



2022 Annual Ministry Report

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church

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Helena, Montana 59602

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www.ourredeemerlives.org

*A congregation of the Montana Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

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Ministry Team

Rev. Trina Johnsten	Lead Pastor
Lori Walter	Administrative Assistant
Sarah Magee	Director of Finance & Facilities
Jason Callon	Director of Worship & Arts
Jackie Bartz	Director of Youth & Family Ministry
Liz Swenson	Director of Children's Ministries
Carol Will	Deacon
Linda Keim	Organist
David McHaley	Custodian

Lay Pastoral Associates

- Lori Bigwood-Pecarina
- Jan Martin
- Kevin Mathews
- Lisa Williams-Mathews

Preschool Team

Kristine Thatcher	Interim Director
Kathryn Dunkelberger	Classroom Assistant
Marie Grissom	Teacher
Alenna Maw	Teacher
Wendy Vukonich	Teacher

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Congregational Proposed Budget Meeting December 4, 2022

The meeting was called to order by first vice president, Kevin Mathews at 9:50am, with 81 voting members in attendance.

Dennis Trotter prefaced the budget discussion by giving an overview of national membership trends in the ELCA, and relative statistics from the Montana Synod and Our Redeemer's. In nearly every statistical category tracked by the ELCA, both nationally and in the Montana Synod, Our Redeemer's contradicts current downward trends and establishes new visions for ministry, participation and outreach.

Treasurer, Beth Johnson, walked the group through the proposed Spending Plan (Council has adopted the language of Spending Plan instead of Budget going forward). Handouts of this Spending Plan were available to all those attending, it was also projected on screen. She explained that 60% of the budget is consumed in payroll, taxes and benefits; 20% in facilities administration and the remaining 20% in benevolence, office administration, Christian education, staff development, worship and music, and committees.

A motion was made by Dwight Hiesterman to approve the proposed 2023 Spending Plan and seconded by Gretchen Krumm. This opened the opportunity for discussion:

- ◆ Question:
 - ◇ How much is the monthly mortgage?
- ◆ Answer:
 - ◇ \$10,933.99 However, mid-2023 this payment will substantially increase as the current loan interest rate of 4.375% will expire. We are waiting to learn the new rate, but anticipate it will be somewhere around 7%.
- ◆ Question:
 - ◇ Where are we currently at relative to expenses over income?
- ◆ Answer:
 - ◇ As we approach year end, we are often in deficit, but typically with end of year gifts, this is more than recovered. Presently, we have a \$24,000 deficit. However, operating expenses are below budget by \$69,000, due in part to decreased staffing levels.
- ◆ Question:
 - ◇ Is there any difference between giving a donation directly to Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp or giving the camp a donation through the church?
- ◆ Answer: No. As long as a donation given through the church is clearly marked to be given to FLBC (or given for any other purpose), the entire amount goes directly to the designation. It is not counted as benevolence.

Jerry Hoover commented on the encouraging trends that Our Redeemer's is experiencing, and the importance of a budget that supports ongoing growth and outreach. He noted that we just completed a five-year strategic plan and that many of the goals have been reached. Jerry stated he believes we are bucking the trends because we are engaged and encouraged the creation of a new five-year plan to assist us in reaching new goals.

Discussion was concluded and Kevin Mathews called for a vote on the 2023 proposed Spending Plan. The vote was 100% in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30am.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Kristine Thatcher

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Our Redeemer's Annual Meeting Sunday, January 30, 2022

Jan Martin called the meeting to order at 9:50am, in-person and via Zoom. Zoom was permitted due to the Covid pandemic.

Pastor Trina began the meeting with prayer. Jan noted a quorum was present.

Ron Paulson moved that the Minutes from the 2021 Annual Meeting and the December 5, 2021, Financial Meeting be approved. Craig Erickson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Jackie Bartz moved the Minutes from the Special Congregational Meeting to establish the boundary of the property Our Redeemer's wishes to retain held November 14, 2021, be approved. Jeff Downhour seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report

Beth Johnson reviewed the financial report for the last year and thanked people for attending the November forum and the budget meeting in December. The financial reports prepared by Sarah Magee are attached to these minutes.

In general, Beth's overview showed that giving for the General Fund and Dedicated funds was down in 2021 compared to 2020. Giving was down during the Advent and Christmas seasons, when giving is often higher. This resulted in an operating shortfall that was covered by a cut in benevolence payments for 2021 and using proceeds from two Estate gifts and some interest received.

Beth urged members to consider extra giving during the summer months when giving is often down during vacations.

Consistent giving makes cash flow management easier.

Committee Reports

Craig Erickson reported that the Generosity Committee (previously known as the Stewardship Committee) has been busy working with the Montana Synod office and Dennis Trotter on the *Fed By Ravens* project. Members of the committee will be contacting the congregation regarding this new approach.

His report is on page 22 of the Annual Report.

Gretchen Krumm shared a PowerPoint slide presentation on the status of the Property Development Committee.

She reviewed the process to date, the intended purpose of the project, and the current status. The Church boundaries were approved by the congregation last November and the committee has been working with the partners and the City of Helena. The vision is to put the land to use for the community good, feeding the hungry and housing the poor, and is a practical evangelism tool. A public meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 8, at 6:00pm.

Eric Spangenberg, Chair of the Call Committee, gave a status report on the progress of the Call.

Our Redeemer's Ministry Site Profile will be available for the Church Council and submitted to the Montana Synod office by mid-February.

Elections

Jan called for a motion to approve the slate of candidates for At Large members of the Church Council for 2022. The new members of the Church Council are:

Kevin Mathews	Ingrid Childress
Julie Penner	Tracy Moseman

Kalley May made the motion to accept the candidates as presented. Craig Erickson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Jan called for a motion to approve the Council Officers for 2022.

Lynn Voss, President
Kevin Mathews, First Vice President
Cody Salo, Second Vice President
Beth Johnson, Treasurer
Ingrid Childress, Secretary
Jan Martin, Past President

Ed Thamke moved to approve the officers, and Pat Keim seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Jeff Downhour moved to accept the new members named to the Perpetual Committee, Personnel Committee, and Generosity Committee. Ed Thamke seconded. Motion carried.

The other members of the Church Council are:

Clint Mingay
Tom Johnson
Carolyn Meyer

Jan expressed her appreciation to Craig for his many years of service on the Council and his continued service on the Generosity Committee. She also thanked Drew Sielbach and Ryan Holm for their work on the Council.

And a special thank you to Jason Callon for the work on the technical aspects of getting the meeting connected and online for the Zoom participants. Thanks to Lori Walter for her work on the Annual Report.

Pastor Trina closed the meeting with prayer at 10:35am.

Respectfully submitted,
Ingrid Childress, Secretary

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Report of the Lead Pastor Rev. Trina Johnsten

It is just days after Christmas as I write this, and my 2022 is going out with a bit of a whimper. After nearly three years of dodging it, I tested positive for Covid only a couple of days into my annual time off after the busyness of Advent and Christmas.

Guess I'll be resting more than I'd planned! This is probably good, as we have a busy year ahead. But first, a look back at 2022:

Interim Pastor (August 2021 – July 2022)

As an interim pastor, I usually write a report to the Council after four months of being with a congregation, drawing attention to areas that need work before a new pastor arrives. One issue identified early and shared with Council was the discrepancy between the associate pastor's part-time call (and part-time compensation) and the reality of her workload, which held considerable responsibility and was much closer to a full-time commitment of her time.

Pastor Wilde's departure due to health issues in November 2021 removed this as a priority issue and allowed us to then focus on the outcome of the congregation-wide *HolyCow!* survey. This tool provided us with a much deeper look into the culture of Our Redeemer's than just four months of an interim digging around usually would.

The survey revealed many possible areas of attention, and the Council and I identified three that could be addressed in the interim period and which ranked high on respondents' desired areas of focus: *worship and music*, *congregational governance and the communication of leadership decisions*; and *Christian education offerings*. Over the following several months, staff worked hard to impact these areas.

- **Worship and music** - Our Redeemer's has long had a reputation for excellent worship and music, but staff transition and significant periods of time without in-person worship during the pandemic had impacted this area. Jason and I spent time reviewing past practices, figuring out what was currently feasible, and planning by season (rather than by week) in an effort to make worship more engaging. We were blessed with the presence of seminarian Baird Linke for half of 2022, who brought a lot of energy and creativity to our worship planning sessions. In addition, several generous gifts designated to bring in guest musicians allowed us to enliven the weekly experience. Guest preachers added new voices proclaiming the gospel, the occasional use of drama and dramatic readings brought emotion and a new way of engaging the story, and evolving and improving musical offerings all worked together to elevate worship over the past year. As we look to the year ahead, we have allocated more financial resources to this area of our life together and will continue to explore ways to bring the gospel to life each week.
- **Congregational governance** - Better communication goes a long way to making people feel like they understand how and why decisions are made at the leadership level. To that end, we started publishing monthly attendance and financial information in the bulletin and *The Voice*, gave more detail in the published Council minutes (particularly on how financial decisions were made), and asked staff to provide greater detail on their areas of responsibility in their monthly reports to Council and the congregation. Feedback has been positive, and we continue to look for ways to provide the congregation with information that helps connect them to the ministry we share.

Work of the Generosity Team has also provided more financial detail through newsletter articles and temple talks in worship. This group has a full calendar of educational events planned for 2023 designed to increase our comfort in talking about money and how managing our gifts and talents is part of our faithful response to being beloved children of God. See Craig Erickson's report for more details on this (available on January 29, 2023)

- **Christian education offerings** - My practice since ordination has been to offer two Bible studies a week, usually on the upcoming Sunday's lessons. But due to being short-staffed at the pastoral level, it has been difficult for me to give this area the attention it deserves in the last year. Judging from the good attendance at the sessions Baird Linke offered on ELCA social statements and the book group led by Lon Bechtel, Jane Peachy, and Linda Nelson on how to have productive conversations on a challenging topic, folks are very interested in conversation around faith and how it impacts their daily life.

Dennis Trotter, through the Generosity Team, will be offering some adult education on our relationship with money in January, and Nelson Bock will be offering a class that comes out of a paper he had published entitled *An Eco-theology: Toward a Spirituality of Creation and Eco-Justice* on Wednesday evenings during Lent. Once an associate pastor is on board, I know we will be able to offer a more robust set of Christian education opportunities for adults.

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Called to be Lead Pastor (July 24, with official start September 12, 2022)

After careful and diligent work, the Call Committee, at the urging of congregation members and with the bishop's permission, included me in the interviewed candidates for the lead pastor position. And the rest is history! I would have never anticipated this when we joined in ministry in August of 2021, but what a wonderful work of the Holy Spirit, as we discerned that continuing together in ministry was a good path forward. Thank you for your encouragement and welcome.

While we have filled one vacant position, we still are in an interim situation as we await a new associate pastor. This means we continue to experience some instability and certain programming and ministries remain on the back burner until we have adequate coverage. Areas currently experiencing less attention than they deserve are general pastoral care, Christian education for adults, our confirmation program, and long-range planning.

Thank you to our eucharistic ministers, Deacon Carol Will, Jan Martin (LPA), Jeff Martin (LPA), Lori Bigwood-Pecarina (LPA), and Jane Peachy, for their ongoing help with pastoral care. I am also grateful to Dennis Trotter, Liz Swenson, and Jackie Bartz for picking up the slack with confirmation this year.

Coming out of covid

As Jason and I began planning for Christmas Eve 2022, we looked back at last year's services on YouTube and were reminded that we were all still wearing masks during worship at this time last year.

