

ANNUAL REPORT



2024

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDING BISHOP

Dear friends in Christ,

All around us, we see signs of God’s love and goodness. A person who has stepped away from church for many years steps back into a congregation, feeling the call of the Holy Spirit. Young adults feeling isolated in a digital-first world start gathering in person in a small group, enjoying the warmth of a hug and a new friend asking about their week. A mother plants a garden, and it yields fruits and vegetables, giving her nutritious food for her kids and extra produce to sell at the local market. Everywhere we look, we see signs of Christ’s love.

In Psalm 93, we read: *“More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore”* (4-5).



God’s love is a majestic thing, and it moves us to share it in word and deed. The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together to share God’s love with people in our neighborhoods, across our country and around the world.

I am so grateful for you, dear church. Your generosity to each of these three expressions of the church – your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization – has bolstered the church’s ability to share the message of God’s love to people who are longing for it. Through your financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices, you’ve helped carry this message of God’s majestic love. Thank you, dear church. As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to stand steadfast in God’s promises, sure of God’s love and goodness.

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



Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at livinglutheran.org/sofia/.

AGENDA – Page 1

ANNUAL MEETING
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Albany, New York
26 January 2025

1. Call to Order
2. Opening Liturgy (pages 6-7)
3. Roll Call & Determination of a Quorum
*1/3 avg. worship attendance (last 6 mos.) required (§C10.04)
(minimum 13 persons/voting members)
4. Appointment of Tellers
5. Adoption of the Agenda
Motion by the congregation council: To adopt the agenda of the annual meeting as written. No second is required; majority vote (show of hands) needed to pass.
6. Approval of Minutes of January 21, 2024 Annual Meeting (page 8)
Motion by the congregation council: To approve the minutes of the January 21, 2024 congregation meeting of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church as written. No second is required; majority vote (show of hands) needed to pass.
7. Election of New Council Member(s)
 - a. Report of the Nominating Committee (including recognition of service of outgoing and continuing council members)
 - b. Nominations from the Floor
Motion: To close nominations for new council members. Second required; majority vote (show of hands) needed to pass.
 - c. Election
Motion (if there are no additional floor nominations): To approve the recommendation of the nominating committee to elect Karen Bielinski to a new three-year term on the congregation council, beginning in June 2025. Second required; majority vote (show of hands) needed to pass.

Agenda continued on page 5.

AGENDA – Page 2

8. Ministry Reports

- a. Pastor's Report & Parochial Report (**pages 9-12**)
- b. President's Report (**page 13**)
- c. Music Ministry (**pages 14-16**)
- d. Cemetery (**pages 17-18**)
- e. Renovation Task Force (**page 18**)
- f. Treasurer's Report (including 2024 year-end balance sheet) (**pages 19-20**)

Motion by the congregation council: To accept with gratitude the ministry reports in this annual report booklet as written. No second is required; majority vote (show of hands) needed to pass.

9. Approval of 2025 Financial Plan for Mission (page 21)

Motion by the congregation council: To adopt the 2025 Financial Plan for Mission for St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church & Cemetery as presented and recommended by the congregation council. No second is required; majority vote (show of hands) needed to pass.

10. Announcements

11. Adjournment & Prayer

Motion: To adjourn the meeting. Second required; majority vote (show of hands) needed to pass.



All pray the Lord's Prayer together, in the language or translation of your heart.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

Padre nuestro que estás en el cielo,
santificado sea tu nombre.
Venga tu reino.
Hágase tu voluntad
en la tierra como en el cielo.
Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día.
Perdona nuestras ofensas
como también nosotros
perdonamos a los que nos ofenden.
No nos dejes caer en tentación
y líbranos del mal.
Porque tuyo es el reino,
tuyo es el poder y tuya es la gloria,
ahora y siempre. Amén.

OPENING LITURGY – Page 1

Confident in God's generosity and gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us praise God and give thanks ...

God, we praise you and give you thanks.

You are good, and your mercy endures forever.

You gave us a garden with good food to eat.

We praise you for food that nourishes us.

You rescued your people from slavery.

We praise you for freedom.

You gave us prophets to correct, rebuke and encourage us.

We bless you for your justice and mercy.

You gave us your Son, Jesus, to love, redeem and save us.

We praise you for his death and resurrection.

You gave us your Holy Spirit to be our Advocate and Comforter.

We bless you for the gifts of every tribe and nation.

