
Tammy Myers (2023, term complete 2025)  
Carol Wiemken (2023, term complete 2025)

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Michael Abraham (2024, term complete 2026)  
Chad Ackerman (2024, term complete 2026)  
Laurie Mauro (2024, term complete 2026)  
Carrie Tuohy (2024, term complete 2026)

## Review of Congregational Ministries:

### **Pastor's Report: Pastor Stephen Bond**

Pastor Steve began by encouraging all to continue to participate in the church's ministries. He then presented 2024 Statistical Report, Membership Changes, and his Annual Report. (*All are attached*)

### **Treasurer's Report: Joseph Perkins (Report and Budgets attached)**

1. All asset accounts are reconciled and up-to-date. Joseph reviewed the status of both the General Fund and the Building Loan Fund, and noted that the Building Loan Fund historically catches up in November and December. Also of note is the Organ Concert raised \$3,777 for hurricane relief and the Building Loan Fund.

*Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented made by Kevin Swagler and seconded by Doug Ackerman. Motion carried.*

2. 2025 Proposed Budget. Primary changes are:

- 3% increase in wages for music director, office manager and treasurer. 5% increase for Pastor. Note: Line 57 showed a 1.1% increase and was corrected to 3%.
- 500% increase in Building Equipment for replacement of refrigerators.
- Grand total increase in 2025 budget is 4.3%.
- Total General Fund increase is 2.8%.
- Building Loan Fund has no increase from 2024.

*Motion to approve the 2025 Budget as presented made by Matt Dewitz and seconded by Cinda Pontsler. Motion carried.*

## **Committee Liaison Reports:**

Finance (Carrie Tuohy) – Report attached

Youth and Education (Laurie Dewitz) – Report attached

Laurie noted that with the help of Pastor and many volunteers we have been able to return to offering weekly Sunday School classes.

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Outreach (Tammy Myers) – Report attached

Tammy noted the many community events Outreach participated in this year.

Tool Box Task Force, chaired by Matt Dewitz and Jerry Jones – Report attached  
Matt noted that the various activities reported are intentionally not specific in order to “preserve the dignity of those they served and earn their trust”.

Visitation Ministry Task Force, chaired by Cheryl Fischer and Cinda Pontsler – Report attached

Cheryl noted that a notable accomplishment of the ministry was unintentionally omitted from the report: visiting the home bound.

Property (Don Schroeder) – Report attached

Don also reported that the fluorescent lighting in the sanctuary is obsolete and will need to be replaced next year with more efficient LED lighting.

Prairie Meadow Task Force, chaired by Laurie Mauro – Report attached

Worship & Music (Laurie Mauro) – Report attached

Laurie highlighted the new Worship volunteer workshops and volunteer guidance documents.

Social Action Ministry (Becky King and Kathryn Whitacre) – Report attached

Pastor Steve reported that the Social Action Ministry has been moving to a more organized committee structure with regular meetings and more long-range planning. This coming year the committee will be led by Sarah Rockwell.

Fellowship Committee (Chad Ackerman) – Report attached

Chad announced they are looking for new members and ideas.

Stewardship Committee (Michael Abraham) – Report attached

Kevin Swagler highlighted the new TV installed in the gathering space and plans to upgrade the C of C Website.

Mutual Ministry Committee (Kim Jones) – Report attached

Kim noted that the committee has completed its work and will no longer formally assemble, but will continue to be a voice for the congregation.

Lay Internship Committee (Pam Davis) – Report attached

Lisa Alleman noted that the committee continues to support Vicar Natalie Downs.

2024 Annual Report – Vicar Natalie Downs – Report attached

Concert Committee – 2024 – Report attached

Pastor Steve reviewed the report for the reformed committee.

**Adjournment:** The meeting closed with the recitation of The Lord’s Prayer.

*A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 12:20 pm by Kevin Swagler and seconded by Kari Swagler. Motion carried.*

Carol Wiemken, 2024 Council Secretary

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## **Annual Report—Pastor’s Report for 2024**

There are three major areas I want to highlight at this milestone marker looking back at 2024 and looking ahead to 2025. In our congregational meeting, of course, I’ll happily welcome any other questions, thoughts, or concerns on any other area of our ministry together. But here are three major pieces to start with:

### *50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Legacy and Beyond*

For the first half of 2024, we were in the midst of celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Community of Christ’s founding. Over the course of numerous events, from concerts and dinners to our gigantic bed build service project day and our celebration weekend in May with a dinner at the Anthony Wayne High School and worship with many special guests from our history, we shared laughter and tears looking back at the first five decades of our history and making new memories to tell to future generations. We created a hallway-spanning timeline, compiled a book of memories, and gathered messages for the future in a time capsule. We honored founding pastor Ray Gottschling with the honorific “Pastor Emeritus” status, and we exceeded our challenge goal of raising \$50,000.00 that was split between paying down the principal on our building loan and supporting ministries near and far that we care about, including Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service) and the Northwestern Ohio Synod.