We weren't having any food fellowship, so interaction between members was limited. Our children's and youth programming was back up and running but experiencing low participation as many families continued to limit possible exposure.

What a difference a year makes!

Worship numbers are back to, and in some cases above, pre-covid levels, with visitors at most services. See Jason Callon's informative report for more information (page 18).

We've taken in *59 new members* this year, with three families ready to go to the next new member class. Thank you to Kevin Mathews and Nelson Bock for attending these classes, writing bios for *The Voice*, and reinstating sponsors for new members to help them acclimate to the congregation. Most of our current growth is in families with preschool-aged children and newly retired adults, two groups that bring much with them. We know how the kids enliven our life together (How about all that happy noise from the Playground each week!), and newly retired people have energy, experience, and time. What a blessing. It's interesting to think about what it means for Our Redeemer's if we bring in 60+ members a year for the next few years...!

We're experiencing significant growth in our *confirmation and children's ministry* participation. Confirmation has 25 students moving between the two offered classes (Wednesday evening and Sunday morning). Sunday School continues to grow, involving more children and families than at any time in Liz Swenson's tenure with Our Redeemer's. A couple of weeks ago, I witnessed one of our kids *begging* her dad to let her stay for Sunday School, even suggesting that if he wanted to go grocery shopping, he could just come pick her up afterward!

Such enthusiasm is a tribute to what Liz and her helpers have created post-covid. Four families who joined us in ministry in December have kids who have been engaged in Sunday School before making their membership official. The Intergenerational Christmas Event on December 11 showcased the momentum this part of our programming currently has, as 13 families gathered to decorate gingerbread houses, do crafts, and act out the Christmas story. My personal observation was that most of them had already been present for worship and Sunday School that morning, so it was amazing to see them back for another couple of hours in the afternoon. And while our *youth group* is smaller than in previous years, they are very visible, helping with anything we ask them to be part of. Liz Swenson's and Jackie Bartz's reports give more details on how programming for our children and youth is impacting lives.

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My hopes for the new year

There is a lot to balance at Our Redeemer's right now, and my primary hope is to keep my head above water as we engage in meaningful ministry and await a new partner in our ministry! Here is a list of what I hope 2023 brings us:

- The arrival of an associate pastor with skills in preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and a creative heart for worship. Pray for this person right now!
- That we continue to have vibrant worship, with excellent music, thoughtful and engaging preaching, and as many people as possible sharing in leadership of this primary activity in our life together.
- That those who join us in ministry find a place in this community to share their gifts, learn more about the God who loves them, and encounter the peace of Christ in our midst.
- That we are known as the most welcoming congregation in Helena, and we do this not by trying to make people more like us but by engaging our neighbors in authentic, loving ways that *change us*.
- That providing affordable housing in Helena becomes part of our legacy and that others are able to learn from our experience partnering beyond our congregation on this project.
- That our food ministries continue to flourish and grow, filling empty bellies and hurting souls.
- That our programming for our children and youth continues to be creative and meaningful, drawing in and creating a safe space for those who need it and showing our kids how much Jesus loves them.
- That care for our elderly, those in crisis, and those for whom we are "family" be lavish and supportive.
- That when people hear that YOU are part of Our Redeemer's they say:
You belong to that congregation? I've heard good things about them. Tell me more...

Thanks be to God for the many blessing that 2022 brought and to God be the glory as we engage in ministry in this place in 2023.

Pastor Trina Johnsten

2022 Congregational President's Report

What a year for Our Redeemer's. During this past year, Our Redeemer's has experienced many exciting developments. Through the work of our Call Committee, we now have Pastor Trina as our permanent leader, and what an excellent leader she is, matching her skills to our needs. By establishing a second call committee near the end of the year, we hope to bring on an associate pastor who will join a terrific group of full and part-time staff at Our Redeemer's.

Our Redeemer's has navigated through Covid to services again with good attendance while supporting online attendance for those unable to make it in person. Our preschool continues to thrive, and our Sunday School programs are also growing, a great trend when so many churches are without many youth.

We have many wonderful ministries of volunteers around the congregation, from the very large Hunger Team, which coordinates so many activities, to several behind-the-scenes ministries like our weekly money counters and our audit committee. This past year also had significant activity by the Property Development Team reaching out to work with multiple government and community partners as we continue to work towards finding the best use for our available land. A new Outreach and Welcome Committee was launched to strengthen hospitality efforts around our church community. If I tried to describe all the ministries, it would require several pages though happily, we now have an updated pamphlet with six full pages of just ministry contact information for the many, many ways our congregation reaches out to serve. What a terrific church family that I've been blessed to be a part of for the past 25 years, since moving to Helena.

I'm honored to have led the church council this past year and want to thank those who made it a delight. When I started on council three years ago, many of our meetings lasted just over an hour, and now we are often at three hours. I've been told it isn't because we are inefficient but simply because there are so many wonderful things happening around our congregation. I want to especially thank our departing council members: Carolyn Meyer, Tom Johnson, Jan Martin, Clint Mingay, and Beth Johnson, some of whom have stayed on longer than normal due to all the challenges with Covid. Similarly, I'm very much looking forward to the new nominees, whom I know are very talented individuals and will bring unique strengths to this year's church council led by upcoming President Kevin Mathews.

Thanks for your part in all of God's blessings in 2022. I look forward to a great 2023 and pray for everyone to experience Christ's peace.

Lynn Voss

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Report of the Director of Children's Ministries Liz Swenson

Our early childhood and elementary youth programs saw immense growth in 2022! Sunday School has shown the most consistent growth, with regular attendance roughly double what it was last year. KidTime has more weekly fluctuations but has also increased over the last year. Even with the discontinuation of our Wednesday KidzEd program this fall, the children's ministry programs are full of children eager to hear God's Word. As always, I appreciate all of the wonderful volunteers and fellow ministry staff that help make it possible to serve the PreK-5th grade youth of ORLC. It's a blessing to lead our youngest youth on their faith journey!

Here are a few highlights from the last year:

- **Sunday School:** We are blessed with a group of kids who are always anxious to learn more about Christ. Children ages 3 through 5th grade participate in a *Workshop Rotation Model*. In this model, children learn about a new Bible story on a 4-week rotation. The children learn more deeply about the Bible story each week through art, science or cooking, games, and movies. The kids love and look forward to these activities every week.

This year we read and learned about the following Bible stories:

- Parable of the Lost Coin
- Baptism and Temptation of Jesus
- The Last Supper
- Paul on the Road to Damascus
- The Ten Commandments
- The Fiery Furnace
- Shepherds and Angels (at Jesus' Birth).

Due to our large increase in numbers this year, especially with our youngest youth, we now split our Sunday School class into two groups; preschool -1st grade and 2nd-5th. Jessica Salo has generously volunteered her time to lead our older group, and I take the younger group. I am so grateful for her willingness to jump in and help teach these youth about Christ! Jason leads our music time at the beginning of Sunday School each week. The children really enjoy learning these fun Christian-themed songs. Once again, I appreciate this partnership with Jason! Based on our growth in 2022, I speculate Sunday School will continue to grow. I foresee a need for yet another Sunday School leader in the near future!

Average attendance numbers for Sunday School in 2022:

	January	February	March	April	May	September	October	November	December
	3	5	5	10	8	12	10	13	14

- **Discontinued KidzEd:** In July, Pastor Trina, Jackie, Jason, and I decided to discontinue Wednesday night KidzEd. Throughout the last few years, the interest in this education option has been very low, with only an average of 1-2 kids attending each week. As an alternative, we invite all children ages 3-5th grade to quarterly fellowship/stewardship events that we hold in partnership with the middle and high school groups, typically on Wednesday nights. We will reassess the need for Wednesday night KidzEd, next school year.
- **KidTime:** Children ages 3 through 2nd grade can begin worship with their family and, if they wish, be excused for about 20 minutes of children's activities, called KidTime. The curriculum is a lectionary curriculum that follows the lesson used during the church service. The children return to the Sanctuary for Communion and the conclusion of the service. This program continues throughout the year and is a very popular educational choice for families. Thank you to Mary Robertson for volunteering to lead these lessons throughout the year!

Average attendance numbers for KidTime in 2022: *Missing numbers from this summer during my maternity leave.

	January	February	March	April	May	September	October	November	December
8:30AM Service	3	2	4	2	2	8	7	4	4
11:00AM Service	2	3	2	8	3	4	2	2	4

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- **Nursery:** Our Nursery continues to be open and staffed for all families with young children. It is open every Sunday from 8:15am - Noon and during special events throughout the week. In September, Pastor Trina and I decided I would take over all nursery responsibilities in January, 2023. During the end of 2022, we went through a period of transition. Jackie and I met to discuss the duties of the nursery, including; scheduling, training, and recruiting. We made the nursery schedule together and sent out a letter to the Nursery staff stating that I was taking over. I am excited about this new role!
- **Prayground:** The Prayground at Our Redeemer's focuses on young children and their families. This corner allows families to have their children in worship while also participating in the church service. In the spring, Jackie and I moved the Prayground back into the Sanctuary! It had been over a year since it was available inside the church due to Covid. We bought a few new toys to add and switched out some toys that had been around for a while. Since Our Redeemer's is growing from the bottom, the Prayground is used regularly during all church services. Many families express that this children's area is unique to Our Redeemer's, making it stand out among the rest in Helena!
- **Confirmation University:** After discontinuing KidzEd on Wednesday nights, I volunteered to partner with Jackie to help lead and teach confirmation classes during the 2022-2023 school year. In partnership with Dennis Trotter, we teach lessons on Wednesday nights. We decided this summer to offer two days each week for Confirmation classes; Wednesday and Sunday. We hoped this would give more options to families with commitments on Wednesdays. We have had a great showing for Confirmation University this year, with 25 middle school students attending between our Wednesday and Sunday classes.

This school year, we started with a month of lessons about the sacraments in the Lutheran church, taught by Pastor Trina. Then in October, we transitioned to the Old Testament and finished 2022 with Genesis, specifically Abraham's story. We will focus on the stories from the Old Testament for the remainder of the school year. We look forward to starting preparations for the Spring Confirmation Retreat at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp in February.

Average attendance numbers for fall Confirmation University in 2022:

	September	October	November	December
Wednesday	11	11	8	12
Sunday	5	6	5	7

- **Confirmation University Fall Retreat at Montana Learning Center:** On October 19th and 20th, we had the Confirmation retreat at Montana Learning Center. The retreat was a big success, with 12 middle school students attending. During the retreat, we discussed the Old Testament and the Creation stories. We had the high school students lead small group discussions about the Old Testament and the Creation stories with the middle school students. The groups competed to put the books of the bible in order from beginning to end. We also had groups each take a Creation story, draw up the essential parts of the story then share the differences with the entire group. We finished up the retreat with group games and campfire worship. It was an excellent opportunity for bonding among our middle and high school youth! Overall the first Confirmation University Fall Retreat was a success.
- **Wednesday Night Service and Fellowship Projects:**
Ice-Skating Night - In January, all elementary, middle, and high school youth went ice skating at the Memorial Park skating rink. It was a great time for fellowship, hot drinks, and fun. After inviting all involved children ages 3-5th grade, six elementary-aged children joined in the fun. We are very grateful to our Thrivent Action Team grant that helped to fund this event!

Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits - In April, the elementary, middle, and high school youth worked together to assemble Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief. We were able to build over 100 kits.

Campus Clean-Up Day - In September, the middle and high school youth worked together to clean up the Our Redeemer's campus. We planted trees, picked up garbage on Green Meadow, and pulled weeds. It was a very successful event, with 17 youth in attendance.

