

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

57th Annual Meeting

January 29, 2023



ST. STEPHEN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

230 North Evergreen Avenue

Woodbury, NJ 08096

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

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.

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It is in the key of B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The score consists of four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The first system includes a four-part setting of the first line of the hymn. The second system includes a four-part setting of the second line. The third system includes a four-part setting of the third line. The fourth system includes a four-part setting of the fourth line. The piano accompaniment is a simple harmonic accompaniment, primarily using chords and moving lines in the left hand.

1 Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;
2 I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,
3 Have you not bid me love you, God and King;
4 Teach me to love you as your an - gels love,

wean it from earth, through all its puls - es move;
no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay;
all, all your own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind?
one ho - ly pas - sion fill - ing all my frame:

stoop to my weak - ness, strength to me im - part,
no an - gel vis - i - tant, no op - 'ning skies;
I see your cross; there teach my heart to cling,
the bap - tism of the heav'n - de - scend - ed dove,

and make me love you as I ought to love.
but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.
Oh, let me seek you and, oh, let me find!
my heart an al - tar, and your love the flame.

Text: George Croly, 1780-1860

Music: MORECAMBE, Frederick C. Atkinson, 1841-1897

Text and music are in the public domain. Reproduced from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, hymn #800. May be reproduced without restriction.

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AGENDA
57th Annual Meeting - January 29, 2023

WELCOME

OPENING LITURGY

INTRODUCTIONS

REPORTS

Council Secretary - Quorum - 2022 Minutes & Council Highlights

Council President

Introduction of Council Nominees - Election

Introduction of Synod Assembly Voting Members - Election

Constitutional Amendments - Vote

Pastor Joseph Graumann

Michael Wyatt

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Christian Education & Youth Ministry

Church Property

Communications

Evangelical Outreach & Social Ministry

Fellowship

Worship & Music

Financial Secretary Report

Stewardship Report 2022

Treasurer's Report

2023 Budget - Vote

WELCA

RESOLUTION: FUTURE CHURCH

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

MOTION TO ADJOURN

2021 Annual Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2022

Number of Members: 345

Number in Attendance: 43

Needed for a Quorum: 34

A quorum was met and the meeting was called to order at 10:45.

A motion to approve the minutes from the January 31, 2021, Annual Meeting was made by Jay Gassaway and seconded by Dottie Shields. The motion passed.

Introduction of Council 2021

Thank you to Terry Puskar for serving 6 years on Council.

Slate of Nominees for the four positions are Kevin Deininger, Judy Hunter, Jackie Wyatt, and Kevin Glass. There were no nominations from the floor. A motion to accept the slate of nominations as presented was made by Steve Puskar seconded by Kathy Young. The motion passed.

Synod Assembly

A motion for Jack Bryant, Dottie Shields, and Jason Puskar to be lay representatives at Synod Assembly 2021 was made by Rich Dann and seconded by Steve Puskar. The motion passed.

Review of Reports:

Motion to accept the Financial Secretary Report was made by Jackie Wyatt and seconded by Steve Puskar. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

A motion to approve the proposed 2022 budget was made by Jason Puskar and seconded by Kathy Young. The motion passed.

Homeland Security Grant

A motion to move forward with the Homeland Security Grant which is for \$150,000 and an estimate from DeSimone Construction for \$154, 592.40 was made by Chris Nelson and seconded by Jason Puskar. The motion passed.

Call Committee

Members of the Call Committee are John Murray (chairperson), Milton Keenan, Kevin Glass, Nancy MacMaster, Kathy Cherico, and Gabrielle Green. The Call Committee was installed.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 12:06 by Lorraine Happbold and seconded by Kevin Deininger. The motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted

Andrea Gerrard

Congregational Meeting

May 15, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 10:54 am.

Opening prayer was led by Rev. Dean Brown.

The purpose of the meeting was to Call Pastor Joseph Graumann as pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church.

Number of Voting Members: 233

Number Needed for a Quorum: 23

Number in attendance: 66

The meeting consisted of members in attendance in person and via Zoom.

Resolution:

The motion to call Pastor Joseph Gruamann as pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church with the agreed upon compensation package totaling \$103,184 and vacation including 4 Sundays. This would include his salary, health benefits, housing allowance, retirement contribution, professional reimbursement, and time for continuing education was made by John Murray and seconded by Michael Wyatt.

The congregation held a question-and-answer session with Pastor Graumann. Pastor Graumann was excused, and a discussion was led by Rev. Dean Brown. Motion to close the discussion and vote was made by Andrea Gerrard and seconded by Sandy Margerum.

The vote to call Pastor Graumann was 60 yes and two no.

A closing prayer was led by Rev. Dean Brown

The meeting was adjourned at 11:39 am.

2022 Council Meeting Highlights

JANUARY: The council nominated Jack Bryant, Dottie Shields, and Jason Puskar to be lay voting members at Synod Assembly.

FEBRUARY: The Annual Meeting was held via Zoom. After nominations and vote the Council Officers for 2021 are as follows: President: Jack Bryant, Vice-President: Lisa Carney, Secretary: Andi Gerrard, Treasurer: Gail Gassaway, and Financial Secretary: Dottie Shields. Committee liaisons are as follows: Christian Education & Youth: Andrea Gerrard, Church Property: Kevin Deininger, Communication: Quianna Keenan, Evangelical Outreach & Social Ministry: Judy Hunter, Fellowship: Lisa Carney and Jackie Wyatt, Stewardship: Dorothy Keenan, Worship & Music: Rich Dann and Sandy Margerum, and Financial: Gail Gassaway and Dottie Shields.

MARCH: Items needed for the food pantry include complete pancake mix, juice, syrup, and soups.

APRIL: The Church Council met with the pastoral candidate and voted to proceed with the candidate preaching at St. Stephens on Sunday, May 15, 2022. The council voted to move to one worship service at 9:30. For Holy Week the church had Three Days in One service that celebrated Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil on April 15th at 7 pm. Easter was celebrated on Sunday, April 17.

MAY: Jack Bryant, Dottie Shields, Jason Puskar, and Pastor Dave Stoner represented St. Stephens at Synod Assembly on May 6 and 7. St. Stephens called Pastor Joseph Graumann as its pastor on May 15. The congregation voted to repair the fire escape with a vote of 71 yes votes and zero no votes. Michael Wyatt was hired as the Director of Music and Meghan Ruggeri was hired as secretary.

JUNE: The fire escape was repaired. The church hosted a table at Lot 323 on Friday, June 24.

JULY: Pastor Joseph Graumann's first Sunday at St. Stephens was July 17. There was no council meeting in July.