As we move forward into the next half-century of our history, I want to ask that we remember how we were able simultaneously to look backward at the past with gratitude while looking around us at the present to see where we can serve and minister and looking ahead to the future God is leading us into. Our fiftieth anniversary was not merely nostalgia for the past, but also a reminder that the God who has been with us for the first fifty years will be faithful into the future. I hope that same spirit and energy drives us as we look to this year, even when there isn’t a large round numbered anniversary to be marked. I am grateful to all those who helped make the 50<sup>th</sup> events such a great series of celebrations, and I am grateful, too, to all who are being raised up as leaders looking ahead, too!

### *Hosting Vicar Natalie as Seminary Intern*

Another part of the year we are looking back on was the request that came to us by way of the Northwestern Ohio Synod to host a seminary intern, and for the way we planned, discerned, and then decided to welcome this opportunity. At first, the idea of an intern was abstract for many of us—we might not have known quite what to expect or how it would all come together. Now, we are getting to know Vicar Natalie, and she has already been a tremendous blessing for our congregation even in just the three months or so that she has been with us. The congregation is rising to the occasion to welcome Vicar Natalie, along with Trevor, Genevieve, and Amelie, and Vicar Natalie is getting the experience of leading in worship, preaching, teaching, and adding her voice to committees and other groups within the congregation. We’ll look forward to the ministry she’ll share with us for all of 2025 and

for the beginning of 2026, and you'll see more and more touches of the faith, experience, vision, and passion that Vicar Natalie brings in the months to come. But once again, I want to commend the congregation for receiving the request to step up that came from the Synod, for reflecting and praying, and then for stepping out in faith to say *yes* to being a site for Vicar Natalie's pastoral formation and growth in ministry!

*A Vision for 2025: Living on the Edge—Christianity Beyond Our Comfort Zones*

In 2024, I invited the congregation to journey through the church year in our worship life, devotional and spirituality life, and educational life with the year-long theme of **Meeting Jesus**. The idea was for us to spend the year getting to know Jesus more deeply so that when we do the work of our purpose statement, *Making Jesus Known*, we would have a deeper and richer understanding of who this Jesus is. Hopefully, you picked up on that in sermons and music choices, in our nine-month marathon study of Mark's Gospel on Thursdays, in daily devotions, and in other resources we offered throughout the year.

This year, I want to invite you along to follow this same Jesus to the particular kinds of places and people where he leads us, especially to the folks on the margins and to the places beyond the routine and the familiar. In 2025, our theme for the year will be *Living on the Edge—Christianity Beyond Our Comfort Zones*. And so that you know, this isn't just a notion pulled out of thin air or manufactured at random out of whole cloth. Rather, the idea of practicing our faith "beyond our comfort zones" and following Jesus "on the edge" outside of the familiar and the routine is a central theme of Luke's gospel, which is actually the primary Gospel we'll be rooted in for Sunday worship in this year, using the Revised Common Lectionary. Luke's gospel in particular (as well as its companion book, Acts, which we will hear from throughout the year as well, especially in Eastertide) portrays Jesus as someone always on the margins of society, also leading his disciples beyond the familiar places of their comfort zones and into new adventures. Jesus is deliberately among the poor, the outcast, foreigners/Gentiles, the least, the lost, and the left-out in Luke's Gospel, and he calls his disciples to be among them as well. In our day and time, it can be tempting to see our Christian faith simply as a comfortable thing that never pushes us beyond the familiar or the routine. So let this be a formal invitation for the year ahead as a congregation—not only to *meet* Jesus, but to *go with him* to the edges of our lives—out beyond the familiar, past the temptation to just "play church," and among the people Jesus always surrounds himself with. Who knows where that might lead us as a congregation as we move into the next fifty years of our story? For sure it will be outward. Probably it will be somewhere we cannot quite predict. Certainly, it will be with Jesus.

Let's go.

