

St. Paul Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod
Columbus, Indiana

2024 Annual Report

Dear Friends,

We've talked a lot about *Extending Christ's Love* this year, and rightly so! That's who we are and that's what we are to be doing.

First and foremost, God calls us to be on the receiving end of His love for us in Christ. His love is personally delivered to you through His life-giving Word and through the Holy Supper of His body and blood. Through these means, Christ embraces you with His love as He forgives, strengthens, and comforts you.



Through these same means, Christ equips and empowers you to extend His love to others. *We love because He first loved us* (1 John 4:19). You are a conduit of Christ's love as His love flows through you to others in word and deed.

The Holy Spirit not only empowers us as individual believers to extend Christ's love to others, but He has joined us together as a family of faith so that we might extend Christ's love to one another, to our community, and to the world.

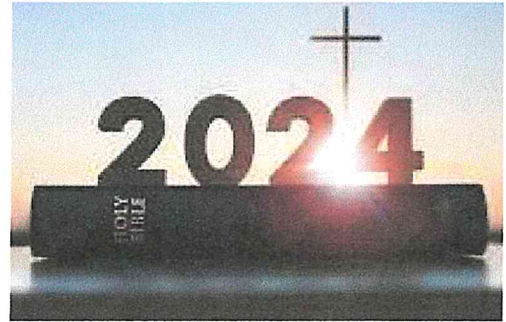
The Annual Report serves as a summary of the past year, how we have carried out our divine calling to receive Christ's love and to extend His love to others. The Annual Report also communicates our goals and emphases for the coming year as we seek to reach more and more people with the love of Christ.

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—to extend Christ's love to others!

In Christ's Love to Extend Christ's Love,
Pastor Bauman

2024 Year In Review



- In February, we welcomed the Concordia Choir from Concordia University in Irvine, California.
- In February, we voted to move forward with a capital campaign for the final phase of our Thirty-Year Master Plan—the construction of the Christian Education Center.
- We were blessed to serve over 170 children through Vacation Bible School, 139 of which were from non-member families.
- In July, our youth participated in a Servant Event in St. Louis, leading a VBS through Christian Friends of New Americans.
- In August, we celebrated Commitment Weekend for our Extending Christ's Love campaign with more than \$4.3 million pledged. The project budget was set at \$8.125 million.
- Our early childhood ministry has its highest enrollment ever with 73 students.
- We welcomed 30 new members this year by transfer or adult confirmation as the Lord continues to grow our family of faith.
- 49 children from our congregation are enrolled in Lutheran schools (preschool-grade 12).
- The Friends of Clifty Church project was completed which included the construction of the bell tower, repurposing of the chapel, and replacing the retaining wall.
- 2024 saw an increase in both average worship and Sunday School attendance.

Welcome New Members



Brent, Sarah, and Eliza Bodem
 Austin Campbell
 Brent, Kim, and Ruth Chandler
 Grace Ferguson
 Jesse, Kelley, and Zaylie Gonsior
 Robert and Cindy Hendershot
 Gabriel Pérez Gómez
 Moisés Pérez Francisco
 Travis, Lisa, Kylie, and Trey Price
 Shirely Riehn
 Nicholas Rosenbach
 Jim and Pam Roth
 Kip and Angie Rupprecht
 Katrina Smith
 Maddox Voils
 Doug and Wendy Wiederhoeft
 Abbigale (Humbel) Wofford

In 2024, we welcomed 30 baptized members
 and 26 communicant members.
 In 2023, we welcomed 25 baptized members
 and 19 communicant members.



Baptisms

Harriett June Barringer
 Wrenley James Burkhart
 Ruth Marie Chandler
 Moisés Perez Francisco
 Paul Christopher Kamman
 Amelia Faye Pevlor
 Gracelyn Mae Potter
 Carolyn Jo Priest
 Carter Dale Micah Shaffer

In 2024, there were nine baptisms compared to
 sixteen baptisms in 2023.

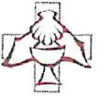
2024 Statistics

Baptized Membership (total membership): 629
 Confirmed Membership: 515

Average Sunday Morning Worship Attendance: 364
 Average Sunday School Attendance: 180

Our 2024 average worship attendance
 increased by five people over 2023.
 Our 2024 average Sunday School attendance
 increased by four people over 2023.

Confirmations



Youth

Owen Bradley Arnholt
 Jax Cohen Branaman
 Russel Stevin Chun Escalante
 Madelynn Olivia Dougherty
 Elliana Suzette Glick
 Madeline Jo Marie Johnson
 Keren Hazel Lewis
 Luke Jonathan Warren
 Liam Alexander Wiltsey

Adults

Brent and Kim Chandler
 Jesse Gonsior
 Gabriel Pérez Gómez
 Moisés Pérez Francisco
 Nicholas Rosenbach
 Maddox Voils
 Abbigale (Humbel) Wofford

In 2024, there were 17 confirmed: 9 youth, 8 adults
 In 2023, there were 15 confirmed: 9 youth, 6 adults

Marriages

Dalton Workman and Libby Wischmeier
 Garrett Pevlor and Emily Ireland
 Josiah Wofford and Abbigale Humbel



There were three marriages in 2024
 and two marriages in 2023.

Deaths

Dorothy L. Linn
 Becky A. Nordman
 Herschel C. Scheidt
 Vernon D. Sullivan

In 2024, four members entered into eternal life
 compared to two members in 2023.