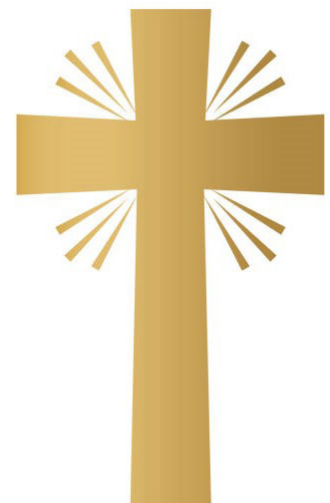
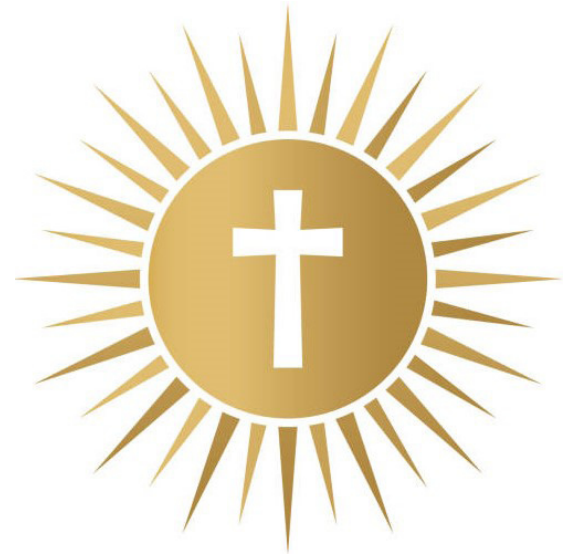
Strengthen your church with every spiritual gift
and commission us again to be your servant people.

Multiply in us the fruit of the spirit:

**love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,
gentleness and self-control.**

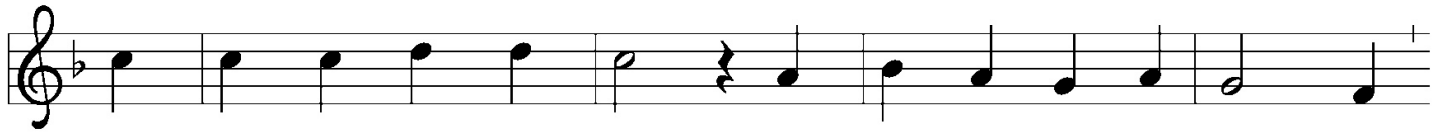
Send us in your love and mercy,
that the world may know you and praise you.

Continued on page 7.



OPENING LITURGY – Page 2

Now Thank We All Our God



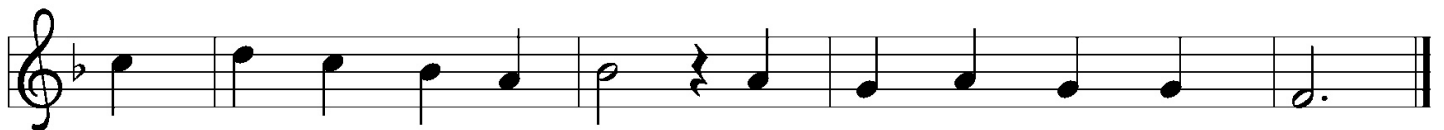
1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices,
2 Oh, may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
3 All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,



who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,
the Son, and Spirit blest, who reign in highest heaven,



who, from our mothers' arms, has blest us on our way
and keep us all in grace, and guide us when perplexed,
the one eternal God, whom earth and heav'n adore;



with countless gifts of love, and still is ours to-day.
and free us from all harm in this world and the next.
for thus it was, is now, and shall be ever more.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 840

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586-1649; tr. Cathering Winkworth, 1827-1878

Music: NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT, Johann Crüger, 1598-1662



Let us pray.

Gracious God, you are the giver of every good gift. Bless us with all that we need for ministry in your name, that we might be a blessing to others.

In the name of the one who broke bread and fed the multitudes, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

MINUTES: 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

ANNUAL MEETING | St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Albany, New York | 21 January 2024

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Lindsay Stannard, congregation president, at 10:51 a.m.

Opening Liturgy

Pastor Josh Evans and Dan Foster led meeting attendees in an opening litany and hymn.

Roll Call & Determination of a Quorum

The number of voting members present was 25, satisfying the necessary quorum.

Appointment of Tellers

Lindsay Stannard appointed Karen Bielinski and Ethan Copenrath as meeting tellers.

Adoption of the Agenda

The congregation council moved to adopt the agenda of the annual meeting as written. Motion carried.

Action on Minutes of Previous Congregation Meetings

The congregation council moved to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2023; March 26, 2023; June 4, 2023; and October 15, 2023 congregation meetings of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church as written. The motion carried.

Elections: New Council Members

Lindsay Stannard presented the report of the nominating committee and called for any additional nominations from the floor. Melissa Savage was additionally nominated.

Lindsay Stannard moved to close nominations for new council members, seconded by Jerry Schwab. The motion carried.

Lindsay Stannard moved to approve the recommendation of the nominating committee to 2024; to elect Melissa Savage to a new three-year term on the congregation council, beginning in June 2024; and to re-elect Joy Pierle and Lindsay Stannard to a second three-year term, beginning in June 2024; seconded by Jackie Campbell. The motion carried.

Ministry Reports

Lindsay Stannard indicated all reports were submitted in writing for the annual report booklet. The congregation council moved to accept with gratitude the ministry reports in the annual report booklet as written. The motion carried.

2024 Financial Plan for Mission

The finance team presented the proposed 2024 financial plan for mission for the church and the cemetery. The congregation council moved to adopt the 2024 Financial Plan for Mission for St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church & Cemetery as presented and recommended by the congregation council. Motion carried.

Announcements: None.

