

# St. Paul Lutheran Church

## Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod

### Columbus, Indiana

# 2023 Annual Report

Connected to Christ ✝ Connected to One Another ✝ Connecting Others to Christ

Dear Friends,

***We are connected to Christ!*** The church is not a building. The church is the people, those who by the grace of God are connected to Christ by faith as branches are connected to the vine.

***We are connected to one another!***

Since we are connected to Christ, we are connected to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Our calling is to pray for one another, support, encourage, and build each other up in the faith.



***We are to be connecting others to Christ!*** Christ feeds our faith and strengthens us, His branches, through His Word and Sacraments, so that we bear good fruit, the fruit of the Spirit. Our Lord desires that all people be connected to Him by faith. Thus, we seek to tell others about Jesus, sow Gospel seeds, and invite people to church so that others can be eternally connected to Christ.

The Annual Report serves as a summary of the past year, how we have carried out our divine calling to strengthen our connection with Christ, to connect with one another, and connecting others to Christ. The Annual Report also communicates our goals and emphases for the coming year as we seek to fulfill our Lord's commission.

2023 gave us many opportunities to connect, to celebrate our connection with one another, and to connect others to Christ, as we celebrated our congregation's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Thanks to all who served to make the special services and events edifying and enjoyable.

As you read this Annual Report, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask me, a member of our church or early childhood ministry staff, or an officer or board member. Also, if you have any ideas to strengthen our mission and ministry here and abroad, please let us know!

Please continue to pray for our congregation. Pray that God would bless and strengthen us for the mission He has given to us—connected to Christ and one another, and connecting others to Christ.

In Christ's Love,  
Pastor Bauman

## 2023 Year In Review

- We celebrated our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary with sixteen special events throughout the year, including eight guest pastors, two hymn festivals, two visiting choirs, two history presentations, two mission speakers, and confirmation reunions.
- We welcomed 25 new members this year by transfer or adult confirmation and 16 through baptism as the Lord continues to grow our family of faith.
- We strengthened our Latino outreach through the service of Pastor Fickenschier. We entered into a partnership with the Indiana District and Trinity Lutheran in Indianapolis so that Pastor Fickenschier can serve the outreach at Trinity and here at St. Paul.
- Over 50 youth attended the lock-in in February and our youth joined with youth from the Aurora Circuit for a circuit-wide lock-in in December.
- We were blessed to serve over 164 children through Vacation Bible School, 132 of which were from non-member families.
- 41 children from our congregation are enrolled in Lutheran schools (preschool-grade 12).
- We are blessed with 21 seventh and eighth graders in youth confirmation.
- In 2023, we had a significant increase in both average worship and Sunday School attendance.
- Our Christian education opportunities expanded in 2023 with a Women's Bible study, small group discussion class, and homeschool religion class.
- Our congregation was featured on the RFD-TV Christmas special in December.
- We developed new branding and logo that will be used on publications and outreach materials. We have increased our church and school's presence on social media.
- We exceeded our \$575,000 campaign goal for the Friends of Clifty Church five months early. Work continued on the chapel repurposing and the new retaining wall.

# Welcome New Members

Abigail Bauman

Pastor Daniel and Deaconess Taylor Fickenscher

Roger and Betty Fox

Paul, Sarah, Emma, and Lily Gibson

Lynn and Beverly Hoeltke

Pamela Jenkins

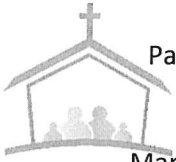
Marcus, Emily, Liam, and Collins Linke

Nancy Lipka

Walter and Debra Rhodes

Christopher Turi

Brian, Chelsey, Logan, Luke, and Hayley Warren



In 2023, we welcomed 25 baptized members  
and 19 communicant members.

In 2022, we welcomed 43 baptized members  
and 31 communicant members.



## Baptisms

Jazlyn Sujei Acosta Rendon

Gwyneth Elise Cotton

Jack Warner Haywood

Zaid Emanuel Hernandez Rendon

Handel Scott Hums

Nemesis Rose Ketchum

Collins Christine Linke

Liam Jaxson Linke

Emery Elizabeth Martin

Micah Charles Natalie

Lazarus Grover Oliver

Natalie Elaine Pollert

Gavin Wayne Rachford

Madeline Jane Scheidt

Jeffery James Tucker

Easton James Umphress

In 2023, there were sixteen baptisms compared to  
fifteen baptisms in 2022.

