



**CHURCH ON THE CIRCLE**  
ST ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023





# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

Over the past year we have continued to experience changes in the world around us. Even as our church finds ways to adapt to this changing world, we find hope in the unchanging and always present promise of God's love through Jesus Christ. We change and adapt not to conform to the world but because we believe that the gift of God's Son is for the world, and that our congregations and worshiping communities are places to gather and be sent into the world, where we will tell the story of God's love in word and deed.

The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the churchwide organization provide ways for the church to move beyond the boundaries of structures and geography and to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, our cities, our country and beyond. We engage in this ministry knowing that our church walks by faith, trusting in God's promise in the gospel, and that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word. In John 15:5, Jesus reminds us, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." We are connected by the promise that we do all through Christ and can do nothing apart from him.

God gives the Holy Spirit, who uses gospel proclamation — in preaching and sacraments, in forgiveness and in healing conversations — to create and sustain this faith. Just as we rely on God to sustain our faith, we rely on each other to sustain the ministries that offer God's love to the world. Through your generosity to each expression

of this church — your congregation, your synod and your churchwide organization — you add to our collective voice proclaiming God's love for all.

I am grateful for your generosity over this last year. My gratitude spreads far beyond your generous financial gifts. You've shared your gifts of time through countless hours of volunteering, serving and accompanying. You've shared the gifts of your voices as we've tried to discover and learn how God is calling us to be the church now and into the future. And, finally, dear church, you have shared the gift of the realness of God's love with the world around you. Be well, dear church, and stand steadfast in the promise of God's love and grace as you take that promise with you into the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

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

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“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” —John 15:5

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## PASTOR'S REPORT

There is something to be said for the pastor's report coming first in this booklet. Not that what I have to say is the most important thing at hand – it is not! But I do have the privilege of setting the scene for that which follows. And a wonderful scene it is...

Doug Engebretson, our treasurer, reports on a financially healthy 2023, in which we ended positively, in the black. That is no small feat for a congregation in today's religious and economic climate.

Ernie Smith, the congregation's president, provides a concise overview of the year, its highlights, and its challenges. And he rightly concludes that the former far outweighs the latter.

Michael Bodnyk, our incredible Minister of Music, reports on a year in which concerts and special events brought members and visitors into our building in impressive numbers. And, beyond that, these happenings brought joy and light into so many lives and introduced SAKLC to the wider community. What a blessing!

Our Community Service Ministry (CSM) and its chairperson, Karyn Smith, spent the year touching the lives of hundreds of people in our community and around the world. These are but a few examples: 1000+ personal care kits, and over 200 quilts for Lutheran World Relief; 40,000 meal kits for kids (yes, that number is correct!); and over \$30,000 raised and distributed to worthy causes in our community. And, in 2024 CSM is transforming into an entirely hands-on ministry, which will impact the lives of even more individuals, and families – funded entirely by the SAKLC Foundation.

In 2023, the SAKLC Foundation, wonderfully led by Don Resler, disbursed grants totaling \$87,000. Some of these generous grants funded vital community-focused ministry at SAKLC – including funding CSM's ministry in 2024, and Audio-Visual enhancements to our fellowship hall. Other grants supported ministries in the Sarasota-Manatee area and far beyond our wee island. And the Foundation's Church Support Fund supported our operating budget by \$24,000 last year. In fact, over the past five years, SAKLC has received \$107,000 from its Foundation, and the wider community received \$386,000!

The refugee team became the Refugee Committee (RC) in 2023, faithfully directed by Nona Arnholt. RC supported dozens of legal refugees - recommended to them by Lutheran Services Florida - with help securing Green cards, household furnishings, bicycles, baby supplies, food, feminine hygiene products, Christmas toys, clothing, and more!

A full year of educational classes and events is described in the Christian Education report. Despite some post-lightning strike technological challenges, a wide variety of topics was covered throughout the year; from Holy Land experiences, to Lutheran biblical interpretation; from the historical experiences of Lutherans in America to contemporary understandings of the faith.

The Growth Committee describes multiple concrete steps taken in 2023 to grow SAKLC in “programs, reach, and membership.” Their report makes for very interesting reading. The committee is led by the indefatigable Steve Gunderson.

The Women’s Ministry report is deceptively concise, as it in fact covers countless hours of preparation, implementation, participation, learning, and fun! The women of SAKLC find friendship and joy within this wonderful band of sisters; the fruit of several years of leadership, guidance and nurturing at the hands of Judy Matthies.