With gratitude for the chance to share the journey with you all in the year behind us and in the year ahead,

Pastor Steve

11-12-24

## TREASURER'S REPORT

1. All asset accounts are reconciled to date.
2. We received a stock contribution offering in October of \$35,268
  - a. \$20,000 was designated for the BF and the balance went to the GF
3. BF/GF for October
  - a. Building Fund
    - BF income was \$35,450 and \$22,887 more than expenses
    - KeyBank BF balance is \$58,835
    - Mission + BF Reserve balance is \$40,864
  - b. General Fund
    - GF income was \$46,350 and \$14,465 more than expenses
    - KeyBank GF balance is \$29,838
    - Mission + GF Reserve balance is \$119,163
4. 2025 draft budget is complete and awaiting council approval



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## Annual Report Finance

2024

**Committee Members:**

Jeff Baden (chairman), Dave Alleman, Kara Yokum, Kari Swagler, Carrie Tuohy

**Committee Council Liaison:**

Carrie Tuohy

- Finance finished the complete audit of Calendar year 2023 in February with no major findings and reported back through council.
- Finance has also started the audit process for current year and will finish early next year after close of this year's books.
- Finance has also reviewed our insurance policies and building loan agreement for any opportunities for better coverage and rates.
- Any questions or concerns please reach out to a committee member anytime and we will be happy to review.

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## Youth and Education Committee

### 2024 Annual Report

The Youth and Education Committee's role is to review and plan overall education in the congregation. This committee serves the needs of our children, teens, and young people of Community of Christ, as well as adults.

**Committee Members:** Lainie Davis (Chairperson), Lorri Britsch, Laurie Dewitz, Kristen Schuchmann, Makayla Stewart, Pastor Steve

#### Notable Accomplishments in 2024:

- Confirmation
  - In the 2023-2024 year, we had four students from Community of Christ, and we spent our time in the Bible year of the Confirmation program
  - In 2024-2025 so far, we have eight students from Community of Christ, and we have partnered with Zion, Waterville, for a total of 12 students so far, in our year looking at the Catechism; we've gotten to do special additional field trips, supplemental projects, and had guest visits from Bishop Beaudoin as well
- Adult Sunday School has offered the following series/topics in our Adult Forum on Sunday mornings in 2024
  - An Introduction to Mark's Gospel
  - Spiritual Gifts
  - Baptized, We Live--Lutheranism as a Way of Life
  - Scenes from a Movement: Stories from the Book of Acts
  - Words about the Word--How to Read the Bible Wisely and Well
  - Women's Leadership in the New Testament and Early Church
  - Held in Trust: Stewardship with Our Whole Lives
  - On the Other Hand: Biblical Voices in Tension
- Adult Midweek Bible Study
  - Tuesday series with Becky King has included a series on prayer, a series on Hosea, a series on Luke in the Land, and other topics
  - Thursday Bible Study has included the Gospel of Mark (Jan-August) and Galatians (September-November)
  - Future series will include leadership/co-leadership with Vicar Natalie as well as Pastor Steve
- ELCA National Youth Gathering
  - Nate Yokum attended the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July with a group from Providence Lutheran.
- Events and Activities
  - Congregational breakfasts

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- Self Defense class (proceeds supported Bethany House)
- Lenten Soup Suppers
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Family Game Night
- VBS with Hope United Methodist
- 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Campout
- Bibles gifted to High School Graduates
- Anthony Wayne Area Youth Group
  - We partnered with several area churches for the formation of a new group focused on bringing together junior high and high school aged youth for activities and events
  - CoC hosted a Fall Kick-Off event in August with inflatable games and food trucks
  - Planning of additional activities including a scavenger hunt and end of school party will continue, as well as brainstorming new ways to involve youth
- Weekly Sunday School!
  - With the help of Pastor Steve and many volunteers we have been able to return to offering weekly Sunday School classes this fall; students are broken into two groups allowing for age appropriate lessons; we are so grateful for the help of all of our teachers and support staff - Chad Ackerman, Eryn Ackerman, Marsha Cochran, Lainie Davis, Laurie Dewitz, Susan Nofzinger, Kristen Schuchmann, Karole Sigg, Makayla Stewart, Debbie Warner, Kara Yokum and Rick Yokum
  - Here is some feedback from teachers and students:

*"Sunday school with the older group has been fun so far. We discussed if a camel could fit through the eye of a needle while trying to put some thread through the eye of a needle. This proved to be more challenging for some than others but it was a very determined group. While reviewing this lesson, the kids sewed some buttons on pieces of fabric. My hope was that they would learn a basic skill that may be of benefit to them someday, while also thinking about how hard it may be to give up material things. I learned that we have very generous kids in our group, and I believe they have what it takes to be great followers of God. Teaching the kids allows me to revisit scriptures and I challenge myself to find creative ways to help them understand the lessons." – Kristen Schuchmann*

*"I am very thankful for everyone who has volunteered their time to make weekly Sunday School available. It's wonderful that we can have two classes focused on specific age groups. My time is spent with the pre-k group, and while we might not follow our planned events exactly during our class time, it's become a time for the kiddos to get to know each other, which will help build strong relationships as they grow in their faith." –Lainie Davis*