## 2023 Statistics

Baptized Membership (total membership): 622

Confirmed Membership: 504

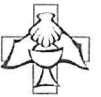
Average Sunday Morning Worship Attendance: 359

Average Sunday School Attendance: 176

Our 2023 average worship attendance  
increased by 26 people over 2022.

Our 2023 average Sunday School attendance  
increased by 25 people over 2022.

# Confirmations



## Youth

Isabel Grace Burbrink

Reese Steven Davis

Lilah Rose Glick

Jonah James Knollman

Reid Michael Koester

Max William Perry

Emily Lynn Vogel

Emily Maria Walker

Taylor Lynn Wessel

## Adults

Pamela Jenkins

Marcus and Emily Linke

Walter and Debra Rhodes

Christopher Turi

In both 2022 and 2023, there were 15 confirmed.

9 youth, 6 adults in 2023

8 youth, 7 adults in 2022

## Marriages



Jacob Walton and Riley Forbes

Thomas Cullen, Jr. and Shanda Sasse

There were two marriages in 2023  
and five marriages in 2022.

## Deaths

Etta Faye Forster

Stephanie Harris

In 2023, two members entered into eternal life  
compared to eight members in 2022.



# PRESERVING THE PAST EMBRACING THE FUTURE CENTERED IN CHRIST



2023 was a year of celebration with the theme: ***Preserving the Past, Embracing the Future, Centered in Christ.*** Our theme verse was Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Thus, as we look back at 2023, it's helpful to allow our anniversary theme to serve as our guide.

## PRESERVING THE PAST

**Memory and History Book:** For our 175<sup>th</sup> year, a book of memories from current members and those who were raised at our church was compiled. A new church history was also written. The Church is the people of God gathered around the gifts of God. The goal of the Memory and History Book was to tell our church's story by those the Lord has served through the ministry of our congregation.

**Festival Services:** 2023 began on New Year's Day with one Sunday morning service followed by a congregational meal to kickoff our yearlong celebration. For our Grand Celebration in September, we welcomed Indiana District President Dr. Richard Stuckwisch. We enjoyed a fellowship brunch between services and concluded the day with our annual Harvest Fest.

**Guest Preachers and Presenters:** Guest preachers included three sons of the congregation: Pastor Marcus Manley, Pastor Peter Brock, and Pastor Matt Jung. Pastor Emeritus William Stache gave a presentation about his life, pastoral training, and service at St. Paul. Our former DCE, Pastor Marty Hasz was our guest preacher in March. We were blessed with encouraging and challenging messages from Pastors John Brunner and Dean Wenthe, who both married daughters of our congregation.

Dr. Larry Rast, President of the Fort Wayne Seminary, preached and gave a two-part presentation on German Lutheran immigration. Jan Voelz gave a presentation on German Christmas customs on Christmas Eve morning.

**Hymn Festival and Choirs:** We welcomed the Kammerchor from Concordia University in Wisconsin and the Kantorei from the Fort Wayne Seminary. In November, Kantor Mau led the congregation in a Hymn Festival based on our stained glass windows.

**Friends of Clifty Church:** Our Friends of Clifty Church Initiative coincided with our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, to preserve our past for future generations. The bell was removed from the chapel and the new bell tower

constructed so that the Clifty bell again calls us to worship and prayer. The chapel has been restored to its original design, including new windows. The stained glass windows have been removed so that they can be used in our current facility and in the Christian Education Center in the future. When the weather warms, the retaining wall will be finished. A historical marker will be installed as well as lighting on the chapel tower. Thanks for your faithful support of the Friends of Clifty Church Campaign!

## EMBRACING THE FUTURE

Many of our guest preachers challenged us to embrace the future, trusting that Christ would sustain His Church in this place through His Word and Sacraments. We embrace the future confident that the Lord is leading us and His love supporting us.

In 2023, we were blessed with the highest average worship and Sunday School attendance in our congregation's 175-year history as God continues to add to our family of faith.

Enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year has begun. We are anticipating this coming school year to be the largest enrollment in our early childhood ministry's 43 year history. Due to this expected increase in enrollment, the voters approved the hiring of an additional Teacher Assistant for the coming school year.

