

Saint Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church
Annual Meeting
June 2, 2024

The Annual Meeting convened following the morning worship service.

President Jackie Martin called the meeting to order at 11:02 am.

Deacon Kyle Warfield explained the process for voting for online and in person voting. Those attending in person were to vote by show of hands and those attending remotely would vote online.

Opening Prayer – Pastor Miller opened the meeting with prayer.

President Martin presented the agenda.

Approval of Minutes -- President Martin moved to approve the minutes of previous congregation meetings:

Resolved, that the minutes of the May 21, 2023 Annual Congregation Meeting and the minutes of the April 21, 2024 Special Congregation Meeting be adopted.

The motion was approved by a vote of 113 Yes, 2 No, and 1 Abstain.

Senior Pastor's Report -- Pastor Miller's report, which is attached, began with a multimedia presentation available here [link to archives file to be inserted].

Ratification of Amendment to Constitution – Pastor Miller reminded the congregation that the 2023 Annual Meeting had approved an amendment to paragraph C21.02, the section of the constitution governing the Mission Endowment Fund (language to be deleted is shown in ~~strikeout~~ and language to be added is shown in **bold underline**):

C21.02. The mission of this fund is to provide a permanent financial base for the future of the congregation. To accomplish this mission, this fund is committed to enhancing the outreach of this congregation, and to providing for worth additions or improvements to this congregation's grounds and facilities, including debt reduction. Outreach is defined as supporting needs in the community, the synod, ~~and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's national and worldwide programs,~~ **and national or worldwide outreach with a Lutheran connection or via someone connected with the Lutheran Church,** including but not limited to seminaries, colleges, social service agencies, special programs, persons in need, new congregational developments, evangelical ministries, and ecumenism.

The vote to ratify the amendment was 109 Yes, 0 No, and 3 Abstain.

Report of the Nominating Committee – Ed Fenstermacher, Chair of the Nominating Committee, presented a report recommending members of Council, the Mission Endowment Fund, and Audit Committee.

Nominees for Congregation Council:

Jennifer Duin	Matt Grussing	Willard Unkenholz
Katherine Bassein	Barbara Sensenig	

Nominee for Audit Committee:

Greg Sanders

Nominees for Mission Endowment Fund:

Charles Helling	Manju Bolleddu	Tom Darnell
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Mr. Fenstermacher expressed his appreciation to those who had agreed to serve and invited others to consider their stewardship of their time and talents.

Ms. Martin called for a vote on a resolution to elect the persons nominated by the Nominating Committee. The vote was 106 Yes, 0 No, and 0 Abstain.

Stewardship and Budget Presentation – Dr. Lynne Yao, Chair of the Stewardship Committee, presented an overview of the work of that committee. The 45 Alive campaign conducted last year enabled the congregation to balance its budget. Dr. Yao noted that several members of the church died in the past year and that their generous giving had amounted to \$100,000 annually. Giving by current and new members still leaves a \$27,000 shortfall in our current budget. She advised that an increase of \$21 per month from each contributor (less than half the amount requested last year) would enable Saint Luke to again have a balanced budget. She expressed her gratitude to all the members for their support for the ministries of Saint Luke.

Deacon Warfield presented the overview of the general fund budget. He noted that in 2023, the challenge was rapid inflation which increased costs in almost every category. For the current year, the loss of very generous donors resulted in a decrease in income, producing a shortfall of almost \$77,000. Thanks to a bequest, \$50,000 from that estate can be used to make up most of that deficit. With the solar panels now operational Deacon Warfield noted that changes in some ministries (such as increased enrollment in the Christian Day School and increased bookings at Hallwood) plus additional giving from new members should enable the church to improve its budget situation for the following budget year.

Deacon Warfield noted that the slide displayed actual amounts for the prior year, the budget for the current year, the year-to-date actual amounts, and proposed budget. In response to a question, he explained that the Saint Luke fiscal year runs from August 1 to July 31 of the following year. He also explained the allocation of costs to the Christian Day School for building maintenance and utilities.

A question was asked as to whether the congregation subsidized Hallowood, and Deacon Warfield said that there was a time when there was a subsidy, but in the current year Hallowood's income exceeded expenses.

Treasurer Rick Ahlberg reminded the congregation that internal debt for the general fund is currently \$540,000, and that Hallowood has an internal debt of \$400,000. The Christian Day School had a surplus of \$140,000 and La Sagrada Familia (not a part of the Saint Luke budget) had a deficit of \$6,000. These were the result of internal loans made in prior years.

A question was asked that suggested a different structure for the reporting of current income and expenses and the proposed budget. Treasurer Ahlberg explained that the church uses an accounting system called Shepherd's Staff that was created for use by churches. The system allocates each budget item on a monthly basis, which is imperfect because of variations such as the date of Easter that can affect giving. With regard to a question about zeroes in the report of prior year's budget for the Christian Day School, Treasurer Ahlberg explained that the school had been moved from a Quickbooks system to the Shepherd's Staff system to be more consistent with other church accounting. He also explained that the Shepherd's Staff accounting system provides options for differing levels of specificity in reporting budgeted items. In response to a question about addressing a projected deficit, Deacon Warfield explained that the appeal for increasing giving by \$21 from individuals.