Adjournment & Prayer

Lindsay Stannard moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:05 a.m., seconded by Staren Bielinski. The motion carried. All prayed the Lord's Prayer together in closing.

Respectfully submitted,
Gilda Fake, Secretary

PASTOR'S REPORT – Page 1

Beloved siblings in Christ,

With a full calendar year under my belt as pastor of St. John's, and approaching my two-year anniversary in April, there is indeed much to celebrate about our ministry *together* this year. A lot of that is already reflected elsewhere in the pages of this report, so please take time to read what my colleagues and your church leaders have to offer as well.

In last year's report, I wrote, "Ministry is never something that can be done in a silo" – words that continue to ring true with every passing day/week/month/year. **I am indebted to the hard and faithful work of my staff colleagues, Dan and Maggie; our council leaders, Lindsay, Jerry, Staren, Melissa, Joy, and Emily; our amazing choir and many worship volunteers; and every single one of you that make St. John's such an inviting and welcoming place to be.** With every passing day of ministry, I'm reminded that none of us has to do it all, and certainly none of us can do it all alone. There is *grace* in that!

Special shout-outs this year for the "behind-the-scenes" work that often goes unnoticed are also in order:

- First, to **Judy Carlson**, our new bookkeeper, who has taken over many of the day-to-day financial responsibilities of our congregation. Who knew how time-consuming that work could be? **Joy Pierle**, longtime treasurer (now assistant treasurer) who faithfully did all of that work as a volunteer for many years – that's who! Thank you both for seeing us through this bookkeeping transition and for making it seem so seamless.

- And second, to **Barb Hegna**. "Who's that?" you ask. She's the amazing talent behind our newly revamped *Eagle* newsletter (beginning with the September/October 2024 issue) and this annual report booklet. I worked with Barb when I was one of the pastors at UNITY Lutheran Church in Brookfield, Wisconsin, where she and her family are members and whose newsletters she also designs. It has been a tremendous blessing to work with Barb again – and to know we can give her words and pictures and she can create something amazing out of it all.

As we celebrate where we have been in the past year and look ahead to all that is come, my prayer for this special community is captured well in the words of our Prayers of the People from this past Sunday (January 5):

Liberate this congregation from a yearning for the past that forgets the future. Fuel in us a passion for discovery. Give us the boldness to dream and to imagine our ministries in new and different ways. God of grace, receive our prayer. Amen!

Faithfully,
The Rev. Josh Evans, pastor
The Feast of the Epiphany
January 6, 2025



PASTOR'S REPORT – Page 2

WORSHIP & LITURGY

Worship is at the heart of all we do. Our liturgical life forms the basis of our life together, as we are continually being gathered together around word and sacrament and continually being sent into the world. In addition to our weekly Sunday gatherings, this year's special liturgies included:

- Choral Evensongs (with St. John's Collegium) for the Presentation of Our Lord (Candlemas), held at St. John's and livestreamed on February 1, and for Thanksgiving, held at Good Shepherd in Loudonville on November 26 and followed by a pie reception.
- Lent and Holy Week services, including Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday (both noon and 7pm); midweek soup suppers and Holden Evening Prayer with Albany Lutherans Together (ALT), which St. John's hosted twice; and our second annual Easter Vigil with ALT, hosted at Good Shepherd in Loudonville.
- Pride Sunday worship on June 9 with Upstate New York Synod Bishop Lee Miller preaching, followed by an amazing Lutheran turnout for the Capital Pride Parade & Festival.
- The return of "Mass on the Grass" in our outdoor worship space on October 6 for our Blessing of the Animals, featuring 5 dogs, 3 cats, and 1 stuffed animal.
- The "Christ Mass" (Christmas Eve), with special music by St. John's Collegium, including the return of Collegium alumni Mikayla Malenfant (soprano, now in her first year at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam) and William Peltz Smalley (bass and violin).

Thank you to ALL who serve in worship (and beyond), enrich our liturgical life, and deepen our spirituality:

- Assisting Ministers: Karen Bielinski, Paula Schwab, & Lindsay Stannard
- Ministers of Music: Dan Foster & St. John's Collegium (see page 16)
- Readers: Thaisa Beach, Karen Bielinski, Avery Heaney, Melissa Savage, & Lindsay Stannard
- Communion Assistants: Karen Bielinski, Gilda Fake, Joy Pierle, Melissa Savage, Paula Schwab, & Lindsay Stannard
- Sacristans (Altar Guild): Maggie Anderson, Linda Davis, Gilda Fake, & Paula Schwab
- Bread Bakers: Maggie Anderson, Karen Bielinski, Sheryl Centanni, Linda Davis, & Pastor Josh Evans
- Ushers: Freddy Boyzer & Kelly Conley
- Livestream Techs: Jerry Schwab, Lindsay Stannard, & Shea Stannard
- Offering Counters: Karen Bielinski, Linda Davis, Gilda Fake, Jerry Schwab, Karen Seiz, Judy Szesnat, Lindsay Stannard, & Shea Stannard
- Flower Deliverers: Thaisa Beach, Karen Bielinski, Mike & Sheryl Centanni, Gilda Fake, Paula & Jerry Schwab, Lindsay Stannard, Jenny Szesnat, & Judy Szesnat

