

A wide-angle photograph of the interior of a church during a service. The view is from the back of the sanctuary, looking down the central aisle towards the altar. The church features high, vaulted stone ceilings and large, colorful stained-glass windows. The altar area is decorated with flowers and candles. A priest in white vestments stands at a wooden pulpit on the right, gesturing with his hands. A woman in a yellow dress stands at the altar on the left, also gesturing. The pews are filled with people of various ages, seen from behind, looking towards the front. The floor is made of dark, polished wood.

LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

BUILDING A BIGGER TABLE

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ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

FEBRUARY 4, 2024

1. Call to Order **Tim Ryan**
2. Opening Prayer **Emily Haite**
3. Election of Council Nominees **Tim Ryan**
Sophia Redekopp
 - *Time Limit: 10 minutes of discussion followed by vote.*
 - *Members limited to 30 seconds for comments.*
4. Message from Pastor **Pastor Lindsay Mack**
 - *Time Limit: 5 minutes for Q/A following Pastor's message.*
 - *Members limited to 30 seconds for questions.*
5. Migrant Ministry **Linda Nguyen**
 - *Time Limit: 10 minutes for Q/A following summary.*
 - *Members limited to 30 seconds for questions.*
6. Stewardship Update **Jensea Chromy**
 - *Time Limit: 5 minutes for Q/A following summary.*
 - *Members limited to 30 seconds for questions.*
7. Review of 2023 Financials **Larry Gehrke**
 - *Time Limit: 20 minutes for Q/A following review.*
 - *Members limited to 45 seconds for questions.*
8. Presentation of 2024 Budget **Sophia Redekopp**
 - *Time Limit: 20 minutes for Q/A following presentation.*
 - *Members limited to 45 seconds for questions.*
9. Closing Prayer
10. Adjournment

FROM PASTOR LINDSAY

Dear people of LMC,

Each year, our congregational meeting falls during the season of Epiphany. In the beloved Epiphany Bible story, the Magi, those mysterious ones from a faraway land, travel to Bethlehem to visit the baby Jesus. They travel for months guided by a bright star shining in the east that drew them to the Holy Family. In Bethlehem, they run right into Jesus, the Word made flesh in a roly-poly child. The Magi bow down and worship the Savior of the World. After they leave their gifts, the story tells, they head home by another road. Something in them has shifted.

The Magi initially started a new journey unsure of where it would lead them. Our church life has changed slightly since the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic, we've seen turnover in membership and an energetic new burst of families with very young children. Attendance patterns in church have shifted. However, we still began 2023 on a pretty familiar path of church life. We hired Russel Angelico to lead our band. For the first time in several years, we had a full staff. Both Deacon Sarah and Christopher served as formal interns which made for extra staff support, particularly in pastoral care in the first half of the year. Slowly, our music and children's ministries began to gain more stability and we journeyed forward.

After the Magi journeyed for some time, they arrived in Bethlehem where they found the baby Jesus, God incarnate in their midst. Holding that baby, bowing before him, and feeling his weight and warmth in their arms seems to have shifted something in them. In the spring of 2023, an influx of South American migrants began arriving in Chicago. I had grown both concerned and curious about what was happening, and shortly before I left for sabbatical, I reached out to some key church leaders to explore if there was a way to get involved. Eventually, LMC gave posada (or shelter) to four Venezuelan families. As LMC members began to meet these newcomers, Jesus awakened us to something holy. We felt the warmth of the people before us. We felt the weight of another's hand in a handshake. We sat and shared real food together. Meanwhile, we continued to see dozens of migrants throughout the city. We had run into Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Word made flesh, in a powerful and unexpected way, and something in us started shifting.

After the Magi met Jesus, the Savior of the world, they returned home by another way. They didn't return on the familiar path, for they were ever so slightly different. When I

returned from my sabbatical, I felt the positive energy of change in the congregation. We voted to call Deacon Sarah to serve as a Minister of Word and Service. We dug into church life. We have slowly woven our social justice ministry with migrants into our work. Dozens of new community members who may not have regularly attended worship volunteered with and donated to the church. As we go forward, something in us is slightly different. We still value community. We still honor questions and doubt. But we have embraced a new way we serve the people around us. We have embraced a new way of service towards each other.