Operation Christmas Child - In November, the elementary and middle school youth worked together on a Wednesday night and a Sunday morning to put together 27 Operation Christmas Child boxes. This is a great way to teach our youth to spread God's word to other children throughout the world.

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- **Camp Sunday:** In February, Margie Fiedler joined us from Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp to preach and share about camp. We decided to make it an enjoyable day and personally invited the youth to join us for camp music during worship and camp-style activities in between services. There were seven Preschool - 5th grade youth who joined. This was a great way to get the youth excited about Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp and Vacation Bible School in July!
- **First Communion:** Pastor Trina and I decided to expand our First Communion invitation to all children in 2nd and 3rd grade as well as 4th grade. We did this because we received increasing special requests for Communion instruction and partake in our First Communion services on Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday. Due to the success we experienced in 2022, we plan to invite 2nd-4th grade children again to join in 2023.
* We have discontinued the Seder Meal, a traditional part of the First Communion classes. We will look into reconvening this event when we have an associate pastor.
- **Children's Choir:** In partnership with Jason, and his leadership, our Children's Choir performed regularly throughout the year. Between 10 and 15 children between the ages of 3 and 5th grade joined us for each performance. The choir had five performances this year! Jason and I plan to have the choir perform throughout the year in 2023.
- **Lenten Acolytes:** Jason and I worked together to add acolytes to worship during the 8:30am Sunday services during Lent. Each week there were two acolytes; one brought in the cross, and one brought in the candle lighter and lit the candles on the altar. This was very popular and helped to engage our youth during Lent. We hope to do this again in 2023!
- **Easter Kids Parade:** With the help of Jackie, we created more Easter Kid's Parade ribbons, and we could invite every child in attendance (above the age of 2) at both Easter services to be a part of our parade! During both services, we had 30 kids join us for this celebration. It was a great way to reach out to those who either haven't attended before or attend irregularly to make them feel welcome. With all the growth we have seen in the last six months, I really look forward to the size of our kids parade in 2023.
- **Summer Youth Activities:**
 - Outdoor Movie Nights - I partnered with Jackie in July and August to put on three outdoor movie nights in the Our Redeemer's courtyard! We watched; *Encanto*, *The Mighty Ducks*, and *The Lego Movie*. It was a lot of fun, with an average of five families attending each night. We even had several families from around the community who were not associated with Our Redeemer's join us.
 - East Helena Swim Night - I partnered with Jackie in August as we hosted a swim night for the youth and families of Our Redeemer's at the East Helena swimming pool! This event was well attended and fun for all.
- **Vacation Bible School 2022:** During Vacation Bible School this year, we partnered with Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp to teach our youth about God's Boundless Power. We welcomed five Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp counselors and Baird Linke to Our Redeemer's to help lead our camp. We had 58 campers officially join VBS. There were 72 kids registered when the week began. Due to the holiday and sickness, we had 15 children unable to participate for the week. We had 37 volunteers (middle, high school, and adults) who joined us throughout the week to help shepherd the campers! All the Our Redeemer's staff joined in to make this week possible. The church was indeed alive, and God showed us how boundless he truly is. Please check out our Facebook page's video and daily updates to learn more about how our week went.
- **Blessing of the Backpacks:** In August, we had a Blessing of the Backpacks Milestone event during the last Sunday worship service before school started. We had several children attend, and we shared a small backpack token for each child's bag as a reminder of God's love. This year, we also made bag tags for the Preschool. During their first chapel, Jackie and I helped distribute these and bless their backpacks. This event brings so much life back to the church after the summer break.
- **Trunk or Treat:** Trunk or Treat took place at the end of October. Our Redeemer's partnered with the Boy Scouts this year to host this event. We had over 20 people volunteer their trunks, one family volunteer to pass out hot dogs, and one family made and passed out hot cocoa/cider. There were about 400 people (kids and families) that came through. What a great outreach event. We are so thankful to everyone who donated candy and volunteered their trunk for this event!

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- **Walk through the Bible:** Our annual Walk Through the Bible class and distribution of Bibles for 3rd graders and their families took place in October. Six kids attended the class, and seven received their Bible during worship. There were also a few who have received their Bibles and instruction since! It was a great event. It is a blessing that we can provide this to our youth at Our Redeemer's. Thank you to the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America for providing the Bibles each year.
- **Intergenerational Christmas Event:** This event is designed for all ages to celebrate Christmas and focus on the reason for the season. We decorated gingerbread houses and cookies, played games, created crafts, and drank hot cocoa. The event ended with our Instant Christmas Program. The children LOVED dressing up to be a part of this; almost all the kids chose a dress-up costume. We had 13 families (50 people) and 15 volunteers/staff members. I am so grateful to those who volunteered their time and talents during this event. Adding gingerbread house decorating was a great idea and quite a hit - we will make this a tradition during this event in the future. As a staff, we have decided that in the future, we will rename the event to The Children's Christmas Celebration and design it for our young families.
- **Faith Chest for Baptism:** Faith Chests were given to newly baptized children in 2022. Each chest includes an age-appropriate book and a Thrivent piggy bank. This year we gave out eight faith chests to those baptized at Our Redeemer's!
- **Vacation Bible School 2023:** We are already excited about Vacation Bible School 2023! This year we plan to use a curriculum from the company called *Group*. The theme will be *Stellar - Shine Jesus' Light*. Vacation Bible School will take place on June 12th-16th from 9am - 12pm daily. We hope that you will join us!

Christ's Peace,
Liz Swenson,
Director of Children's Ministries

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Report of the Director of Youth and Family Ministries

Jackie Bartz

" God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us."

~ Ephesians 3:20-21 (The Message)

This year has been a rollercoaster with so many twists and turns. We hoped for a more normal year, only to find that we were stretched in new ways and needed help assisting and leading in specific areas. But God can do anything, and it was amazing to witness him work in and through so many people to continue and spark new life into ministries at Our Redeemer's. I am continually grateful for this Body of Christ that has worked together in the Spirit to accomplish more than I could have imagined in the past year!

Here are some highlights from this past year:

- **January Confirmation Electives** - I teamed up with Baird Linke and organized and encouraged wonderful learning and intergenerational relationship-building experiences through Confirmation Electives. Ron Pecarina applied for a Thrivent Action Team Grant to assist with the cost of these courses. Baird, Lori Bigwood-Pecarina, and I led a discussion on being an Inclusive church and the LGBTQ+ community, and Helen Bunkowski taught a group of seven how to make lefse with the assistance of Karen and Bonner Armstrong and Blair and Gretchen Krumm. We also had 25 youth help assemble Kid Packs with Helena Food Share, Bruce and Judy McMaster, and Dave Mehl; a cold but fun night of ice skating at Memorial Park; rosemaling with Hildegard Krumm; and game night with Liz Swenson and Lynnette Avery.
- **Youth Ski Retreat at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp** – Three youth joined me for the ski retreat at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp January 14-16. More youth wanted to attend, but as it was the weekend before semester finals, most could not participate. Ed Peachy accompanied me as our male chaperone, nurse, and ski guru! All were happy to spend the beautiful weekend with camp staff in worship, prayer, hiking on the mountain, and even a polar plunge in Flathead Lake!
- **ELCA Youth Workers' Extravaganza** – It was so wonderful to be back in person with youth workers and pastors for this amazing youth-focused continuing education opportunity. This year's theme was "Boundless," noting that we are all broken and bound by sin, but at the same time, we are free through the Sacrifice of Christ Jesus. I was so uplifted by the conversations and collaborations with my peers in person, moved in worship, and enriched through workshops that specifically address the needs and desires of our youth today. I am so grateful for the support and encouragement of staff, council, and our congregation to attend the Extravaganza as my continuing education to provide me with the youth-focused knowledge needed to work with our youth throughout the year.
- **Confirmation University Youth Retreat** – We officially had ten middle school, seven high school youth, and five adults for the Confirmation Retreat in February. The kids learned a lot and had a blast. Everything worked out well despite the power outage - all the better to experience camp! It is such a blessing to see our youth back together again as one happy and encouraging family! It was so awe-inspiring to watch the high school youth grow as leaders as they led worship and music and to see them willingly use their creativity to share their struggles and faith! We also made and donated eight fleece tie blankets for the Linus Project. I am thankful for Bryan Hanson and the use of his van, Chris and Kayme May for the use of their cargo van, and as behind-the-scenes help, Lynnette Avery for her outstanding devotion and engaging work with our youth! I also want to thank Lori Walter for helping with the paperwork, Pr. Trina for administering Covid rapid tests, Lisa Williams-Mathews for helping prep tie-blankets, Carol Calkins for her fantastic ideas for the blessing service, and Baird Linke for being there every step of the way.
- **Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp Summer Curriculum Review** - Margie Fielder and the staff at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp invited me, other youth directors, and pastors to review their summer curriculum via Zoom to make it as engaging and valuable as possible for all ages. I am so grateful that camp includes others in this conversation and to assist as a meaningful partner in their ministry!
- **Spring Safehouse** - Each Wednesday evening, we had around 12 dedicated and passionate youth attend Safehouse and dive into scripture, Lenten practices such as preparing the ashes for Ash Wednesday and spending time supporting each other in fellowship. They were more than happy to help with a Palm Sunday Skit during worship, help usher, assist with communion, offering, greeting parishioners, and run the computers. It was so awesome to have them help lead worship in a new and engaging way!
- **Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits** – Our youth worked together again to collect items and assemble Personal Care kits for Lutheran World Relief in April. They applied for and received a Thrivent Action Team Grant to assist with the cost of some items that were less expensive when ordered in bulk (nail clippers, combs, toothbrushes). We were able to assemble 109 kits in approximately 25 minutes. Many hands truly make light work!

