

Pastor's Annual Report November 2023

Dear Friends in Christ:

Life is never boring in church, right? Well, apart from a few sermons by the senior pastor. This year has been no exception. We seem to have settled into a new normal. In person attendance averages about 250 worshippers each week. Sometimes we have a bit more, sometimes a bit less. It is not on par with pre-pandemic attendance, but then few things are the same as they were in life prior to COVID. I am quite grateful to those of you who continue to make the effort to be present in worship. Online worship is convenient and a wonderful option for connecting to Sunday church when you are out of town or ill - but it just isn't the same as in person worship with your fellow believers.

We are also blessed by those of you who continue to financially support the ministries of St. Peter's, even when you are not here in person, through your use of our online giving programs. We thank you from the depth of our hearts for your consistent offerings. We were also deeply blessed by recent gifts of roughly \$10,000, \$15,000 and \$83,000 which allowed us to pay off the portion of our mortgage note that had a significantly higher variable interest rate associated with it. The elimination of that portion of our building debt allows the Finance Committee to be able to anticipate more accurately what our debt service will be going forward.

To those of you who are also volunteering regularly as worship leaders, we are equally grateful. The ability to have lectors and ushers ... communion assistants and acolytes ... choir members and musicians... altar guild servants and nursery attendants ... AV leaders and live stream tech persons ... allows us to embody the goal of participatory worship. We can always use additional help, so that those who serve can sit with their friends and family members when they are not leading worship. I would challenge each of you reading this to consider volunteering. None of these jobs are difficult or onerous, and the privilege of actively leading worship with others is a special gift in our faith lives. If you are not sure where you would best fit, I and others would be glad to chat with you to help you decide.

The difficult news you will see elsewhere in this booklet of reports is the change in our staff structure. As we all know, staffing costs always consume a significant part of budgeted expenses. We have worked hard to preserve our current staff structure, but the inability to close a significant five-figure deficit in our 2024 budget forced us to make some adjustments. First, we will pause our New Day service at the end of the year, which will freeze the New Day worship leader position for a time. Not having New Day worship will free up a significant amount of time for Sister Dottie to direct towards our Children's Ministry – an area of ministry in which Sister has been an essential cog since her call to our staff as a deaconess. That means that our current Director of Children's Ministry will no longer be a paid staff position. Our final change will be to conclude our Visitation Pastor position at the end of this current contracted year in June 2024. Not having that position for the full year of 2024 is the final change to the HR budget that will allow us to present and vote upon an achievable financial budget for the 2024 year. These kinds of changes are never easy, and we thank each of our staff members for their faithful service in their roles. These changes are budget driven, not performance driven in any way.

As I say in some fashion at every annual meeting, I thank you again for the privilege of serving as your pastor these past twelve months. I will continue to work in ways that strengthen ministries and participation within those ministries in the time I have remaining in my call here. I thank you for your partnership in that goal,

See you in church, Pastor Ross
Sister Dottie's Annual Report- 2023

“Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” Isaiah 43:18-19

As I write this report, I find myself using the same scripture text. There is no denying it, church is no longer what it was pre-COVID. Our weekly attendance is down, we have had to make some cuts to staffing and our contemporary services due to the decrease in giving to our general fund and we still struggle to find volunteers to fill all of our ministry vacancies.

What does this mean for the church as we move forward? I wish I had a concrete answer, but I do know that we will not be going back to how things were in 2019. Yes, some of our members have left to join other congregations or have left the church completely. For those who have remained or recently joined, it seems that the church is competing for time that is often given to outside commitments, sports, clubs, work, school and other activities that fill the time that was once dedicated to being a physical part of the church.

2024 will be a transition year; Pastor Ross will be retiring in June and a new intentional interim will be coming on board. One of the goals of the interim will be to help our congregation make goals for the future. They will help us discern our needs.

It is with a heavy heart that due to financial reasons, we have decided to put on pause the Children’s ministry director and the New Day service and music director. These decisions were not easy and always come with a feeling of heartache when we are dealing with people and their positions.

I will be absorbing Children’s Ministry into my area. Since I no longer will be needed as the main worship leader in New Day, I will focus much of my energy on Education for all ages.

I am hopeful that these changes and cuts will help us all discern what we truly want for St. Peter’s and how we can give of our time, talent and treasures to make sure ministries thrive in our congregation.

As the writer of Ecclesiastes said, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.” Let us discern together what God is calling is to be now and in the future.

President's Annual Report--2023

Greg Hand

I want to thank members of St. Peter's for placing their trust in me to serve as council president this past year. I also want to thank members of council, our committees and many of you who serve in volunteer roles to serve the body of Christ in worship, service and education.

Every member of the body of Christ provides value in his or her service. There are many gifts of service, and each is vitally important in enabling St. Peter's to build a community of faith by God's grace.

Members of our committees and council have provided many hours of service to ensure that we have an environment in which we can worship and pray together, help each other develop a meaningful relationship with God and model our faith to children, youth and others. I hope and pray that I have been a good listener, received and followed good advice and provided leadership when necessary.