Art Sensenig asked to whom do we owe the internal debt that was described. Treasurer Ahlberg explained that the internal debt reflected borrowing from endowment funds.

President Martin presented the resolution for approval:

Resolved, that the Saint Luke adopt the following 2024-2025 budgets:

	Expense	Income	Income-Expense
General (operations) Fund	\$834,289	\$834,500	\$ 211
Christian Day School	\$561,700	\$555,000	-\$ 6,700
Hallowood Fund	\$267,654	\$311,500	\$ 43,846

The vote was 104 Yes, 2 No, and 0 Abstain, so the motion was approved.

Mission Endowment Fund – Pastor Miller presented a report on the Mission Endowment Fund (MEF), the earnings of which are used to fund grants that the MEF Board recommends to the congregation. Andy Boston, Chair of the Mission Endowment Fund explained the process for reviewing requests and then presented the recommendations for 2024 funding:

Resolved, that the following Mission Endowment Fund grants be adopted:

Humble Walk, Lutheran Campus Ministry at UMD:	\$ 7,600
Saint Luke Lutheran Church Quilt Ministry:	\$ 3,000
Saint Luke Senior High Youth Gathering:	\$ 4,500
Forgotten Luther Symposium:	\$10,000

The vote was 106Yes, 0 No, and 1 Abstain.

Closing Prayer – Pastor Miller led a closing prayer (from “Evening Prayer,” *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*):

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The meeting concluded with the hymn “God Be With You Till We Meet Again.”

The meeting recessed at 12:20 pm until 5:00 pm on Friday.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph Watkins
Assistant Secretary and Archivist

SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT

LOVING GOD. LOVING NEIGHBOR

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself. (St. Luke 10:27)

Loving God, loving neighbor. We are called, we are loved, we are sent forth.

WORSHIP

During the program year of 2023-24, the Saint Luke community of faith praised our God for all we have been given. We worshiped. We gathered, increasingly in person as we were able and livestreamed just about every worship opportunity as well. How wonderful to have the pews full for major festivals and welcome as well a steady following of those online.

We even saw 108,000 view all or part of the Easter services, and high numbers on Christmas too – almost 20,000 for the Candlelight Service. Technology has opened up a new world.

We sang praises, and enjoyed the prayerful All Saints Evensong, and the gift of God-with-us in the Festival of Lessons and Carols.

We gave thanks for choirs, both vocal and bell choirs who lead the church' song.

We also took the worship service to retirement communities such as Leisure World, using the chapel there, and several times to Riderwood, now where 25 or so Saint Lukers reside.

We also offered worship in Spanish regularly on the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 5:00 p.m. This Misa Español has grown during the year, touching the lives of the La Sagrada Familia outreach and others who desire to worship in Spanish.

We continued to be a community rooted in prayer, where thanks to our Prayer Partners, each member of Saint Luke was lifted in prayer each day.

FAITH FORMATION

We grew in faith. Through Sunday School, Confirmation, SLSHY, Adult Education opportunities, we loved God with all our mind. Even during the week, faith formation didn't stop.

Women in Community, Wednesday morning Bible study Group, Book and Video, Men's Group, WELCA Circles, gathered to cultivate the Word in our hearts. What a joy too, the outreach we had for Vacation Bible School – how we thank you for all the support to touch so many young lives with Jesus' love.

COMMUNITY

We gathered, we laughed, we enjoyed food and hospitality, we were and are community. We found it best to have congregation celebrations on Sunday so several times we did just that. We enjoyed Homecoming Sunday with delicious treats and a special service project for the children that day.

We had a Reformation Celebration and Oktoberfest, with German Band, and delicious German fare, a moon bounce in the Upper Lot, and games for the young people. We celebrated God's Work our Hands and Saint Luke Sunday with a congregation service project assembling bags of needed items for refugee families.

We had a grand Christmas Tree Lighting, and sing-a-long, out in the front yard, yes a tree of lights 40 feet high.

We also had a winter service project assembling 1000 kits for the southern border ministry of Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey, in El Paso. How wonderful – all generations worked side by side and before you

knew it, we were done and ready for the student band from George Mason and again, scrumptious food.

SERVICE OUTREACH

We loved our neighbor, as Jesus commanded. We celebrated 25 years of Quilting Ministry that one year the quilters even made more than 200 quilts. What a ministry, with quilting and baby blankets for Global Health Ministries and so much more.

We had food drives through Sunday School and Christian Day School, and also the one for Thanksgiving. What a treat for so many at the holiday to not only get a food card but pick actual food as well. The Food Ministry outreach never was stronger. On the average we assisted 350 families per month, giving out an average of \$8000 in food cards each month to those referred.

We also developed a food outreach to the La Sagrada and Langley Park community. Through staff and volunteers there was a regular food ministry several days a week, each week, where we delivered food donated by restaurants and grocery stores. This continues and is food that is not expired but yet the restaurants have excess and donate. We collect the donations in the truck, sort it all, then distribute in the Langley Park community to our siblings in need.