*"The kids are very sweet and receptive. It's such a great feeling when a child comes up with an answer I have never thought of before." – Susan Nofzinger*

*"On Sunday, November 10, the older students' class discussed Mark 12:38-44, focusing on how we can reflect God's generosity to those in our community. The class attendees were Evan and Cole Ackerman, Carson and Kylie Metcalf, and Addison Carman. We discussed how our church dispenses aid to others while taking care of our own needs. We brainstormed ideas of generosity that the students could act on in their school, home and sports communities. Evan commented that he could "pass off" the basketball to a teammate who*

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*hasn't had a score. Addison talked about asking a lonely classmate to play with her. Everyone said they could do chores without being prompted! We ended the class by making a surprise envelope to share with someone we want to secretly treat." – Debbie Warner*

*"Teaching has helped me become more unified with the church. Not only with teaching, but also being able to attend adult Sunday school when my children are being taught. My husband and I are able to step out of the roles of being "mom and dad" for an hour to learn without having to wrestle a child or open a snack.*

*Rosalie has really loved Sunday school thus far. She has liked getting comfortable with all the different teachers and learning about God, especially since she went from a Christian preschool to a public kindergarten this year. I know she's loved all the activities and frequently talks about the other kids in Sunday school like they are her friends." – Makayla Stewart*

### **Goals and Objectives for 2025:**

- Nurture additional leadership to support and serve the needs of the youth at Community of Christ via hiring of shared Youth Director with Providence Lutheran in Holland
- Grow youth participation in Sunday worship services, Sunday School classes and other activities
- Continue to offer regular, weekly Sunday School classes for youth and adults
- Increase activities and educational offerings for youth and families

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## Outreach

### **2024 Annual Committee Report**

#### **Committee Description:**

**Welcome guests and new members to our congregation and continue to increase our presence in the community.**

#### **Committee Chairperson:**

Greg Myers

#### **Committee Members:**

Shelly Hayes, Rose Ackerman, Robin Fritz, Kristen Schuchman, Kari Swagler, Cindy Smigelski, Tammy Myers, Cammie Abraham, Pastor Steve

#### **Notable Accomplishments:**

- Established welcome bags to be distributed to new members
- Improved outreach response to greeting and welcoming visitors
- Participated in community events - Cherry Fest Parade, Eats & Beats, Boo to Do in Waterville, Trick or Treat in Whitehouse
- Provided breakfast for faculty & staff at the 3 Anthony Wayne primary schools
- Supported some of our shut-ins with new Christmas Caroling event
- Joined local faith communities in participating in the Toledo Pride parade
- Teamed up with Council to welcome students back to school and Vicar Natalie to our congregation
- Continued the Adopt a College Student program to help our college youth stay connected

#### **Goals and Objectives for the coming year:**

- Continue to find ways to support the Anthony Wayne school district staff and students.
- Look for more opportunities locally – parades, host community activities in our church yard, potential support for local Genacross group homes.
- Team up with other committees to continue to find ways to promote our purpose of Making Jesus Known – Food for Thought in Downtown Toledo with Social Ministry, Breakfasts between services to help support activities

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## **Our Purpose – “Making Jesus Known”**

### **2024 ToolBox Annual Activity Report**

**Making Jesus Known through God’s grace by providing essential services for unfortunate or extraordinary circumstances.**

**Committee Co-Chairman: Matt Dewitz, Jerry Jones**

**Committee Members: Don Heilmann, Kevin Swagler, Dean Nofzinger, Don Schroeder, Wayne King, Dan Sigg, Jeff Baden, Rick Yokum, Brian Jones, Pastor Stephen Bond, Michael Abraham, Ken Hayes, Zach Weber, Dave Rockwell**

**In 2024 Toolbox has made strides in becoming a trusted resource for the community. Toolbox has been called upon and responded to jobs such as flooring for Urban Wholistics, electrical repairs, yard maintenance, roof and gutter clearing, plumbing, hot water service and home accessibility. A few milestones that spark pride for Community of Christ are:**

- **Called direct from previous recipients proving the trust formed with quality and discreetness.**
- **Formed collaborative partnership with Anthony Wayne School District Social Services. Toolbox has become a useful “tool” for identified needs amongst community members.**
- **Collaborated with and supported CoC Visitation Ministry. Visitation Ministry has been instrumental in identifying many burdens within the community.**
- **Collaborated with God’s Work Our Hands.**

## **2025 Goals**

- **Increase collaborative outreach to identify more community needs**
- **Streamline call to action**
- **Increase visibility within the congregation**
- **Create a fluid estimate system**
- **Increase recruitment for the many talents we have in our congregation allowing us to expand scopes of work**

**Community of Christ's support of the Toolbox ministry has been lifting burdens and "Making Jesus Known"! CoC has reached out and shown that people do love thy neighbor.**

**Your gifts of talent and contributions to the Toolbox ministry are being used to share the Grace of God!**

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## **Visitation Ministry** **2024 Annual Ministry Report**

### **Ministry Description:**

Our initial mission was to visit with members and friends of the congregation who were unable to attend worship in person and assist the pastor in sharing communion with those who desired it. This ministry continues to expand as we work to share Jesus' love with those around us.