This change makes sense. In the past few years, our world has felt unsettled and changed. The role of church in people's lives is changing, and the pandemic accelerated this change that had been decades in the making. Changes and shifts are expected and even necessary.

As we look forward, we will continue to deepen our sense of community with one another and strengthen our relationships. We do this through Wednesday night meals, small groups, and service opportunities. We are also curious about how younger generations are connecting to the church and will look to explore ways young people connect with God. Finally, we are committed to our service of the "least of these," particularly those who are most marginalized in our world. We will evaluate and tend to our social justice ministry as it evolves. God's purpose for LMC continues to unfold, and we look towards the future with excitement and anticipation.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to you all for the gift of my summer sabbatical. I didn't anticipate that a period of rest and slowness over the summer would have such a positive impact on me. It did. Thank you! I'm grateful to the way you all supported the work of the church in my absence this summer. Many thanks to the volunteers who provided leadership such as the Church Council and Pastors Kevin Massey and Phil Hirsch in their care for our weekly worship. I'm ever grateful to our faithful and talented staff and contractors for their dedication, creativity, and flexibility. Our staff picked up more work in my absence over the summer, and the congregation is steadier for their faithful service. Thank you to Russell Angelico, Jared Beverly, Christopher Drummond, Melissa Ferguson, Iris Kean, Kal-El Parra, Sandra Sanchez, and Deacon Sarah Swagler.

With joy and thanksgiving,
Pastor Lindsay

WORSHIP

In worship, we deepen our relationship with God together. We ponder the things that God loves, sing the songs of our hearts, remember that we are forgiven and beloved and are sent back out into the world to share the love of Jesus.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Over the course of 2023, we used several worship series that helped us explore our connection with God. During Lent, we used the series “Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith,” to explore how God is at work in our lives. Over the summer, a steady slate of volunteers and staff led worship while Pastor Lindsay was on sabbatical. In the fall, we started off our program year with the series that explored our relationship with money through the ancient stories of God’s providence and care. We reflected on our worldviews of scarcity and abundance, and we pondered how we can have a healed, right relationship with our finances. During Advent, we leaned into the traditional themes of hope, peace, joy, and love with the series “Let There Be!”





