



917 Evergreen Avenue
Millvale, PA 15209

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
CONGREGATION
For 2023**

AGENDA FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 28, 2023

- 1. Establish a quorum and call to order. (7% of active members)**
- 2. Welcome and Report from the Council President**
- 3. Approve Minutes from the November Congregational Meeting**
- 4. Committee and Ministry Reports from 2023**
- 5. Financial Report from 2023**
- 6. Parochial and Pastor's Report from 2023**
- 7. Approve Reports**
- 8. New Business**
- 9. Adjournment and Blessing**

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him all creatures here below;

Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Amen.

CLC Council Annual Report for 2023

Last year in my report for 2022, I stated that there were many successes and I believe 2023 promises the same. I am happy to report that Council was able to build on the previous year. 2023 was not without its challenges, but Council was able to work through them.

We started the year by signing the covenant that we developed the previous year. This was important for those new to the Council. The purpose of the covenant is to develop healthy communications and relationships. Some of the items in the covenant were to attend worship regularly, support the various ministries of CLC, practice healthy communications, support fellow council members and engage in proactive problem solving.

The year started with Pastor Erin having surgery and the termination of employment of our administrative assistant. Many thanks to Diane Curry for stepping up to keep the office flowing until council was able to hire a new administrative assistant. She continued to help in organizing the food pantry, and also help after the new hire, to make sure all went smoothly.

Our Lenten season started with something new, “Ashes to Go”. This was an opportunity for Pastor to give ashes on Ash Wednesday, but also to talk with personally to people about the season and why we do it. During Lent the council decided to use the money from the Lenten offering of \$2,373.00, to support the Lutheran University Campus Ministry.

The Call Committee continued its work on the “Mission Site Profile”. This was no small task. The committee met every other week to complete the MSP. When it was completed, it went to council and then to the Synod for approval. After Synod approval it was posted on the ELCA website. As of this writing the Call Committee has interviewed 2 candidates who are interested in taking a call at CLC.

The food pantry has continued to provide food 3 days a week for families in the community. Many thanks go to the volunteers who help make this happen and the many organizations that donated to the pantry. One of those organizations is 412 Food Rescue who provide fresh produce along with other food items, now uses CLC as a hub for distribution. The food pantry has also provided hams for Easter and turkeys for Thanksgiving.

A new ministry that has started is ESL classes. This is for those who English is a second language or not at all. They meet once a week.

CLC has become a teaching parish in 2023. Seminarian Lindsie Struth will be with us until May of 2024. She gives 6-8 hours a week, most of that time is Sunday morning observing and practicing worship leadership. She works closely with Pastor Erin to learn the everyday work of a Pastor and the skills that a Pastor needs. Lindsie also works with our Sunday School that has started back up in the fall of 2023 along with a Confirmation class that has 5 students.

There has been a lot going on at Christ Lutheran this past year. We ended the year with our annual Christmas Present Give-Away and Lindsie doing an Advent class.

The council has much to do in 2024, starting with hiring a new organist.

The Staff Support will be meeting soon to discuss the job description of a new organist.

The Call Committee will continue its work in finding a new Pastor. Pastor Erin would like to start a regular adult group that meets after Sunday worship. The food pantry, NA, AA, Scouts, ESL, and the many other ministries of the church will continue to fulfill our mission statement - "We are in the neighborhood for good".

Leonard K. Jansen

President of Church Council

Congregational Meeting Minutes

December 3, 2023

Call to order- Mr. Jansen established a quorum and called the meeting to order.
Erica Strafalace reviewed the congregational meeting minutes from June 3, 2023.
Bernadette Thompson motioned to approve the minutes and Bud Worst seconded.

Finances- Ray Lardin took the podium to talk about our financial budget for 2024. Pastor Erin passed out our line item statements for 2023 that were current up through October. The council pre-mailed out budgets for the current year and next year for congregants to review. Tina Galioto asked about what appears to be 10k spent on maintenance and what that encompasses. Ray explained that we had a furnace repaired, a gate added upstairs, and other expenses.

Donna Davis raised a question about the income made in renting out the social hall. Ray said it's not shown on the financial statement yet and Sherrie Lane hasn't deposited the money yet. Donna asked how much we make from that and Ray said we might average \$600 per month. Donna asked that Sherrie deposit the social hall rental money monthly so that the report can remain up to date.