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- **Graduation Banquet & Blessing** - We had three graduates participate in the Graduation Celebration this year. Pastor Trina, Dennis Trotter, and Lynn Voss helped lead the celebration. I am grateful for those who stepped up and made it all go so smoothly, including Kennedy Bartole, Paden Holman, and Lynnette Avery.
- **Summer Fun Events** – The month of May provided a time for high school youth along with eighth graders to gather, decompress, build relationships, and have a lot of fun with a farewell game night with Baird Linke, frisbee golf with Ryan Swenson, a night at the Flying Giant, and, of course, playing the game of Shoe! Summer fun nights included outdoor movie nights and a night at the East Helena Pool. We tried to put together another Luther League baseball game but found too many families to be out of town to get teams together. We hope to find a better date to play ball next summer!
- **Vacation Bible School** - What a fast, furious, and amazing week full of fun and memories! Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp counselors and Baird were helpful and energetic! And what a fun way for our older youth to connect with camp and get excited about FLBC (maybe even be a camp counselor in the future)! I worked alongside Liz to make sure that crafts were prepped, game supplies and decorations were ready, and our counselors were prepared each day. It takes many hands to make it a success and we are so grateful for all that volunteered to help!
- **Youth Summer Servant Tip** – Our youth are resilient, faithful, and amazing! Despite the National Youth Gathering being cancelled in February for a second time, they were determined to find something meaningful to participate in for the summer. After exploring and getting turned down from many hopeful opportunities due to limited spaces and staffing shortages, two youth of the group decided to spend a week at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp again, while the other two decided to try a new camp and program at Luther Heights Bible Camp in Idaho from June 26 - July 1. Our youth partnered with Christ the King youth in Bozeman to attend the SALT (Servant Adventure Leadership Teams) program, a blend of service and adventure with service opportunities such as clearing fire mitigation timber and stacking logs in designated areas, as well as including fun adventures such as hiking Crater of the Moon, horseback riding and whitewater rafting, plus all the fun of camp! Thank you to David Hanson, who willingly came as a male chaperone this year!
- **Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp** - Seven youths rode with me to camp and five rode back to Helena with me. More joined us at camp for the week. The stories, camp songs, and giggles were contagious! It was a blast to witness the wonderful ways they fellowship, lead with their faith, and bond with one another. I was there throughout the week to support our first-time campers, help with bible studies, plan and lead worship, scoop ice cream, and late-night tea parties under the stars (to name a few). Parents gave terrific feedback and were very appreciative of the help with transportation and a friendly face for their child at camp. It is definitely something I will assist with again! I also collaborated with camp to send notes to all our campers throughout the summer with coupons for 2 ice cream treats and a note telling them we are praying for them! They all loved the special cool treats!
- **Fall Planning & Confirmation University** - Throughout the summer, Pastor Trina, Liz, Jason, and I met several times to discuss fall programming as we were and are short an Associate Pastor to lead Confirmation. We sent out several surveys and even phone calls to parents and families to help determine how to serve them best. We created a team consisting of Pastor Trina, Dennis Trotter, Liz Swenson, and I to work together on Confirmation University. We determined that we would offer Confirmation University classes on Wednesday evenings led by Liz and Dennis, and Sunday mornings between services led by Dennis and myself, with Pastor Trina assisting when the topic or need arose. I have taken registration, the majority of communication, and the lead in planning all the service and fellowship activities throughout the year. Dennis and I have had a consistent group of four to eight youth attending each Sunday morning for Confirmation University classes.
- **Blessing of the Backpacks** - We had a great turnout at the beginning of September as we celebrated this milestone by presenting approximately 20 youth with backpack tags, blessing, and praying over them. We also presented backpack tags to all the preschool students during their first chapel of the school year.
- **Fall Wednesday Worship** - As we planned for the fall, Pastor Trina, Jason, Liz, and I explored ideas to increase and diversify Wednesday worship. We decided to switch the style of worship every 4 to 6 weeks, starting in the fall with outdoor campfire worship. Liz and I worked with the youth to empower them to lead different parts of worship, including invocation, trinitarian greeting, prayers, confession and forgiveness, assisting with communion, and leading songs and playing instruments. It was fantastic to see them have so much fun and be so creative! This, too, has continued as we have transitioned into other styles of worship.

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- **Fall Safehouse** - We have had a dedicated and consistent group of eight to twelve youth! We began regular youth group meetings on Wednesday nights starting September 14th. I led the youth in a brainstorming activity regarding what they would like to talk about this year at Safehouse – and they didn't mess around! They dove into tough topics like mental health, death, funerals, relationships, self-awareness, finding balance in their daily lives, staying involved with the church after high school, and so much more. This only emphasizes how important it is for youth to have a safe space with a supportive community to bring their worries, concerns, and ponderings and wrestle with how the Bible and God intersect with our daily lives. They have been enthusiastic to help with whatever is needed, from helping with the neighborhood picnic, leading worship and watching children in the nursery to leading a Fall Confirmation Retreat, hosting trunks at Trunk or Treat, doing service projects around the church property and helping prep and lead activities at the Intergenerational Christmas Event! What a blessing to have youth that are so engaged and willing to take on leadership roles in our church and community!
- **Preschool Chapel** – Kris Thatcher asked for assistance with preschool chapel this year as she is the new Interim Preschool Director. It has been a delight to assist and lead the preschool chapel at least once a month. I love finding creative ways to engage these smiling faces and teach them all about God's infinite love!
- **Nursery** – It has been wonderful to have the nursery open again this year. I am so grateful for the dedication and caring of our attendants for the littlest members of our congregation. We had a nursery attendants' meeting and training this fall to ensure we were all on the same page. Although families have been slow to come back to the nursery (and because they are having too much fun in the Playground), there has definitely been an increase in use this fall, especially with all the new young families attending. Although I have enjoyed coordinating the Nursery, it technically falls under Children's Ministries, and Liz will be taking on the role of coordinator starting in 2023.
- **Fall Campus Clean Up** - On September 28th, all ages of Our Redeemer's came together to assist with much-needed service projects on our own campus. We focused on adding new wood chips to the pathways in the Community Garden, removing dead trees, planting new ones, and picking up garbage in the field and along Green Meadow. It takes a lot of hands to keep our property looking nice, and what a HUGE impact was made that day with a large pile of wood chips spread and a dumpster filled with garbage! Thank you for the many hands that helped!
- **Fall Confirmation Retreat** – As past winter retreats have been such a success, we decided to try a shorter and closer retreat this fall at the Montana Learning Center on October 19th and 20th. It was fantastic! The high school students stepped up and led the confirmation students well through games, lessons, meals, star gazing, and worship. It was so fun to see their gifts shine through the short retreat. We had 12 middle school youth and ten high school youth, and a half dozen adults attend the retreat. I am so grateful to Bryan and Debbie Hanson for cooking meals and ensuring that our special dietary needs were met, plus all that helped plan out the details! The biggest feedback we got from the retreat was simply that it wasn't long enough!
- **Fundraisers** – Each year, our dedicated youth work together to fundraise for summer youth trips, ski trips, Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp summer camp, and more! Some of our youth were even able to fully fundraise for all that they participated in.
 - **Crunch for a Cause** – On February 10th from 5-7pm, Taco John's on Montana Ave. donated 50% of sales to our youth group. We were able to raise \$327.24 in just two hours! Thanks for all that had dinner with us!
 - **Carroll College Concessions**– This year, our youth group has continued its partnership and its fifth year with Sodexo to work Carroll College Concessions for both the football and basketball seasons. Our youth group enjoys serving in our local community and is grateful for this partnership and fundraiser opportunity that goes beyond the walls of our church, especially as we raised \$3344.67.
 - **Christmas Wreaths and Gift Cards** – We partnered again with the Preschool to sell Christmas Wreaths as a fundraiser, and they sold out quickly! It was very successful, and we are thrilled to partner to meet the minimum order and serve our community. Our gift card sales were also a great service to our congregation members, as well as making a good profit for future youth events. Between the two, we raised approximately \$800.
- **Trunk or Treat** –We were able to hold Trunk or Treat for the community this fall, keeping the event entirely outside with trunks, lawn games, a scavenger hunt, and cocoa and cider for all to enjoy on Oct. 29th. We partnered with the Cub Scout Troop #207. There were about twenty trunks, and the kids had a wonderful time finding all the scavenger hunt rubber ducks. Thank you to all those who decorated their trunks and donated extra candy. Special thanks to Gretchen and Blair Krumm for making hot dogs, Shar Wetherell for the hot cocoa and cider, and Steph Richardson and Linda Nelson for staffing the scavenger hunt. It was an amazing outreach, with over 400 people passing through!

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- **Boy Scouts** – Throughout the year, I have been coordinating with the Boy Scouts to continue to do service projects for Our Redeemer's as we are a part of their charter. They re-stained the picnic tables, weeded some beds in the parking lot, and helped weed and lay mulch in the pathways of the Community Garden. They are always very excited about the projects and ways to give back to our congregation.
- **Outdoor Christmas Display** – This is the third year I have headed up a group of volunteers to work with Jerry Hoover to create our outdoor Christmas display. The community and congregation were very appreciative and found its simplicity to be a very meaningful experience. Jerry Hoover once again rallied a team to light the trees while I found others to help set up the stable and luminary lights. It turned out beautiful again. Thank you for the many hands that made this project such a success!
- **Intermountain Children's Christmas** – Our high school students decided to sponsor 24 youth at the Intermountain Children's Residential Treatment Center by providing them with Christmas stockings again this year. They applied for a grant from Thrivent to assist with the funds donated by Our Redeemer's youth, family, and friends to shop and fill stockings for each resident at Intermountain. They also set up a fireplace display with Christmas tags for the congregation to contribute general gifts for each cottage, such as sidewalk chalk, markers, jump ropes, hula hoops, puzzles, and more! We are blessed to have youth with such big hearts and a willingness to ensure other youth know they are loved and remembered at Christmas!

My goals for the coming year include the following:

- Continue to inspire, encourage, and guide our youth as leaders for service opportunities and other leadership roles in our congregation and community.
- Participate in youth ministry-specific continuing education opportunities to find new ways to encourage our youth in their faith journeys, to remain an active part of the church, and engage them in leadership roles.
- Lead a group of youth on a Summer Servant Trip to experience faith in action
- Continue to encourage and foster intergenerational relationships within our congregation through service, sharing of skills, and meaningful conversations.

In Christ's Service,
Jackie Bartz
Director of Youth and Family Ministries

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Report of the Director of Worship & Arts Jason Callon

It was a busy year for the ministry team at Our Redeemer's. I am happy to present a summary of this last year and details about attendance and my ministry work.