**Please Note: NEW
worship volunteers
always welcome! :)
Contact Pastor
Josh or Maggie
Anderson to help.**



PASTOR'S REPORT – Page 3

FAITH FORMATION

Sunday School

Without a doubt, the highlight of our year was our fabulous all-ages Christmas pageant, “The Biggest Fan of Jesus,” which had its Capital Region premiere at St. John’s on Sunday, December 22. Thanks to everyone who participated: Lindsay Stannard, Makayla Savage, Lena Pierle, Olivia Lewis, Madelynn Savage, Lucian Lewis, Joe Pierle, Ivy Pierle, Silas Centanni, Karisa Centanni, and Kelly Conley; as well as Staren Bielinski for costume design and Paige Pierle for assisting with rehearsals and “stage managing.”

Other highlights of the year included:

- Baking muffins for the CACC Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter in March.
- Participating in “God’s Work, Our Hands” Sunday in September, which included making homemade cards and flower arrangements for our members who are homebound.
- Gathering for our second annual Advent Fest on December 7 to decorate our chapel tree, assemble Christmas-at-Sea gift boxes for the Albany Maritime Ministry, make Christmas cookies, and have a delicious lunch of grilled cheese and tomato soup together. **(Save the date now for Advent Fest on Saturday, December 6, 2025, 11am–2pm!)**

Thanks to the continued leadership of Paige Pierle and the new-to-2024 leadership of Karisa Centanni for their vital roles in making



space for our youngest members and helping them to grow in their faith. We look forward to a revitalized Sunday School program in 2025.

Adult Education

Regular opportunities for faith formation (and fellowship) continue to be offered in tandem with our ALT ministry partners, including monthly Faith on Tap gatherings with Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit (meeting at Warbler Brewery in Delmar) and the First Lutheran Book Club (now meeting in-person at a variety of locations). Stay tuned to your e-news and *Eagle* newsletters for details for upcoming gatherings.

In addition, St. John’s hosted the ALT-sponsored event “The Maleficent Seven: How to Handle the Clobber Passages” with Mother Grace Wilgefertis Ferris in July, and a special Sunday forum/film screening of the documentary *A Case for Love* was held in November.

Opportunities for regular Bible study will (hopefully) be offered in the year ahead. Your input for what you’d like to see offered and your participation are always welcome.



PAROCHIAL REPORT

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

	2023	2024
Confirmed*	88	68
Baptized	14	12
Active Non-Members & Associate Members	15	15
Inactive Members**	119	137

* **Note 1:** "Active" members (who are confirmed) are such members who during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation. (St. John's Constitution, §C8.02)

** **Note 2:** "Inactive" members are still members of this congregation but have not communed in this congregation or made a contribution of record in the preceding calendar year and thus are not eligible for voting privileges at the meetings of this congregation. (St. John's Constitution, §C8.02)

OFFICIAL PASTORAL ACTS

Funerals

Ann C. Monthie	January 4, 2024*
Gloria Fraley	September 19, 2024
Marilyn Lynn	December 20, 2024
Richard Lynn	December 20, 2024*
Marion Mueller Gaenzle	December 22, 2024*
Mary Pastor	December 28, 2024*

Weddings

Kane Battibulli + Travis Jansen | July 28, 2024*

*Denotes non-members



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

To my St. John's Family,

Another year, another report from the Council president! Hold back your excitement! I never know what to write. This year I considered copying and pasting last year's report, with a few changes of course, to see how many of you read the annual report. But I figured most of you read the annual report so I better come up with something else.

The world in which we live is constantly evolving and changing around us. Sometimes it feels like chaos, uncertainty, and instability. When these feelings become overwhelming, I remind myself of God's love and grace for each and everyone of us. St. John's is where I am reminded of that love and grace. I see, hear, and feel the love and grace of God in our Sunday Worship services, in our conversations during coffee hour, in our service projects, and in everything that we do together.

Thank you to everyone who has stepped in to help and serve in different ways (big and small) throughout the year. I am grateful for your commitment, your faithfulness, and your generosity.

I would like to personally thank Pastor Josh, Dan Foster, Maggie Anderson, Judy Carlson, Bob Curtis, Shea Stannard, and Barb Hegna. Thank you for what you do!

Also, my thanks and appreciation to council members for your dedication to leading St. John's. (See *Installation photo below.*)

I am grateful and thankful for the blessings that God has provided to St. John's, and I look forward to what the future holds.

Respectfully submitted,
Lindsay Stannard, Council President



Council Members were installed on July 21, 2024. (Standing, left to right): Pastor Josh Evans, Lindsay Stannard (president), Melissa Savage (treasurer), Joy Pierle (assistant treasurer), Jerry Schwab (vice president), Staren Bielinski (secretary). (Not pictured): Emily Coppenrath (at large).