AUGUST: The council passed the motions to receive Alicia C as a member, adopt a new website, to donate the remaining plots at Eglington Cemetery to be used by people the cemetery deems to be in need, and to proceed with a trial period for a new piano until a congregational vote can be had. The congregation was officially awarded the money to use towards the security upgrades that were discussed at the Annual Meeting on February 6, 2022.

SEPTEMBER: Pastor Joe was installed on Saturday, September 24, 2022. The council voted to support youth financially who wanted to attend the Youth Retreat in November.

OCTOBER: The Council passed motions to accept James and Phyllis S and Margret N as voting members and to accept Joyce M as an associate member. The congregation approved the purchase of the piano by a vote of 78 yes and 11 no votes. The committee to work on the Durand Lease will be Lisa Carney, Dorothy Keenan, and Mike Wyatt. The council was informed that the congregation will receive the entire amount from the Otto Herbie Trust. Alicia C, James and Phyllis S, Margret N, and Joyce M were recognized as new members of the congregation on Reformation Sunday, October 30.

NOVEMBER: The council passed the motion to begin the next steps for a music scholarship program. Sunday School began on Sunday, November 6.

DECEMBER: The council passed the motion to make the recommendation to the congregation to create a future church team to do strategic planning for the congregation. Christmas Eve services were at 3 pm and 7 pm.

Pastor's Report

"Then they told what had happened on the road, and how [Jesus] had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread." —Luke 24:28

The heavens open, and thunder strikes. Tablets are handed down. A burst of light renders a man blind. A bush bursts into flames and is yet not consumed. When we think of God's self-disclosure, these vivid images often come to mind. "Where," we often ask, "is God's might now? How can God be at work here, today?" In the story of the disciples' walk to Emmaus, Jesus is found right beside them as a stranger, sharing conversation and a meal.

While we might seek theatrics, God's presence comes to us constantly. Here, the Word of God is spoken, sung, read, and shared. Here, we receive forgiveness and eternal life in the waters of Baptism. Here, we share in the Holy Meal. God uses everyday things like words of hope, simple water, and common bread and wine to be with us. Similarly, while we wait for Jesus' coming in the clouds, we affirm that Jesus is already here today, present in Jesus' body, the Church. We are God at work in the world.

I am overjoyed to be your pastor here. Since you all voted to call me as your pastor, I have been hard at work learning about our community: both the congregation and its environs. I have been getting to know you, laughing and crying with you, teaching, preaching and visiting. So many of you have been so gracious in your welcome, but also in your help. You are teaching me how to be a pastor of this particular place. You are equipping me to use my gifts for the benefit of this Church and of the Gospel.

In the time that I have been here, I have eased into my role as your minister of Word and Sacrament. I have led four funerals and one baptism. I have made three hospital visits and a couple house calls. As part of my involvement with the New Jersey Synod, I have been appointed to the Mission Advocacy Table, which is the body that approves and assigns funds to strategic ministries and new mission starts in the Synod. I was also appointed to the board of directors at CrossRoads, our shared Episcopal-Lutheran camp in Port Murray, NJ. I am continuing my fellowship with the Pastoral Innovation Network of New England (and now NJ) through the Hartford International University for Religion and Peace in Connecticut. I continue to lead two Bible studies a week, adult Sunday school, and confirmation class. God comes to me every day in my service with you all. You teach me and uphold me just as I work to uphold you.

One new role for me is leading our staff. Over the past six months, I have had the privilege to work alongside excellent professionals. We have developed as a cohesive unit, and each one of them is dedicated to serving Jesus and to serving this community. Together with them and the council's executive committee, I have been working to establish job descriptions and an evaluations process. My goal this year is to revise our employee handbook, last updated in 2007. This will ensure that our policies reflect the modern realities of church work, and it will help our congregation care for those who care for us so well. Together, your staff are working hard to serve our mission wisely.

Like those two disciples who walked to Emmaus with Jesus, we are at a turning point in our story of faith. As our church undergoes change from within and without, Jesus meets us where we are. Like those disciples, we see him on the road, hearing our gripes and showing us the resurrection. Like those disciples, we meet him in the breaking of the bread, feeding us for the journey. We are his body, and where Jesus goes, we go with the fullness of the grace and revelation of God. Like those disciples, we are excited to tell others what God is up to in our lives. Together, let us tell the story of how the Lord met us in the breaking of bread.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Joseph Graumann, Jr.
Pastor

2022 IN REVIEW

MEMBERSHIP & PASTORAL ACTS

MEMBERS RECEIVED

BAPTISMS



Julian Lee Keenan

July 10, 2022

Mia Salice

MacCleary

October 2, 2022

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH



James Shields

Phyllis Shields

Margaret Nichols

Joyce Maloney

Alisia Carnovsky



MEMBERS REMOVED

DEATHS



Kenneth K. Kline

January 7

Dominick A. DelPiano

February 19

Margaret C. Boker

February 21

Gary B. Kanney

July 1

David L. Kershaw, Sr.*

July 5

Edith Tavener **

July 6

Shirley E. Miller

August 10

Carlton F. Fairchild

August 12

Jacob Amwake*

September 10

Jonathan Spinosi

October 21

Sally L. Bouchaud

December 8

**Not a member*

***Columbarium burial*

TRANSFERS



AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE



IN PERSON: 60



ONLINE: 84

Future Church 2028

Why?

Society is changing. Our church has changed. Making a plan of action will let us know who we are and how we can specifically contribute to our community. It will help us use our resources wisely and involve everyone in the decision-making of our congregation.

Who?

You! This process will involve every single stakeholder in our congregation and invite others from the community. A dedicated group of folks, led by Jackie Wyatt, will “own” the process, reporting to council and congregation as a committee: The Future Church Committee.

How?

3 PHASES OF FUTURE CHURCH



When?

Phase 1: approximately three months.

Phase 2: conclude work for 2024 Annual Meeting

Phase 3: re-evaluate in 2028.

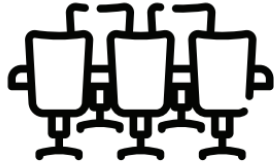
Constitutional Amendments

Every three years the Churchwide Assembly adopts revisions to the Model Constitution for Congregations. These revisions must be incorporated into the Congregation Constitutions of every ELCA congregation. We will vote upon these revisions during the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 29, 2023.

Please see separate handout to review all proposed revisions and rationale.

2022 Year in Review

AS PRESIDENT



Attended **36** meetings
(includes executive team,
council, call committee, staff, and
members of the congregation)



Attended
2022 NJ Synod Assembly



Developed a **Call Committee**

THE CONGREGATION

Called **Joseph Graumann, Jr.**
to be pastor of
St Stephen Lutheran Church



Hired **Meghan Ruggeri** as
Director of Communications



Hired **Michael Wyatt**
as Musical Director

Exhibited at **Lot 323**
Pride Event

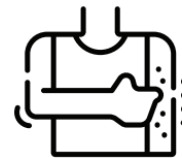


PRIDE



Fall Property Clean up

14 volunteers | **2** cases of poison ivy



Purchased a **Boston** grand piano,
made by **Steinway**

Report of the Music Director, Michael Wyatt

This has been a year of great change and renewal in our congregation, and I am elated to be a part of that!