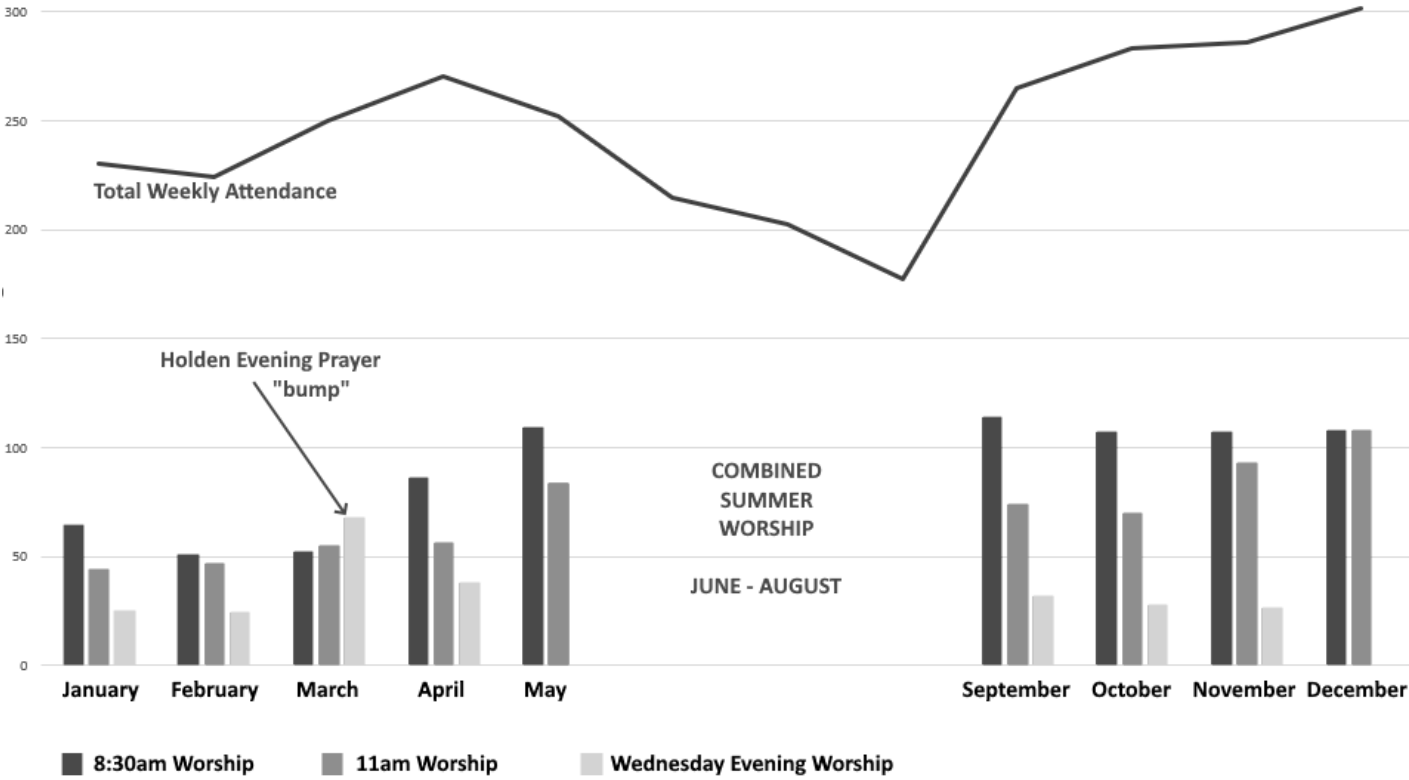
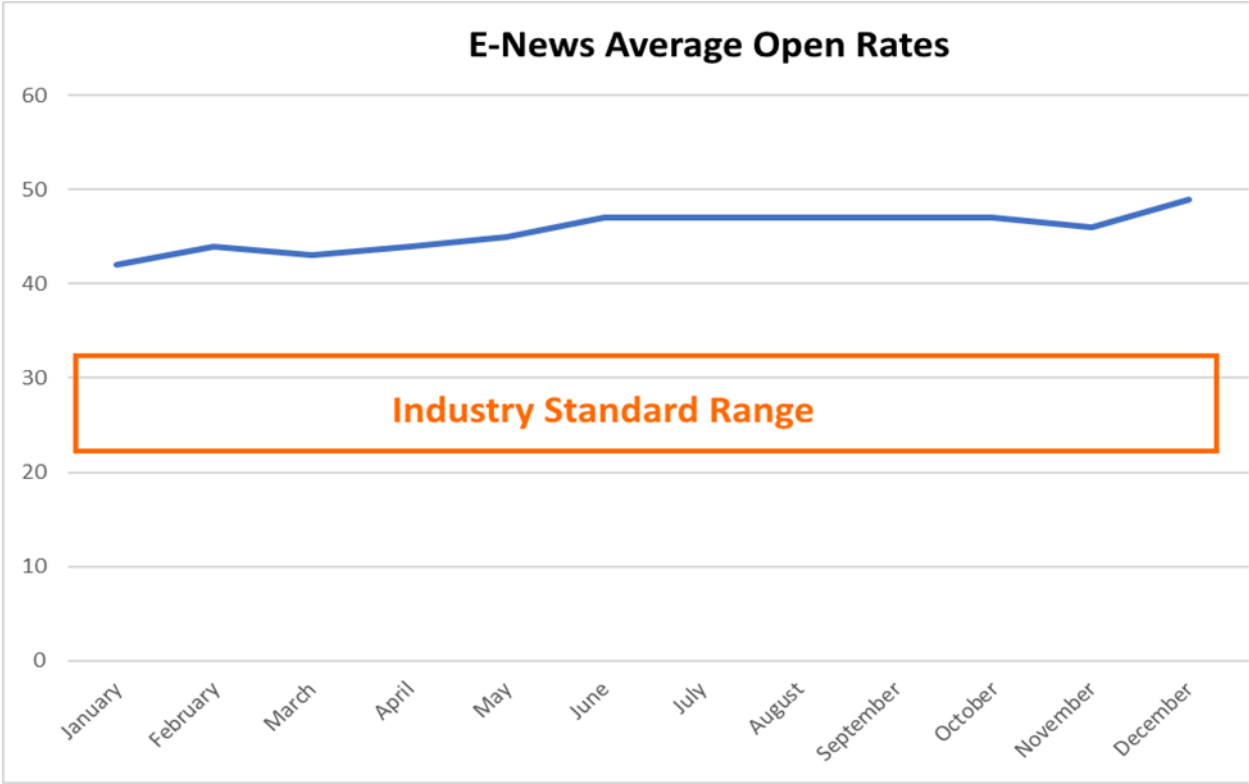
- Until May of 2022, we had Baird Linke on the staff with us, who helped with preaching and many other duties. This substantially helped both Pastor Trina and me.
- We removed the mask mandate in March, and subsequently, our attendance numbers rose. There were a few exceptions to this when we asked people to mask again during spikes in Covid cases, but it sure does feel more worshipful to see the faces of our friends!
- Holden Evening Prayer was celebrated Wednesday evenings last Lent, and we saw a significant increase in engagement during this time, with over 60 people each week. We plan to do this again for Lent 2023.
- More dynamic worship planning is something Pastor Trina and I worked hard on in 2022. This included hymnsings, bringing in guest preachers, dramas, and other special services. Guest preachers were invited for three main reasons: to increase the variety and perspectives of the Good News, expose the congregation to notable members of our various communities, and support Pastor Trina. Guests included Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp director Margie Fiedler, Dr. Eric Meyer, member of Our Redeemer's, Bishop Laurie Jungling, Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger from the Montana Synod office, retired bishop Jessica Crist, Dr. David Lose, Pastor Mark Donald, Director of Christikon, and Jeanne McCoskery, member of Our Redeemer's. These were all wonderful experiences and are vital to our congregation's invigoration. We plan to continue this practice.
- We have a large team of Lay Pastoral Associates (LPA's). These are leaders among the congregation that have undergone formal training through the synod to assist in leading worship. Our 2022 team consisted of Lori Bigwood-Pecarina, Jan Martin, Jeff Martin, Kevin Mathews, and Lisa Williams-Mathews. They assisted with preaching, presiding, and other duties, such as pastoral care. They were of great assistance as we only have one pastor currently.
- Holy Week and Easter were very successful in 2022. A wide variety of people participated in worship to bring dramatic retellings of the stories we all know to our congregation. Palm Sunday started things with a string quartet and a drama by Pastor Trina and three members of our high school youth program. Maundy Thursday included a dramatic monologue by Kevin Mathews. Good Friday was a narrative retelling of the crucifixion story with a guest cellist. For Easter Sunday, Pastor Trina treated us to a dramatized sermon featuring special music from a brass ensemble. It is worth noting, our Maundy Thursday attendance of 90 was the highest since 2017 and our Good Friday attendance of 101, the highest since 2018.
- Another success of the Easter season was our mailer campaign, where 3,000 postcards were sent to our neighbors. We know for certain at least a few new members came from this campaign, which makes its cost of about \$0.25 per card well worth the expense. We also did mailings for the summer neighborhood barbeque and Christmas Eve 2022. I believe this is something we should fund and continue two or three times per year.
- Outdoor worship occurred for much of June as we experienced another spike in Covid cases. This was largely successful, I believe. Pastor Trina and I have yet to plan for summer 2023, but I hope we can continue this tradition of worshipping outside three or four times each summer.
- We received a grant from our own Perpetual Fund Committee in the fall to purchase and install acoustic panels on the back wall of our sanctuary. This has been a recommendation of Sean Connolly, an acoustician with Big Sky Acoustics since 2012. This will improve the sound quality incrementally and, along with other improvements such as a new microphone for Pastor Trina, a rebalancing of the system (which has yet to happen), and the installation of a feedback destroyer (which has yet to be fully programmed), we continue to improve sound quality. The intelligibility of speech is of increasing importance as members of our congregation age.
- This fall, the choir converted into what we are calling the *occasional choir*. I passed along leadership to Jim Penner, Jerry Mayala, and Kevin Mathews. They have sung a few times. The most notable was during Lessons and Carols, which featured 19 singers!
- Liturgical settings were simplified and streamlined this fall, as we are still understaffed. This means the 8:30am and 11:00am services have the same layout; the only real difference is the genre of music. This may evolve as time passes and we bring on a second pastor. We are averaging 55 minutes or less per worship service, which I believe has a positive net effect on our congregation.

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- Wednesday evening worship this year continues to evolve as we struggle to find how to serve our community best. Worship numbers average around 25, five of which are paid staff. In the fall, we began with camp worship, followed by several weeks of Compline evening prayer, then various other programmings for November/December. In the winter, we will begin a service of prayer around the cross, followed by Holden Evening Prayer in Lent, before breaking again for summer.
- In the fall, Lori Walter and I redesigned our bulletins to give a cleaner, more modern, and standardized look. We now have formatting standards to ensure the bulletins will always have a similar clean look.
- Pastor Trina was installed in October. The service included Dr. David Lose, Associate to the Bishop Jason Asselstine, and a variety of congregation participants and guest musicians. This service was a lot of fun, and I believe, continued the momentum we have been building.
- We invited a few outside groups to hold programs in our sanctuary, including Philip Fortenberry and Musikanten Montana, who played an All Souls concert. In addition, the Helena Symphony, Helena Chorale, and Helena Music Teachers Association utilized our building for rehearsals, recitals, and other programming throughout the year. This is important for our community and helps us maintain visibility and relevance to the broader Helena community.
- We featured guest musicians at many of our festival worship services, including Reformation, All Saints (which featured a jazz combo), and Christmas Eve. In addition, when we had many “normal” consecutive Sundays, I tried to host a folk band or bring in something else “special”.
- Lessons and Carols for Advent was very successful this year. For the first time, we held programs over two nights. Also, for the first time, we used this as a fundraiser, bringing in about \$500 for our local God’s Love shelter. We had over 50 volunteers, student musicians from the Helena Youth Orchestra, and professional adult wind players. A little over 200 people attended over the two nights. I believe we can revert to one night of Lessons and Carols next year.
- On the eve of Thanksgiving, we celebrated our traditional ecumenical worship service at Saint Peter’s Episcopal cathedral. Lisa Williams-Mathews, Carol Will, and I represented our congregation and participated in leading worship.
- Our Christmas Eve worship was wonderful this year, with an attendance of 100 at 10:00am, 287 at 4:00pm, 166 at 6:00pm, and 47 at 10:00pm. Add the 51 views online, and that is 651 friends that celebrated with us! Christmas day was led by Jan Martin and Linda Keim, with an attendance of 15.
- Our traditional worship music continues to be led by Linda Keim, with member Toni Guay helping out during communion.
- Our Rejoice band continues with Mark Ellzey, Kevin Mathews, Autumn Keller, and Mark Robertson. We invited a new drummer, Aidan Wosoba, a private student of mine.
- Our Wednesday evening music continues with a friend of the congregation Chas Elliot. I have no youth band this year.
- Our group of worship assistants is over 40 people who volunteer to usher, greet, assist with communion, lector, operate the computer, and more during worship. I am grateful to this group; there are too many helpers to name! Kash Helfert continues as our livestream technician, who runs the equipment needed to bring worship into the homes of over 50 people per week.
- My focuses in 2023 include having the acoustic panels installed and re-tuning the sound system, working with a new associate pastor, another outstanding set of festival days (holidays), another restful summer, exploring bringing a livestream option to 11:00am worship, revisiting our Wednesday evening offerings, and continuing to bring dynamic worship experiences and excellent music to our community.
- I will conclude with some charts and numbers. Our weekly “Messenger E-news” email continues to defy convention, with an open rate (the percentage of recipients that look at the email) between 40-50%, well above the 20-30% of the average church newsletter. *See graph on the next page.*
- Our attendance has increased all fall, and we are trending in a very positive direction. Note the winter and summer drops are expected and typical. Of particular note: even excluding Christmas Eve, our December 2022 has the highest weekly attendance average since 2018! *See graphs on the next page.*

Thank you for all your support this last year, and I look forward to serving our church community for many more to come!
Jason Callon
Director of Worship and Arts

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Month	8:30am	11:00am	Online Views†	Wednesday 6:30pm	Average Weekly Attendance
January	64	44	65	25	230.5
February	51	47	68	24	224
March	52	55	50	68	250
April	86	56	60	38	270
May	109	83	40	*	252
June**	128		58	*	215
July**	153		33	*	202.5
August**	122		37	*	177.5
September	114	74	30	32	265
October	107	70	52	28	283
November	107	93	40	26	286
December	108	108	57		††301.5

*Wednesday worship summer break from May through August

**Combined 9:30am summer worship June through August

†This is a challenging number to quantify because it grows as time goes on. We try and take this measure within a week of it being uploaded. Also note, we use a multiplier of 1.5 when adding to the average weekly attendance, as often more than one person is watching on the same screen.