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Page 1

SAINT JOHN'S COLLEGIUM

Looking back on 2024 and the past eight years since we founded Saint John's Collegium, it's well and good to reflect on how the beauty and richness of liturgical music has elevated the worship life of this congregation, and how our sacred musical education mission has been realized in our youngest members. Of our twelve musicians on Christmas Eve, three started training with us while they were yet in high school.

Before going off to earn a bachelors and a masters degree in violin in Boston and Montréal, **William Peltz Smalley** started playing and singing with us when he was a senior in high school. **Mikayla Malenfant**, last year's choral apprentice, just finished her first semester at the Crane School of Music. **Maura Lander**, our current high school apprentice, just passed her pre-screenings and will soon perform her live auditions at Ithaca College, SUNY Fredonia, and Crane. (I hope that we'll always have at least one apprentice per year to continue and expand this invaluable ministry.)

Saint John's Collegium gave each of them a massive boost towards careers in music; they all love Saint John's so much that they tell me months in advance when they'll be home to ensure they get the most time with us during their breaks.

We should acknowledge and be thankful for how special this is, and how much beauty and goodwill we broadcast beyond these tiny walls, beyond our little choir.

Most of our 'older' choir members (the near 30/20-somethings) started when they were undergraduates at The College of Saint Rose (now sadly defunct). Saint John's Collegium gave them a huge a boost as well: in the greater community, our musicians are teaching, directing their own groups, and are first call gig artists for many other local conductors. Whenever other conductors hire our musicians, they know exactly where they've come from; our people are tremendous ambassadors for Saint's John's when they're out performing in the community.

When I think about the broad positive influence a community of faith can have, I can't help but be overjoyed with how well our choir continues to function not only as the sacred music leaders of this congregation, but far beyond. **Continued on page 15.**



On November 24, St. John's Collegium premiered Music Director Dan Foster's new Thanksgiving Cantata – Psalm 136 – "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!" Watch (or re-watch) it on [YouTube!](#)

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Page 2

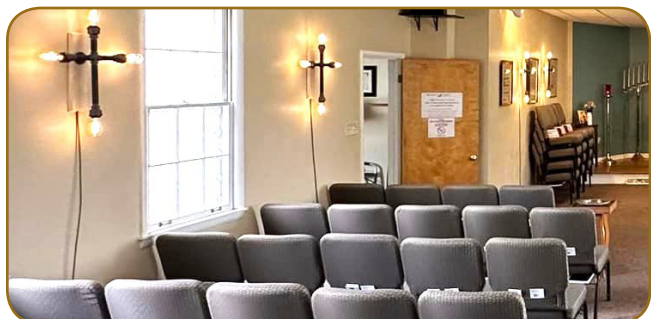
TECHNICAL PROJECTS

Sconces

Over the summer, I completed the custom cast-iron cross sconces; guest always ask about them; one of our congregants liked them so much that she bought the materials and I made one for her home. The bulbs we installed are app controlled over WiFi. On Christmas Eve, I was thrilled with how well that worked during the singing of Silent Night as I dimmed the lights from my phone as we lit our candles, just before I started to play the organ introduction. Together with the “stained glass” light covers that Pastor Josh installed over the fluorescent light fixtures, our lighting is now versatile, and truly beautiful.

Hardwiring

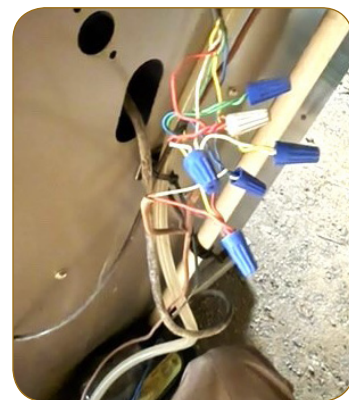
Hardwiring the audio video computer To make a more reliable stream for our remote worshipers, Pastor Josh and I realized that for greatest bandwidth and video stream stability, the MacMini at the AV station should be on wired internet, rather than WiFi. We took a couple days to run an ethernet cable through the walls and ceiling from the back corner of the sanctuary to the office, which was just as much fun as that sounds! We used our ladder time to clean out the overhead lights as well.



Thermostat upgrade

The wall on which the thermostat is mounted is uninsulated; cold air blows on it from inside the wall through a large hole (*pictured below*). As a result, it's impossible to maintain an even temperature in Winter. To solve this issue once and for all – and to gain the additional benefits of remote control and monitoring for the HVAC system – Pastor Josh and I decided to install a smart thermostat and remote sensors. But when we attempted to install it, we encountered a mis-wired condensate pump (*pictured below*) which led to the furnace shorting out and burning its safety fuse. I replaced the fuse, left a spare on the furnace, and cleaned out the condensate pump; when it gets warm enough for me to spend a couple hours down there without the heat on, I will rewire the mess pictured below onto a proper bus bar and complete the installation of the smart thermostat.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Foster, Director of Music



Above, left: Large, uninsulated hole in the wall behind the thermostat which causes uneven, unpredictable temperatures in the sanctuary. (New smart thermostat with remote sensors will fix this issue.) Above, right: Wiring spaghetti on the side of the furnace above the condensate pump. Learn more info in article above.