The following are some of the matters that our committees and council worked through this past year:

- Sale of the vicarage, distribution of the proceeds and elimination of the variable rate loan: This involved solicitation of input of all members of the congregation. That input revealed a strong preference for debt reduction. The congregation voted to apply 100% of the proceeds to debt reduction. The proceeds from the vicarage sale, donations from the Mission Campaign and generous gifts dedicated to debt reduction have recently allowed St. Peter's to pay off the balance of the variable rate loan ahead of schedule. Elimination of that debt positions St. Peter's much more favorably as we enter a new stage this coming year.
- Music and worship: In 2023, St. Peter's turned a new chapter in its worship and music programs. These programs should enable us to better reach out to members of the community much more effectively. The 2023-2024 concert season and the support of members should serve to identify St. Peter's as a community of faith that proclaims its faith through music and the word of God.
- Property: Our building and facilities can no longer be considered "new construction." Maintenance and replacement of aging systems (e.g., HVAC) have presented challenges. The property committee members have done an amazing job to ensure that the structural and maintenance needs of our building and grounds have been met at minimal cost.
- Finance and Human Resources: We have faced challenges due to declining attendance and weekly offerings. Working with Human Resources, Finance will

present a budget that ensures that we can resource vital ministry needs of St. Peter's in 2024 and position us to move forward as we enter a new chapter.

- Constitution: We will be voting on changes to the Constitution, which have been mandated by the Synod, at the 2023 Congregation Meeting. The Constitution reminds us of St. Peter's continuing accountability to the ELCA and the Susquehanna Synod. It also serves as a reminder to church officers of our accountability to each of you.

Moving forward in 2024:

- Transition: Pastor Ross will retire at the end of June. Shortly before his retirement, we will have a special recognition luncheon for him after Sunday services. Stay tuned for details. We will work with the Synod, which will assign an intentional interim pastor to assist us as we go through the call process. This will be a time for both introspection and communication. Call committee volunteers will play an important role in shaping the direction and choice of a new senior pastor.
- Stewardship and Ministry: The pay-off of the variable rate loan will allow us to devote more of our treasure to current ministries and programs of the church rather than to loan principal and interest. The Mission Fund will also provide an opportunity for St. Peter's to make a difference in the community and the world around us.

At St. Peter's we affirm the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This truth compels us to believe, as C.S. Lewis asserted, that Christianity "is of infinite importance." This calls us to serve and love one another and others in our community. It compels us to follow Jesus and to share the good news of what he has done for us and humanity.

We encourage you to join us and build a community of faith by God's grace here at St. Peter's during the coming year.

Thank you to members of council, the committees and the congregation for the support, input and grace that you have given me.

Endowment Fund 2023 Annual Meeting Report

The mission of the Endowment Committee is to consolidate, manage and utilize in a responsible and effective manner all existing and future bequests, memorial gifts and other gifts designated for the Endowment. We accomplish our mission by:

- Investing the endowment assets in a prudent manner that allows for a maximum return on the fund investments while at the same time diversifying the portfolio to mitigate risk.
- Distributing income generated for benevolence or other church expenditures that are not part of the annual budget and that meet specific guidelines established by the Committee.
- Educating the Congregation and others about the Endowment in order to encourage and generate future contributions.

Endowment Committee members include Stephen Gegg (Chair), Scott Glassford, (Treasurer), Karen Peiffer (Secretary), Pastor Craig Ross, Greg Hand, (Church Council President).

Market & Investment Fund Returns as of September 30, 2023

- 2023 has proven to be a volatile market year with January's positive start quickly eroded with losses in February and March. By June 30, markets gained but gave back some returns in August and September.
- As of September 30, 2023 we are up a combined \$52,600 in the Endowment and General Fund portfolios.
- The S&P 500 is up 13.07% and leads the DOW but drags the NASDAQ. Large-Cap stocks are leading the way with the S&P Mid-Cap 400 up 4.27% and the S&P Small-Cap 600 up just 0.81. International equity markets are positive. 2023 has seen a return of growth stocks outperforming value stocks.
- Fixed income markets continue to suffer with the US Aggregate Bond index down 1.21% and US Governments up just 0.65%. Global bond indexes are generally down.
- The Endowment Fund has returned 7.46% versus a blended benchmark of 6.96%. Over a volatile 3 years, the Endowment Fund has returned 4.83% versus a blended benchmark of 3.85%.
- The General Reserve Fund has returned 6.85% versus a 6.49% blended index return. Over 3 years the General Reserve Fund has returned 4.30% against a blended benchmark of 3.36%.

2023 Related Activity

- Endowment Committee members receive reporting from our investment advisor, Fulton Financial Advisors, and we discussed and approved several gifts during 2023. We also met with Fulton on two occasions, October 25 being the most recent meeting.
- With Fulton, we reviewed our Investment Policy Statement (IPS). Investments remain in line with the IPS and asset allocations are in line with commonly accepted investment standards for long-term portfolios.