Starting in July, our first order of business was to reorganize our choir and music ministry. I am happy to report that our choir is small, but strong, made entirely of members of our congregation. I would like to thank those members for their continued support of the music program, and for their time and dedication to our craft. My top priority was and remains to break down the barriers of music in our church. Music in the context of worship is meant to elevate our service—to give us an opportunity to participate in weekly worship. In my time I have noticed the uptick in congregational participation in the music presented each week. With that being said, I would like to see more of our members joining our choir.

In the early fall we procured for our church a beautiful baby grand piano. This has been an invaluable addition to what we can offer here musically at St. Stephen. The introduction of piano music has enabled us to bridge the divide between classical and contemporary worship, while maintaining our value on a traditional service. It also has opened up the ability for more of our congregation to share their gifts, including Pastor Joe, and Gail this past week with their dual piano performance of “Lamb of God” as a prelude for worship.

I thank each of you for your support over the past several months as I transitioned from a member of the choir to its director. While my tenure here has been brief—only up until the start of this year—I am eager to see what we can accomplish in the coming year with our music ministry.

Financial Secretary Report

	THIS MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	YEAR TO DATE
	DECEMBER	DECEMBER	DECEMBER
	2022	2022	2021
INCOME FOR CURRENT EXPENSES			
Weekly Offering Envelopes	10,155.00	114,126.00	132,201.00
Simply Giving	2,285.55	28,762.75	
Plate Offering	866.00	1,573.00	2,604.00
Special Offering Envelopes	1,761.00	2,203.00	8,078.00
Sunday School Offering	-	-	
Interest	32.11	87.99	79.00
Thrivent Choice	-	633.00	274.00
Flowers	905.00	1,475.00	650.00
Weddings, Baptisms, Etc.	-	-	600.00
Youth Ministry	-	-	
Grants	-	-	1,500.00
Bequests	-	-	
Use Donations	-	167.00	70.00
		-	
Total Current Exp. Income	16,004.66	150,790.74	146,056.00
		-	
DURAND RENTAL INCOME	19,774.00	233,832.00	227,022.00
		-	
SPECIAL PURPOSE GIVING FUND		-	
Special Purpose Giving	-	-	890.00
World Hunger	-	450.00	3,880.00
Disaster Relief	-	300.00	390.00
Blankets	-	50.00	1,530.00
Lords Lunch	-	-	
Greater Wdbry Coop Ministry	236.00	1,711.00	3,445.00
Total Special Giving Income	236.00	2,511.00	10,135.00
		-	
Total Income (Funds A to C)	33,697.00	384,816.08	383,213.00
		-	
MEMORIAL FUND		-	
Regular Contributions	660.00	1,485.00	2,075.00
Memorial Garden	-	225.00	375.00
Total Memorial Fund Income	660.00	1,710.00	2,450.00
		-	
COLUMBARIUM	-	-	1,500.00
		-	
ORGAN FUND		-	
Regular Contributions	-	-	
Total Organ Fund Income	-	-	
		-	
MUSIC FUND	-	-	
Music Fund Contributions	-	21.00	4,575.00
Total Music Fund Income	-	21.00	4,575.00
		-	
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND		-	
Regular Capital Imp. Contributions	-	455.00	425.00
Total Captial Improvement Fund	-	455.00	425.00
		-	
TOTAL RECIPITS FROM ALL SOURSES	36,674.66	389,319.74	392,163.00

Treasurer Report
2023 Proposed Operating Budget

OPERATING INCOME:		2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Proposed
Income:				
Weekly Offering Envelopes	4001	160,000	143,091	155,000
Plate offerings	4002		3,348	0
Special Envelopes	4003		2,203	0
Sunday School Offerings	4004		0	0
Interest	4005		120	0
Weddings/Baptisms/Funerals	4006		0	0
Flowers	4007		1,475	0
Thrivent Choice	4008		633	0
Use donations	4010		167	0
Grants	4015		0	0
Youth Activities	4016		0	0
Bequests	4020		0	0
Capital	4801		<u>455</u>	<u>0</u>
Total:		160,000	151,492	155,000
Designated Giving:				
World Hunger Appeal	4503	0	450	0
Disaster Relief	4504	0	300	0
Quilts/Blankets	4505	0	50	0
GWCM	4510	0	<u>1,636</u>	0
Total:			2,436	
Total Giving St. Stephens:			153,928	
Other Revenue:				
Durand Academy Rent	4101	233,832	233,832	<u>237,288</u>
Total:		233,832	233,832	237,288
Grand Total:			387,760	392,288
Proposed 2023 Income		392,288		
Proposed 2023 Budget		<u>392,077</u>		
Surplus:		211		

OPERATING EXPENSES:		2022	2022	2023	Giving
	Account	Budget	Actual	Proposed	Percent
Mission Support					
Synod Support	5005	16,000	14,470	15,500	10.0
Synod Support- Durand income	5005	4,677	4,677	4,746	2.0
Bishop's Challenge	5010	0	0	0	0.0
World Hunger	5020	4,000	3,641	3,875	2.5
Delaware Cluster	5025	0	0	0	0.0
Mission Partnership	5030	0	0	0	0.0
Mission Support- Int'l	5035	0	29	30	0.0
Disaster Response	5060	0	300	0	0.0
Grtr Wdbury Com. Min.	5510	5,000	4,405	3,875	2.5
Quilts	5515	0	0	1,000	0.0
Community Mission	5535	0	500	1,000	0.0
Other Appeals	5540	<u>1,600</u>	<u>918</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>1.0</u>
Total:		31,277	28,941	30,176	18.0

Church Property					
Gas Heat	6010	11,000	14,470	15,000	
Electric	6015	25,000	21,211	22,000	
Water/Sewer	6020	6,500	16,562	12,000	
Janitorial Supplies	6025	400	409	700	
Trash Hauling	6030	3,360	3,006	2,940	
Property & Liability Ins.	6035	14,000	14,730	15,492	
Security System	6040	3,180	3,491	3,372	
Furniture & Equipment	6045	1,000	1,015	1,500	
Bldg. Maint. & Repair	6055	10,000	9,830	12,000	
Capital Improvements	6057	0	40,450	0	
Organ & Piano Maint.	6065	1,100	10,450	1,430	
Landscaping	6070	14,500	11,605	13,000	
Cemetery Lots Expenses	6085	0	0	0	
Air Conditioning	6090	500	0	0	
Loan Interest	6202	<u>1860</u>	<u>1,903</u>	2,340	
Total:		92,400	149,131	101,774	