**Committee Chairperson:** Cheryl Fischer and Cinda Pontsler

### **Committee Members:**

Greg Aubell, Joan Bierley, Pr. Steve Bond, Carol Borkowski, Cheryl Fischer, Michelle Gebhart, Shelly Hayes, Julie Holliker, Marlene LaChine, Bea Ludwig, Barb Mersing, Sharon Miller, Fred Ortner, Cinda Pontsler, Irene Rang, Natalie Rilling, Kathryn Whitacre

### **Notable Accomplishments:**

- Continuation of Meal Train, Need a ride?, birthday postcards, cards to the homebound and those on the prayer list.
- College students were sent off to school with a box of homemade cookies to share and their addresses were provided to the congregation
- Monthly visits were made to Blue Creek Healthcare for visiting, hymn singing and a short devotional time
- Prayer shawls and baptismal blankets were made and distributed.
- Two "Cookie Days" were held, each with cookies for the congregation to enjoy and 100 bags for the congregation to share.
- Twenty-five Easter baskets were filled and shared with homebound members and others.
- Freezer meal production was expanded and more than 220 were distributed to those needing a hot meal without worry.

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## **Goals and Objectives for the coming year:**

- Pilot “Conversations and More” in February to offer an afternoon social opportunity at the church.
- Introduce a new Educational Focus, with activities for sharing information with members and the community.
- Send notes and other material to college students throughout the school year.
- Increase the number of Easter baskets and Cookie Day bags
- Make use of Lutheran Brotherhood mini grants to fund activities.

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## **Property Committee**

### **2024 Annual Committee Report**

#### **Committee Description:**

Carry out all resolutions of the congregation and the Council on purchases, repairs, and replacement of church property and equipment. Obtain bids following the policies established by the Finance Committee for the obtaining of bids for work and equipment. Enlist special work crews for special repairs, improvements, cleaning, painting, decorating, landscaping, and other projects.

Arrange for repairs of an urgent nature

#### **Committee Chairperson:**

**Dan Sigg**

#### **Committee Members:**

**Jerry Jones, Rob Kohntopp, Laurie Mauro, Dave Prueter, Kevin Swagler, Zach Weber**

#### **Notable Accomplishments:**

- Thank you Rob Kohntopp for sharing his Time & Talent by painting to freshen up the hallway to the Fellowship Hall and hallway leading to the Dutch Road entrance.
- Thank you to Dick Burdo for cleaning the flower beds in the Spring
- Thank you for John Spilker's lift in order to replace spot/flood lights in the sanctuary.
- Thank you to Dave Prueter for mowing the lawn in 2024
- Thank you to Jerry and Claudia Jones for the Fellowship Hall and Cynda Pontsler Entrance Circle gardens
- Thank you to All for donations to the Capital Improvements Fund which allowed us to replace the Fellowship Hall AC unit and repair the rubber roof above the small kitchen

#### **Goals and Objectives for the coming year:**

- We have received a bid for sidewalk leveling to satisfy insurance requirements. The initial request for bid was in the amount of \$6,277.00. A second bid has been received for \$2,800.00. Due to the disparity of these quotes a third quote will be obtained and the work will be budgeted for 2025
- We are looking into the cost to replace the foggy windows in the Fellowship Hall. The kitchen refrigerator required a service call again and may need to be replaced in 2025.
- Perform or contract all miscellaneous repairs, as needed

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## **Prairie Meadow Task Force – Annual Report 2024**

The Prairie Meadow was seeded with 46 species of native plants on Jan 22. The plot was mowed in full in late June and in parts to prevent seeding of weeds on several occasions throughout the summer. The Prairie Meadow bloomed quite well for a first-year prairie. The Prairie Meadow was used as the focus of a Summer Spirituality Saturday – God at Ground Level – Spirituality of the Prairie Meadow, was included in the NWF’s Sacred Grounds tour of religious organization prairies on August 8.m and was included as a station for a women’s retreat on Sept 15. Seed is being collected from the plot for redistribution into areas of the plot which had lower germination rates due to weed growth. The Prairie Meadow Task Force has received approval from the Property Committee to expand the Prairie Meadow plot to half an acre so that its full objective of serving as a source of education and meditation can be realized by the incorporation of walking paths.