The Annual Report not only looks back, but also looks to the future. What is on the horizon in 2025 for our life together as a Family of Faith here at St. Paul?

EDUCATION AND YOUTH MINISTRY

At the Annual Meeting, the Voters approved moving Mrs. Jennifer Probst into the role of Director of Christian Education (DCE) at the end of the school year. In this role, Jen will no longer serve as preschool teacher but will devote her time to serving as Director of our Early Childhood Ministry as well as leading our education and youth ministries.

Jen was trained as a DCE and has served in this capacity in other congregations. Our outreach approach has never been to adopt a specific evangelism program, but **build and strengthen relationships** in both our church and school. With Mrs. Probst directing early childhood, Christian education, and youth ministries, Jen would form relationships with early childhood ministry students and their families which would continue through Sr. High youth. In addition, the connection between church and school would also be strengthened.

Until recently, the Director of our Early Childhood Ministry was not a classroom teacher. By not having teaching responsibilities during the school day, Mrs. Probst will be able to assist teachers where needed, give tours to prospective families, and provide individual care and support to students who are struggling (illness, separation anxiety, discipline, etc.).

We are thankful for our youth counselors, Sunday School Superintendent Katie Arnholt, our youth and education boards and many others who have served during this time of vacancy in youth and education ministry. Even though we have been in an extended time of vacancy, we have been able to maintain and even strengthen many aspects of youth and education ministries. Pastor Bauman will remain the point person for youth and education until the end of the school year when Jen moves into this new role.

BUILDING PROJECT

The Building Committee continues to meet with Architect Kevin Stuckwisch on Design Drawings to meet the approved \$8.125 million budget for our new Christian Education Center.

The Finance Committee continues to work on grants, fundraisers, and other ideas to raise funds for Extending Christ's Love.

Once the Building Committee and architect finish their work, the architectural plans will be presented to the congregation. A special voters meeting will be called to consider moving forward with construction. If the voters approve this motion, then a groundbreaking service will be scheduled followed by the beginning of construction.

So what's the timeline for this? The Building Committee is optimistic that they can present the architectural plans to the congregation and have the voters meeting sometime this year. By 2026, we could be in the Construction Phase of this endeavor!

Please continue to pray for the Building and Finance Committees and for our congregation during this process and pray that Christ's love would be extended to many people, young and old, through our Christian Education Center.

MUSIC MINISTRY

Our music ministry will be enhanced through the support of the Charles and Etta Faye Forster Music Fund. The first disbursement of \$5,129 from this newly created endowment was received this month. These funds will allow the purchase of choral music, supplies for our choirs, as well as supporting guest musicians to enhance our Divine Services and other events.

Our congregation is extremely blessed through legacy gifts. In 2024, our endowments and trusts Helping Hands, radio ministry, and church worker scholarships. In addition, over \$104,000 of unrestricted income from our endowments was applied to Extending Christ's Love.

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.



Thanks to your generosity, we are able to further our Lord's mission locally and globally. Your gifts are a blessing now and for years to come:

General Fund: In June, the Church Council approved a motion to replace all six HVAC units at the church. Due to hail damage, the church received \$43,131 from an insurance claim to repair the units. Given their age (15 years), the Council determined the best stewardship was to replace the units, resulting in an unbudgeted expense of \$91,154. Because of your generosity, we were able to pay for this expense and end 2024 with general fund net income of **\$8,228**. Total general fund income was \$1,023,435 and total expenses were \$1,015,207.

Extending Christ's Love: We have been blessed with over \$4.3 million in pledges for Extending Christ's Love. September 1, 2024, was the official beginning of the Fulfillment Phase of this campaign which will continue through 2029. As of December 31, 2024, just four months into the Fulfillment Phase, total income for Extending Christ's Love is **\$780,036!** *To God Be the Glory!* An added blessing of your generosity is that these funds are currently earning interest until they are needed for the project. The more that is contributed early in the campaign will also postpone our need to seek financing from Lutheran Church Extension Fund, thus saving even more in interest payments.

Scholarship Granting Organization: The SGO program allows Indiana residents to contribute to a school to provide tuition assistance. Those who contribute to the SGO receive a credit on their Indiana income taxes. The scholarships benefit school families who have financial need. As of December 31, 2024, **\$32,150** is available for SGO scholarships.

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

2025 Officers, Board Members, Church and School Staff

President:

Jason Schroer

Vice-President:

Zach Mathews

Secretary:

Linda Scheidt

Financial Secretary:

Rachel Fohne

Treasurer:

Mary Ann Nunn

Elders:

Brian Arnholt

Jim Brock

Adam Hall

Art Ramsey

Eric Scheidt

Tim Scheidt

Carl Shaffer

Wiley Umphress

Steve Voelz

Youth:

Thomas Essex

Jacob Howarth

April Ann Wofford

Education:

Crista Burbrink

Chad 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

Emily Linke

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:

KfC: Chad and Rachel

Fohne; Matthew and

Sarah Lewis

C4Life: Travis and Lisa

Price

SPY: Dr. Tom Reinsel;

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

Rachel Fohne

Latino Outreach

Coordinator

Renee Strietelmeier

Sunday School

Superintendent Katie

Arnholt

Director and Teacher

Jen Probst

Teachers Anne Wiltsey

and Michelle Schultz

Teacher Assistants:

Gayla Alesandro,

Sally Haak, Kathy

Hoover, Sarah

Lewis, Laurie Schultz,

Caroline Wilcox, Glory

Wofford, Amy Yeley