	Account	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Proposed
Congregational Ministries				
Worship & Altar Supplies	7005	2,221	1,757	2,000
Flowers	7010	0	507	500
Music	7020	2,500	2,888	3,500
Music Stipends	7021	7,200	1,125	5,250
Bulletin Covers	7025	0	0	0
Sunday Church School	7030	300	640	700
Catechetics & 1st Communion	7040	200	293	300
Youth	7045	500	0	500
Adult Education	7050	200	0	200
Fellowship	7055	500	396	750
Social Ministry	7060	500	74	1,000
Stewardship	7065	300	0	300
Evangelism	7070	200	745	500
Communication	7075	100	105	4349
Devotionals	7080	330	350	380
The Lutheran	7085	118	118	118
Supply Organist	7090	1,200	500	900
Supply Pastors	7095	<u>1,125</u>	<u>575</u>	<u>1,300</u>
Total:		17,494	10,072	22,547

Administrative Expenses

Office Expenses	8005	3,000	2,512	3,000
Technology	8007	2,500	2,488	2,500
Convention & Retreats	8010	400	200	400
Travel (general)	8015	400	317	400
Travel - Pastor	8020	1,000	666	1,000
Moving Expenses	8023	0	5,809	0
Telephone (Office & Bldg.)	8027	2,820	2,810	2,820
Pastor's Cell & I-Pad	8026	780	551	0
Postage	8030	1,500	827	1,000
Offering Envelopes	8035	1200	1,054	1,200
Outside Printing	8040	0	0	0
Payroll Service	8045	1,150	1,161	1,160
Acctg., Legal & Professional	8050	2,500	0	2,500
Bank Fees & Finance Chrgs.	8055	0	0	0
Vanco Service Charges	8056	200	317	325
Office Equipment Leasing	8060	6,103	6,912	6,385
Office Equip. Maint. & Repair	8065	150	345	200
Miscellaneous	8070	0	269	0
Worker's Comp. Ins.	8075	<u>3,967</u>	<u>3,245</u>	<u>3,582</u>
Total:		27,670	29,484	26,472

		2022	2022	2023
Staff Compensation:	Account	Budget	Actual	Proposed
Pastor's Compensation				
Salary	9005	60,000	65,615	80,340
Pension	9010	8,640	4,378	9,640
Medical	9015	33,468	8,782	10,224
Housing Allowance	9020	12,000	16,154	0
Continuing Education	9025	500	0	700
Book Allowance	9030	<u>400</u>	<u>198</u>	<u>500</u>
Total:		115,008	95,128	101,404
Music Director's Compensation				
Salary	9050	16,218	11,773	14,214
Housing Allowance	9055	<u>8,838</u>	<u>2,550</u>	<u>0</u>
Total:		25,056	14,323	14,214
Wedding Compensation	9060	0	0	
Office Staff Compensation				
Secretary -Full-time	9065	20,800	15,760	28428
Office Manager	9072	<u>8,252</u>	<u>8,252</u>	<u>8,502</u>
Total:		29,052	24,012	36,930
Building Maintenance Staff				
Sexton	9075	27,226	27,222	29,132
Maintenance Person	9077	<u>16,474</u>	<u>16,474</u>	<u>17,628</u>
Total:		43,700	43,696	46,760
Taxes				
Soc. Sec. & Med.	9090	8,300	8,951	9,500
NJ Payroll taxes	9095	<u>3100</u>	<u>2,093</u>	<u>2300</u>
Total:		11,400	11,044	11,800
Total Staff Compensation:		224,216	188,203	211,108
Total Expenses:		151,417	217,628	180,969
Grand Total:		<u>375,633</u>	<u>405,831</u>	<u>392,077</u>
Capital Loan (Liability)				
Principal	6201	6660	6570	6840

**Treasurer Report
FUND BALANCE**

FUND	2022 Balance	Income	Expenses	2023 Balance
Memorial	\$10,533.25	\$1,560.00	\$1,756.72	\$10,336.53
Memorial Garden	\$3,614.11	\$225.00	\$108.22	\$3,730.89
Columbarium	\$4,848.29	\$0.00	\$1,250.50	\$3,597.79
Music Fund	\$8,321.49	\$0.00	\$8,321.49	\$0.00
Organ Fund	-\$307.62	\$307.62	\$0.00	<u>\$0.00</u>
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS				\$17,665.21

REPORT OF THE RAYMOND JAMES INVESTMENT ACCOUNT

Balance 12/31/2022	\$226,082.01
Balance 12/31/2022	<u>\$200,273.09</u>
Unrealized Loss:	(\$25,808.92)

Treasurer Report
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets

Bank

1005 - Checking (Fulton Bank of NJ)	71,802.75
1015 - Raymond James Account	200,273.09
1100 - Thrivent Annuity	2,394.55

Total Bank	274,470.39
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Other Current Assets

1115 - Cemetery Lots	27,513.75
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Total Other Current Assets	27,513.75
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Total Assets	301,984.14
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Liabilities

Long Term Liabilities

6201 Note Payable- Fulton Bank of NJ	27,647.47
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Total Long Term Liabilities	27,647.47
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Total Liabilities	27,647.47
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Net Assets

Restricted

Columbarium	3,597.79
Memorial Fund	10,336.53
Memorial Garden	3,730.89

Total Restricted	17,665.21
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Unrestricted

General Fund	256,671.46
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Total Unrestricted	256,671.46
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Total Net Assets	274,336.67
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Total Liabilities + Net Assets	301,984.14
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Call Committee Report

In November 2021, the process to call a new pastor began by asking the church council to complete a Ministry Site Profile, a document providing information about our ministry setting.

Members of the St. Stephen's Call Committee - John Murray, Chair – Committee Members: Milton Keenan, Nancy MacMaster, Cathy Cherico, Gabrielle Green, and Kevin Glass. All call committee members devoted their time and energy and contributed to the process. The Call Committee was responsible for:

- finding the next pastor;
- engaging council input to help guide the search process;
- providing updates to the church regarding developments during search process;
- presenting the pastor candidate to the voting members of the church.

Between **January and March 2022**, the Call Committee met both in-person and virtually to develop interview questions, meet with the candidate, and meet with references for the candidate. We also met with the NJ Synod office who helped the Committee navigate through the Call process.

In **April 2022**, the Call Committee and Church Council voted enthusiastically and unanimously to request that our candidate visit St. Stephen's and lead worship at the May 15, 2022 service. At the end of the May 15 th service, a Meet and Greet was held with the candidate and the Congregation voted to extend a call to our new Pastor, Joseph Graumann. Pastor Graumann most recently served as Pastor at Saint Stephen Lutheran Church, Marlborough, MA.