BY THE NUMBERS

Services streamed on YouTube: 59

Hours of worship streamed: 83

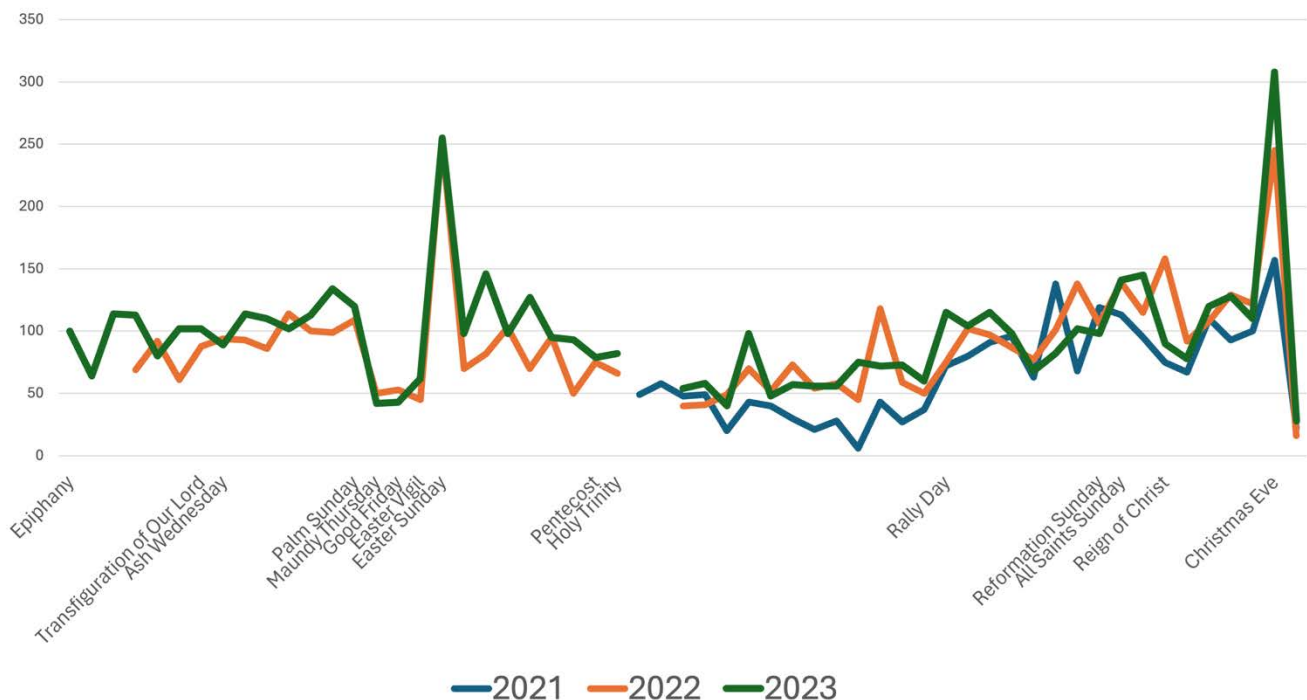
Baptisms: 8

Christmas Eve volunteers: 61

Families who participated in communion education for our elementary-school children: 5



In-Person Worship Attendance 2021–2023





OTHER WORSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

During both Advent and Lent, we held contemplative candlelit vespers services on Wednesday nights.

Ash Wednesday was again led by our youth.

Our Holy Week worship included both somber reflection and joy as we remembered the old stories of our tradition together with that sacred story of Christ's death and resurrection.

We thoughtfully celebrated unique services such as Pride and Juneteenth.

During the Christmas season, families brought their grandparents and friends for our Christmas pageant and then filled the house on Christmas Eve.

The number of children attending our 11am services grew notably with a full house in the Playground.

We had seven in-house trained preachers that offered sermons throughout the year, including Pastor Lindsay.



VOLUNTEERS IN WORSHIP

Worship is an offering that we create together for God. That means we depend on the service of many volunteers on any given Sunday.

The sacristan team expanded and prepared the communion for two services each Sunday during the program year and one during the summer.

A small and mighty team of volunteers assisted with decorating the Sanctuary for the various liturgical seasons and purchasing Easter flowers and *nochebuenas* for Christmas.

Our property team regularly changes the outdoor banners.



Many thanks to Karl Raack, who painted the beautiful tree paintings that adorned the church during the summer months.

A great thanks is due to Deacon Sarah and Vicar Christopher along with Pastors Kevin Massey and Phil Hirsch in their leadership of worship over the summer. Thanks also to Sanna Adlem and Tom Pels for offering messages and supporting the congregation during Pastor Lindsay's sabbatical.

Thanks to your generosity, we are able to connect with our community and wider world as the light of Christ.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN

YOUTH GROUP

Though small, LMC's Youth Group was mighty in 2023! In May, they hosted an end-of-the-year pancake breakfast as we celebrated the close of a wonderful programming year. The fall saw many service opportunities such as the

third annual community Trunk-or-Treat, putting together blessing bags, and Theodore H. taking the lead on the December Dignity Meal for our migrant neighbors by organizing a coat and winter gear drive. We look forward to more service opportunities in 2024!



BY THE NUMBERS

Program Registrations: 24

Confirmands: 5



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children are an incredible and vibrant part of LMC's community, and our Sunday School continues to grow.

February 2023 saw the return of a Communion Class in which 8 children grades 1-4 learned about why the Eucharist is so important to our faith. In fall 2023, we welcomed new teachers Alison and Jack Blaser to the Pre-K/3- and 4-year-old classroom. This class tends to be our largest with an average of 5–8 children each week with approximately 15–20 children throughout the Sunday School program each week! We were able to get creative with space and moved Sunday School from the 3rd floor to the 2nd floor. In addition, our annual Christmas Pageant saw approximately 40 children participate—including the children from our Venezuelan families!