MUSIC MINISTRY – Saint John’s Collegium

OUR MISSION

WORSHIP

The Collegium seeks younger professional musicians to Saint John’s to take part in worship by leading sacred music – to glorify God and to enrich the experience for all. To increase participation, the visibility of our mission, attendance, and outreach.

LEARNING

The Collegium seeks to share our rich tradition of sacred music with even younger singers. With the talents and high-level training of students and professionals, to better share the range, depth, and remarkable beauty of sacred music with our congregation.

SERVICE & WITNESS

The Collegium provides a service to our community by creating an opportunity for singers to support their art financially in a way that glorifies God and enriches worship.

“Music is the art of the prophets and the gift of God.” ~ Martin Luther



MEMBERS

Olivia Faure
mezzo-soprano,
founding member

Kris Græsser
baritone, full-chorister

Avery Heaney
tenor, full-chorister

Alec Hicks
tenor, full-chorister

Maura Lander
soprano, choral-apprentice

Abigail Luther
soprano, full-chorister

Mikayla Malenfant
soprano, junior chorister
(when she’s home)

Chloë Metcalfe
soprano, junior-chorister

William Peltz Smalley
bass, violin, full-chorister
(when he’s home)

Thomas Raimo
baritone, junior-chorister

Jilian Reilly
mezzo-soprano, full-chorister

Gabrielle San Roman
mezzo-soprano, full-chorister

Daniel White
baritone, assistant organist,
founding member

CEMETERY REPORT – Page 1

2024 Cemetery Statistical Summary:

10 Full Burials
7 Cremations
13 Lots Sold

\$4,327.50
Cost of Foundations Constructed



Appreciation is again extended to Robert (Bob) Curtis, Cemetery Superintendent, who handles sales, digging and responds to requests from Funeral Home Directors. The Superintendent and his crew also monitor the Cemetery grounds periodically, providing required repairs to broken headstones and other cemetery maintenance as needed.

For the second year in a row, we have contracted with Asprion Landscape LLC, a local Colonie business, for snow removal and salting, as Bob Curtis no longer has the capacity to provide this service.

We are in the process of having our cemetery records digitized by Lazarus Cemetery Mapping with the goal of having an easily searchable database utilizing the Cemify (software) platform. Lazarus was on site in August 2024 to capture data and plans to have data entry/transcription completed by late February/early March 2025.

Plans are currently being considered to build a separate Cemetery garage for all Cemetery equipment and an office for the Cemetery Superintendent. We will update you with more information as it becomes available.

On behalf of St. John's Lutheran Church and St. John's Cemetery, our heartfelt thanks are extended to:

- All who participated in the exterior work day at the Chapel, especially our Sunday School students (under the direction of Miss Paige) who took such pride in cleaning, planting and trimming this year. We hope you all noticed the neatly trimmed cross on the hill beyond the crypt that our students worked diligently to bring back into form. Further appreciation is also extended to Maggie Anderson, Gilda Fake and Paula and Jerry Schwab for their added beautification efforts, flag vigil and "poop" removal, and to Pastor Josh who continues to keep us neat and organized. Your continued, watchful care of our church home and cemetery is very much appreciated.
- Nick Klapp who again donated his time this past year to trim trees along power lines, power wash the Chapel (focal point of Cemetery entrance) and cut up and remove fallen trees and tree limbs.

Continued on page 18.

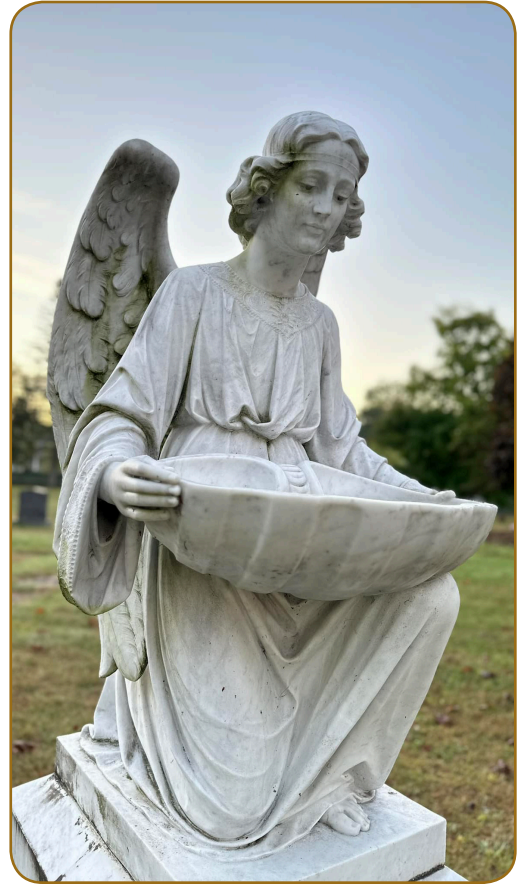
CEMETERY REPORT – Page 2

If you happen to drive through the Cemetery and notice any required maintenance or dogs off leashes, please let me know so that we may provide a welcoming, spiritual location to visit those saints who have gone before us.