††excluding Christmas Eve

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Report of the Interim Director of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Preschool Kristine Thatcher

It is a privilege to serve as the interim director of Preschool at Our Redeemer's. Starting my role in June provided the summer to familiarize myself with the preschool and various processes. This is a very well-structured program, and the quality reputation it carries is understandable.

The teachers do an excellent job of nurturing and teaching the children. The children get along well and learn to support and have empathy for one another. Our current enrollment is 51 children.

Highlights of the Year

- Parent/teacher conferences were held at the end of January. This provides a valuable opportunity to connect with the parents 1:1 and share progress and any areas that need a little more attention.
- In February, registration for the upcoming school year began. Beginning February 8th, existing families were given the opportunity to enroll, and the following week registration was opened to the general public.
- During March, plans were made for the Summer Preschool Fun Camps. Four camps were decided upon; a teacher and assistant were secured. A review of registrations for the upcoming preschool year showed 43 students were preregistered.
- April was busy preparing for the upcoming art show in May and the annual preschool singing in church. T-shirts were ordered for summer camp attendees, teacher self-evaluations were done, and surveys were given to families requesting feedback on our program.
- May concluded the end of another successful school year. The art show was a hit, and it is always rewarding to see how much the children have advanced in their skills over nine months. Registration for fall was 47 students. Summer camps filled up quickly.
- June and July were busy securing teachers for the four-year-old class and the summer camps. Marie Grissom joined the team as our four-year-old teacher. Marie came to us with over seven years of Early Childhood experience, utilizing various monthly themes to introduce numbers, letters, colors, first words, the calendar, and Spanish.

The summer camps are always well received, and typically all have waiting lists of one to two children should an opening occur. Four sessions were offered, and all were filled. The camps provide a week each of morning indoor and outdoor play. The children enjoy crafts and activities, interacting with their friends, and meeting and making new friends. This is also a significant fund raiser for our Preschool; we netted \$2,049.47.

- During August the Preschool playground was refreshed by our dedicated helpers, Jerry Hoover and Dave Mehl. They painted the play equipment, checked it for proper functionality, and tightened nuts and bolts, ensuring all was safe for the children. The Preschool web page was updated with current information and the layout refreshed. Enrollment packets were mailed out to the parents of the 48 registered students. Orientation meetings were held with parents at the end of the month.
- In September, classes got off to a good start; students and teachers were eager to begin the year! We took advantage of the beautiful fall weather and had a great turnout for our first Family Fun Day at Spring Meadow Park. These are scheduled one Friday a month and provide a nice opportunity to come together in an informal setting. A parent brought in a pony, and the children all enjoyed learning a little about horses, bridles, and saddles!

Numerous families chose to sign their child up to participate in Lunch Bunch. This extends their day a little longer and allows the children to eat and play with their peers, including friends from other classes. It also gives parents the flexibility to pick their children up a little later in the morning or drop them off a little earlier in the afternoon. A popular option offered Monday-Thursday from 11:00am-12:15pm; volunteers to assist with the oversight are a big help!

All classes did fire and earthquake safety drills.

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- We once again partnered with the Youth Group and sold Christmas wreaths as a fundraiser for preschool throughout October. The support/sales were fantastic; we netted \$475! The East Helena fire chief came with their fire truck and gave an informative and fun presentation to the children. As Halloween approached, the children practiced little skits. They enjoyed wearing their costumes while their parents watched their Halloween programs; a good turnout and fun! We rolled our Family Fun Day into Trunk or Treat; this worked exceptionally well.
- November brought the opportunity for sharing; our preschool families participated in the Food Share drive and contributed generously to Our Redeemer's efforts. We had another successful mid-month fundraiser at Panda Express, which brought in \$415! The support for our Preschool is so greatly appreciated. This month we brought families together to watch A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving; families enjoy this "down time" together, and it grown relationships.
- The children so enjoyed December, the crafts, the stories, and the songs. They worked diligently at preparing for their Christmas programs and did an excellent job! Parent turnout for the programs was fantastic. Our Family Fun Day (attendance was great!) was led by musician David Casey, who has been coming in monthly and working with each class to share the joys of music.

We are extremely fortunate to be able to provide this service and program to our community. It is a blessing and a joy for each of us that have the opportunity to be a part of Our Redeemer's Preschool. This ministry makes a very positive influence on these children. We could not do this without the support from the Council and our congregation. Our heartfelt thanks is extended to all.

Peace and Blessings,
Kristine Thatcher, Interim Director

2022 Hunger Team

Hunger Team - expresses its gratitude to the congregation for its continual support of their ministry. Our partnership with Helena Food Share was most productive during this year. The congregation raised \$14,001.77 for the milk money campaign for the Kid Pack Program (including the \$6000 matching grant from the Treacy Foundation). You also donated 1,180 pounds of food during our holiday food campaign. Many of you assisted with our community garden, which yielded over 1,800 pounds of produce for this partner. And you continue to donate requested items for the Kid Pack Program during the school year and spend hours assembling Kid Packs on the first three Tuesdays of each month.

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The Kendra Wilde Hunger Endowment Fund - generated \$789.86 for distribution during 2022. Recipients of these monies include God's Love (\$267.84), Family Promise (\$289.50), and Ukrainian Relief through Lutheran World Relief (\$232.52). You may continue to donate to this endowment fund by writing your checks to ORLC with Wilde Hunger Endowment Fund on the memo line. Thank you, once again, for your generosity.

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2022 Annual Report of the Women of the ELCA

WELCA is a community of women who meet together for fellowship, growth and service. Called to discipleship in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, society and the world. **All women who are members of Our Redeemer's are also members of WELCA.** All women are invited to attend WELCA functions and Bible study.

Bible study is one of our core activities, and this past year there were two Bible study groups which met monthly. In the summer months the two groups joined together for fellowship and study. There is a quilting group which meets weekly to make quilts for Lutheran World Relief; 178 quilts were sent out this past May to be distributed all over the world. The Sew in Love service group also meets weekly to make items for the women and children at the Friendship Center. The Funeral Reception group provides meals after funerals.

Our fundraising efforts this year involved two events: a church wide garage sale in June and a holiday bake sale in December. We were blessed with great helpers for both events and realized over \$4900 in income from the garage sale and more than \$1700 from the bake sale. With this income we were able to continue the purchase of Bibles and tabs for the third grade Sunday School students and sponsor scholarships for students attending Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp as well as provide a college scholarship for one Our Redeemer's student, Brennan Jensen, he is attending Concordia College. We also provided financial assistance to the Our Redeemer's Emergency Assistance Fund, Lutheran World Relief and several local charities. The Treasurer's Report details how all the income was distributed.

During the year we coordinated the collection of items for Lutheran World Relief Kits and in May we sent out 115 Baby Care Kits and 120 School Kits. We also coordinated "Thinking of You" packages for our two seminarians, Baird Linke and Shawn Juers and his family. The packages were sent out quarterly throughout the school year.

The WELCA Board oversees all aspects of the WELCA program and plans the events for the coming year. Serving on the Board this year were: President, **Pat Lumma**; Vice President and Secretary, **Charlene Mayala**; Treasurer, **Jan Martin**; and Bible Study Chairs, **Hildegard Krumm and Kay Patterson**. The WELCA Board meets the second Tuesday of the month at 10:30am in AD-1 and we invite all interested women to attend any of our meetings.

In Christ's service,
Pat Lumma, WELCA President

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2022 Annual WELCA Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance		\$7,732.42
Income		
	Circle Offering	\$442.99
	Pool of Living Water	\$55.74
	Thank Offering	\$697.00
	Donations	\$83.00
	Garage Sale	\$4,948.83
	Winter Bake Sale	\$2,068.38
	Interest	\$1.78
Total Income		\$8,297.72
Expenses		
Synod		
	Convention	\$35.00
	Circle Offering	\$627.50
	Pool of Living Water	
	Thank Offering	\$697.00
Our Redeemers		
	Bibles	\$210.00
	Emergency Assistance	\$300.00
	FLBC Camperships	\$1,000.00
	College Scholarship	\$1,000.00
	Seminarian Assistance	\$500.00
	Quilt Supplies	\$592.46
	LWR kits shipping	\$225.35
	Prior Year Festival	\$289.00
	Fund Raising Expenses	\$224.00
	Postage and Paper	\$11.60
Total Expenses		\$5,711.91
Bank Balance 12/31/22		\$10,318.23

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2022 Perpetual Fund Committee

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church (ORLC) established an endowment fund titled Perpetual Fund to receive and administer gifts from wills and other bequests In January 1991. Gifts are invested with income earned from the investments available for grants as approved by the Perpetual Fund trustees. Trustees are appointed by the ORLC congregational Council for a three-year term and can serve only two consecutive terms. There are two sub-funds of the Perpetual Fund, a Facility Debt/Service Fund, and a Seminary Scholarship Fund. The Perpetual Fund trustees announce the availability of grants in the church bulletin and Voice during the month of April. Grant applications are reviewed with approved grants funded thereafter. The Fund's investment balance at the end of the year can be found in the investment category of the balance sheet in the annual financial report.

PERPETUAL FUND: SEMINARY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Trustees approved grants for Our Redeemer's seminarians Baird Linke, currently serving an internship in Ohio and Shawn Juers, a first-year seminarian at Wartburg Theological Seminary.

PERPETUAL FUND: ENDOWMENT FUND

Trustees approved a one time \$1,500 grant to have Flathead Bible Camp staff lead Vacation Bible School and reduce the fee to VBS participants. This expense was included in the 2023 budget.

Trustees also approved a grant totaling \$6,000 from the Perpetual Fund's general fund to purchase and install acoustic panels to make the sound in the sanctuary better for worshippers.

Respectfully submitted,

Trustees: Karen Caplis, Lori Chase, Glenn Erickson, Christopher May, Jim Penner

2022 Gifts and Memorials Committee Report

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Gifts and Memorial Committee (GMC) at Our Redeemers Lutheran Church (ORLC) did not meet this past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The GMC received and reviewed monthly financial reports to ensure that all gifts/memorials were properly directed to fund(s) as specified the donor(s).

The GMC general fund balance was \$9,562.14 on November 7, 2021 and \$10,792.14 on October 23, 2022. There were no expenditures this year.

Prayerfully submitted by,

Our Redeemer's Gifts and Memorial Committee
Norm Midtlyng, Chair Ingrid Childress

Autumn Keller

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2022 Financial Review Committee

The Financial Review Committee is annually re-established by the Council President and met periodically in 2022. Committee members reviewed documents pertaining to the church's financial status regularly, advised the Council with respect to budget issues, advised the Council Treasurer on bookkeeping issues and proper accounting procedures, and responded to the Audit Committee's annual review. The committee routinely reported recommendations regarding financial matters to the Church Council. The Committee members in 2022 were Lynn Voss, Jan Martin, and Beth Johnson. Sarah Magee attended meetings as a non-voting member.

In Christ's Service,
Beth Johnson
Council Treasurer

2022 Outreach and Welcome Team

The Outreach and Welcome Team (OWT) was formed at the end of June 2022. It developed as an offshoot of the hospitality committee, which, at least at the time, did not formally exist. Rather, it was an ad hoc group of people who, when asked, would periodically organize church social functions. Certain people associated with this group contemplated two key aspects of "hospitality." First is the word's outward character: an online definition of "hospitality" is "the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers." While being hospitable to each other is absolutely worthy of our attention and organizational gifts, we felt called to a more intentional direction of hospitality toward "guests, visitors, or strangers."