MUSIC

CHOIR

Improvising our way through a “new normal” of how to be church, characterized by flexibility and creativity: the choir actually grew in 2023 to around 18 singers, with an average Sunday attendance of around 8 to 10. More importantly—whether a trained singer, or a novice singer with growing abilities and confidence: we enjoyed coming together to make music.



CONGREGATIONAL MUSIC FOR THE 9AM SERVICE

For 2023, worship continued to incorporate an expansive array of musical that included multiple ELCA and ecumenical hymn and service music resources. We also dusted off some of our wonderful Lutheran chorales, rich in rhythmic interest and formative, accessible theology. Worship music was further enhanced by vocal and instrumental soloists, choral motets and part singing of hymns by the choir, and leadership provided by our cantors. “Christmas in September,” Holy Week, Christmastide and other combined services during the summer allowed more collaborations between the 9am choir and the singers and musicians of the praise band.



LMC BAND

LMC boasts a unique contemporary music program; one where dozens of musicians (yes, *dozens*—as many as 36) volunteer their talents and lead our 11am services, creating original arrangements out of traditional hymns and acclaimed popular music. Our band members rotate each week based on availability and repertoire and deliver not just “songs” but “arcs” within each service.

During the summer as well as on holidays, the band collaborated with the organ- and choir-led program to produce a fusion of musical expressions, apt for both members and visitors that came to worship.





In 2023, we said goodbye to our longstanding 5-foot baby grand piano, and with heartfelt thanks to our generous donors and coordinators, we welcomed a revitalized 1970 Yamaha C7 grand piano into our building. We also reworked the band corner in the sanctuary, so that every musician can plug in seamlessly. We look forward to growing our technical and creative capabilities with all these tools at our disposal!



Additionally, band director Russell Angelico assisted our paid teen helpers in livestreaming nearly every 9am service all year. This includes online recordings saved to LMC's YouTube page, available for all to reference and enjoy into the future. We see this effort evolving in its scope, so that more worshipers both within and outside our community can engage our online portals to experience what LMC has to offer.

It deserves mentioning that this program, along with LMC's traditional music, brings in new members all the time. Why? Music, and what it offers on a personal level, is a bridge from isolation into community. On this note, LMC's band is a group that welcomes participants of all levels and interests, and we look forward to growing even more, as those that seek to participate in this way join our community. Contact the band director or anyone on staff if you are interested in learning more.

RETURN OF THE BELLS

Welcome back, handbell choir! In the fall, thanks to the leadership of Melissa Busch, the bell choir returned to LMC. The intergenerational choir has 12 members and regularly plays at both the 9am and 11am services.



COMMUNITY

This past year, LMC has reached out to the community in a variety of ways.

We started the year with a chili supper hosted by the women's ministry, with options to taste and vote on a variety of delicious chilis.

We hosted several block parties in connection with worship, which consistently involve community members. On Easter Sunday, we hosted an outdoor party after church with refreshments and a bounce house.



In June, we celebrated Juneteenth with a block party, complete with vendors from Black-owned businesses, a delicious spread of food, activities for families, and readings.

LMC also brought a group together to participate in the Chicago Pride parade with the Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches. On March 4, 2023, LMC completed 19 years as a Reconciling in Christ congregation.



To start off the program year, we hosted a Rally Day party complete with an outdoor worship service, a robust potluck, and even a petting zoo!



In the fall, we again hosted a canned good drive in connection with our Trunk or Treat block party and welcomed a number of community members who came to trick or treat and participate in activities.





The colder months provided opportunities to connect and deepen our relationships. We expanded the Wednesday meals to twice a month and welcomed everyone for soup suppers during both Lent and Advent prior to evening vespers. During the Thanksgiving season, we hosted our annual Pre-Thanksgiving Meal, a fundraiser for the Friendship Center. Later, we packed the Fellowship Hall before our Christmas Pageant with family and friends for a homecooked Venezuelan meal, and many members gave gifts for Concordia Place Wishing Stars.