Dennis Conrad brought up that the car shop next door uses our parking lot during the day and they provide no donation to do so. Dennis proposed that we mail an official letter from the church requesting that they pay for parking in the lot. Ray said we can address that in our next Council meeting.

Judy Stennett expressed concern brought up about paying a pastor when we are running out of money each month and asked if the Synod can help with our expenses. Ray and Pastor Erin explained that we are using our investment accounts to pay for our monthly expenses. While it's not ideal, we are still in a better spot than most churches and the Synod does not help with monthly expenses.

Judy asked if we pay a percentage to the Synod every month? Pastor answered that we pay benevolence but not 10% every month. We choose what we give and when. Ray said that we budget 5k per year to pay the Synod.

Michelle Schrieber asked about strategies for getting new members and more monthly giving. Pastor responded that young families do not have the ability to give at the levels of our older longtime members. Our church has more involvement in Millvale and activities happening in town, but it is not always well attended by our congregants representing CLC. For example, Millvale days weren't well attended.

Ed Kapsha spoke regarding our finances and low attendance. Pastor and Mr. Jansen responded that we have been talking amongst the Council about how to improve attendance and weekly giving. This is why we've started our Stewardship speaking series in November. This continues to be a topic that we will focus on in Council.

Jean Thens motioned to approve the budget and Kurt Schrieber seconded.

New council members- We have three people leaving the council; Tim Komoroski, Becky Nyren, and Diane Curry. We currently have 10 members and can have up to 12. We nominated Pat Bauer, Morgan Boyd, Jackie Marfisi, and Tina Galioto as our new members. Mr. Jansen asked for approval from the Council secretary and Erica approved.

Ed Kapsha entered his letter of resignation and will be leaving after 12/31/23. We wish him all the best and thank him for what he's done for CLC!

Diane Curry spoke on behalf of the Call Committee and announced that we have two candidates interested in the open Pastoral position. The Call Committee will look over their information and have them come in for an interview in person or on zoom. Erica Strafalace asked if the Call Committee is accepting new members. The Call Committee is made up of a set number of people and they are not accepting new members at this time.

It was asked if the potential pastoral candidates are given our financial information prior to applying and Pastor Erin said that our financial information was all included in our profile that went out to any interested candidates.

Bud Worst motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 am and Erica seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erica Strafalace, Council Secretary

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 2023

Sunday School is nearly back in full swing this year! We have a great elementary school class using a “one room schoolhouse model” using lessons that tie together the broad scope of Bible stories. Mandy Freiss and Erica Strafalace have taken leadership of this class. We also have a brand-new Pre-K class with fun hands-on stations, projects, and learning simple Bible stories together. Morgan Boyd leads that class, but we are looking for more helpers and teachers. Leonard Jansen teaches confirmation class, and we have 5 students participating in this 2-year program. In total we have 17 students enrolled in Sunday School this year. Pastor Erin makes the rounds, filling in for teachers as needed in each class, and taking a turn teaching.

We have had several different classes for adults this year, including a “Welcome To Church” series that led to a lot of great discussions, and an Advent Study during the season.

Regular Adult Education is our next priority for 2024, as well as continued events for kids, bringing together our Sunday School classmates with their friends and family.

FOOD PANTRY 2023

Just the Facts: 28 volunteers (members and friends)

Served over 200 families this year, with an average of 45 families per month.

We have several community members who regularly drop off donations, a very generous annual grant from the SWPA Synod’s Ethel Verney Fund, and donations from members and friends throughout the year.

We receive a monthly large donation of fresh and frozen items from 412 Food Rescue, and supplement that throughout the month by purchasing non-perishable items. 412 Food Rescue also gives us deliveries as available of extra produce.

We provide turkeys for Christmas and hams for Christmas and Easter. This is also through one of our amazing community partners!

Ways you can get involved in 2024

- check the weekly update each week for a donation item that is needed
- “Regular” Volunteers at one of our food pantry shifts.
- “On-Call” Volunteers – for special deliveries, errands or projects needed at the pantry

Sewing Team Report

The sewing team made four quilts this year. We made two baptism quilts, one graduation quilt and a quilt for Steve Slepecki's ordination. We also made cross bookmarks for the five children getting their first communion. It is our pleasure to continue to make quilts for baptisms, confirmations, and high school graduations, as well as bible bookmarks and quilts for special occasions.