Second, this expansion of hospitality led to the recognition that, in order to graciously receive people outside our community, we need to reach out and invite them. This is built into the Our Redeemer's mission statement: "Embraced by God's love, **we reach out** to serve because our Redeemer lives." It is also at the core of the universal Church's calling: Jesus's final command to his followers was to "**Go** therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Matt 28:19). Finally, we realized that, once people are invited, a big part of welcoming them is to help them become a part of our community by connecting them to appropriate ministries and members.

Based on this discussion, the team developed the following mission statement:

To foster a culture of outreach and connection, we strive to invite and welcome all to join in experiencing God's healing, life-giving grace, and responding by worshiping and serving in Jesus' name.

To that end, we have:

- Organized, advertised and put on a fall picnic for the congregation and the surrounding neighborhood.
- Participated, along with several other local churches, in a ministry fair at Carroll College.
- Established a network of sponsors to help welcome and orient new members.
- Worked with staff to update and publish a comprehensive listing of ministry opportunities within the church.
- Began working on improving signage to help visitors navigate our church building.
- Collected hard-copy promotional materials from other churches to assist in adding to our own materials.
- Began working with staff to recruit additional worship assistants and team captains to ensure all worship services have adequate greeters, ushers, and communion assistants.

Current Members:

Karen Armstrong	Nelson Bock	Lynda Hanson
Shauna Helfert	Kevin Mathews	

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Report of the Audit Committee For Calendar Year 2021

Dear Members of the Church Council:

The financial audit of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church for calendar year 2021 was conducted by Mike Burke, Shawna Helfert, and Jeff Martin.

The purpose of the internal audit is intended to provide the oversight necessary to promote a strong control environment and to afford reasonable assurance that good stewardship is being used in handling and accounting for the assets of the congregation. It was not an audit performed by professionals in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.

The following is a summary of our reviews, findings, and recommendations.

The Audit Committee reviewed the following financial policies:

1. Bank Account Reconciliation Review and Approval Policy dated July 7, 2010 and approved November 16, 2021;
2. Credit Card Policy dated August 22, 2006 and approved November 16, 2021;
3. Check Signing Policy dated August 21, 2018 and approved November 16, 2021;
4. Money Counting Policy dated October 15, 2019 and approved November 16, 2021;
5. Petty Cash Accounts Policy dated August 21, 2019 and approved November 16, 2021;
6. Purchase Order Signing Policy dated May 19, 2016 and approved November 16, 2021.

GENERAL FINANCIAL POLICY FINDING

The 2019-2020 Audit Committee found that not all policies had been approved annually, particularly for 2020 and recommended that all policies should be reviewed and approved by the Church Council annually. Since that audit the Church Council has reviewed and approved the financial policies in November 2021.

PURCHASE ORDER FINDING

We reviewed purchase order policy and randomly audited several months of purchase orders for amounts to be paid to vendors for services, supplies, licenses, and miscellaneous other requests for reimbursement. We also reviewed reoccurring bills that don't require POs with their invoices and checks and journal entries for several months. Signatures and levels for purchases corresponded to the "Purchase Order Signing Policy" May 19, 2016, were proper and in order. No material discrepancies or exceptions were found.

General Recommendation After seeing some PO's that paid for licenses to use copyrighted music, ministerial/liturgical material, or other electronic material, we asked Sarah Magee, Director of Finance and Facilities, whether the church checks in with staff members or under the employee policies to let staff know that these licenses are for use of the church and for their duties at the church. This might be a good reminder in policy so that staff leaving employment or working outside their church duties know that licenses purchased or reimbursed by Our Redeemer's are for church use and use by an employee in their duties and not for personal use once they leave employment.

CREDIT CARD FINDING

We reviewed credit card policy and audited individual staff monthly statements to the policy. No material discrepancies or exceptions were found.

MONEY COUNTING FINDING

The Church Council reviewed and approved The Money Counting Procedure October 15, 2019. However the Money Counting Policy refers to detailed procedure updated September 2012. The current procedures have been amended since 2012. We sat in on the money counting process in October. The money counting procedure found in the money counting box was dated 2012. That document was replaced by the current version.

We reviewed the offerings from several weeks to ensure they were designated to the appropriate church accounts and donor accounts. We compared the envelopes, checks and slip sheets for cash.

No material discrepancies or exceptions were found.

MONEY COUNTING RECOMMENDATION

The money counting policy should be amended to reflect the date of the current money counting procedure.

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PAYROLL AND EMPLOYMENT TAXES

We sampled payroll and employment tax payments, including unemployment taxes. No material discrepancies or exceptions were found.

INSURANCE COVERAGE AND PAYMENTS AND BUSINESS FILINGS

We reviewed insurance types and levels. After a discussion with Sarah, we were able to determine, based on estimated replacement values found, that the church is and has been adequately insured with steadily increasing coverage levels based on value. We verified business filing of Our Redeemer's with the Secretary of State to be in good standing as of 02/22/2022.

We reviewed insurance payments to ensure the payments were up-to-date.

No material discrepancies or exceptions were found.

BANK RECONCILIATION

We reviewed bank reconciliations and ensured starting balances matched beginning balance in January 2021 and ending balance in December 2021. We reviewed and verified book balances monthly with reports from Shepard's Staff. We sampled the months of March and September and reviewed the director of finance's reconciliation. We traced check number's 15557 and 15558 and found both checks were voided and confirmed by discussion that voided checks were either stored in another file or the check can be deleted in the software and shown as voided in the accounting system.

There were no significant findings, but we include these notations:

1. Some checks issued by the church, typically to individuals and not businesses, appeared at times to take more than six months to clear the checking account. General business practices refer to checks outstanding for 6 months or more as stale dated, where a check by Our Redeemer's could be refused by a financial institution for payment.
2. This causes Sarah's outstanding monthly items tracking for reconciliation to be long and continued for many months.

SIGNATURE CONTROLS

We examined check signatures for various months in 2021 in the general checking account and found signatures by the church's treasurer most frequent and in order based on the level of the issued item and what the check was written for. Sarah explained the difference between the general checking account and council funds. Sarah noted that she signs for council funds checks but not the general checking account. We found amounts and signatures in order and for the proper levels. We discussed and verified with Sarah how checks are generated from Shepard's staff program, and all seemed in order.

No material discrepancies or exceptions were found.

FUTURE AUDITS

1. We recommend a more thorough audit be done of payroll benefits such as FICA, Worker's Compensation, State Unemployment Insurance, and other payroll taxes, which this audit did not cover in any detail.
2. As with previous audits, the ELCA Congregational Audit Guide suggests, "Congregations with annual receipts in excess of about \$400,000 should seriously consider engaging an outside auditing firm to perform the audit." The ORLC Constitution states that an outside audit shall be done minimally every five years.
3. If not already completed, an inventory of physical assets, and a process to track and maintain current inventory items.

We would like to thank all the staff members for their cooperation and assistance in the conduct of the 2021 audit and especially recognize Sarah Magee and Lori Walter for their prompt response to the numerous requests we made in the conduct of this audit.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Burke, Shauna Helfert, Jeff Martin

Property Development Team Report - 2022

The development planning process, funded through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, produced a Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR) in June of 2022. The full PAR is available for reading on the church website under the "Happenings" tab and Property Development drop-down. This PAR documents all the meetings that took place with the congregation, planning partners, and the public. The PAR shows a master plan for the proposed affordable housing development on a portion of the church's property which includes transitional housing units for the YWCA, rental units for RMDC, and affordable homes for sale by Habitat for Humanity, in addition to open space, trails, sidewalks, a community center, and a small market. Additionally, the PAR documents the mission planning effort undertaken by the congregation with a master plan for the portion of land proposed to be retained by the church showing future development of an outdoor worship space, columbarium and memorial garden, preschool expansion, and daycare facility.

Accomplishing the goal of providing affordable housing on a portion of the church's property is still a big lift and will require significant grant and tax credit funding to realize. The first step towards realizing the goal is to subdivide and rezone the property so that a portion of the property can be sold, and the zoning fits the proposed use. This is an effort that requires time, money, and management.

RMDC (Rocky Mountain Development Council) has offered to act as the lead developer if enough seed money can be acquired to facilitate the subdivision and rezoning process, acquire the land, and get Horseshoe Bend installed. To that end, RMDC will be applying to the City of Helena for federal funding money available to the City through ARPA (The American Rescue Plan Act) in mid-January. The total funding request for this project will be \$2.4 million and our project is one of seven projects that have been invited to apply for a total available amount of \$2.8 million.

The Property Development Team has grown in the past year and is benefitting greatly from the participation of members with special expertise in development planning and funding. We continue to be grateful for the participation of these new members and the support of the congregation. We understand it is a long process that requires both patience and stamina, but the team is motivated by the future benefits the development would provide both our community and our congregation.

Any future sale of land will have to be approved by majority vote at an official congregational meeting.

Property Development Team

Jerry Hoover: jerry.r.hoover@gmail.com

Bonner Armstrong: bonnerarmstrong@gmail.com

Cody Salo: Salo3730@gmail.com

Craig Erickson: cerickson@greatwesteng.com

Herb Kulow: herbkulow@gmail.com

Jan Martin: jomvallymt@gmail.com

Nelson Bock: nbock6552@gmail.com

Del Schubring: d-aschub@hotmail.com

Kim Mangold: kmang406@gmail.com

Ryan McLane: ryan@franzdriscoll.com

Sharon Haugen: haugensharon74@gmail.com



St. John's United

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



SKILLED NURSING CARE CHALLENGE

The landscape of elder care in Montana and across America has reached an inflection point. In 2022, eleven Montana nursing homes closed due to rising challenges. These challenges include a shrinking availability of healthcare workforce, an increased cost of labor, inadequate Medicaid reimbursement, and inflation of food and general operating supply expenses. These challenges have converged at a time when the sheer number and proportion of adults over the age of 65 is increasing. SJU's commitment and capacity to provide skilled nursing healthcare to those within its continuum of care remains, but its capacity to serve people not within its continuum has diminished.

LUTHER'S LODGE RELOCATION PROJECT

Luther's Lodge is a home providing private bedroom/bathroom suites with shared living areas for out-of-town guests receiving medical care or treatment for themselves or their family members. First English Lutheran Church (FELC) and Luther's Lodge (LL) have invited SJU to help facilitate an effort to raise funding and relocate LL within remodeled spaces of FELC. This relocation would expand services, enhance amenities, and create an improved location for LL within the Billings hospital corridor.

AT HOME

Since launching in 2019, SJU's At Home program has thrived. At Home members receive a variety of services to support their lives, inclusive of continuing care coordination, an emergency response system, transportation, concierge assistance, vacation services, preventative maintenance, social opportunities, fitness and wellness programs, and access to SJU activities. Additional grant funding has prompted expansion of At Home programming in Missoula and the Bitterroot Valley to the west, and in Richland County to the east, in partnership with Sidney Health Center.

ST. JOHN'S UNITED FAMILY SERVICES

Sustained in part by donations from individuals and congregations, SJU Family Services connects with children, families, and individuals through compassionate programs. The C.A.R.E.S. program, funded by a grant from Lutheran Services in America, empowers families to utilize their natural and community resource supports to reduce referrals to the foster care system. In 2022, C.A.R.E.S. staff worked intensively with over 35 families who reported improved family relationships. Family Services licensed clinical social workers met in-person or via telehealth with over 375 individuals to provide short-term and long-term counseling. Supportive education and counseling was provided without fee to 52 expectant parents and their support people. Four infants were placed in their forever homes. Contract adoption services were provided to 17 families and assistance was offered to over 20 post-adoption cases, including three reunions. The Wendy's Wonderful Kids Adoption Recruiter, funded by a grant from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, continues to help over 25 Montana youth in foster care build connections and find permanent placements.