Throughout the year, our Free Little Pantry on the corner provided a place to share and receive food.

Members' generous donations to LMC helped us support many community ministries, including the Friendship Center, the Night Ministry, the Chicago Metropolitan Synod, ELCA Disaster Relief, and Apna Ghar.

In addition, we opened our beautiful building to visitors for Chicago Open House, and we provided a free place to meet for our local AA group, Versiti blood drives, Boy Scout events, Chicago Babywearing, and Waters Elementary give-gifting organizers.

STEWARDSHIP

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Jensea Chromy

Jay Kapp

Emily Haite*

Tim Klein

Johnny Frevert*

Deiter Schulte*

Justin Bush

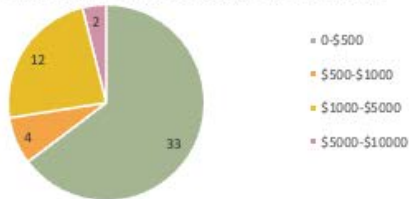
(*denotes Council Member)

2023 Total Donations: \$447, 339

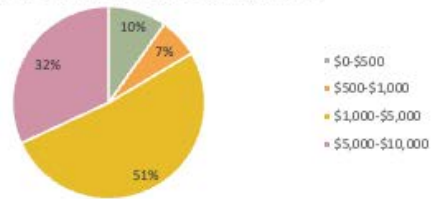
2023 End of Year Appeal: 51 donors, including our matching-fund families; Raised \$47,389.79 which exceeded our goal of \$40,000



0-\$500 accounts for the majority of Donations

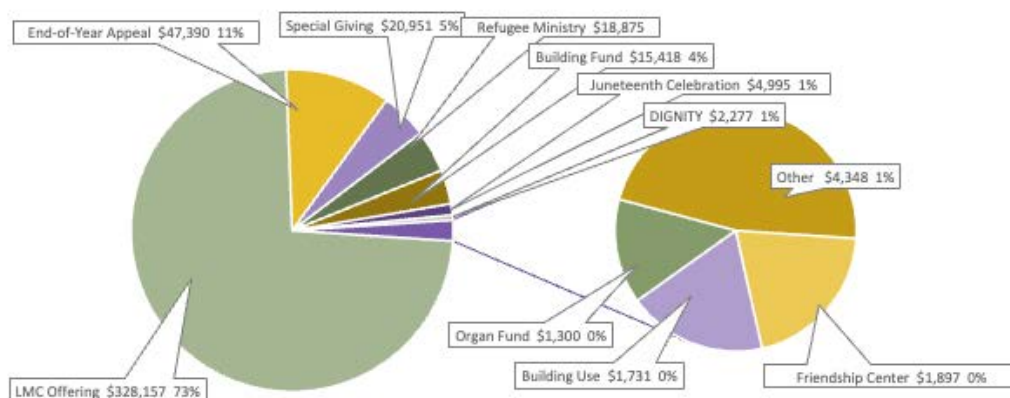
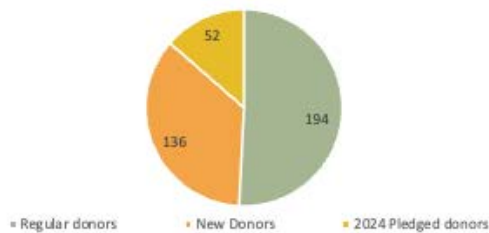