Suggestions for additional Cemetery maintenance projects or improvements are always welcome.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Bielinski, Chair

Postscript: Bob Curtis' wife underwent cancer surgery last month so this has been a difficult year for him and his family. Being self-employed, Bob did not originally have medical insurance to cover the surgery but was finally able to purchase some kind of insurance which has helped them, but does not cover all expenses. If anyone is willing to make a contribution to pass along to the Curtis family, please speak with me to make arrangements. Financial contributions in the form of checks should not be made payable to St. John's and these donations would not be tax deductible. *Thank you for your care and concern.*



RENOVATION TASK FORCE UPDATE

A new Task Force has been established to assist Council regarding future building plans/renovations consisting of Michael Centanni, Jerry Schwab and Karen Bielinski. The previous plans to build an entirely new campus (for the congregation, as approved at the October 2023 special meeting and reported at the January 2024 annual meeting) are being put on hold as the task force considers a more financially feasible and logistically practical renovation plan.

Initially, consideration has been given to the construction of a new cemetery garage and office on cemetery land to enable the renovation of the Chapel garages for additional office space and common area for the congregation, including a designated Sunday School area. All plans are preliminary and in discussion only at this time. The recommendations of the task force will be brought to Council and the Congregation for final approval. We are hopeful that an application for a building permit for the new garage building may be finalized for submission to the Town this winter, with construction to begin as early as this Spring (2025).

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Bielinski, Chair

TREASURER'S REPORT

The members of the finance team are: **Melissa Savage (treasurer), Joy Pierle (assistant treasurer), Lindsay Stannard (president), Judy Carlson (bookkeeper), and the Rev. Josh Evans (pastor).**

The finance team is responsible for preparing a proposed budget to be present to the Congregation Council and the congregation at the annual meeting. The team also monitors the investments of the congregation and makes recommendations to the council regarding investments considering the mission of the congregation.

During 2024, St. John's hired a third party bookkeeper to take on many duties the previous treasurer was completing. Judy Carlson joined the team in March and has been a wonderful asset. The Treasurer now just maintains oversight of financial records, receipt and disbursement of funds, and acts as liaison between the bookkeeper and council.

Many other individuals assisted in the financial operations of the congregation throughout the year. Our thanks go to everyone who counted the offerings, posted pledge information and/or generated the contribution statements, as well as our congregation members who mailed their offerings, placed them in the offering plate at church, or submitted offerings electronically.

St. John's received a disbursement of \$156,000 from the Kane estate in June 2024 and the final disbursement of \$22,744.96 (\$11,372.48 for each church and cemetery) from the Turner estate in November 2024. After a 10% tithing, the remaining balances have been invested in Certificates of Deposit, based on the interest rate environment at the time.

In preparation to complete the 2025 budget, fund consolidation was reviewed and approved to simplify the budget line items.

Our congregation's endowment continues to be managed by Fenimore Asset Management. The balances of the fund have increased in 2024 based on market conditions. We are still withdrawing \$20,000 each month from the Capital Reserve Account to cover St. John's monthly expenses.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Savage, Treasurer



2024 YEAR-END BALANCE SHEET

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH – Current as of 12/31/24

Account Name	Amount
Assets	
Trustco Checking	\$208,568.71
Mission Investment Fund	\$24,385.26
Trustco Savings	\$113,919.66
Trustco CD 1	\$286,052.78
Trustco CD 2	\$286,052.78
Trustco CD 3	\$142,594.91
Total Assets	\$1,061,574.10
Liabilities	
Trustco Credit Card	\$5,650.16
Flex Savings Acct Withheld	\$-0.14
Vision Withheld	\$-65.20
Sup Term Life Ins Withheld	\$65.20
Total Liabilities	\$5,650.02
Equity	
General Fund - Fund Balance	\$917,979.88
Cemetery - Fund Balance	\$123,253.57
World Hunger - Fund Balance	\$272.05
New Church Building - Fund Balance	\$4,731.21
Outreach - Fund Balance	\$9,687.37
Total Equity	\$1,055,924.08
Total Liabilities + Total Equity	\$1,061,574.10



2025 FINANCIAL PLAN FOR MISSION

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH – PROPOSED

	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Proposed
Regular Contributions	60,093.00	59,513.77	58,100.00	56,741.06	59,400.00
Special Donations	1,150.00	1,118,285.65	1,200.00	179,128.28	300.00
Investment Income	241,261.00	241,570.02	204,021.00	240,000.00	241,300.00
Designated Giving					1,700.00*
	<i>* Includes World Hunger, capital expenditures, and outreach</i>				
Total Income	302,504.00	1,419,369.44	263,321.00	475,869.34	302,700.00
Salaries & Benefits	159,404.00	154,834.72	201,011.00	173,707.42	198,063.59
Office & Administrative	26,692.00	45,019.06	26,000.00	24,495.03	30,195.00
Facilities & Maintenance	14,746.00	18,130.76	17,700.00	20,628.82	17,500.00
Worship & Formation	2,698.00	5,473.00	5,450.00	8,511.56	12,450.00
Benevolence & Other Support	12,791.00	72,178.81	13,160.00	48,420.59	14,065.00
Designated Giving					1,000.00*
	<i>* Includes World Hunger, capital expenditures, and outreach</i>				
Total Expenses	216,331.00	295,636.35	263,321.00	275,763.42	273,273.59
Diff. Income/Expenses	86,173.00	1,123,733.09	-	200,105.92	29,426.41