- The blended benchmark used by Fulton for our portfolio includes the MSCI All Country World Index, the Barclays Capital US Intermediate/Corporate Bond Index, and the FTSE 3 Month Treasury Bill Index.
- We remain satisfied with the service and professional expertise we receive from Fulton.

2023 ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT ENDOWMENT FUND

Fund Balance 12/31/2022	\$777,253.88
<i>Increases consist of the following:</i>	
• New Contributions	\$0.00
• Investment Income YTD 9/30/2023	\$13,014.14
• Realized Gains YTD 9/30/2023	\$1,283.20
• Unrealized Gains YTD 9/30/2023	\$44,128.06
• Accrued Income Adjustments	\$643.03
<i>Decreases consist of the following:</i>	
• Disbursements for benevolence (2023 YTD)	(\$11,740.00)
• Investment Manager Expense	(\$5,867.67)
Fund Balance 9/30/2023	\$818,714.64
St. Peter's Church loan activity:	
• Loan Granted for Debt Reduction 2/1/2011	\$100,000
• Loan Granted for Debt Reduction 3/18/2011	<u>\$35,000</u>
• Total Original Debt	\$135,000
• Loan Payments Received in 2023	\$0.00
• <i>*Life to date and future interest forgiven in 2022</i>	
Loan Outstanding 9/30/2023	\$110,199
• 2023 ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT GENERAL FUND	
• Fund Balance 12/31/2022	\$176,512.90
<i>Current Year Increases consist of the following:</i>	
• New Contributions	\$0.00
• Investment Income YTD 9/30/2023	\$3,423.25
• Realized Gains YTD 9/30/2023	\$215.43
• Unrealized Gains YTD 9/30/2022	\$8,554.97

• Accrued Income Adjustments	\$184.29	
<i>Decreases consist of the following:</i>		
• Approved distribution (2023 YTD)	\$0.00	
• Investment Manager Expense	(\$1,318.18)	
Fund Balance 12/31/2022		\$187,572.66

2023 ENDOWMENT CONTRIBUTION & DISTRIBUTION SUMMARY

Contributions: None

Distributions:

- 1) \$5,000 to Busoka Church in Tanzania.
- 2) \$3,000 to Family Life Center technology improvements (2nd and final gift)
- 3) \$740 Laminator for Pre School
- 4) \$3,000 Manheim Township Homes for Hope

Estimated Remaining 2023 income:

\$8,760 – to be gifted by end of year.

There were no General Reserve Fund contributions or distributions.

St. Peter's Cemetery Committee - Annual Meeting Report 2023

St. Peter's Lutheran Church has a beautiful cemetery located on 62 Valley Road, that includes a cremation garden. We also have a Memorial and Meditation Garden, located on the side of the church facing Delp Road. Thanks to the generous funds of an anonymous donor, this garden area has been given additional plants and grooming.

We give special recognition to George Groff, who has been dedicated to the St. Peter's Cemetery for more than 70 YEARS. It is worth your time to have George share with you the history of this cemetery. His passion for maintaining the cemetery began when he was a young teenager, helping his uncle who was a member of St. Peter's volunteering. Over the years, his family also assisted in the mowing, weeding, and maintaining the cemetery to the highest standards.

We recently hired Creations Landscaping for cutting the grass and trimming, but George, as caretaker, has continued to ensure the potted plants and flowers are removed at the appropriate time, the American flags are standing straight at the veterans' gravesites, and everything looks extra special around the holidays when family members may be visiting. George even has a copy of all the obituaries and knows where all these loved ones are buried. The love and dedication that George Groff has given to this cemetery makes me admire the strong, positive character of George who certainly exemplifies "Love one another."

We have reached a milestone. At the age of 88, George is stepping aside from his position as St. Peter's Cemetery caretaker. We are seeking one or more people to shadow George and to learn from the master. There is a modest stipend paid for the services as a cemetery caretaker.

In addition to this position, we are seeking someone who can dig the graves for our church Memorial and Meditation Garden. We welcome new volunteers to serve on the cemetery committee, which meets two or three times per year for approximately one hour per meeting, never longer.

A special thank you to Pastor Ross and Paul Schultz who support this committee in many capacities to make it run efficiently.

Children's Ministries - Cindy Geesey, Director of Children's Ministries

The Children's Ministries' Committee provides educational, worship, and fellowship opportunities for members of St. Peter's that focus on, but are not limited to, children age 4 (preschool/kindergarten) to, and including, 4th grade. Our focus is to teach the Word of God and nurture spiritual growth through varied educational and fun experiences for our youngest members. Our programming for the past year included Sunday School for ages 4 through 4th grade, First Communion Instruction and Recognition, Easter Egg Hunt, Vacation Bible School, and Bible presentations. The Committee plans and implements these activities annually, supervised by the Director of Children's Ministries.

This year, we experienced continued growth in attendance at our community events including the Easter Egg Hunt and Vacation Bible School. Children's Sunday School also continues to grow with the largest area of growth being preschool-aged children thanks in part to increased communication with St. Peter's Preschool families via flyers, letters and emails. As we have been able to return to normalcy following the global pandemic, we are excited to continue to offer a new and innovative Sunday School Curriculum for grades 1 through 4, which includes an opening with songs and a Bible story and weekly rotations to three stations – creation (crafts), exploration (science and cooking), and adventure (games), and a closing. Our preschool/kindergarten class begins with singing and progresses with a Bible story, crafts and games.

Last year, our Gingerbread Bash was a huge success so we will soon begin to plan for that event which will take place on December 1st. We invite and encourage members to consider joining our committee to assist with the planning and execution of any, or all, of our activities.

Communications Committee – Jill Emmert, Chair

The Communications Committee facilitates the management of the overall public image of St. Peter's. Our goal is to raise the level of awareness about the church, our ministries, and our events to our members and the community.

As the church has returned to its active slate of activities, we have been busy striving to keep you informed. Online, we continue to oversee the website, social media platforms including Facebook and YouTube, and the live-stream of worship services. We have actively sought and used various other means in an attempt to keep all of our membership informed. Direct email, postal mailing, the Herald newsletter, church signage, press releases, and LNP ads, as well as worship service walk-in slides, have been employed. We also help, as needed, with editing and proofreading any letters, documents, and publications generated by staff and committees.

We have been working with Josh from the Lakelands Institute, a professional church communication firm, for about a year now. You should have noticed our communications looking a bit more polished as he has taken over some of the roles that our volunteers had been struggling to fill. The website is being updated, the Herald comes to you each week now, and the "Three Things You Need to Know" email gives you a snapshot of what to look forward to at church this week. We just completed a very successful publicity campaign to recruit singers for the upcoming "Messiah" concert.

Our committee is small, but mighty, and I can't thank them enough for their dedication to this mission! They have the best ideas, the keenest eyes, and a lot of energy. We are always happy to have new members and to hear your ideas of how we can better connect with you. And we encourage committee chairs or other event organizers to reach out to us to help us tell your story.

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE – Lynn Fyfe, Chair

Our summer was bookended by an end of the school year cookout and the back-to-school kickoff this year. Both were well attended, and we are thankful for the help of the youth who set up and cleaned up, and the grilling skills of Joe Almoney and Rob Morrison.

Our small fellowship groups have been going strong over the last year. Among those are WELCA, Widow's Group, Moral Mondays discussion group, Book Club, Just for Fun, 50+ and Pub Theology. Thank you to all the volunteers who kept those groups going. If you haven't yet found the time to join us at one of these fun activities, please keep an eye on the Herald for something that might interest you – there is a lot going on!

Many thanks to Donna Aho and Nancy Pokopec for organizing our coffee bar and the schedule of volunteers, and to Neil Snyder and the volunteers that keep the kitchen clean, stocked, and operational for the fellowship and ministry groups that use it.

We are looking forward to the return of Game Nights on the first Sunday of each month, beginning in December and continuing through the winter months. We have enjoyed this relaxed fellowship in the past, where members enjoy learning new board and card games and playing some old favorites!

We are always looking for new ideas and people to help – please contact Lynn Fyfe if you are interested in helping with Fellowship events.

Financial Committee – Paul Berkebile, Chair

The primary responsibility of the Finance Committee is to formulate, recommend to council, and monitor the adherence to appropriate internal controls, policies, practices, and procedures for all financial matters and activities of the church not otherwise delegated by the governing documents of the church.

I want to thank Alan Brayman for his years of service as our church and Sherry Moul, former Chair of the Finance Committee who has served as Treasurer for our congregation for the current year. In addition, my thanks to Mark Linn who continues as Assistant Treasurer, Paul Shultz our Parish Administrator who is a huge contributor to the financial management framework of our church and Janelle Almoney our bookkeeper. Thanks as well to the other members of St Peter's who served on the Finance Committee this year including Ray Auchter, Terry McGuigan, Carolyn McNaughton, Jen Schlener, Randy Shue, Larry Wilcox, Adrian Young, Pastor Ross and Greg Hand, who serves as the Council liaison to the Finance Committee.

The Walz Group was contracted again in 2023 to perform a compilation review of our financial records. Their report was provided to representatives of the Finance Committee on September 19th.

From a financial standpoint the sale of the vicarage and our ability to pay down significantly our variable rate mortgage debt as we were experiencing rapid interest rate increases was very beneficial. We are thankful to the congregation for voting in favor of paying down the variable rate mortgage. That step moved us significantly closer to paying off the variable rate loan by December 2024 as required by our loan agreement with Fulton Bank. As I was writing this report two donors came forward which resulted in the payoff of the variable rate loan. At current interest rates this redirects \$5K in monthly expenses to other areas and represents the first time in many years where our external debt is approaching \$800K. We began the year with \$1.4K in debt, so this is nearly a \$600K reduction (42%).

As reported again last year, in 2011 the congregation borrowed \$110,000 from the Endowment Fund. Interest on the internal loan has been gifted to the congregation by the Endowment Committee; however, the principal of loan needs to be paid to the Endowment Fund. This issue remains on the radar of the Council and Finance Committee as the loan impacts the earnings potential of the Endowment Fund.

Of concern to the Finance Committee is the size of our beautiful church building. The aging nature of even the newest parts of our building are of concern to the Property and Finance Committee. We are grateful to Mark Aho and the Property Committee for their

leadership managing our property at the lowest cost possible in these challenging financial circumstances.

We encourage all members who are not currently using one of our electronic giving options to prayerfully consider doing so in 2024. We have seen significant growth in the numbers of members participating and the related contributions. Electronic giving now provides more than 50% of our monthly offering, which provides stability for our cash flow.

The preparation of the annual budget and the ongoing monitoring of income and expenses is a major role of the Finance Committee. Like the approach in 2022 we formed a budget sub-committee in August of this year to begin assimilating the 2024 budget requests of the various committees and ministries. A series of dialogues and conversations were held in areas where preliminary expenses exceeded projected realistic income. In October the entire Finance Committee met with the budget sub-committee to brainstorm.

Subsequently, the Finance Committee requested a joint meeting with the Council, which was held October 9th to discuss potential adjustments to the budget to deal with the projected deficit. The goal was for the Finance Committee to brainstorm with the Church Council and leadership to finalize a budget to send to the Council for their meeting on October 16th. The bottom line is attendance and giving has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Prospectively, the Finance Committee could use a few additional committee members to assist with this ministry. Questions or to volunteer feel free to reach out to any member of the Finance Committee. May God continue to bless us, guide our community of faith, challenging us to develop ideas to sustain our beautiful building while providing for a robust ministry both within our congregation, our community, and the world.

Human Resources Committee – John Kerchner, Chair

The mission of the Human Resources Committee is to support the Council and the staff by assisting with human resource-related tasks including calculating benefit cost changes, reviewing salary recommendations, ensuring that staff evaluations are completed, and carrying out any other human resource-related issues. Our responsibilities include, but are not limited to: reviewing and updating job descriptions for all church staff as needed; determining and setting staff salaries and benefit packages; formulating and proposing the HR budget for the upcoming year; reviewing all rostered leaders with input from the Council president; auditing all non-clergy staff reviews; reviewing a list of official holidays for the upcoming year; submitting a report of yearly activities for the annual congregational meeting; and, upon recommendation of the Preschool Committee, providing for preschool personnel, salary, and benefits adjustments.

This year we completed our traditional service music leadership search and hired Tom and Deborah Berdos, Director of Music and Organist respectively. As you are aware our long term Parish Secretary retired at the end of 2022. We have promoted JoAnn Harriger from Assistant Secretary to Parish Secretary and hired Kristie Windle as Assistant Secretary. In order to help control costs, both of these positions are currently part-time. The 2024 HR budget was prepared and submitted to the Finance Committee. In the upcoming year(s), the Human Resources Committee will help in supporting the Interim Pastor in our transitional period as well as the Call Committee as we search for a new Senior Pastor.

MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Sherry Weller, Chairperson

The Mutual Ministry Committee functions as the liaison between the rostered leaders, the congregation, and the community.

The Committee:

- Is Mission oriented – representing the congregation and supporting the rostered leadership
- Builds on a broad vision of ministry
- Embraces a healthy practice of inclusion and develops mutuality
- Listens & observes the life of the congregation, recognizing areas that may warrant attention. Supports open dialogue from all, without fear of retaliation
- Serves as the conduit between the congregation, community, Pastor Ross, and Sister Almoney, sharing feedback, to further the church's growth and vision

Members of the congregation are encouraged to share their concerns, both positive and negative, with members of the Committee, Pastor Ross, Pastor Hand, or Sister Dottie. Open dialogue is critical to the health of the church. Without the opportunity to share opinions regarding all types of concerns, they may go unnoticed and therefore not addressed.

There were many items discussed this past year including, but not limited to: On-going church safety, options for the sale of the Vicarage, the evolving needs of the children's Christian education, church/community programs, preschool updates, and the process to call an Interim Pastor, upon the retirement of Pastor Ross in 2024.

Meetings occur every other month. Each member plays an important role, sharing their opinions, as well as a brief Bible study, prayer and leading the meetings. While many Committees have specific goals, the Mutual Ministry Committee serves as the eyes and ears of the church, keeping a pulse on any issue. We hope we function in a way that supports all people, the mission/vision of the church, and the community at large.

Membership: Pastor Ross, Sister Almoney, Sherry Weller, Mark Aho, Mark Beauregard, Angela Moshos, Melissa Sasso, and Shirley Dombach.

Parish Life Committee Report- Christine Smith, Chair

Parish Life is comprised of various sub committees and outreach opportunities and offerings. It includes W.E.L.C.A., Prayer Chain, Sages Special events, Funeral Hospitality, Altar Flower Deliveries, and Meal & Transportation requests. Parish Life's goal is to enhance and support members in a variety of ways when needed.

W.E.L.C.A. – W.E.L.C.A., a group of approximately 40 women that meet monthly with an average attendance of 20. Notable changes in 2023 are the change in leadership and the expansion of the Vantage House care kits. Katharine Caldwell and Sally Rager 'retired' and Kathy Berkebile is serving as the new lead along with Nancy LeFevre continuing as treasurer. Gratitude to Kathy and Sally for their dedicated service for many years and timeless hours spent. The group made 30 plus personal care kits for the residents of Vantage House-a Lancaster based recovery home for women and their children. W.E.L.C.A. also packed and delivered 82 personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief. Items for both kits, such as towels, soap, tooth brushes, shampoo are collected at the meetings and packed up for drop off or shipping. Congregational donations would be welcomed. Contact Kathy Berkebile for more info if interested in donating. Meetings are the second Thursday of the month at 9 AM with a light breakfast followed by a special speaker. All women are welcome to attend.

Prayer Chain- the Prayer Chain currently consists of 38 members under the continued leadership of Angela Moshos and Ginny Gerhardt. At least two members have been added in 2023. Prayers requests are received via many forms- directly from members, through the church office and online. The number of prayer requests are not tracked, but the number seems to be down from pre-COVID days. Always openings for more members- this is an outreach that can be done at home with no meetings to attend.

Sages Special Events- Sages events are thriving, held 3 times a year with an early daytime Christmas service, Maundy Thursday service and August Sunday Birthday celebration. Attendance is above previous years. Changes in venue and timing have made a big impact on attendance. Sages birthday recognition in August was highlighted with Pastor Ross and Cleckley dual preaching. Sages events are open to anyone that has celebrated 80 or more birthdays.

Funeral Hospitality- A ministry that provides lunch or a reception before or after a funeral service. It has not come back from the COVID restrictions. Only one request in 2023. New lead and team are needed.

Altar Flower Deliveries- Altar flowers deliveries are made by 12 volunteers on a rotating weekly basis scheduled by lead, Christine Smith. Also manages the Christmas poinsettia and Easter plant deliverers to an expanded group of homebound members. Piloted in 2022 to add "place on the grave of (name)" for an Easter plant was well received and duplicated in 2023. Will continue to offer in 2024.

Meal & Transportation Requests- Year to date, numerous ride requests but no meal requests. Volunteers to give members a ride would be very welcomed. Contact Christine Smith at 610-213-6624 if available to help. New lead is needed.

Preschool Annual Meeting Report

Our current 2023/2024 school year began on Monday, September 11th. This school year, we added a new 3-year-old class with 12 children. We currently have a young 3-year-old class, three 3-year-old classes and three 4/5-year-old classes. We are almost full with 76 of our 82 available spots filled. We currently have 14 teachers and 4 substitutes on staff.

Because of the creation of the preschool scholarship given by Sandi Hirko in memory of Andy and other contributions, we were able to sponsor a few children whose parents would not otherwise be able to afford the tuition.

Our afterschool lunch box program, Prayground, has 20 children attending. This is a Christian education program that includes Bible stories, crafts, free play and of course lunch! It is really gratifying knowing that almost a third of our preschool attends our Prayground program and we continue to have parents enroll their children.

Our preschool is involved in community service projects –in recognition of Breast Cancer month, we have been collecting items for Thrive and Grit, a group organized by two of our preschool teachers, Boni Sauder and Jacquelyn Iannello. They collect certain items and put together goodie bags for people undergoing cancer treatment at the Ann Barshinger Cancer Center. We also collect soda tabs for Ronald McDonald House. We donated over 25 gallons of soda tabs in September!

We have a relationship with Millersville University as we have several student teachers who come and spend time with our classes. These students are enrolled in the early childhood education degree program.

Our preschool holds many crossover fellowship and service events. Many of our preschool families attended our trunk or treat event in October, they will be invited to all of our upcoming St. Peter's events. Children are attending our egg hunts, as well as VBS. We also currently have families attending our worship services. We continue to promote worship, fellowship and educational events to our preschool program.

Our preschool is grateful for the space and the joint ministry with St. Peter's. We are also grateful for the volunteer work of Mark Aho and his property team who make sure we have what we need to educate our preschoolers.

We will begin re-enrollment in January. Questions can be directed to Heather Cramer at heather.cramer@stpeterslutheran.org.

Property Committee—Mark Aho, Chair

2023 Annual Report

I am pleased to report that we have continued to make progress addressing long-standing facility needs and updates in the past year.

- 3 failed heat pumps replaced
- Conversion of over 100 lighting fixtures to LED for energy savings
- Replacement of 3 failed circulating pumps for the HVAC systems
- Numerous roof repairs and leak fixes
- Emergency plumbing leak repair in old sacristy
- Repair of hot water heating system for FLC/Cafe
- Replacement of deteriorated landscape plantings in the Memorial Garden
- Emergency roof repairs above the library to correct a leak

A significant project was completed early in the year to sell the vicarage. Work was done to clean up and prepare the property, engage a real estate agent and manage the sales process. Fortunately, the real estate market remained strong in Manheim Twp enabling us to use the net proceeds of over \$300k to pay down our variable rate debt.

Aside from all the large projects there is always a continuous flow of smaller projects and maintenance needs. In a very large facility with parts dating back to 1959, hardly a week goes by without finding something in need of attention.

- Cleaning and repairs to the playground
- Replacement of a number of safety EXIT lights
- Replacement of batteries in Emergency lights
- Installation of railing in the choir loft
- Repair of door closers in the entire building
- Kitchen steamer repair
- Replacement of Augsburg area exterior exit lights

Property has also undertaken an effort to clean up and organize all the areas of the church that accumulate storage items over time. Areas completely reorganized include the FLC sacristies, storage behind the new Sanctuary, kitchen supply area, building blueprints and both boiler rooms.

Heading into 2024 our 2 biggest challenges remain planning ahead for major potential replacements like roofs, boilers, HVAC units and the need for volunteers with skills that match typical maintenance needs. The heat pumps that provide the heating and cooling in the older parts of the building are mostly 20+ years old and near the end of life. We are replacing them as they fail and trying to stay current with preventive maintenance. A survey of all the roof areas was completed in order to better plan for future repairs and replacement.

St Peters has been extremely fortunate over many years to have the volunteer efforts of members with plumbing, electrical, wood working, HVAC and general construction skills. Many are now aging out and the alternative is paying contractors. My hope is to interest a new generation in making similar contributions. Volunteers can work on individual projects too without being a Committee member – give me a call!

My sincere thanks to current volunteers for their many contributions to the progress made in 2023. George Groff deserves special recognition as our resident plumbing guru who tirelessly repairs all manner of sinks, toilets, HVAC and piping. If it leaks, George is on it – he saves us a fortune!

Mark Aho

Property Chair

717-471-5898

Stewardship Committee

Betsy Linn-Chairperson

Mission Statement - St. Peter's Stewardship Committee's mission is to inspire church members to share their God-given time, talent, and treasure to enrich their personal faith journey (and the lives of others).

2023 Activity – The Stewardship Committee engaged in a variety of productive conversations and activities throughout the year:

- Created a “Giving your Talent” section of the Herald spotlighting the stories of members who give of their time and talent to St. Peter's.
- Continued the new approach to the year-round stewardship appeal, focusing first on treasure (November-January), talent (March-May), and time (summer and early fall).
- Watched and discussed an ELCA webinar, “Talking About Economics in Uncertain Times.”
- Randy Shue has diligently worked on reducing our unused envelopes by reaching out to many members.
- Continued the “Thanking Ministry,” led by Barbara Tolbert. For 2023, Barbara sent over 300 thank-you notes to church members. Thank you, Barbara! After many years of serving on the committee, Barb has (sadly) retired. The Thanking Ministry will be continued by Beth Glassford. Welcome, Beth!
- Discussed throughout the year church giving stats and financials, provided by Randy Shue, financial secretary, and Paul Schultz, parish administrator.

Committee Members – Bob Bowman, Lynn Fyfe, Sherry Moul (ex officio), Paul Berkebile (ex officio), John Olmsted, Pr. Craig Ross, Jennifer Schlener-Thomas, Paul Schultz (ex officio), Randy Shue, Barbara Tolbert, Adrian Young, Beth Glassford and Betsy Linn (chair)

Throughout the year, we have had many discussions on how to encourage members of the congregation to give their time to St. Peter's. It has been a struggle to fill several needed volunteer roles.

Parish Administrator Paul Schultz actively engages with and supports the work of the committee. Sherry Moul, Treasurer, Paul Berkebile, Finance Chair, and Greg Hand, Congregation Council president, have attended committee meetings, ensuring even tighter alignment across these leadership groups. They each are critical resources to the committee.

Prepared: 10/20/23

2023 Annual Report of the Tanzania Mission Committee (TMC)

TMC's three goals for this year were:

1. Raise \$6,000 for the Busoka orphans and Itete Hospital.
2. Raise and donate \$5,000 or more to help continue the building of the new Busoka Lutheran Church.
3. Pray for the Busoka community and the orphans at each of our church services.

The TMC sent \$4,485 raised from 2022 to Busoka with \$4,107 to assist the Orphans and \$378 to Itete Hospital, located close to Busoka.

Through the generosity of everyone at St. Peter's, we also sent \$5,000 in 2023 and have now sent \$35,000 in total to help rebuild their church. The Busoka people have made great progress constructing their new building.

After 3 years off due to COVID, the TMC held our Sub Sale and raised \$1,116. The use of these funds will be designated late this year after we know the total amount raised this year.

Peter Murdock visited Busoka in October/November 2022 and brought back pictures and stories from the Busoka people and construction activities moving forward on their new church building.



Inside the new Church building.
Church building.



People gathering outside the new

The TMC received another \$5,000 grant from St. Peter's Endowment Fund. The funds were sent to Busoka this spring for the new church building.

Communications between people from Busoka and the TMC and Peter Murdock have continued highlighting the church rebuilding activities and the Busoka people's on-going prayers for the people of St. Peter's.

Busoka Pastor, Pastor Sarafina Mwalukawa continues to serve the Busoka people and the area around Busoka.

The Tanzania Mission Committee is planning a Cookie Walk on Saturday December 9, 2023. The Cookie Walk is the largest annual fundraiser the TMC has for the people of Busoka.

The people of Busoka and St. Peter's continue to pray for each other each Sunday, strengthening our relationship and the bond between us that is now 17 years old.

Alan Swanson, on behalf of the entire Tanzania Mission Committee

WORSHIP COMMITTEE – TRADITIONAL SERVICES AND MUSIC

Congregational report 2023

St. Peter's has seen a revival of our worship and music ministries since calling Tom and Deborah Berdos to lead our musical life at the beginning of the year. As we had imagined, we are gradually building back programs that thrived before COVID restrictions with a wide range of music ministries (vocal, handbell, children's choir, and Musical Arts). The church is alive with new inspirations as well, notably St. Peter's first annual performance of Messiah with a 100-voice community chorus and orchestra on December 17, 2023.

This year we have been working on evaluating St. Peter's ensemble history, determining interest in various musical endeavors, and putting together a post-pandemic music ministry for St. Peter's. Tom and Deborah started working with the Herald Choir in December 2022. In addition to Herald Choir, the Canticle Choir is again singing at 8:00 a.m. services once per month. Our handbell choirs include St. Peter's Ringers and Exultate Ringers. Our youth music includes a new Youth Choir and Deborah is leading the Sunday School children in weekly singing. A new musical venture for us has been the intergenerational orchestra. We also had great musical experiences during the summer with our St. Peter's musicians offering their gifts in worship. In all of these ensembles, we have found eager and supportive musicians ready to take new challenges with enthusiasm and joy. It is still a post-pandemic rebuilding time, and numbers are not as high as they were prior to the pandemic, but enthusiasm and musicality is very strong. We praise God for a great start to our ensembles.

The Musical Arts Concert Series has a full 2023-24 season, with a variety of concert styles. We welcomed the Lancaster British Brass Band in August, enjoyed vocal excellence from Amy Yovanovich and Christyan Seay in October, and will have a down-home good time with the Summit Hill Bluegrass Band in February. The MACS will feature two annual choral outreach events, inviting singers from the region to participate with us. Messiah, on December 17, has had wonderful support from the community with over 100 singers engaged. In addition to the large community chorus, this formal concert will also feature a full professional orchestra and opera soloists. In the spring, we shift gears and again open our doors to new singers with the St. Peter's Choir Festival. This program will feature a variety of choral music, and a freewill offering to benefit local first responders.

It has been wonderful to see very generous support for the MACS as we step away from the confines of COVID and open our doors to the community at large. Many thanks to all of our patrons, committee, ushers, refreshment bakers, and others who make this series a strong outreach.

We are also grateful for the opportunity to support the Ocean Grove Choir Festival in Ocean Grove, NJ, by conducting local rehearsals at St. Peter's in June. This historical choral event features a choir of hundreds of singers, and draws participants from all over

the east coast. A number of our own St. Peter's singers sang last year. This is another opportunity for us to open our doors and welcome guests in.

We continue to offer two traditional services and one New Day service most Sundays, with additional services both indoors and outdoors on Christmas Eve, Holy Week and Easter. We have built up a team of livestream volunteers who enable us to broadcast at least two services every Sunday. This ministry has expanded to enable St. Peter's to offer livestream audio/video coverage of memorial services, weddings, and performances upon request.

A reminder that our ensembles - choirs for adults and youth, handbell choirs, intergenerational orchestra - are always open to new musicians. Please do not hesitate to email Tom for more information, or to participate (tom.berdos@stpeterslutheran.org). And, special thanks to those who work behind the scenes to organize music and help with the many details of keeping a music ministry moving forward. We are indebted to all of our volunteers, working hard for the glory of God in our worship services.

We have a faithful core committee assisting the clergy and music ministers. We invite anyone to join the discussion as a part-time or full-time member of the committee, which meets 10 months of the year on the second Tuesday at 7:00 pm. Please contact us to discuss our work or if you would like meeting notices.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Lambert

Worship Committee chairperson

jislamvt@gmail.com

Tom Berdos

Director of Music

tom.berdos@stpeterslutheran.org