Percentage of Donations by Range

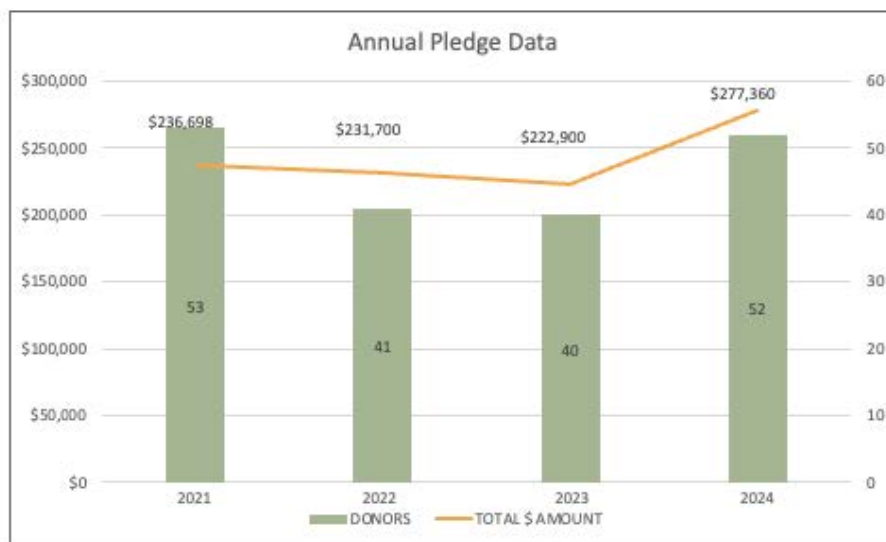


2023 – Who We Are and Where We Give

LMC Donors - 268 Total



2024 Pledge Drive – Positive Trend – 52 pledges (\$277,360)



- **Stewardship Future Plans**

- Migrant/Refugee Fund Contribution
- Recognition
- Bequest/In Memory
- Gifts of Time & Talent
- Volunteer Management
- 100th Anniversary of Building
- What does Year-Round Stewardship look like?

- **Stewardship Q/A**

- **Thank You from the entire Stewardship Team**



FINANCES

Assets and Liabilities as of Year-End 2023

Accounts	Amounts
Cash-Chase Account	\$106,993
Cash-Old National Accounts (including Capital Campaign and Organ Fund)	\$88,536
ELCA Endowment Fund Investment (as of December 31, 2023)	\$224,661
ELCA Mission Investment Fund (as of December 31, 2023)	\$162,081
Vanguard Investment Fund (as of December 31, 2023)	\$24,901
Building (as of April 2023)	\$8,516,088
Machinery, Furniture, and Equipment (as of April 2023)	\$1,289,237
TOTAL ASSETS	\$10,412,497
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$2,869

Total Revenues and Expenses

Last 5 Years

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Envelope Offerings	\$374,529	\$407,036	\$360,411	\$364,671	\$367,112
Building Use		\$16,143	\$43,866	\$37,978	\$35,151
Payroll Protection Plan Loan		\$69,267	\$69,267		
Total Income	\$439,544	\$553,132	\$490,324	\$428,419	\$491,783
Total Expenses	\$444,333	\$448,054	\$426,634	\$511,344	\$552,744
Net Income	(\$4,789)	\$105,078	\$63,691	(\$82,925)	(\$60,961)

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2024 Budget Proposal

Pastor and Staff Compensation

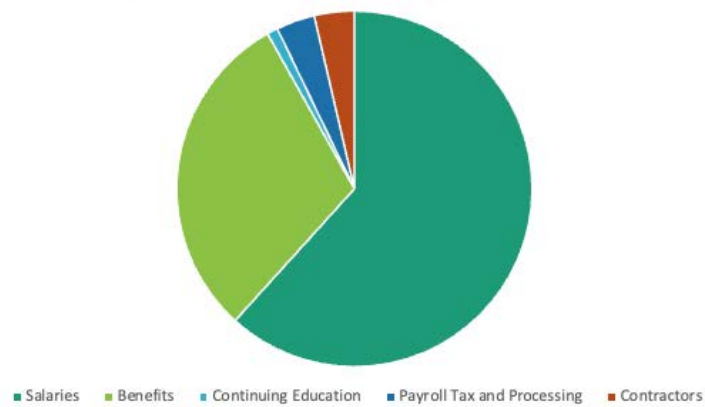
	2023 Actual	2023 Budgeted	2024 Proposed	% Change
Salaries	\$218,126	\$238,848	\$244,116	2.2%
Benefits	\$98,886	\$98,517	\$119,286	21.1%
Continuing Education	\$1,701	\$3,900	\$3,900	0.0%
Payroll Tax and Processing	\$12,909	\$11,988	\$13,865	15.7%
Contractors	\$17,124	\$14,400	\$14,400	0.0%
TOTAL	\$348,746	\$367,653	\$395,567	7.6%