The Planning Committee has worked diligently the past three years in both proposing the Friends of Clifty Church initiative to preserve our past while also working on plans for the final phase of our Thirty Year Master Plan, the addition of the Christian Education Center. A special voters meeting has been called for **Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup>** to consider a motion to begin a capital campaign to move forward with this project in response to the continued growth in both our church and early childhood ministry.

## CENTERED IN CHRIST

Past, present, and future—Christ is our center and focus! Please continue to pray for our congregation that we would remain centered in Christ and His lifegiving and unchanging Word. Pray that we would be faithful in witnessing and reaching out with the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.



Thanks to your generosity, we are able to further our Lord's mission locally and globally. 2023 General Fund Net Income was **\$59,887**. Your sacrificial giving last year enabled us to:

- Support District and Synod Mission Endeavors with \$53,000.
- Expand our Latino Outreach by calling Pastor Fickenscher to serve.
- Continued support of our Mission of the Month. \$1,000 is given each month to directly support a mission or outreach.
- Fund our early childhood ministry, including SGO scholarships for students who qualify.
- Meeting the \$575,000 goal for the Friends of Clifty Church Campaign five months early.

We are committed to transparency regarding the financial health of our congregation. If you would like detailed financial reports, please contact Financial Secretary Melissa Pevlor. Questions about the budget can be directed to Treasurer Mary Ann Nunn, or a member of the Board of Stewardship.

**Endowment, Estates, and Trusts:** Our congregation is extremely blessed through legacy gifts: The Dora Fischer Estate, the Edwin and Evelyn Schuette Estate, the Woodrow and Thelma Newkirk Fund, the Bick Trust, and the Church Workers Scholarship Fund. These funds supported Helping Hands, radio ministry, and church worker scholarships.

In 2023, we added an additional endowment: The Charles and Etta Faye Forster Music Fund. Income will be distributed annually to the restricted music account to uphold and strength our congregation's music ministry.

If you desire more information about our existing funds or are interested in giving a legacy gift to our congregation, please contact a member of the Endowments, Estates, and Trusts Committee.

## 2024 Officers, Board Members, Church and School Staff

### **President:**

Jason Schroer

### **Vice-President:**

Zach Mathews

### **Secretary:**

Linda Scheidt

### **Financial Secretary:**

Melissa Pevlor

### **Treasurer:**

Mary Ann Nunn

### **Elders:**

Brian Arnholt

Jim Brock

Adam Hall

Art Ramsey

Eric Scheidt

Tim Scheidt

Carl Shaffer

Wiley Umphress

Steve Voelz

### **Youth:**

Jennifer Dougherty

Thomas Essex

David Probst

### **Education:**

Crista Burbrink

Rachel Fohne

Sarah Lewis

### **Trustees:**

Corbin Oliver

Steve Potter

Dan Schroer

### **Cemetery:**

Frank Helt

Neil Nolting

Daniel Wint

### **Evangelism:**

Mike Hackman

Kacey Patterson

Colin Scheidt

### **Early Childhood Ministry:**

Andrea Cotton

Mackenzie Wint

Marissa Younger

### **Stewardship:**

Rob Baltus

Adam Scheidt

Carolyn Wilkerson

### **Endowments, Estates, and Trusts:**

Mary Ann Nunn

Adam Scheidt

Warren Scheidt

### **Trinity High School Board:**

Larry Haak

Henry Wischmeier

### **White Creek Lutheran**

#### **School Foundation:**

Phil Burbrink

Matthew Lewis

### **Council-at-Large:**

Lisa Alderson

Katie Arnholt

April Hoeltke

### **Youth Counselors:**

C4Life: Chad and Rachel

Fohne; Matthew and

Sarah Lewis

C4Life: Marc and

Jennifer Dougherty

SPY: Dr. Tom Reinse;

Eric and Linda Scheidt

### **Church & ECM Staff:**

Pr. Doug Bauman

Pr. Daniel Fickenscher

Pr. Jeff Patterson

Kantor Daniel Mau

Church Secretary

Mackenzie Wint

Financial Secretary

Melissa Pevlor

Social Media/Publicity

Kacey Patterson

Latino Outreach

Coordinator,

Renee Strietelmeier

Director and Preschool

Teacher Jen Probst

Kindergarten Teacher

Anne Wiltsey

Preschool Teacher

Michelle Schultz

Teacher Assistants:

Gayla Alesandro,

Jenna Green, Sarah

Lewis, Glory Wofford,

Amy Yeley