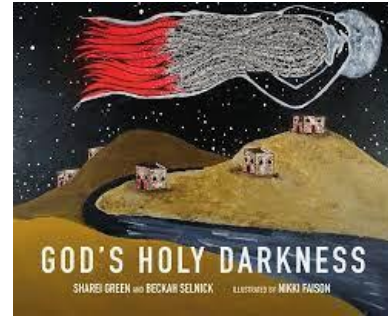
On **September 24, 2022**, Pastor Joe Graumann was successfully installed and celebrated as our new Pastor.

Respectfully submitted,
John Murray, Chair, Call Committee

Christian Education & Youth Ministry

Youth activities are back and in person. The Sunday School Program met in the Spring of 2022 during Lent to prepare for Holy Week and the Easter season. The story of Jesus's life during Holy Week and his resurrection were shared with children.

On November 6th, Sunday School began meeting weekly after the Sunday morning service. We read the story *God's Holy Darkness* by Sharei Green and Beckah Selnick. If you are looking for a new picture book to add to your child's collection, please consider this book. The book celebrates instances in the story of God's people when darkness, blackness, and night are beautiful, good, and holy.



We began using the lectionary-based curriculum that aligns with the lessons and Gospel that are heard during the worship service. When entering the church, there are Children's Leaflets that can be picked up for pre-readers and beginning readers at the door on the right side of the sanctuary. These leaflets can help younger children connect with the scripture during the worship service.

Confirmation meets two Mondays each month for older students who are near middle school age. Children are learning about the bible and the Lutheran faith. Please see Pastor Joe if someone in your family is ready for Confirmation.

First Communion instruction is available for any families who are interested. Please see Pastor Joe or Andi if your child is ready for Holy Communion.

The Youth Group has met to build community by playing board games. Synod wide youth activities are back in person also. If you are interested in meeting other youth from St. Stephens or New Jersey talk to Andi.

Respectfully Submitted
Andrea Gerrard

Church Property

This year at St. Stephen's we thankfully only had one major problem: the school fire escape. It was an item that had been discussed for a few years. This year, we concluded that it was necessary to make the repairs for the safety and concern of all. All demolition and repairs were completed with a warranty from Maximum Fire Escapes. The total cost for the repairs was \$32,450.

During the year we encountered some minor repair needs (plumbing and electrical) that come from standard use of the building and age.

A minor modification was completed to the platform in the choir area to accommodate our new piano. The front rail was also removed and modified to open the choir area itself. The cost associated with this was labor only, since materials were refurbished.

Standard miscellaneous items for the church and the school were completed. Any cost that was the responsibility of Durand was forwarded to them for reimbursement.

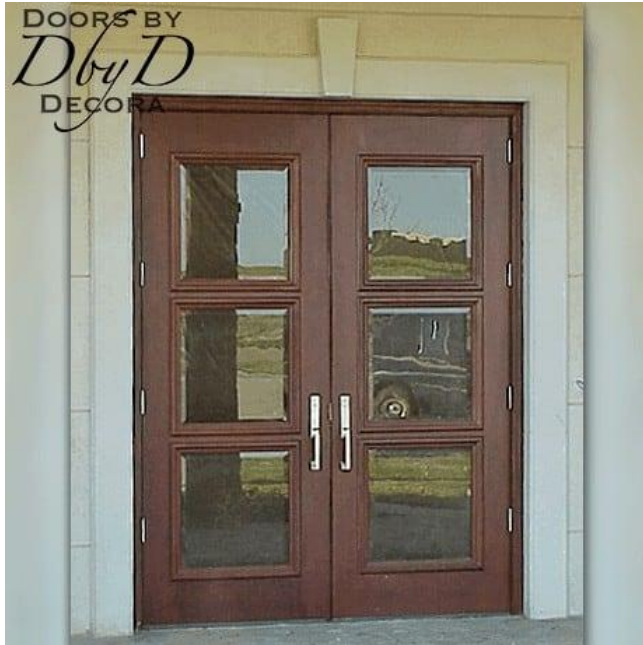
No major projects are scheduled or being addressed at this time. Hopefully 2023 is a quiet year for repairs.

I look forward to assisting St. Stephen's and Durand in the future.

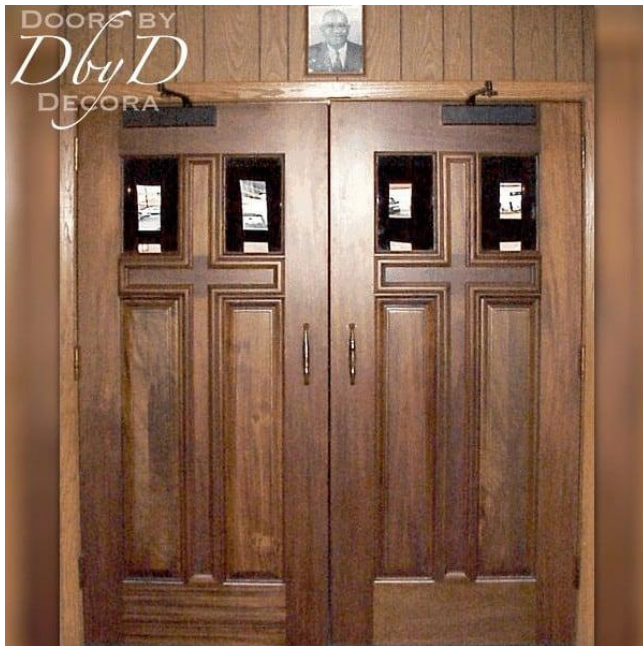
Thank you,
Michael G. Wyatt

Homeland Security Grant Project - Jay Gassaway

We received the Security Upgrade project Construction Permit January 10. We expect the doors to be delivered by early April and project completion by the end of April or early May.



Exterior doors into the Narthex



Interior doors from Narthex to Sanctuary

Communications

Since starting my role here at St. Stephen's in June, I have been soaking in a lot of new information and trying to learn as much as possible about St. Stephen's, its members, its traditions and its ministries. While there have been a lot of new processes and tasks to learn, I have also been using my experience as a marketing professional to streamline communications with the congregation, as well as reach new people.

One of the first major projects I tackled was updating the website. A refreshed site launched in August and it is my hope that it becomes a useful resource for existing members as well as a tool to reach new people. The content on the website is purposefully developed to give people who are searching for a church family an idea of who we are, what we believe, and the work we do. Since the launch of the new site, our website traffic has increased 28% compared to the same time last year. We also ran our first social media ads and sent out a direct mail postcard to garner attention for events during Advent. In 2023, I plan to use these learnings to create a communications strategy that will tell the story of St. Stephen's and encourage its growth for the future.