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2024 Budget Proposal

Visual Depiction of Amounts To Be Budgeted for Personnel

Proposed 2024 Personnel Budget Distribution



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2024 Budget Proposal

Property Expenses

	2023 Actual	2023 Budgeted	2024 Proposed	% Change
Unforeseen/Emergency Repairs	\$37,899*	\$9,500	\$7,000	-3.4%
Quarterly Boiler Maintenance		\$4,000	\$4,000	
General Maintenance			\$2,000	
Cleaning Services	\$23,207	\$19,250	\$19,250	0.0%
Snow Removal	\$233	\$2,000	\$2,000	0.0%
Lawn and Garden	\$0	\$900	\$900	0.0%
Table Set Up	\$0	\$1,500	\$1,500	0.0%
Utilities	\$17,611	\$27,750	\$27,750	0.0%

* Includes \$12,748 in designated donations for special projects and \$11,925 in Capital Campaign work.

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2024 Budget Proposal

Other Non-Personnel Expenses

	2023 Actual	2023 Budgeted	2024 Proposed	% Change
Worship and Hospitality	\$5,734	\$7,475	\$5,975	-20.0%
Evangelism and Communication	\$1,067	\$5,100	\$5,650	10.1%
Youth and Children	\$4,267	\$5,750	\$6,310	9.7%
Music	\$2,725	\$4,500	\$4,650	3.3%
Stewardship	\$383	\$1,065	\$1,064	0.0%
Other Ministries and Events	\$3,121	\$3,400	\$4,500	32.4%
Technology	\$10,234	\$10,819	\$10,819	0.0%
Office Supplies	\$9,174	\$10,500	\$9,500	-9.0%
Insurance	\$14,012	\$14,000	\$14,600	4.3%

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2024 Budget Proposal

Donations to External Entities

	2023 Actual	2023 Budgeted	2024 Proposed	% Change
ELCA Support	\$27,200	\$26,700	\$26,950	0.9%
Food Pantry	\$2,750	\$2,750	\$2,750	0.0%
Night Ministry	\$3,486	\$2,750	\$2,750	0.0%
Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches	\$0	\$250	\$250	0.0%
Faith and Justice Donations	Paid from Donations	\$1,050	\$1,050	0.0%
Refugee Ministry*	\$31,844			

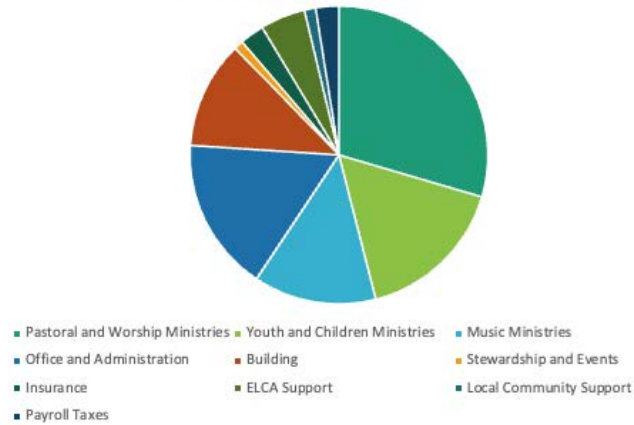
* Paid from designated donations.

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2024 Budget Proposal

Visual Depiction of Amounts To Be Budgeted in Total

2024 Budget Distribution in Total



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2024 Budget Proposal

Total View

	2023 Actual Expenses	2023 Budgeted	2024 Proposed	% Change
TOTAL	\$552,744	\$528,612	\$556,735	5.3%

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OUR CHURCH HOME

Our property team did great work this year to keep our building in good shape and improve it. We upgraded our security system with new cameras and a brand new red door by the office. Volunteers from the church also chipped in for a work day on April 29.

We rented our space to Lincoln Square Fencing, Merry Music Makers, SoleStance dance class, and a number of one-off events.