Goals: 1. Expansion of the Prairie Meadow to .5 acre

2. Support further germination of natives across the plot through seeding, planting and weed control

Objectives: Promote use of the Prairie Meadow for meditation, stewardship and appreciation of creation, and education.



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## **Worship & Music**

### **2024 Annual Committee Report**

#### **Committee Description:**

The Worship & Music Committee plans and reviews the worship life of the congregation using the liturgical calendar as a guide. Using the on-line program, Sign-Up Genius, worship volunteers are scheduled for each Sunday service and other services as needed. The committee also supports the Director of Music and meets the first Thursday of the month, and/or as needed.

**Committee Chairperson:** Bev Fischer

#### **Committee Members:**

Lisa Alleman, Volunteer Choir Director  
Beverly Fischer  
Cheryl Fischer  
Michelle Gebhart  
Bea Ludwig  
Laurie Mauro, Council Liaison  
Sharon Miller  
Don Schroeder  
Carol Wiemken  
Eric Dickey, Director of Music  
Pastor Steve Bond  
Vicar Natalie Downs

#### **Notable Accomplishments:**

- Worship Volunteer Workshops and Worship Volunteer Guidance document
- Practice of Easter Vigil. The creation of artwork and banners for Lent was used for the Easter Vigil Service
- Creation of artwork and banners to celebrate Christmas Season
- Introduced Rogation with the Blessing of the Prairie Meadow
- Introduced Blessing of the Backpacks and Blessing of the Animals, and continued Blue Jeans Sunday
- Welcomed Lisa Alleman as volunteer choir director. Introduced Choir Sessions to welcome new Choir members.
- Hosted a number of special events and celebrations including All Creation Sings Workshop for NWOS, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary worship celebration with Bishop Daniel Beaudoin, and a number of concerts.

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## **Goals and Objectives for the coming year:**

- Provide workshops for volunteering for worship roles
- Learn a new liturgy (Setting 8) – we will learn new worship resources in certain seasons
- Refresh and update seasonal decorations
- Look for ways to include children and adults in worship roles

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## Social Action Ministry Report—2024

This has been a year of both continuity and renewal for Social Action at Community of Christ, in the best senses of those two words. On the one hand, we have continued to carry on numerous projects and partnerships for which we have a longstanding tradition of serving and helping our neighbors. These are just a few of the Social Action related events of the year we are completing:

- Monthly participation in meals at Salem Lutheran Church (with Wayne King as our most faithful and consistent volunteer helper on this!)
- Gardening and weeding help at Urban Wholistics Urban Garden in Toledo
- In-gathering of items for Lutheran World Relief School Kits
- Planting Trees at James Colbert Park (opposite Salem Lutheran, Toledo) as part of God's Work. Our Hands Sunday servant event
- Halloween-time Trunk-or-Treat at Salem Lutheran
- Angel Tree Gifts for young people in the North End through Salem
- In-gathering of personal care and other products for Welcome Baskets for migrant workers through Bridges of Hope initiative partnering with churches in Fremont, Ohio through their LIFT (Living in Faith Together) program
- Adopt-a-Resident Christmas gifts for Luther Home of Mercy

As you can see, there are a lot of events and ways we strove to do good in the world and to accompany neighbors in this past year—and that's all in a year when we had numerous other projects, events, and activities related to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (like the Bed Build, which also certainly helped neighbors!). At the same time, this is a year for renewal and reorganization for the Social Action Ministry team, because we have moved to a more organized committee structure with regular meetings and more long-range planning to coordinate the events and projects we've taken on. In recent years, each of the above projects has floated independently as stand-alone service projects, without much intentional planning throughout the year for when we do different activities. Our hope for 2025 and beyond is to improve communication and planning so that more people in the congregation can become involved with the ways we reach out in love, serve our neighbor, and do justice where God has placed us.

So late in 2024 we reorganized with emerging leadership from Sarah Rockwell to chair our committee, and as we gather new faces and hands to help, we hope to expand the ministry we can do to care for neighbors near and far. We have also begun some initial conversations with other local agencies like Genacross for ways we can help in their work supporting at-risk children and youth and offering affordable housing to low-income seniors, and we are also exploring the work of Isaiah 1:17 House which is getting off the ground in Lucas County to offer hospitality and temporary shelter for children entering foster care, often with nothing but a garbage bag with a few possessions in it.