My main goal as communications director is to share your stories, messages and announcements, whether that be through the bulletin, email, social media or other channels. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please feel free to call or stop by the office.

It has been a pleasure to join the staff at St. Stephen's and I am grateful for the warm welcome I received from everyone. I look forward to getting to know each of you even more this year as I support the many ministries of St. Stephen's.

Thank you,
Meghan Ruggeri

Evangelical Outreach & Social Ministry

We attempted some Evangelism events this year with participating at Lot 323 in Woodbury this past summer, doing a community mailing & our Jolly Elves Christmas Wrapping event in December, but as things continue to normalize from the pandemic, we hopefully will have more evangelism events reaching out to our community this year.

I'm hoping we'll be able to reinstate the appointment of sponsors to new members joining St. Stephen's and perhaps incorporate a Fellowship event with welcoming them to our church.

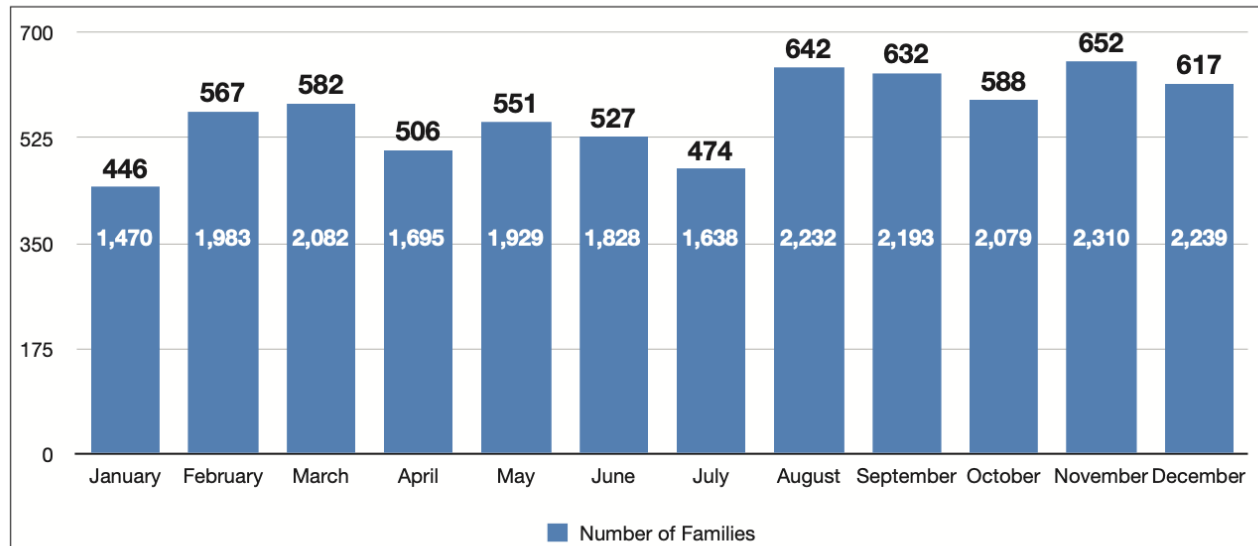
The Social Ministry continues to be strong through the work of WELCA, the sewing group and our efforts with the food pantry through GWCM, but I know people would like to be doing more.

If you have ideas & would like to help out in this area, please contact me.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Hunter

Greater Woodbury Cooperative Ministries (GWCM)

FOOD PANTRY



6,784

Families Served

23,678

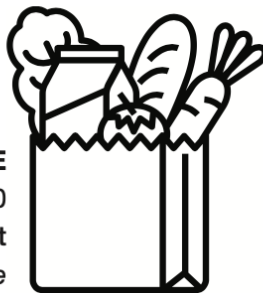
Individuals Served

THRIVENT CHALLENGE

500 items for \$500

Feed the Northeast

Spring and Fall food drive



Christmas Men's Gifts

200

pairs of socks collected and distributed

St Stephen GWCM Board Trustees

Jack Bryant

Rich Dann

Worship & Music

This past year saw many new developments in the worship life of St. Stephen's. After more than nine months under the leadership of our interim pastor, Rev. David Stoner, the congregation called Rev. Joseph Graumann on May 15 to be the new pastor of St. Stephen's. Pastor Joe started on July 12.

In the meantime, after a search conducted by the Worship, Music, and Arts Committee, the Congregation Council approved the hiring of Michael Wyatt as Director of Music on May 23. A musician and educator—as well as an active member of St. Stephen's—Michael took over from our former Director of Music, Larry De Pasquale. The Committee has been pleased to work with both Pastor Graumann and Michael Wyatt in helping to plan our worship. Both old and new hymns have been used. One measure implemented with the Committee's support was the purchase of a baby grand piano to allow for greater variety in our musical repertoire.

In addition, we have resumed having the church choir during worship services, so far with small numbers and on selected Sundays. Some members of the congregation have also stepped forward to start a bell choir. We are hoping to further develop both choirs under Michael's leadership in the coming months.

Another change made during the past year was to discontinue the use of two services on Sunday mornings, recognizing that church attendance has not yet returned to pre-COVID levels that would support more than one service. Worship now begins at 9:30 AM, which appears to be the optimal time for most members of the congregation. We are also continuing to livestream Sunday morning worship services for those who cannot participate in person.

Many thanks are due to all the members of the congregation who have volunteered as choristers, ushers, lay readers, communion assistants, altar guild workers, and others who help with worship. A special nod to regulars such as Terry, Steve, and Jason Puskar, Sandy Margerum, Andi Gerrard, Jack Bryant, Jay Gassaway, and Gail Gassaway (who faithfully serves as backup organist as well).

Richard Dann, Chair

WELCA

2021

Due to the Covid Pandemic 2021 was a short year for WELCA. We did not meet until September, and at that time we continued our study of Peter for three months. We will start a new study in January of 22 with "Woman of the Bible". We continue to work on our quilts taking 38 to Maryland for Lutheran World Relief in August 2021.

We are again using the choir room to work on the Quilts and are restricted to only 4 women working at one time. Two women have been working on their own making dresses for "Dress a Girl around the World". They have purchased their own material and have not used any designated Quilt money.

2022

2022 left us with fewer members as we lost Edie Tavener and Shirley Miller. We started viewing the DVD "Woman of the Bible". Quilts were still being assembled and we have 50 to be taken to Maryland for LWR spring of 23. We also have 20 more dresses to go to "Dress a Girl around the World".

The end of 2022 the idea of changing WELCA from being connected to the State & National WELCA to a local Service Committee or Circle was suggested. As I am putting this report together it was decided at the January 2023 meeting to remain a branch of the State & National WELCA and also contribute to "Service Projects".