GAINAN COMMONS GREENHOUSE

SJU and Billings Public Schools Career Technical Education partnered to develop an urban horticulture education center located within the downtown SJU Gainan Commons building. The Center will provide technical education opportunities for students, intergenerational volunteer engagement, and fresh produce to serve SJU communities. The greenhouse will be self-sustaining through solar power and rainwater collection.

TRANSITIONAL REHAB CENTER

Construction commenced to transform a portion of the Legacy building that once housed elders into a thirty-six room transitional rehab center for patients in need of short-term health care. This modernized structure will increase staff collaboration efficiencies and quality of care management. Advanced technologies within the space will improve medical monitoring and capability of caring for medically complex patients. Project completion will be fall, 2023.

CHILDCARE RELOCATION

SJU was awarded a \$970,000 Childcare Innovation and Infrastructure grant through the American Rescue Plan Act and state of Montana. These funds, combined with other raised funds, will develop 6000 square feet of space, previously used for housing elders, into a state-of-the-art child development center that will be embedded within a retirement community. When completed, SJU's current Center for Generations childcare will be relocated into this space.

PHILANTHROPY

Our thanks to generous financial donors and volunteers who continue to sustain SJU with love and support.

For volunteering, please contact our Director of Volunteer Services at (406) 655-7727.

For financial donations, please contact our Foundation Gift Planner at (406) 655-7783.

For on-line volunteer registration or donations, go to www.stjohnsunited.org. Thank you!

ST. JOHN'S UNITED CLINIC

SJU opened a medical clinic at the Billings west end campus with intent to preserve and improve the health and well-being of employees and residents. Under the leadership of Janice Ostermiller, FNP-BC, this clinic provides a full-array of primary care services, inclusive of wellness medical screening, testing, lab work, treatment, and mental health care. The clinic is open weekdays to provide access and convenience.

CAMPAIGN FOR RESIDENT CARE

In April, the St. John's Foundation surpassed its Campaign for Resident Care funding goal of \$17 million – \$9 million to construct Chapel Court Apartments, an affordable housing project, and \$8 million in endowment gifts and gift intents. Earnings from endowed funds will support and sustain the lives of SJU residents who have exhausted their resources.



Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp

Annual Report 2022

"This camp has meant so much to these kids and to us. You have helped us in every way grow in Christ. These years of camp will always be part of their lives. The impact that Flathead Lutheran Camp has on children's lives is priceless. - Camper Grandparent's"

2022 BY THE NUMBERS:

Sept. 2021 – May 2022 Campers: 1209 guests (retreats/events/EE students); 121 participants in 3 communities through Fall/Winter/Spring Outreach
2022 Summer Campers: 1,126 (all ages, all programs); 18 Day Camps in congregations;
79 summer volunteers; 51 incredible summer staff



YEAR IN REVIEW:

- January 2022:
 - Thanks to the generosity of many, FLBC reached its goal for the Holy Ground Campaign! This allowed us to pay off the remaining loan for the new land on Hughes Bay, and begin attending to some facility related projects at camp.
- Spring 2022:
 - Year-round staff hit the road to recruit staff, visit congregations, and do our Outreach program!
- June 2022:
 - After being postponed twice since 2020, our Holy Land Pilgrimage was finally able to happen!
- June - August 2022:
 - With an amazing staff from 13 states and 2 other countries (Spain & Haiti), hundreds of campers of all ages experienced God's love at FLBC through our summer theme "Boundless: God beyond measure."
 - After 7 weeks of summer camp programming, 2 additional weeks took place in partnership with organizations such as Intermountain Residential and the Montana Youth Diabetes Alliance.
- Fall 2022:
 - FLBC's year-round ministry continued with exciting experiences; to name a few, our Women's Retreat, Quilting & Crafting Retreat, and Golf Tournament, as well as hosting retreats for church councils, Billings High School Choir, Glacier Park staff, and many more!
 - FLBC received news that the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust has committed a \$237,000 grant to the Shalom Home: Staff Housing/Retreat Cabin project!
 - A new strategic plan was adopted during the October Board of Directors meeting, and presented to the FLBC association at the Annual Meeting.

Thank you for your generosity and care for camp!

PLEASE help us recruit summer staff ages 18-90 and consider "adopting" a 2023 Summer Staff member!

Go to <https://flbc.net/work-at-flbc/> for applications!

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Biographies of Council Members & Nominees

Kevin Mathews

Kevin is married to Lisa Williams-Mathews, current Alter Guild chair and former Director of Children's Ministries. He and Lisa have two married adult children, one pair in Missoula and one in Butte. They also are both Lay Pastoral Associates and have been members of Our Redeemer's since 2006. Both have lived in Helena their whole lives but for a 14-year stint in Seattle after college. Kevin likes to make music when he can: he currently sits in with the Rejoice Band, sings with the Helena Symphony Chorale, performs periodically at Benny's Bistro, and has performed in several musicals, operas, and concerts. He is a member of the Friendship Center Board of Directors and retired last year from a career as an environmental engineer and consultant.

Lynn Voss

Lynn graduated from Montana State University in Bozeman and moved to Helena in 1997. Shannon and Lynn were married in 1999 with Our Redeemer's then Pastor Doug Peterson officiating. Lynn has taught Sunday School and Confirmation classes, led Crown Financial Ministries classes, and been involved on the Stewardship, Call, and Mutual Ministry Committees before serving on the council. Lynn and Shannon have two boys: Eli, a 2021 graduate of Capital High School, and Bridger, a Junior at Capital High School. Shannon is a Human Resources Professional with the Department of Administration at the State of Montana. Lynn is a Financial Advisor with Thrivent, a Christian-based financial services firm helping people prepare for their future while navigating life's complexities.

Ingrid Childress

Ingrid Childress is a long-time member of Our Redeemer's. She and her husband, Don, are both retired and enjoy outdoor activities such as gardening, hiking with their dog, camping, and fishing. Ingrid is a member of the Grace Notes Handbell Choir; she enjoys making a "joyful noise" with the rest of the choir.

Cody Salo

Cody has been a member of Our Redeemer's since 2011 and has served on the church council for the past two years. More recently, Cody has been involved on the Property Development Committee to help Our Redeemer's and partners create affordable housing. He believes in their mission of assisting the community and housing needs. Cody's wife, Jessica, was also involved in the Call Committee. They have two children, Kendall and Kacey, that had the opportunity to attend preschool here and now participate in Sunday School and Confirmation. They are excited and blessed to be a part of a great church community and are excited to help Our Redeemer's with all the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Julie Penner

Julie has been a member of Our Redeemer's for almost 40 years - since her family moved to Helena when she was a child, and she has many fond memories through involvement in the church. Julie has been married to Brett for almost 20 years, and they have two amazing teenagers together! Since 2002, she has taught in various places and is currently teaching third grade in East Helena, where she has taught for the last 11 years. It's a privilege to serve on the church council, and she is excited to see where the Lord takes us.

Jennifer Colegrove

Jennifer has been a member of Our Redeemer's for 25 years and has attended Lutheran churches all her life. She played the organ for her hometown church in Idaho in high school. Jennifer taught Sunday School and Confirmation classes in the past. Currently, at Our Redeemer's, she is on the Hunger Team and plays with the Grace Notes Bell Choir. Jennifer is a Dietitian Manager at St. Pete's Health, where she has worked for 25 years. She retired from reffing and running the local recreation soccer programs. She loves cooking, gardening, skiing, hiking, biking, adventuring with friends, and hanging out with her family - sons Cannon, wife Holly, and Logan.

Ed Johnson

Ed's father transferred his church membership from St. John's Lutheran to Our Redeemer's in the late 1950s, and Ed was baptized at age two years by Pastor I. C. Gronneberg on December 23, 1964, at Our Redeemer's on Stuart Street. He attended regular church school throughout grade school years into high school. His learning years were under the direction of Pastor Lowell Anderson, and he received his church bible on December 13, 1970. For reasons he does not remember, Ed did not complete confirmation, and his attendance waned during his college years and working away from home both before and after marriage. Upon establishing a permanent residence and raising a family (note: Ed's wife raised our children in St. Theodore Catholic Church in Avon, MT.), he returned to Our Redeemer's on Stuart street and eventually was confirmed by Pastor Doug Peterson. Ed has since been a regular fixture in the pews on Sundays.

Tracy Moseman

Tracy Moseman was hired in December 2021 to start a new office, Faith and Community Based Services, at the Department of Public Health and Human Services to be the conduit between faith and community organizations and DPHHS, knowing many times the two entities serve similar populations with similar needs. Before this role, she worked for seventeen years in educational student support services at the Office of Public Instruction and Helena School District. Tracy and her husband, Mark, have two children (Haley, a freshman at MSU, and Trey, a sophomore at Capital High). She is a lifelong Montanan and enjoys everything outdoors, including sunrise hikes over Mount Helena.

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Tracey Tintinger

Tracey recognized the importance of a Christ-centered life, church community, and its connection to family as she and her husband, Ben, began raising kids. She and her family joined Our Redeemer's about 25 years ago. Growing up in Helena, she first attended ORLC as a fifth grader in 1978. Tracey has had the joy of teaching Sunday School and Confirmation classes at Our Redeemer's as her children were growing up. Through our church community, she discovered the Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. Seventeen years of attending family camp at FLBC also solidified tradition, memories, and spirituality in her and her family. Through a combination of stay-at-home mom and part time office manager for Mosaic Architecture, Tracey has had a well balanced home/work life. This was particularly helpful in raising four kids. Now that those kids are adults, they deeply appreciate the family values and church communities that Tracey instilled in them.

Tracey enjoys reading, hanging out with friends, traveling, and traipsing about on the mountain trails with her husband and three dogs. She also looks forward to volunteering more time where needed in the community and helping Our Redeemers.

Sarah Sampson

Sarah grew up in Shelby, MT, and came to Helena to attend and graduate from Carroll College. She works at Triple Tree Engineering here in Helena. Sarah and her husband, Pat, have three boys: Shane (12), Bryce (9), and Chase (6). All three boys attended Our Redeemers Preschool, and during that time, Sarah also served on the Preschool Board for nine years. Now the boys participate in Confirmation and Sunday School at Our Redeemer's. They have made Our Redeemer's their church home since 2010. Their family loves to spend time outside snow skiing, hiking, fishing, and golfing. The boys also keep us very busy with all their sporting activities (football, basketball, soccer, track, & baseball). Their family is blessed to be a part of Our Redeemer's.

Linda Nelson

Linda is a retired educator, Licensed Professional Counselor, writer, and Registered Drama Therapist. She has lived in Helena for 14 years and been a member of Our Redeemer's for 10 years. She has served on the Hunger Team since its inception and been a member of the Grace Notes handbell choir for most of her time at Our Redeemer's. Linda has also taught several adult education classes at the church on a variety of social and theological issues. Although she grew up as Presbyterian, she was attracted to Our Redeemer's because of the warm welcome she received and the strong commitment of the laity. Her family includes her daughter Gretchen Krumm, son-in-law Blair, and granddaughter, Ella. In addition to other community involvements, she is a member of the Knitters for Peace, a group that provides hand knitted times for a variety of charitable organizations both here and abroad. She also enjoys reading and gardening in her spare time.

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church
Notes