Submitted by Pat Bauer

Worship and Music Committee Report

The Worship and Music Committee met seasonally deciding on what setting of the liturgy to use for that season. We also began the Spiritual Drumming for Lent in place of a Wednesday service during the Lenten season. Hymn selection was left to the discretion of the Organist/Choir Director and the Pastor.

In the absence of a choir director/organist, Pastor and I chose Hymns appropriate to the season together. We are looking to grow our committee in 2024 and meet regularly to plan seasonal worship settings and other special services.

Submitted by Pat Bauer

Call Committee Report

The call committee began meeting in February and met every other week creating our MSP document to begin our search for a Pastor. Since then, we submitted the MSP document to the Synod who accepted it, and were presented with two candidates. We interviewed both candidates in December and since then have attended a service led by one of these candidates.

We are hopeful that we can present a candidate for Pastor of Christ Lutheran to the council in the very near future.

Submitted by Pat Bauer

YEAR-END FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2023

INCOME: \$163,405.62

EXPENSES: \$204,415.52

(\$41,009.90)

ENDOWMENT: \$239,958.21

COUNSELING CENTER GRANT FUND: \$3,429.70

YOUTH GROUP ACCOUNT: \$6,352.48

At our budget meeting, we were met with some stark predictions of deficit for the year, and we were wrong! Not only did our December offerings nearly more than triple the usual amount, our endowment grew with the market back up to nearly \$240,000.

Average Monthly Offering (Jan – Nov.): \$6,797

December Offering: \$19,997

We are still not meeting our monthly expenses with offering – but we are improving. Your attention and commitment to this matter, with your regular donations, whether in person or online will make the difference!

Our 2023 total donations for usage of the Gathering Place was \$5,237.

We have applied for another grant from the SWPA Synod to fund our Food Pantry.

A detailed line-item financial statement is available upon request.

Parochial and Membership Report for 2023

Baptisms: 1

Winnie Carol Davis

New Members: 1

Morgan Boyd

Transfers Out: 2

Rev. Steve and Julie Slepecki

Deaths: 4

Anna Mae Gosnell

Anna Marie Ruzomberka

Helen Vannosdell

Barb Ramsey

Membership at the end of 2023 (on the books) 445

***Voting* Membership (communed and contributed in 2023)** 93

Active “Child” Membership (not yet confirmed) 18

Average Worship Attendance in 2023 37

Pastor's Annual Report for 2023

Dear Members,

This was the worst year for me in many ways. Healing from surgery and dealing with random illnesses seemed to consume my time more than I wanted it to. But it was hands-down the best year for me in realizing the grace and care that friends and family and this congregation had to offer. When I wasn't sure what I could do, members came through for the work of the church in ways that I couldn't have imagined. I'm not used to being on the receiving end of care. That was a learning curve for me, but it was a testament to the way that this congregation is dedicated not only to this neighborhood and their church, but to each other.

Despite my frustrations, we accomplished so much this year! Despite setbacks and unexpected challenges, we persevered faithfully to worship, learn, teach, serve, feed, and share.

We grew in our relationships with each other and with our neighbors, and even as I know my time with you is probably coming to an end soon, I am even more committed to sharing the love of God with our neighbors here in Millvale. You have cared for me in ways, and have allowed me to grow and serve alongside you. You have supported my efforts and showed up when it mattered.

If you're new here, please get to know the blessing that this church is for its members and the neighborhood. If you've been here awhile, please reacquaint yourself with our mission and work, and recommit yourself to be in the neighborhood, for good!

We'll watch my slideshow of the highlights of 2023 together at the Annual Meeting, but these are only the big moments that we all participated in.

For each of these pictures, there are a hundred other small moments I've witnessed and participated in that showed the abundance of God's grace, mercy, and blessing at Christ Lutheran Church

Thanks be to God!

Pastor Erin Evans
Intentional Interim Pastor

What will we go for in 2024?

Do you have an idea for a church fellowship event or a community event? An organization you would like to partner with?

What's one way you would like to participate more in the life of the church?

NAME:
