

April Pastor's Newsletter

Greetings in the name of Christ!

One of my favorite things about the Christian faith is the emphasis on both hearing holy scripture and then, through the power and grace of the Triune God, living it out daily. This is one reason I fell in love with worship that emphasizes both Word and Sacrament. When we gather for worship, we hear (and experience) Jesus in the reading of Holy Scripture. Jesus is the Word made flesh and so when the scriptures are proclaimed its speaking Jesus into the midst of the congregation. But Jesus doesn't just want us to hear or think about him, he wants to nourish us with his very self, his very life, his very essence.

This is where the sacraments come in! In sacraments, holy rituals that are promised by Christ to give the reality they proclaim, we receive life from Jesus. So, for example in baptism we really do receive the promises (reality) of eternal life, of the bodily resurrection to come, the forgiveness of sins, etc. In the Eucharist (Holy Communion, Lord's Supper, etc.) we really do receive the body and blood of Jesus under the appearance of bread and wine, and with that comes the promises (reality) of continued forgives of sins, strength from the Holy Spirit, and Christ made present through the gathered body of the baptized faithful.

This of course all describe what we do on Sunday, but the point of Sunday worship is to be nourished and rejuvenated by Jesus for the rest of the week. So, what are ways that we can continue to daily live our faith in our lives away from worship? Some ideas might seem obvious like prayer, reading the Bible, and reading a devotional. These are absolutely good ideas! However, have you ever thought of giving as a way to live your faith? Usually when we think of giving and church it might come with one of the following reactions, "Giving? Is it Fall and that weird stewardship time again?" "I am not able to give money and am worried Jesus won't love me."

While many congregations usually discuss money when it's Fall and the traditional time

for stewardship campaigns, Christians are called to a lifestyle of giving / offering. Why? Because our lives are an offering to God and that means our daily living. Giving does not always involve giving money (and for the record **YES** Jesus loves you whether you ever give a penny to a congregation), but can involve giving your time to volunteer, giving away things you have a lot of (blankets, clothing, furniture, yarn, food, you name it!) Notice how your giving can affect other things in a positive way. For example: If you give away extra / unused things instead of throwing them out you are practicing recycling / reuse so your helping God's creation by not putting things in a landfill. Giving is part of

who we are as the baptized people of God for the sake of the world. Below I have included five of my favorite faith filled reasons to give and how they make a difference. I hope that as we celebrate the coming of Spring / Summer and the abundant life and plenty around us you will also enjoy some of the ways the abundance each of us has received from Christ makes a difference in our community / world.

Yours in Christ,
Pr. Nicole

Five Ways Your Giving Makes a Difference

- 1. Your giving ensures that there is a safe, comfortable, accessible place to gather to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed in Word and Sacrament.**

“But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?” – Romans 10:14-17 (NRSV)



2. Your giving ensures that local community missions have the support they need!

“Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” – Mark 12:29-31 (NRSV)



3. Your giving ensures that you do not become enslaved to your things.

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” – Matthew 6:21 (NRSV)



4. Being able to give and support others makes us feel good because we are participating with Christ!

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” – 1 Peter 4:10 (NRSV)



5. Giving can grow / strengthen your faith in Jesus!

“Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.” – Philippians 2:4-7 (NRSV)





**North/West Lower
Michigan Synod**

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mittensynod.org**

In this Issue:

“Mālama ka ‘aina”

2024 Synod Assembly

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“Mālama ka ‘aina”

In the Hawaiian language, the phrase “Mālama ka ‘aina” means to take care of the land. Hawaiians, to this day, love, preserve, and protect the land as the source of their living. Hawaiians believe that, if we take care of the land, the land will take care of us. A related phrase, “Mālama Honua,” means to take care of the earth. When we protect the planet, we keep it well for future generations.

My family and I learned the concept of “Mālama ka ‘aina” as we explored the islands. We were asked not to litter and to stay on the trails, keep our distance from wildlife, and make certain there were no seeds on our shoes that could take root and threaten plants endemic to Hawaii. Mostly, we were invited to consider the islands and the ocean that surrounds and connects them as sacred.

There are few places in the modern world in which the connection between humankind, myth, and nature is more obvious than Hawaii. More than a relic of Hawaii’s distant past, Hawaiian mythology is a very present spiritual belief among many of the islands’ indigenous people. As noted historian Herb Kawainui Kane stated in the PBS series, *The Hawaiians*, island natives believed that, “The entire universe was an orderly, fixed whole in which all the parts were integral to the whole, including man himself. Man was descended from the Gods, but so were the rocks, so were the animals, so were the fish. Thus man had to regard the rocks, the fish and the birds as his relatives.”



Waimea Canyon, Kauai



Poipu Beach, Kauai

In Hawaiian mythology, the islands and ocean provide unmistakable evidence of the gods. Pele is the goddess of fire and volcano; Namaka is the goddess of water and the sea—and waves. Laka, the goddess of the forest who enriches the plants with light, is best known for creating the beautiful Hawaiian hula dance. Seen most recently in Disney’s *Moana*, Maui is a demigod and the god of the sun. When the sun rose and set too quickly, Maui tamed it and extended the length of a day so people could have longer days to work. Yet, my favorite is Kamohoalii, the chief deity among the shark gods, who is revered for his role in guiding ancient Polynesian travelers to Hawaii, leading lost ships to safety, and protecting sailors. For a lighthearted appreciation of Hawaiian mythology, pay attention to the ocean in Disney’s *Moana*. For something more substantial, read Chapter 2 of James Michener’s novel *Hawaii*.

These goddesses and gods, and several more, are connected to particular places in Hawaii. For example, on the island of Kauai, Pele dug into the earth and formed a hill called Pu’uopele or “the hill of Pele.” We understand associating places with the divine, at least in theory. In the Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament, Jacob called the place where he wrestled with the angel Peniel “face of God,” because he saw God face-to-face and his life was

preserved (Genesis 32:30). Many pilgrims to the Holy Land report they experience Jesus's presence most acutely not in church buildings, but in natural places, including the Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, Mount of Olives, and Garden of Gethsemane.

Yet, these Biblical locations are far away; connecting to the places Jesus lived, taught, suffered, died, and rose requires either study or pilgrimage. So, here at home, we experience Jesus in church buildings, which are a step removed from nature and creation. If we are honest with ourselves, we subtly discourage people from experiencing Jesus in nature and creation, out of fear that, if people genuinely experience Jesus in nature, they may not return to our church buildings.

How much we want to care for and protect our church buildings! Rather than sacrificially caring for the land, so the land will take care of us, by asking how many buildings the church actually needs, we endeavor to make our buildings more hospitable to the planet through green teams and solar panels. These are certainly worthwhile undertakings that, of course, deserve to be lauded. Nevertheless, I return from Hawaii wondering what would happen if we strove to recover the sacredness of creation rather than confining Jesus and our appreciation of sacred space to our buildings. What kind of impact would we have if "Mālama ka 'aina" became an integral part of our spirituality?



'Akaka Falls, Hawai'i

How might we cultivate this Hawaiian (and Native American) spiritual perspective? Earth Day is April 22. Perhaps we could use this day and month to put some plans in place for the summer. Here are four ideas:

- First, let's get out of our buildings at least one Sunday this summer. I'm not thinking of folding chairs on the church's front lawn. Let's go to the beach. Let's go to the park. Let's go into the woods. I seem to recall that, once upon a time, Immanuel in Suttons Bay held Easter sunrise worship in a cherry orchard; perhaps they still do. Our Ludington and Muskegon congregations used to worship on the beach. St. Paul's in Alpena worships on the shore of Lake Superior. Forty years ago, as an intern, I spent some summer Sundays leading worship at Trinity/Midland's camp.

Perhaps being locked out of our church buildings during the pandemic has made us determined never to leave them again. People remind me that Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching in their synagogues and that Jesus taught in the temple in Jerusalem. That's true. Jesus also taught in a boat on the sea of Galilee and on a mountain (as in Sermon on the Mount). Jesus also prayed on a mountain, in a garden, and at a river. We can leave our building; our building will be there when we come back. I acknowledge that this is easier for me to say because I do not have a single church building that I call home.



Laniakea Beach, Oahu

Keep worship simple when you venture out into nature. As obvious as it sounds, don't attempt to re-create indoor worship outdoors. People and the word are all we really need to worship. Read a story about Jesus spending time in nature, ideally a story that is appropriate for the location. We can sing and pray things we know by heart. Don't bring books. Don't make bulletins. Some water for remembering baptism might be lovely; consider using the water that's there. Some bread and wine might be nice, but it's not necessary. I suggest some silence or guided meditation that provides space to experience the triune God in the setting.

- Second, let's encourage our people to spend time in nature this summer; to do this, we may need to give them permission not to show up at the church building once or twice, though they can certainly send their envelope. I spend some of my holiest summer Sunday mornings sitting at the end of my dock or standing waist deep in lake water praying. I have spent time with God on the same lake for more than 60 years; it is such a sacred place to me that Cathy and I have a cabin there that I call the cathedral. Wouldn't it be neat to have a map of Michigan where people could put post-it notes at the places they experienced God in nature this summer.

- Third, perhaps we could help people experience God in nature. We could give them Bible verses to contemplate and prayers to pray on their summer excursions. We could write a devotion about a place in nature near our church and post it on Facebook or our webpage for everyone to read.

I might write about the sublime area where the Platte River flows into Lake Michigan, not during the hot summer days when it is the finish line for Platte River tubers and paddlers. I'd write about the post-Labor Day Platte River, where one can experience solitary sunsets and survey how the sand of the summer's widened beach was carried offshore again by the fall storms. The shoreline is constantly being sculpted by waves and breaking-wave swash, which forms a variety of patterns. The beach widens and thins, is sculpted and re-sculpted. This place that I have known all of my life dies and rises, is reborn and re-created. Standing where the Platte River flows into Lake Michigan is for me an experience of God's will and work, especially in Jesus Christ.



Platte River and Lake Michigan

- Fourth, let's name our own sacred place, to ourselves and to one another. I was inspired as I experienced Hawaii's mountains, volcanoes, rainforests, waterfalls, and beaches. I understand and appreciate their sacredness. Yet, while I certainly experienced God in Hawaii, Hawaii is not my sacred place. God is most present to me at a lake and a river in northern Michigan that I am privileged to care for and protect at least for a time. This place cares for me or through this place God cares for me. And I want it to be well for future generations.

More than anywhere else, a lake that flows into a river that flows into Lake Michigan is the place where "Mālama ka 'aina" resonates most with me. Where is that place for you? If you know it, I pray you get to spend some time there. If you don't know it, I pray you find it this summer. When we can name our particular sacred place, perhaps we will be better prepared to care for and protect the planet as something as sacred as our church buildings, so that the land can care for us and the planet can be well for the generations who come after us.

"Mālama ka 'aina"

The Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, Ph.D., Bishop

Jesus as Savior Preaching Retreat

Save the Date! Join us for the Jesus as Savior Preaching Retreat on October 21-23, 2024 at St. Francis Retreat Center in Dewitt!

Dr. Robert Kreig, Professor Emeritus of Theology at the University of Notre Dame will present on the topic of preaching Jesus as Savior.

This retreat is designed for preachers, but anyone who cares about preaching is welcome to attend. This event has been generously supported by a gift from Ms. Christine Allen.

More information will be available soon!

Renewal of Ordination Vows

Save the Date! The Synod's Kalamazoo Conference will offer a renewal of ordination vows with Bishop Satterlee on Tuesday, May 14, 2024!

The service will be held at 11:00am ET at Trinity Lutheran Church in Battle Creek.

All rostered ministers are invited to attend.

More information will be available soon!

Adult Theological Education Witnessing to Christ and Love for Neighbor in an Election Year

NORTH/WEST LOWER MICHIGAN SYNOD ELCA

ADULT THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

WITNESSING TO CHRIST AND LOVE FOR NEIGHBOR IN AN ELECTION YEAR



JOIN THE REV. AMY E. REUMANN, ELCA WITNESS IN SOCIETY SENIOR DIRECTOR, FOR A SIX WEEK STUDY ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INTERSECTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR FAITH JOURNEY!

TUESDAYS STARTING SEPTEMBER 3
ZOOM

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod announces the next session of our Adult Theological Education program: Witnessing to Christ and Love for Neighbor in an Election Year.

Join the Rev. Amy Reumann for a six-week study starting September 3, 2024!

The Rev. Amy E. Reumann serves as ELCA Senior Director for Witness in Society in Washington, D.C. Her leadership directs staff and church advocacy in federal public policy, through the ELCA-affiliated state public policy office (sppo) network, at the United Nations through Lutheran Office for World Community representation, and with the ELCA Corporate Social Responsibility program.

“Witnessing to Christ and Love for Neighbor in an Election Year” is an opportunity to hear from the Rev. Amy E. Reumann on civic engagement intersections and opportunities in our faith journey. Core affirmation of our baptism is to “serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus” and “to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.” Informed by our discipleship, “We have a responsibility not only to fulfill our private roles and functions in life, and to pray for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2), but also to be civically engaged,” relays the ELCA social message on government and civic engagement. Dive in with six Tuesday evening sessions.

The class will meet on six consecutive Tuesday evenings: September 3, 10, 17, 24; October 1, 8, 2024 from 7:00 - 8:15pm ET via Zoom. This course is open to all adults, both laypeople and rostered ministers, and is free of charge. Sessions will be recorded. Registration is required and will close on August 24, 2024.

Register now: <https://forms.gle/PpVaWwUDYwPMvDUU7>



THE NORTH/WEST LOWER MICHIGAN SYNOD INVITES YOU TO THE

SYNOD CELEBRATION RIVER CRUISE

Join us aboard the Michigan Princess for a river cruise with dinner, celebrations of significant anniversaries, and thanks for mission support and ministries.

August 1, 2024 • 6pm
MICHIGAN PRINCESS
GRAND RIVER PARK
LANSING, MI

Synod Celebration River Cruise

All are invited to attend the Synod Celebration River Cruise on August 1, 2024!

Join us aboard the Michigan Princess for a river cruise with dinner, celebrations of significant anniversaries and thanks for mission support and ministries!

Those celebrating significant anniversaries will receive more information soon. All others are invited to complete the registration from by June 26, 2024.

We have established a three-tier cost depending on ability to pay. If you have additional questions, please contact davidsprang@mittensynod.org.

Register Now: <https://bit.ly/3U2CZyx>

Caring for the Lord's Earth

Bishop Emeritus John Schleicher, Environmental Stewardship Task Force

“The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it” (Psalm 24:1a)

Sitting in a taxi in Munich on February 17, stuck in traffic, John Kerry wrestled with an idea. The U.S. climate envoy was in southern Germany to attend an annual security conference. In a few hours, the former Secretary of State would receive an award named in honor of a well-known Nazi resister, Ewald von Kleist. As he ruminated on his remarks, he worked to connect what he called the ‘echoes of the 1930's’ in today's geopolitics with the need for unity on climate action.

That night he found the words: “On climate, on Ukraine, and on so much more, the whole world needs to come together...We stand next to another abyss. It is the test of our own times, a test as acute and as existential as any previous one” (TIME, 4/8/24 p.53).

As we again approach another Earth Day, we are experiencing first hand (literally for Phylis and me in the recent storm that toppled trees in our backyard) weird weather patterns unlike any we've known before. Who of us has not wondered this winter and spring about the destiny of cherries and apples and grapes, hitherto growing so abundantly in our state.

We are not without hope. Rob Rafson, head of Chart House Energy, a Muskegon based company working hand in hand with organizations like Michigan Interfaith Power and Light, has helped birth Solar Faithful, people of faith standing together “next to the abyss” during perhaps the greatest test of our time. Already in our synod family, Solar Faithful has enabled First Lutheran in Muskegon Heights, Faith in Okemos, and Bethlehem in Traverse City to install solar arrays (with substantial rebates or no cost to the congregations). With new governmental incentives it is truly possible that in the next six or seven years a majority of our congregations could stand together next to the abyss utilizing solar power, creating and/or supporting community/rain gardens, and voting our faith in the months and years ahead as a bold stewards of the LORD's earth

In many ways the future for the earth looks very bleak. According to the United Nations, two-thirds of the world is desertifying and the world's remaining topsoil will be gone in 60 years unless we find a way to save our soil. We have yet to come close to reducing our emissions enough to mitigate rising mean temperatures. Yet, for us, trusting day by day in the power of Jesus' death and resurrection, we will stand together, working the rest of our lives to honor and cherish this precious planet and all that is in it.

God's work. Our hands.



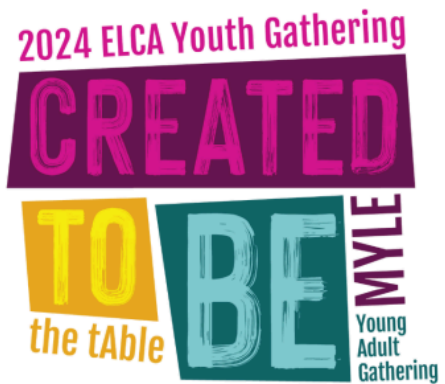
September 8, 2024

Save the Date for “God's work. Our hands.” Sunday!

Congregations across the ELCA will join together for our annual day of service on September 8, 2024.

Participating in service projects is one way to celebrate who we are as the ELCA – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.

Learn more at elca.org/dayofservice.



TODAY IS THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER!
VISIT ELCA.ORG/GATHERING

Synod Finances

	March	Year to Date
Unrestricted-Undesignated Fund		<i>(Feb-Mar)</i>
Mission Support Revenue	82,958	187,637
Synod Assembly Revenue	0	0
Other Revenue	14,027	17,779
Total Revenue	96,984	205,417
Churchwide Proportionate Share (50%)	41,479	93,819
Synod Assembly Expense	0	0
Other Expenses	68,047	71,717
Total Expenses	109,526	220,190
Net Change to Fund Balance (Revenue - Expenses)	(12,542)	(14,774)
Beginning Fund Balance	144,508	146,740
Ending Fund Balance	131,967	131,967
Other Fund Balances		
Unrestricted-Designated		1,006,203
Temporarily-Restricted Endowment-Related*		868,120
Temporarily-Restricted		316,830
Permanently-Restricted		1,035,547
Total - All Funds (as of 3/31/24)		3,358,667

*Mission Support received March 1-31 was \$25K less than prior year. We believe this is related to the timing of mail delivery.
 *March 31 ELCA Ministry Growth Fund Account Statements were not available at the time of publishing this summary. The amounts shown here reflect balances as of 2/29/24.

Tax-Exempt Status

Occasionally we receive requests from congregations for information about tax-exempt status and/or federal employer identification numbers, aka FEINs.

Congregations should have their own FEIN and questions about tax exempt status should be sent to 501c3@elca.org.

Mission Support Memo

The April 2024 Mission Support Memo is now available! This month's memo inspires us to wonder how God might be calling us into ministry and shares an opportunity to learn best practices in creating and empowering stewardship teams.

This month's Mission Support Memo and previous Mission Support Memos are located on the ELCA website: <https://bit.ly/3Qf7waL>

Disability Learning Day

Our synod's Disability Ministry Task Force is hosting a Disability Learning Day on May 18, 2024! This learning event is designed for rostered ministers and lay leaders and will be held at Peace Lutheran Church in Gaylord from 9:30am - 3:00pm ET.

A Keynote Address will be given by Victoria White, who serves as Program Director at With Ministries. Her experience and passion in education and ministry converge in her writing, speaking, consulting and training for congregations, equipping them to build belonging with people of all abilities. She will discuss ways of including people with varying disabilities in worship and best practices for building belonging.

Attendees will participate in two workshops from the following offerings:

- Biblical Perspective on Disability led by Bishop Craig Alan Satterlee
- Ministry with People with Dementia, led by Pastor Clay Bates
- Normalizing Neurodiversity in Your Context, led by Victoria White

There will also be time for group discussion so please bring both your struggles and challenges and ideas and strategies that have worked in your context. Books and other resources will also be available for sale.

The registration cost is \$20 and includes lunch and a book or fidget toy. To attend, please complete the registration form at: <https://tithe.ly/event-registration/#/8701547>. The last day to register is Monday, May 13, 2024. If you have additional questions, contact Pastor Clay Bates at clayhbates@gmail.com.

This event has been generously supported by a member of our synod who shares our passion for ministry with people with disabilities.

May Bishop's Newsletter

Due to the timing of Synod Assembly, there will be no Bishop's Newsletter for the month of May.

Check the Weekly Updates for news and events. **The Bishop's Newsletter will return in June!**

Last Chance: Synod Pets!

Thank you to everyone who has submitted photos of their pets!

If you haven't submitted a photo and would still like to be included, please email a photo of your pet, their name, and your connection to the Mitten Synod (ex: congregation name) to communications@mittensynod.org. **To be included, send your photo by April 19, 2024!**

As the resulting project will be shared publicly in synod communications, submission of a photo confirms your consent to have it and the corresponding information shared.

Upcoming Events

April 15	Registration Deadline: ELCA Youth Gathering	Learn more: elca.org/gathering
April 16	Cultivating Generous Congregations	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3Vc4EhI
April 21	Synod Assembly Book Available	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3E6VYzP
April 22	Earth Day	
April 22	Wartburg Seminary Land Acknowledgement Workshop	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3xITNBZ
May 2	Pre-Assembly Discussion on Budget & Compensation Guidelines	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3E6VYzP
May 7-9	Synod Assembly Technology Orientations	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3E6VYzP
May 11	Synod Assembly	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3E6VYzP
May 14	Renewal of Ordination Vows	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3JfPEYP

Congregations in Transition

Note: We include congregations on the public list when the called pastor or rostered leader completes her or his ministry in the congregation. Thus, congregations in which the pastor has resigned but is still serving are not listed here. We also do not post calls that are accepted until Bishop Satterlee signs the Letter of Call.

Bay Conference	Pastor Emily Olsen-Brandt, Dean	Kalamazoo Conference	Pastor Joan Oleson, Dean
Prince of Peace/Rose City	Pastor David Sprang, Administrative Pastor / Supply Pastors / Discerning Future	Stony Lake Conference	Pastor Sarah Samuelson, Dean
Capital Area Conference	Pastor Neil Brady, Dean	Sunrise Conference	Pastor Megan Crouch, Dean
Grace/Lansing	Pastor Brian Schneider-Thomas, Interim	New Life/Alcona County	Supply Pastors / Seeking candidates
Greater Grand Rapids Conference	Pastor Julie Schneider-Thomas, Pastor Kate Van Valkenburg, Co-Deans	St. Paul/Alpena	Seeking a part-time assistant pastor
Trinity/Grand Rapids	Pastor Dennis Smith, Interim Senior Pastor / Seeking candidates	Trinity/Barton City	Discerning Future
Bread of Life/Hudsonville	CALL ACCEPTED: Pastor David Beese, Term Call through 2029	Traverse Conference	Pastor Jonathan Reid, Dean
Peace/Sparta	Supply Pastors / Interviewing	Advent/Lake Ann	Pastor Rosanne Anderson, Administrative Pastor / Supply Pastors
Zion/Woodland	Supply Pastors / Seeking candidates	St. Paul/Reed City	Supply Pastors / Call Extended
		Messiah/Roscommon	Took first vote to disaffiliate from the ELCA

A REMINDER

The church restrooms are still one-person-at-a-time. This was put in place not only because of Covid, but to make any LGBTQ+ visitors comfortable using our facilities. Please continue to observe the signs.

Help us Worship at Hope

We are looking for readers, greeters, communion assistants, acolytes, and altar guild to help us celebrate and worship God on Sundays. Please consider signing up by speaking to Marne Seiber or Pr. Nicole. All ages are welcome



and no experience is needed and Pr. Nicole & Judi Gage are delighted to meet with you to discuss how to serve in these roles. Thank you so much for serving!

Acolyte: Helps the congregation worship by lighting the altar candles (baptism candle when seasonally appropriate) at the beginning of service and putting the candles out at the conclusion of worship. This role is one for everyone from 2nd grade through adult. Needed at the primary Sunday worship service and select special services only.

Reader: Helps the congregation worship by reading the Old Testament, leader parts of the Psalm, and Second Reading. This role is one for everyone who feels comfortable with reading Scripture; approximately 3rd grade through adult. Readings are provided several days in advance via email and can be provided earlier if requested. Needed at all worship services.

Assisting Minister: Help the congregation worship by leading the prayers, carrying the Common Cup during Communion, reading the announcements and the final dismissal. This role is one for everyone who feels comfortable reading the prayers and announcements; probably best for teens through

adults. Needed at all worship services.

Communion Assistant: Helps the congregation worship by carrying the tray of individual cups during Communion. Needed at the primary Sunday worship service and select special services only.

Cantor: Helps the congregation worship by singing the leader parts as noted in the liturgy. This role is one for singers from teen through adult. Needed at the primary Sunday worship service and select special services only where the liturgy setting in use requires a cantor.

Choir: Helps the congregation worship by occasionally providing anthems and introits as part of the service. Rehearsals are typically held after the 10:30 service and/or on Wednesday evenings with additional times scheduled as needed. The choir does not typically sing every week and only sings at the primary Sunday worship and select special services. While reading music and choral experience is a definite plus, it is not required. The choir at Hope simply works to “make a joyful noise” and bring music to the service which glorifies God. This role is one for everyone of all ages who wishes to join in our noise--making!

Greeter: Helps the congregation, especially visitors, feel welcomed as they enter the building. Provides directions and answers questions regarding church layout and necessary items for worship. Needed at primary Sunday worship service and select special services. This role is one for individuals, couples, and families of all ages.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYER AT HOPE

Prayer Chain - this Prayer List is for Urgent or Special requests for prayer. This list is confidential. **In Our Prayers List** - this list is for general or on-going needs for prayer. It is published in the eBlasts, worship bulletins, and the Together Newsletter. They are also read out loud during worship. **Tuesday Bible Study Prayer List** - The Tuesday Bible Study Group meets at Hope at 9:30 am and prays for various prayer requests.

Prayer requests are coordinated by Judi Gage.

Giving to Hope Lutheran Church

At Hope we seek to grow in our faith in Jesus Christ and to share the good news of Jesus Christ in our community and world. Thank you for your generosity in helping support our missions and outreach!

Give by Check

Checks made out to Hope Lutheran may be safely sent to:

Hope Lutheran Church

290 12th Street, Plainwell, MI 49080

Need Giving Envelopes?

Contact Keith Gage

Give Online

Give safe and securely with PayPal! Simply scan the QR Code below and you will be directed through making an online donation to Hope. You can also schedule recurring giving!



Christian Neighbors

Items We Always Need Are:

- Oatmeal
- Jelly
- Pancake Mix
- Pancake Syrup
- Instant Mashed Potatoes
- Applesauce
- Canned Fruit
- Snack Items (chips, pretzels, granola bars, etc.)
- Canned Ravioli
- Women's Deodorant



March Financial Report

THE MONTHLY REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

MARCH 2024

GENERAL FUND	THIS MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	LAST YEAR TO DATE	CHANGE
GENERAL FUND	\$8,037.66	\$18,547.72	\$15,931.00	\$2,616.72
LOOSE OFFERING	\$142.01	\$176.33	\$110.25	\$66.08
GENERAL FUND TOTALS	\$8,179.67	\$18,724.05	\$16,041.25	\$2,682.80

DESIGNATED GIVING	THIS MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	LAST YEAR TO DATE	CHANGE
BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
COMMUNION WINE	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$0.00
FLOWER FUND	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
FUNERAL FUND	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$60.00	-\$60.00
LEAF BLOWER	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
MEMORIAL	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$570.00	-\$570.00
OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$0.00	\$35.00	\$0.00	\$35.00
RETREAT	\$0.00	\$175.00	\$0.00	\$175.00
SUNDAY SCHOOL/CHRISTIAN EDUCATIO	\$35.00	\$42.00	\$21.79	\$20.21
STAFF GIFTS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$270.00	-\$270.00
DESIGNATED GIVING TOTAL	\$105.00	\$322.00	\$991.79	-\$669.79

EXTERNAL MINISTRIES	THIS MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	LAST YEAR TO DATE	CHANGE
CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS	\$360.00	\$740.00	\$645.00	\$95.00
ELCA FUND LEADERS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10.00	-\$10.00
GOOD HANDS PLAINWELL	\$50.00	\$110.00	\$100.00	\$10.00
LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
NOISY OFFERING	\$3.70	\$13.32	\$19.84	-\$6.52
PROJECT HOPE XICHIUAN (GSF)	\$0.00	\$300.56	\$25.00	\$275.56
SEMINARY FUND	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
SYLVIA'S PLACE	\$50.00	\$110.00	\$65.00	\$45.00
SYNOD DEBT ASSISTANCE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
WINGS OF HOPE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
EXTERNAL MINISTRIES TOTAL	\$463.70	\$1,273.88	\$864.84	\$409.04

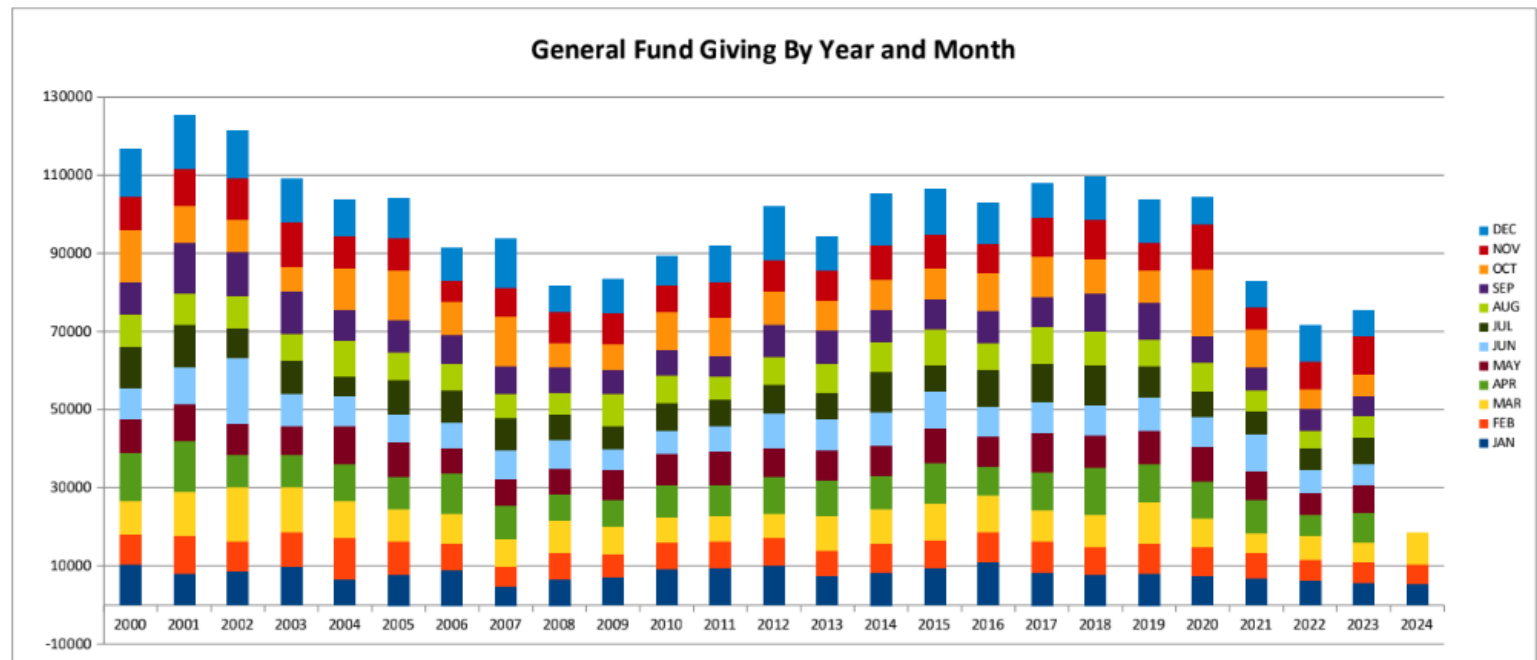
6.27% PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL GIVING DESIGNATED FOR EXTERNAL MINISTRIES

OTHER REVENUE	THIS MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	LAST YEAR TO DATE	CHANGE
REFUND	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$134.78	-\$134.78
THRIVENT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
NON GIVING TOTAL	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$134.78	-\$134.78

GRAND TOTALS	\$8,748.37	\$20,319.93	\$18,032.66	\$2,287.27
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General Fund Giving Past 12 Months:	\$78,042.27	Monthly Average \$6,503.52	Weekly Average \$1,500.81
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TOTAL NUMBER OF DONATIONS	68	161	159	2
NUMBER OF DIFFERENT DONORS	27	32	32	0



General Giving (Non Designated) By Month													
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
2000	\$10,537.00	\$7,422.00	\$8,843.00	\$12,217.00	\$8,516.00	\$8,056.00	\$10,577.00	\$8,272.00	\$8,306.00	\$13,283.00	\$8,453.00	\$12,306.99	\$116,788.99
2001	\$8,109.00	\$9,615.00	\$11,418.00	\$12,982.00	\$9,471.90	\$9,176.04	\$11,092.00	\$7,790.00	\$13,072.50	\$9,414.00	\$9,288.00	\$13,868.25	\$125,296.69
2002	\$8,658.09	\$7,701.00	\$13,860.00	\$8,212.00	\$7,778.00	\$17,104.80	\$7,502.24	\$8,303.00	\$11,111.88	\$8,517.37	\$10,384.52	\$12,208.04	\$121,340.94
2003	\$9,886.86	\$8,653.00	\$11,717.13	\$8,365.38	\$7,113.00	\$8,459.72	\$8,585.00	\$6,621.54	\$11,001.75	\$6,124.01	\$11,519.96	\$11,042.91	\$109,090.26
2004	\$6,570.00	\$10,745.88	\$9,339.00	\$9,435.48	\$9,729.87	\$7,721.40	\$4,913.63	\$9,397.69	\$7,715.00	\$10,642.78	\$8,307.00	\$9,213.00	\$103,730.73
2005	\$7,712.00	\$8,417.34	\$8,503.34	\$8,055.00	\$9,042.30	\$7,173.48	\$8,622.48	\$7,210.06	\$8,106.34	\$12,860.00	\$8,343.92	\$10,031.46	\$104,077.72
2006	\$8,877.80	\$6,916.00	\$7,670.00	\$10,177.92	\$6,610.00	\$6,340.00	\$8,366.83	\$6,829.00	\$7,260.65	\$8,424.24	\$5,595.00	\$8,343.00	\$91,510.44
2007	\$4,721.29	\$5,130.58	\$7,139.36	\$8,335.00	\$7,072.71	\$7,230.00	\$8,308.50	\$6,005.40	\$7,260.00	\$12,508.50	\$7,374.19	\$12,610.00	\$93,695.53
2008	\$6,518.00	\$6,858.64	\$8,077.50	\$7,010.38	\$6,334.00	\$7,347.00	\$6,621.26	\$5,680.00	\$6,569.86	\$6,009.80	\$8,136.90	\$6,559.00	\$81,722.34
2009	\$7,142.80	\$5,880.00	\$7,129.00	\$6,739.00	\$7,659.00	\$5,547.00	\$5,678.00	\$8,151.30	\$6,422.89	\$6,343.88	\$8,075.72	\$8,700.34	\$83,468.93
2010	\$9,244.00	\$6,615.05	\$6,673.00	\$8,255.30	\$7,844.00	\$6,103.13	\$6,975.00	\$7,170.00	\$6,524.25	\$9,793.00	\$6,541.00	\$7,395.00	\$89,132.73
2011	\$9,537.00	\$6,696.00	\$6,461.00	\$8,243.00	\$8,335.00	\$6,562.00	\$6,802.42	\$6,026.00	\$5,139.00	\$9,686.00	\$9,196.00	\$9,161.00	\$91,844.42
2012	\$10,257.00	\$6,828.00	\$6,413.44	\$9,210.00	\$7,589.46	\$8,881.00	\$7,216.00	\$7,258.82	\$8,049.00	\$8,695.00	\$7,885.00	\$13,790.00	\$102,072.72
2013	\$7,561.28	\$6,374.00	\$8,962.00	\$9,060.00	\$7,626.35	\$8,076.00	\$6,788.00	\$7,407.00	\$8,634.00	\$7,383.00	\$7,811.42	\$8,842.00	\$94,525.05
2014	\$8,301.00	\$7,489.50	\$8,714.00	\$8,571.00	\$7,816.00	\$8,350.00	\$10,324.00	\$7,913.56	\$8,135.00	\$7,617.00	\$8,986.00	\$13,055.20	\$105,272.26
2015	\$9,593.22	\$7,186.00	\$9,200.25	\$10,580.00	\$8,603.00	\$9,334.00	\$6,990.00	\$9,112.00	\$7,586.00	\$7,926.00	\$8,737.00	\$11,534.00	\$106,381.47
2016	\$10,974.00	\$7,751.00	\$9,350.00	\$7,310.87	\$7,884.52	\$7,477.28	\$6,811.00	\$6,811.00	\$8,221.24	\$9,746.43	\$7,360.00	\$10,529.00	\$103,009.11
2017	\$8,295.19	\$7,953.21	\$8,012.00	\$9,961.15	\$9,776.44	\$8,175.12	\$9,727.78	\$9,211.28	\$7,799.00	\$10,425.00	\$9,773.00	\$8,781.17	\$107,890.34
2018	\$7,669.00	\$7,122.00	\$8,117.00	\$12,354.05	\$8,122.00	\$7,916.82	\$10,077.00	\$8,499.19	\$9,987.00	\$8,624.00	\$10,165.36	\$11,078.44	\$109,731.86
2019	\$7,980.00	\$7,712.00	\$10,669.00	\$9,865.00	\$8,370.00	\$8,505.00	\$8,101.89	\$6,715.00	\$9,355.00	\$8,501.00	\$6,886.10	\$10,980.00	\$103,639.99
2020	\$7,610.00	\$7,173.00	\$7,395.00	\$9,393.34	\$9,065.00	\$7,725.00	\$6,490.00	\$7,100.00	\$6,784.40	\$17,264.90	\$11,545.60	\$6,904.00	\$104,450.24
2021	\$6,750.00	\$6,715.00	\$4,950.00	\$8,553.70	\$7,461.00	\$9,278.00	\$5,915.00	\$5,415.00	\$6,740.91	\$9,820.00	\$5,691.37	\$6,495.00	\$82,800.98
2022	\$6,171.19	\$5,399.00	\$6,290.00	\$5,270.00	\$5,741.54	\$5,658.00	\$5,775.00	\$4,395.00	\$5,485.00	\$5,160.00	\$6,901.63	\$9,270.00	\$71,516.36
2023	\$5,715.00	\$5,229.00	\$4,987.00	\$7,893.15	\$6,826.40	\$5,575.00	\$6,647.00	\$5,679.00	\$4,940.00	\$5,570.00	\$9,603.00	\$6,761.00	\$75,425.55
2024	\$5,231.00	\$5,279.06	\$8,037.66										

Highest Month: **\$17,264.90** October 2020
 Lowest Month: **\$4,395.00** January 2007 & August 2022

Last Month's Attendance

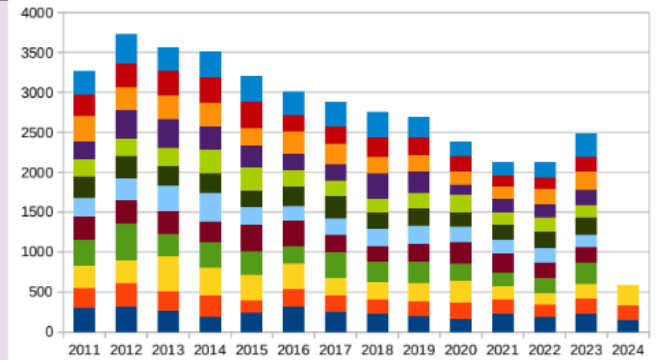
March 3, 2024	43	Last Month's Total Attendance:	245
March 10, 2024	46	Last Year Same Month:	176
March 17, 2024	52	Year To Date Attendance:	581
March 24, 2024	47	Last Year to Date Attendance:	602
March 31, 2024	57	Change From Last Year:	-21
Average Per Week:			
Last Month:	49.0	Year To Date:	48.4
Last Year-Same Month:	44.0	Last Year To Date:	46.3
		2023 Year Average	46.8

2000's GENERAL GIVING BY YEAR

Year	Amount	Change from Previous Year
2000	\$116,788.99	
2001	\$125,296.69	7.28%
2002	\$121,340.95	-3.16%
2003	\$109,090.26	-10.10%
2004	\$103,730.73	-4.91%
2005	\$104,077.72	0.33%
2006	\$91,510.44	-12.07%
2007	\$93,695.53	2.39%
2008	\$81,722.34	-12.78%
2009	\$83,468.93	2.14%
2010	\$89,132.73	6.79%
2011	\$91,844.42	3.04%
2012	\$102,072.72	11.14%
2013	\$94,525.05	-7.39%
2014	\$105,272.26	11.37%
2015	\$106,381.47	1.05%
2016	\$103,009.11	-3.17%
2017	\$107,890.34	4.74%
2018	\$109,731.86	1.71%
2019	\$103,639.99	-5.55%
2020	\$104,450.24	0.78%
2021	\$82,800.98	-20.73%
2022	\$71,516.36	-13.63%
2023	\$75,425.55	5.47%
2024	\$18,547.72	-74.07%

Current Pace For This Year (General Giving): **\$74,190.88**

Total Attendance By Year



Newsletter Information

Published 12 times per year
 Do you want information in the next monthly newsletter?

- Email media.hopeplainwell@gmail.com
- Deadline: May 15, 2024

Feel free to email pictures, announcements, or any other information you would like to share with the congregation in next month's newsletter!

April and May Calendars

April 2024

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1 Easter Monday Office Closed	2 9:00am - Coffee with Vets 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study 3:00pm - Men's Bible Study	3	4	5 Office Closed	6
7 10:30am - Worship with Bishop Craig Satterlee	8 Office Closed	9 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study	10 5:00pm Soup Supper Fundraiser	11	12 Office Closed	13
14 10:30am - Worship	15 Tax Day Office Closed	16 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study 6:00pm - Council Meeting	17	18	19 Office Closed	20 10am-1pm Styrofoam Recycling
21 10:30am - Worship	22 Office Closed	23 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study	24	25	26 Office Closed	27
28 10:30am - Worship	29 Office Closed	30 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study				

May 2024

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 Dick & Pauline Northrup Anniversary	4
5 Cinco de Mayo 10:30am - Worship 12-2pm - Taco Bar Fundraiser	6 Office Closed	7 9:00am - Coffee with Vets 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study 3:00pm - Men's Bible Study	8	9 Ascension Day	10	11
12 Mother's Day 10:30am - Worship	13 Office Closed	14 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study 6:00pm - Council Meeting <i>Mark & Sandy Babcock Anniversary</i>	15	16	17 <i>Richard & Irene Ward Anniversary</i>	18
19 Pentecost 10:30am - Worship <i>Brent & Marya Barbee Anniversary</i> <i>Robert & Jennifer Loftus Anniversary</i>	20 Whit Monday Office Closed	21 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study 6pm - Council Meeting	22	23	24 <i>Jan & Tammy Schultz Anniversary</i>	25
26 Trinity Sunday 10:30am - Worship	27 Office Closed <i>Chuck & Nancy Gregory Anniversary</i>	28 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Bible Study	29	30 Corpus Christi	31	

- **Sunday School (all ages) 9:15 A.M.**

- **Worship 10:30 A.M.**

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Webpage: hopeplainwell.org

Hope's Facebook page: Hope Lutheran, Plainwell, MI

Hope's YouTube channel: Hope Lutheran Church, Plainwell, MI

Office Hours: Tuesday 10-noon; Wednesday & Thursday 9-noon