MIGRANT MINISTRY

Due to political turmoil resulting in socioeconomic and humanitarian collapse, there is a surge of Venezuelan migrants seeking asylum at the U.S./Mexico border. In 2023, over 30,000 migrants found their way to Chicago, a welcoming sanctuary city. Over the course of the last 12 months, migrants have spent weeks sleeping on sidewalks and in the lobbies of the district police stations, relying solely on the contributions and efforts of dedicated community volunteers.

Luther Memorial Church saw the need and answered the call to service and humility. In May of 2023, we took in 17 adults and children. Later that year, we helped to reunite family members and took in an additional five family members.



OVER
750
DIGNITY
MEALS WERE
SHARED IN
COMMUNITY

OVER
15,000
MEALS WERE MADE BY
LMC'S MIGRANT
FAMILIES AND
VOLUNTEERS FOR OUR
NEIGHBORS IN NEED





PREPARING FOR NEW ARRIVALS

LMC joins with other community members and ward officials in devising an early action plan to support our new migrant neighbors at the 17th police district. LMC congregation members, including Youth Group, deliver meals and supplies on a weekly basis to the precinct.

APRIL

MAY

WELCOMING OUR FAMILIES

LMC responds to the critical need for more adequate shelter options that offer safe and nurturing environments so that these people may thrive. On May 17, three families are welcomed to shelter at the church.

EMPOWERED TO GIVE BACK

After food supplies are drastically cut short at police precincts across the city, the migrant families utilize LMC's kitchen to prepare culturally appropriate food for their fellow neighbors in need. Community volunteers also help lead the effort by delivering food prepared at LMC to the police precincts.

JUNE



AUGUST

NEW BEGINNINGS

LMC's families formally begin the school year and the youth immediately dive into extracurricular activities, including soccer, arts camp, dance, and more. Supplementary English classes, academic tutoring, and other forms of community connection are also part of this new phase of their lives.

RESPONDING TO CHANGE

After months with thousands of migrants sleeping on lobby floors and in tents on sidewalks at the police station, the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago announces drastic changes in asylum seeker policy. LMC responds with its first DIGNITY dinner, an experience upholding human values by serving Venezuelan comfort food to migrants in a formal dining setting.

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

CONTINUING TO HELP

LMC hosted its second DIGNITY dinner, focused on migrants who were moved to city shelters in the vicinity of the church. With the help of LMC's Eagle Scout and Youth Group, critical cold weather clothing, toiletries, and supplies were collected and distributed to nearly 400 neighbors.

STAFF

In 2023, LMC accompanied two staff members, our Director of Youth and Children's ministry Sarah Swagler and our Organist and Choir Director Christopher Drummond, as they completed their internship requirements for ordination. Many thanks go to the nine LMC church members who served on the internship committees that coached and supported our interns through the journey and filled out the final paperwork.





Over the summer, the LMC council led the initiative to call Deacon Sarah to serve LMC as an ordained deacon. In September 2023, Deacon Sarah was extended a call, and on Reformation Sunday, she was ordained in the Fall Metro Synod ordination. Congrats, Deacon Sarah! Many thanks to those church members who served on Deacon Sarah's call team.



THANK YOU!

We offer thanks to all our volunteers from throughout the year. This church wouldn't be what it is without you. We extend our heartfelt thanks to...

Chancel Choir • Cantor Ministry • Bell Choir • Classical Instrumentalists
Band members • worship schedulers • Assisting Ministers • Acolytes
Sacristans • Altar Guild • Audio Visual Team • ushers
Live streamers like Jacob Byerly, Claire Shank, and Maddux Smith
Prayer Shawl ministry • Property Team • Security team • Sunday school teachers
One-Stop Wednesday Volunteer team • Migrant Ministry team
Women's ministry • WELCA • Faith and Justice • Gardening Group
Youth group and confirmation volunteers • Club 56 volunteers • small group leaders
Church Council • Nominating Team • Investment Team • Internship Committees

In addition, we offer thanks to all who donated in 2023. Your generous support makes our ministries possible.