GIVING

The Saint Luke community has always been so generous. When we needed it most so many stepped up and responded to the 45 Alive Campaign which was a great success. Thanks to a generous bequest from the Paul and Thelma Fricks Estate, we were able to tithe that gift and send \$44,000 to Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem and \$44,000 to the ministry of La Sagrada Familia.

Various needs came to us from Lutheran Disaster Relief and the congregation responded gloriously. (Ukraine)

Whether it was Easter Lily Food Cards for our local community or Poinsettia Care cards for the children at Augusta Victoria Hospital who were detained due to the war and needed clothes, toys and so forth, Saint Luke was there. Poinsettia Care Cards alone saw \$3445.00 come in that was sent to the children.

CARING FOR CREATION

Our favorite color started to become shades of green – yes, we loved God by caring for God’s creation. We finally went solar – so much work went into this and the support of all the people and yes, we did it! For the last two months our electric bill shows we are generating all the electricity.

Also, hundreds of printed pages gave way to a few printed pages and then tablets and personal devices for Sunday worship. Paper cups gave way to mugs for fellowship time.

Thanks to a grant and partnership with Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake, 14 beautiful trees were planted around the Silver Spring campus, trees all native to this area. More to come down the line.

We upgraded much in the building, including updating the Great Hall. We transformed the old nursery now to the Kids Korner. Have you seen it? How we love children in church and this way if the little ones need to step out, parents can go to the Kids Korner where young ones can play and move, while parents can still watch the worship service on the jumbo screen. We replaced the old and failing cooling tower with a new one which is more energy efficient.

HALLOWOOD

How we reached out to our neighbors, those who wanted a place away to gather for retreats, meetings, conferences, and enjoy the beauty of God’s

creation. Our Conference and Retreat Center was filled almost each week with guests and this was wonderful news as we gradually got back up to speed after the pandemic.

We actually had a surplus of \$45,000 this past year. We thank an amazing team at Hallowood, Deacon Warfield who does the overall administration Howard Harris our Senior Associate and Chef, Carlos Esquivel our groundskeeper for the church grounds as well as Hallowood, Emma Holmquist, registrar, Natalie Ugarte, billing, Karen Evans, Financial Secretary.

CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL

We know a little child shall lead them and each day children did just that. Through our wonderful teachers, staff and yes, the children and families, we experienced the image of God – love and joy, compassion and care incarnate. We gave thanks for Director Amy Zandarski-Pica for her amazing 9 years of service and after a significant search, warmly welcomed Tracy Kingcade, as our new school director as well as Margaret DickinsonSeifert, administrative assistant. The Spirit was soaring and continues to show us the path toward building the Christian Day School back to maximum enrollment. These are exciting times!

LA SAGRADA FAMILIA

With the departure of Pastor Morales, we reshaped the way the ministry happens accompanying our siblings from Central America. Instead of one pastor, we developed a La Sagrada team. This ministry is supported by Campus Ministry, the Synod and others, but Saint Luke gives it a home, staff oversight and all the support of the people of God at Saint Luke.

Suleyma Alfaro, Saint Luke member became the coordinator of the midweek after school programs, programs 5 days a week, tutoring, fellowship, music (led by our own Alix Evans), art (led by Nancy Gurganus) and much more.

We asked Pastor Manuel Caceres, a full time Spanish teachers and part time assistant at Augustana Lutheran, to serve as the primary worship leader for the Sunday evening worship services. We continued ESL classes several night a week. We thanks volunteers Don and Aggie Steinbach from Saint Luke and Bailey Sullivan, Andrew Vigliotta, Tim Carter, and Michelle Wagoner from UMD Lutheran Campus Ministry.

SERVANTS OF GOD

Those who work among us at the church, the school, the Conference Center, or La Sagrada bless us all. The staff family is a gift we have among us. In addition to previously mentioned Amy Zandarski-Pica, we said farewell to Dr Alain Truche as our Director of music but again the Holy Spirit stirred and just recently we hired Adam Scott Graham as our new Director. We also welcomed Director of the Choristers Alix Evans as our new Assistant Director of Music. We were honored to have Bishop Richard Graham with us as pastor in residence and look forward to him being with us in this capacity at least until the end of 2024. Now while I lifted in name those who were involved in transitions, know how thankful we can be for the whole team – just wonderful!

One of my greatest blessings is to be surrounded by such dedicated servants of God. It is an honor and privilege to see how each of these saints loves God with all their heart mind and soul and yes, their neighbor – all those created by our God in this world.

On a personal note, it was a year of some milestones. February 12, I gave thanks for 40 years called to ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament. June 1, yesterday marked 25 years here at Saint Luke, and I have to say, today, June 2 is the day it all started. My baptismal anniversary is today. I am so blessed.

As we said at the beginning,

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself. (St. Luke 10:27)

Loving God, loving neighbor. We are called, we are loved, we continue to be sent forth.

Thank you and God's peace be with you.