We are really excited about where God is leading us into the year ahead, and we hope you'll consider being a part of these ministries to embody love for neighbors near and far as Social Action Ministry grows and expands in 2025!

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Social Action Ministry,  
Pastor Steve



# COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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6517 Finzel Road, Whitehouse, Ohio 43571

## **Fellowship Committee**

### **2024 Annual Committee Report**

#### **Committee Description:**

**Planning and organizing events to bring members together that encourages connection through faith in a welcoming environment. Fellowship helps to build and strengthen relationships among its members.**

#### **Committee Chairperson:**

**Susan Nofzinger**

#### **Committee Members:**

**Pam Davis & Chad Ackerman**

#### **Notable Accomplishments:**

- Dinners For 8
- April 8<sup>th</sup> Solar Eclipse Party
- Pastor Steve's Food For Thought nights out
- Summer Mudhens Outing

#### **Goals and Objectives for the coming year:**

- Come up with new events to bring our congregation together
- Fellowship looks to lead/revise the Summer Camp Out - possibly simplify to having a campfire in each of the summer months.
- At least 1 fellowship event a quarter scheduled
- Recruit 2-3 more committee members

**Our Purpose – "Making Jesus Known"**



# COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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6517 Finzel Road, Whitehouse, Ohio 43571

## **Stewardship Committee 2024 Annual Report**

**Committee Description:** Stewardship is giving of our time, talent, and treasure for the community and making Jesus known.

**Mission Statement:** In response to what God has done for us through Christ Jesus, our mission is to help members mature in Christ as responsible stewards by promoting and encouraging joyful giving of our time, talents, and treasure.

**Committee Chairpersons:** Tina Baden and Kevin Swagler

**Committee Members:** Michael Abraham, Dave Alleman, Kathy Chamberlain, Matt Dewitz, Laurie Mauro

### **Notable Accomplishments:**

- C of C In Focus monthly video spotlight focused on different events or groups each month.
- Continued to update the C of C website.
- A new TV was added to the gathering space.
- Added Noisy Offering during offertory with money to go to different ministries.
- Purchased a new video/camera for better sound and video quality.
- Updated the online church directory.
- Time and Talents and Pledge cards were sent out.
- Festival of Talents with a Time and Talent show was held in October
- Organized the Covenant signing.

### **Goals and Objectives for the Coming Year:**

- Grow committee with addition of new members.
- Continue to find new ways to tell the story of all the active teams and ministries of Community of Christ to our members and the community.

**Our Purpose – “Making Jesus Known”**

## MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE

**MISSION:** To have a dedicated team assisting Pastor Steve in his transition and adjustment into Community of Christ in his first year.

**Goals:** Meetings every other month (or as necessary) to discuss and check in with Pastor Steve and provide support in any way that was needed, be that in Community of Christ or with his family

**Objectives:**

- 1) Provide feedback from members on how he was doing (sermons, Sunday school, daily activity)
- 2) Get Pastor Steve's feedback on how he felt we were adjusting to him as a congregation
- 3) Get Pastor Steve's feedback on daily workflow
- 4) Sharing ideas and projects that Pastor wanted to implement in the congregation during "Holidays/church calendar"
- 5) Sharing the traditions of his former congregation and ours...what worked and what didn't and new ideas going forward.

**Members of the Team:** Pastor Steve, Kim Jones (Chair), Kari Swagler, Joan Bierley, Cammie Abraham, Cheryl Fisher, Tina Baden, Eryn Ackerman

**Meetings were held in the library on the following dates:**

October 25, 2023   December 12, 2023   February 6, 2024   April 2, 2024   June 4, 2024

Overall, the assembly and execution of the Mutual Ministry Team served its purpose! It was a great way to make sure everyone was adjusting to Pastor Steve's style and that he was adjusting to us. We were able to share a lot of ideas and stories over the course of 5 meetings. In fact, it was decided after the June meeting that the committee no longer needed to formally assemble, but were available to Pastor in one off situations. The committee members also continued to be the voice of the congregation should we need to discuss issues or even good things with Pastor.





# COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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6517 Finzel Road, Whitehouse, Ohio 43571

## **LAY INTERNSHIP COMMITTEE**

### **2024 Annual Committee Report**

#### **Committee Description:**

As defined by Wartburg Theological Seminary, our role is to walk beside Vicar Natalie throughout her internship, offer feedback, complete evaluations, and give her a point of view from the congregation.