As of December 31, 2022 I resigned as President of WELCA. Kathy Young will take over this responsibility as of January 1, 2023. It has been a pleasure serving as President for WELCA these last 5 or 6 years but there comes a time in everyone's life to retire and let another take over.

Nancy MacMaster, WELCA President

In addition to the above mentioned, WELCA also initiated service projects that included soda tab and Halloween candy collections for Ronald McDonald House and a Christmas Gift Angel Tree to help families in our community who were in need. Thank you to everyone who donated to help make these projects a success.

Kathy Young

WELCA Income & Expense Statement

January 1 - December 31, 2022

BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2021		\$	535.02
INCOME:			
Circle Offering	\$	278.00	
Thank Offering		46.00	
Donation for Quilts		50.00	
TOTAL INCOME			374.00
OPERATING EXPENSES:			
Quilting and Dress Material	\$	425.00	
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES			(425.00)
BENEVOLENCE CONTRIBUTIONS			
WELCA Regular Offering	\$	111.20	
WELCA Thank Offering		86.00	
Memorial Fund-Tavener & Miller		50.00	
TOTAL BENEVOLENCE CONTRIBUTIONS			(247.20)
BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2022		\$	236.82

RESOLUTION: Future Church

WHEREAS St. Stephen's Lutheran Church is called to proclaim God's Word for a changing world,

WHEREAS our congregation has undergone a season of change and renewal,

WHEREAS we desire to steward God's gifts of time and resources,

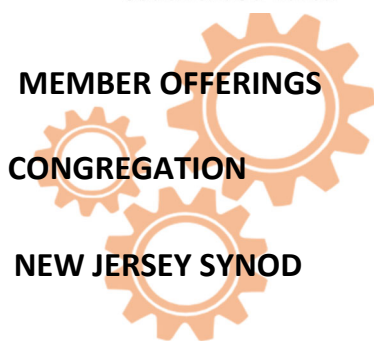
WHEREAS we are committed to a spirit of inclusion and democracy

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that St. Stephen's Lutheran Church create a Future Church Committee to lead a period of study and planning, intended to result in a five-year strategic plan.



New Jersey Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

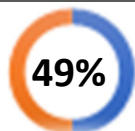
WHERE DOES MY OFFERING GO?



In 2023, we anticipate that members of our 155 congregations will share **\$1,760,000** in Mission Support with the New Jersey Synod. This represents the largest portion of the Synod operating budget of **\$2,116,300** which includes additional income from investments, grants, and certain designated gifts.

IN 2023, YOUR MISSION SUPPORT OFFERINGS WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO:

Grow the ELCA and MINISTRY PARTNERS

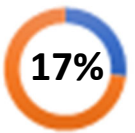


\$1,016,500

7

7 Partners in ministry are supported by this portion of our Synod Spending Plan. **Half of our Mission Support** is shared with the ELCA Churchwide organization. Additional ministry partners in New Jersey and our region grow as a result from the financial support offered through our gifts.

Strengthen CONGREGATIONS



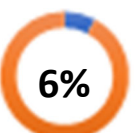
\$357,512



155

The 155 Congregations and 130 pastors under call in the New Jersey Synod find resources, networks, and support for faith formation, stewardship, justice, multicultural ministry, discipleship, witness, and communication through Synod Mission Teams and Assistants to the Bishop.

Accompany NEW and STRATEGIC MINISTRIES / COHORTS

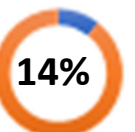


\$126,000



Together we support 5 new mission starts, 4 strategic ministries, and equip leaders through monthly zoom gatherings and congregational cohorts journeying together. Go and..., Caminando Unidos en Cristo, and Faithful Journey are learning communities engaging in spiritual practices and cultivating new behaviors to connect more deeply with God, each other, and our neighbors. We also celebrate our synod's mission initiatives in Camden, Dunellen, Elizabeth, Passaic, Pennsauken, Ridgefield, and Trenton.

Provide leadership for MISSION through the OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

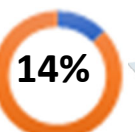


\$281,622



The Bishop seeks unity in faith and common mission among the expressions of this church. Our Bishop manages the roster and the calls of leaders and candidates for ordained ministry. She strengthens our Lutheran identity and facilitates common action among communities of other faiths.

Engage in OVERSIGHT and PLANNING for Synod Ministries



\$285,031



13

MISSION CLUSTERS

The Synod organizes lay and clergy leaders to serve on governance boards and committees that provide guidance and oversight for our ministries. We provide facilities, equipment and human resources for staff and operations of the New Jersey Synod.

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

We have seen many changes throughout the years and throughout the world. Sometimes we've been left yearning for the days when things didn't feel so complicated. Other times, we have seen something new happen and have asked, "Why did this take so long?" The church has been through its own changes as well. Some of these have left us wishing for simpler times while others have us waiting for even more to come about.

But, dear church, God still is unchanging. God's love is still the foundation on which the church was built. While we have seen many changes, both in the world and at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the eternal love of God and the good news that dwells with Christ's death and resurrection continue to provide hope for everyone. This is why our mission remains steadfast, whether that is through our traditional mission work in places near and far or from new ventures and visions that encourage us to think of different ways to reach even more people.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us: "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" (13:16). That could not be truer in the work we have been doing in each expression of the church. Your gifts continue to benefit the good work of spreading the good news throughout your communities, your synods and the whole church. We are all answering the call to continue to do good work with the help of your support, whether that is through your resources, your time or your talents.

I am grateful for your generous support of each expression of the church. God calls all of us to continue to do the good work, and you continue to answer that call. We also continue to join you in that call and will remain true to looking toward God's unchanging promise. There is still much change and learning that will come before us, but God's steadfast love energizes us for the work God is still doing in the world through this church.

In Christ,

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

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God”

(Hebrews 13:16).

AMENDMENTS TO THE *MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR CONGREGATIONS*
APPROVED BY THE 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY
[WITH RATIONALES]

Prepared by the Office of the Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
August 2022

Following are amendments to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* that were approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. Additions are underlined; deletions are ~~struck through~~.

Provisions within the *Model Constitution for Congregations* are of two types:

- **Those provisions marked with an asterisk are required when a congregation amends its governing documents.** They must be used without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner (i.e., neither additions nor deletions are permissible). Such provisions go into effect immediately upon approval by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation, provided that they have been presented to the congregation at least 30 days prior to the meeting.
- **Provisions not marked with an asterisk are non-required provisions.** These provisions represent wording recommended by the Churchwide Assembly. If the congregation chooses to incorporate them into the congregation's constitution exactly as presented here, these provisions require a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation, provided that they have been presented to the congregation at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

If the wording of non-required provisions is altered or amended from the text presented here, the provisions must be approved at one congregation meeting by a majority vote and then must be ratified *without change* by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the congregation. (See *Model Constitution for Congregations*, *C16.04. for more detail.)