	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Proposed
Cemetery					
Cemetery Income	30,350.00	36,005.00	28,300.00	31,035.50	20,500.00
Investment Interest	43,181.00	44,557.06	32,150.00	70,303.53	53,485.90
Total Income	73,531.00	80,562.06	60,450.00	101,339.03	73,985.90
Equipment & Operating Expenses	15,089.00	20,530.16	26,920.00	23,635.49	39,480.00
Manager's Salary	30,782.00	31,552.07	32,530.00	32,530.08	33,505.90
Perpetual Care	665.00	525.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Total Expenses	46,536.00	52,607.23	60,450.00	57,165.57	73,985.90
Diff. Income/Expenses	26,995.00	27,954.83	-	44,173.46	-

MINISTRY PARTNERS & IMPACT – Page 1

**AVERAGE WORSHIP
ATTENDANCE: 2024**

In Person: 33

Online*: 17

**Including live and recording viewers*



SUNDAY SCHOOL: 2024

Active Kids: 7



BENEVOLENCE SUPPORT: 2024

be·nev·o·lence
/bə-nevəl(ə)ns/
noun: the quality of being well meaning; kindness.

Capital Area Council of Churches \$250



Upstate New York Synod \$6532



Upstate New York Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Hudson Mohawk Conference \$1000



Cornerstone Campus Ministry \$850



New York State Council Of Churches

New York State Council of Churches \$300

ReconcilingWorks
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION



ReconcilingWorks \$500



ELCA World Hunger

ELCA World Hunger \$697

Lutheran Disaster Response \$120



Lutheran Disaster Response

Synod "Ambulances for Advent" Appeal \$2700



MINISTRY PARTNERS & IMPACT – Page 2

ALBANY LUTHERANS TOGETHER

St. John's is a congregation of Albany Lutherans Together, an intentional partnership of the four Albany-area ELCA congregations, including First Lutheran Church (Albany/Pine Hills), Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (Loudonville), Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit (Albany/Delaware Avenue), and St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (Colonie).

Together we worship – including special midweek liturgies for Advent & Lent and the Great Vigil of Easter – and we give back to our community through regular outreach collections – including school supplies for Giffen Memorial and Delaware Community Schools, paper goods and other supplies for the CACC Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter, Christmas-at-Sea gift boxes for the Albany Maritime Ministry, and calendars for Rehabilitation Support Services.

In 2024, we gathered a special offering during our midweek Lenten services and Easter Vigil to support the work of Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service), raising a combined total of \$1033 between our four congregations. Since 1939, Global Refuge has provided welcome and hope to more than 750,000 refugees, witnessing to God's love for all people, advocating for immigrants and refugees, and transforming communities through ministries of service and justice. Learn more at globalrefuge.org.

We look forward to further collaboration in the year ahead, as we strive to strengthen community and witness to God's love in the Capital Region and beyond.



St. John's members wrap gifts for Albany Maritime Ministry's Christmas-at-Sea program during Advent Fest on December 7, 2024. Thanks to everyone who continues to contribute their time, talents and financial donations to help our partners here at home and around the world.



We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

Trusting in the extravagant grace of God that sets us free, we affirm the sacred worth and dignity of our siblings in Christ – of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, racial and ethnic identities, ages, abilities, and socio-economic statuses.

We confess the church's complicity in systems that harm God's people, including homophobia and transphobia, sexism, racism and white supremacy, and ableism.

Together, as a community of Jesus followers, rooted in grace, we commit ourselves to the work of racial equity and anti-racism and to confronting and dismantling all systems of injustice and oppression in all we do and say.



OUR MISSION: Worship God. Serve Faithfully. Reach Out.

Land Acknowledgment

St. John's is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Mohican, Haudenosaunee, and Schaghticoke peoples, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to acknowledge and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Josh Evans, Pastor
pastorjosh@stjohnsalbany.org
518-250-9098 (mobile)

Dan Foster, Director of Music
danfoster@stjohnsalbany.org

Maggie Anderson,
Community Care Coordinator
parishsec@stjohnsalbany.org

Bob Curtis, Cemetery Manager
518-365-7777

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Staren Bielinski	Secretary	First term ending May 2027
Emily Coppenrath	At Large	First term ending May 2026
Joy Pierle	Assist. Treasurer	Second term ending May 2027
Melissa Savage	Treasurer	First term ending May 2027
Jerry Schwab	Vice President	Second term ending May 2025
Lindsay Stannard	President	Second term ending May 2027

You can email St. John's Council at council@stjohnsalbany.org and your message will be sent to all of our Council members.



St. John's is a progressive faith community in the heart of Albany and a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Find us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram!](#)

303 Sand Creek Road, Albany, New York 12205 + 518.465.7545 + stjohnsalbany.org