#### **Committee Chairperson:**

Pam Davis

#### **Committee Members:**

Cammie Abraham, Lisa Alleman, Andrea Donley, Rebecca Jaessing, Chris Rilling, Pat Roth, Debbie Warner

#### **Notable Accomplishments:**

- Gathered a committee and discussed our role and responsibilities with Pastor Steve.
- Meeting monthly with Vicar Natalie to understand and support her role and responsibilities as Vicar and as a seminary student.
- Offering continual support to her family as they adjust to this significant change in their lives.
- Discussing her learning goals in 12 competency areas, as defined by Wartburg Seminary [Leadership, Theological Articulation, Leading Worship, Preaching, Teaching Adults, Teaching Children, Evangelism, Pastoral Care, Administration, Stewardship Leader, Leader of Social Ministry, Raising up Leaders for the Church]

#### **Goals and Objectives for the coming year:**

- Continue monthly to discuss her learning goals and her progress and provide feedback to help her further explore her ministry.
- Support her and her family in adjusting to the community as well as our congregation.
- Periodically solicit congregational feedback.
- Conduct a mid-point evaluation – July 2025

**Our Purpose – “Making Jesus Known”**



# COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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6517 Finzel Road, Whitehouse, Ohio 43571

## **2024 Annual Report - Vicar Natalie Downs**

Greetings in the name of Christ! It has been my delight to serve alongside the people of Community of Christ as my internship site this academic year. I began my internship in August 2024. This will be a part-time internship for 18 months as part of the completion of my degree program as a Master of Divinity student and Word and Sacrament candidate in the ELCA. Below is an overview of the goals I have touched on thus far in my internship.

### **Supervisor Meetings**

Pastor Steve and I have met consistently on Tuesdays for our supervisor session to discuss a variety of topics. In collaboration with him, I have also worked out the contextual learning goals for the Internship.

### **Internship Committee**

I have met with the internship committee once a month. I have also met individually and have touched base with Pam Davis, the head of the internship committee. We began with an introductory session and discussed the plan for the group. We also have discussed and worked on the review of the learning goals for the internship. The internship committee has been a blessing in walking me through my internship providing me with information on the community and also steps to consider for the future.

### **Preaching**

Pastor Steve and I have developed a targeted goal around preaching in the community. Currently, I am preaching once a month and that will increase over time. I also have been preaching a children's sermon in worship.

### **Continuing Education and Pastoral Groups**

Pastor Steve has introduced me to the Toledo Conference of the Northwest Ohio Synod (NWOS), where I have made connections with fellow pastors who actively service, or are retired. Being in this community has allowed me also to learn more about the various faith communities in the conference and needs within the community. Pastor Steve has also introduced me to a Toledo area text study group that meets once a week to discuss the upcoming lectionary text. I have also attended some events in the community to learn about specific needs and topics of interest. I have attended the Isaiah 117 house information and fundraiser session, a home that will be built in Lucas County. I attended First Thursdays at Monroe Street United Methodist Church, which is a monthly seminar regarding important topics and concerns of the day. In November, they had a presentation on Native American/Indigenous communities and faith.

### **Teaching and Leading**

Pastor Steve and I have collaborated on some teaching projects in Christian Education. In November, Pastor Steve and I co-led a discussion on *On the Other Hand: Law and Works* on Sunday mornings. Pastor Steve and I are also creating a 6-week Bible study called *Things Seen and Unseen*, which is about angels in the Biblical text. I also have served in Confirmation, helping to lead and teach in class. Our confirmation class is a combined class with Zion Lutheran Church in Waterville.

**Our Purpose – “Making Jesus Known”**

## **Concert Committee Report—2024**

After enjoying a number of great musical concerts over the course of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year celebrations, we heard a renewed interest in hosting concerts and other performances here at Community of Christ as we had previously done in the years prior to COVID. So, building off the positive energy from hosting concerts from the AW High School Jazz Band, recitals of our own Eric Dickey, Amanda Worthington, and other performers in the previous year, the Concert Committee has rebooted and is at working on arranging new concert events to be hosted here at Community of Christ. Our focus is two-fold: first, to create opportunities for people in the wider community to experience beauty through music in different forms, just for the sake of the music itself; and second, to use those concert events as ways of raising funds for both in-house needs (like our Building Loan payments) and outside causes and ministries we care about, like hurricane relief through Lutheran Disaster Response.

Our first event of the newly rebooted Concert Committee is a perfect example: on November 24, we'll be hosting an organ recital featuring four organists with a variety of styles and pieces, and we'll be directing proceeds from the free will offering toward both the church's building loan and also to hurricane relief through LDR. We are working on several ideas for the winter and spring of 2025, and we invite your voice, ideas, and hands as we try to create more opportunities to use our worship space for its supplemental purpose of being an acoustically designed space for concerts and music. If you are interested in being a part of the Concert Committee in 2025, see Eric Dickey or Chris Rilling.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Steve, on behalf of the Concert Committee