For convenience, the rationale that was presented to the Churchwide Assembly for each amendment is provided in italics following the amendment. These rationales are *not* part of the amendments with which they are associated, they are *not* part of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, and they are *not* intended to be incorporated into the constitutions of congregations. They are here only to give context for the amendments.

The Office of the Secretary would like to express gratitude for your faithful attention to your congregation's constitution!

Chapter 4: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

***C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

[...]

- d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, ~~and,~~ justice, ~~and equity~~ for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, ~~caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations,~~ and standing ~~in solidarity~~ with the poor and ~~powerless oppressed~~ and committing itself to their needs.

Rationale: [This amendment was proposed on the assembly floor during the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; consequently, no rationale was provided prior to the assembly.]

Chapter 6: CHURCH AFFILIATION

***C6.05.** This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time this congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless ~~he or she is the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are a~~ voting members of this congregation, ~~the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, they~~ shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.

[...]

- d. If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the second meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless ~~he or she is the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are a~~ voting members of this congregation, ~~the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, they~~ shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.

Rationale: Inclusive language.

Chapter 9: ROSTERED MINISTER

***C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

[...]

- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, ~~calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.~~

Rationale: [This amendment was proposed on the assembly floor during the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; consequently, no rationale was provided prior to the assembly.]

- *C9.05.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:
- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for **any of** the following reasons:
[...]
 - 4) **inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of physical disability or mental incapacity** of the pastor;
[...]
 - b. When allegations of **physical disability or mental incapacity** of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop, **in his or her who has** sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
[...]
 - c. In case of alleged **physical disability or mental incapacity** under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon **removal resumption** of the **disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, ability to conduct the office effectively** the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

Rationale: These changes parallel changes being made elsewhere in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA. Language related to disability has been changed to reflect current understandings and to clarify that inability and incapacity to conduct the pastoral office effectively are the standard to be considered. In addition, the words "any of" have been inserted for precision, and references to the synod bishop have been made inclusive.

- *C9.12.** The pastor of this congregation:
- a. shall keep accurate **parochial** records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;

Rationale: The deletion of "parochial" is for consistency of usage.

- *C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of **his or her** ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Rationale: Inclusive language

- *C9.14.** The **parochial** records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in **his or her the secretary's** hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

Rationale: These changes parallel changes being made elsewhere in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA. The deletion of "parochial" is for consistency of usage. The second change is for inclusive language.

- *C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:
[...]

- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

Rationale: [This amendment was proposed on the assembly floor during the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; consequently, no rationale was provided prior to the assembly.]

- *C9.25.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and this congregation shall be as follows:
- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
 - [...]
 - 4) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon;
 - [...]
 - b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop, in his or her who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - [...]
 - c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon removal resumption of the disability and the restoration of the deacon to health ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

Rationale: These changes parallel changes being made elsewhere in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA. Language related to disability has been changed to reflect current understandings and to clarify that inability and incapacity to conduct the pastoral office effectively are the standard to be considered. In addition, the words "any of" have been inserted for precision, and references to the synod bishop have been made inclusive.

- *C9.31.** The deacon(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Rationale: Inclusive language

Chapter 10: CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the [senior] pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president¹ of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of ____ [number][percent] of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

[New footnote]

¹ If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.

Rationale: Because there are congregations where the pastor is president of the congregation, a footnote is being inserted to suggest that the vice president of the congregation might be given authority to call a special Congregation Meeting.

C10.08. This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Rationale: This change recognizes that there are other means of providing for simultaneous communication, for those with hearing disabilities, for example.

C10.09. “Ex officio” as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

Rationale: There is often confusion surrounding the term “ex officio.” The intended meaning is that someone who is a voting member ex officio has both voice and vote because of the office that person holds. The term is often misunderstood, however, to mean that the person cannot vote.

Chapter 12: CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.05. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

[...]

- e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of mission support monies to the synod treasurer.

Rationale: Because synods have different systems for receipt of mission support monies from congregations, the elimination of the word “treasurer” allows for greater flexibility.

C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president², and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

[New footnote]

² If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.

Rationale: Because there are congregations where the pastor is president of the congregation, a footnote is being inserted to suggest that the vice president of the congregation might be given authority to call a special meeting of the Congregation Council.

- C12.13.** The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, **as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent.** ~~and, to~~ To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Rationale: This change recognizes that there are other means of providing for simultaneous communication, for those with hearing disabilities, for example.

Chapter 13: CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

- C13.04.** *Mutual Ministry Committee(s)* (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee) shall be appointed jointly by the president [vice president⁴³] and the rostered minister. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.

[Footnote number changed]

⁴³ For use if the pastor is president of the congregation under two of the options in C11.02.

Rationale: Editorial change necessitated by the addition of earlier footnotes.

- C13.08.** The [senior] pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation. [The president⁴ **[vice president]** of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation, except the Nominating Committee.]

[New footnote]

⁴ **If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider selecting the vice president.**

Rationale: Because there are congregations where the pastor is president of the congregation, a footnote is being inserted to suggest that the vice president of the congregation might be granted ex officio membership on committees and boards as described.

Chapter 15: DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

- *C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of this congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to *C15.01. do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two **rostered** ministers **of Word and Sacrament**). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.

Rationale: Change for inclusion of both rosters.

- *C15.11.** When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president **[vice president]** of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the

dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in ¶S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Rationale: This change allows congregation members in situations in which the pastor is also president of the congregation to inform the vice president of their intent to petition the synod bishop for consultation.

Chapter 16: AMENDMENTS

- *C16.02.** An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01., shall:
- be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; **and**
 - be ratified without change at the next regular meeting of this congregation **held pursuant to C10.01.** by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; **and**
 - have the effective date included in the resolution² and noted in the constitution.**

[Footnote also deleted]

² *Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of *C16.03. to allow time for the synod's review of the amendment.*

Rationale: "Regular meeting" has already been defined elsewhere in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA. In addition, C10.01 is not a required provision, so it is not advisable to make reference in a required provision to a non-required provision.

- *C16.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to this congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of this congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following **the congregation's a** vote of approval.

Rationale: Change for precision. This has often been incorrectly interpreted to mean that the synod must vote to approve amendments that are designed to bring the congregation's constitution into alignment with the Model Constitution. In fact, amendments to bring any section or sections, either required or not required, into conformity with the Model Constitution go into effect immediately upon the congregation's vote to amend.

Chapter 20: PARISH AUTHORIZATION

- *C20.02.** One congregation of a parish shall issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Sacrament or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

Rationale: Editorial change.

- *C20.03.** One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

Rationale: Editorial change.