Lastly, the Property Committee report outlines the costs associated with not only the general upkeep and running of our wonderful building (a building which makes all of our worship and ministry possible!) but also those resulting from the 2023 lightning strike and Hurricane Ian-related flooding. As you can see, tens of thousands of dollars have been spent this year, not on luxuries, but on necessary repairs and replacements. Thankfully, our members and friends have been generous, and our reserve funds have been used for precisely that for which they were created. And so, although our reserves are somewhat depleted, our ministry continues and thrives – thanks be to God!

It is, perhaps not surprising that, at the end of a year in which the faithful planning and incredible foresight of previous generations of SAKLC folk allowed this congregation to weather (no pun intended) all that 2023 could throw at us; that congregational leadership began to ask this question: How should we begin to prepare not just for next year but for many years ahead? The founding generation at SAKLC was not content with simply meeting the budget each year; they had a vision for growth. The next generation saw strategic planning and reserve funding as an expression of faithful living and witness. In 2024, this generation will focus on a vision for growth, and the actions necessary to enable us to both live faithfully in the moment and at the same time lay the groundwork for those to whom we will pass on the Gospel ministry in and from this very special place. And so, arguably, the most important report is not found in this Annual Report but is in fact being drafted as I type. The Strategic Planning Team will issue their report in 2024, and I am proud to be a part of a team which looks into God’s future with such faith and anticipation; with such gratitude for the past, and such hope for the future.

In fact, that last sentence sums up, rather well, not just the labor of the Strategic Planning team, but also the attitude of heart and mind of this wonderful congregation, past, present and – God willing – future. **A congregation which looks into God’s future with such faith and anticipation; with such gratitude for the past, and such hope for the future.**

**Pr. Ken Blyth**

Pastor

## TREASURER'S REPORT

We have successfully made our way through a complicated 2023. We dealt with unanticipated expenses related to insurance, landscape damage and electrical systems repair.

The landscape damage occurred all around our church, parking area and especially our garden. Thankfully, no water intrusion was found in any of our building areas. The electric and electronic equipment damage was caused by a lightning strike.

The funds for these Capital Items were mostly borne by the Capital Reserves Account. While this account shows balance from \$184,770 at the beginning of the year to \$201,176 at the end of the year, further explanation is provided in the next paragraph. The year-end balance includes a \$24,000 contribution made to the account from the Operating Budget and the most appreciated targeted fund raising that occurred during the year of \$101,575. Expenditures included the replacement of several Air Conditioning units and other items at a cost of \$84,168.

At the end of 2023, however, outstanding invoices and anticipated additional expenditures from the weather and electrical impacts to the property were approximately \$175,000. Offsetting these additional costs are the \$77,000 operating surplus from 2023 and the transfer of unused hurricane funds of \$12,000 to Capital Reserves. Therefore, the available Capital Reserves for 2024 is approximately \$115,000.

We began the year with a 2023 Balanced Budget anticipating Operating income and expenditures of \$1,122,121. Given the unexpected physical plant expenditures from the Capital Reserves account and cautious spending, we were able to complete the year spending \$1,087,877 from the Operating Account.

As you can see in the Financial Report, the major items affecting the cash needs were:

1. Tech Support (offset by reduction in Support Staff Salaries)
2. Insurance
3. Building Repairs & Maintenance

The budget plan which you are considering today reflects a balanced budget based on a planned total income of \$1,220,000 as per the proposal sent out to you earlier this month. The plan includes an increase in Regular Member Giving of about 2.07% over the actual 2023 amount received, noting that in 2023 Regular and Loose Offerings were considerably higher than budgeted. The overall budget is increased 4.74% from Total Income received in 2023. The increase from 2023 Budget to 2024 Budget is 8.72%.

Some of the key elements include:

1. A continuation of the independent fundraising by the Music Ministry
2. A contribution from the SAKLC Foundation Church Support Fund
3. A reorganization of staff support that positively impacts the mission of the church
4. The inclusion of funding for consultant services to manage our electronic broadcasting effort to provide our services and programs via internet media

The Music Ministry and the Community Service Ministry contribute significantly to the face of SAKLC via their programs and delivered services to the public and disadvantaged populations locally and internationally.

The amounts included in the budget were developed with advice from several of the Ministries and reflection on the expenses incurred in 2023. The Finance Committee, the Executive Committee and the Church Council have come together to recommend support for the 2024 Budget and we hope you will agree with their recommendations.

**Douglas Engebretson**

Congregation Council, Treasurer

**ST. ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
FINANCIAL MINISTRY PROPOSAL - 2024**

20240116 Final

		Preliminary	Budgeted for	Budgeted for
		Actual 2023	2023	2024
<b>Income Accounts*</b>				
<b>ENVELOPES</b>				
01	REG OFFERING	\$ 925,826	\$ 870,061	\$ 945,000
02	MISC ENVELOPE OFFERING	4,794	7,825	6,000
	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>930,620</b>	<b>877,886</b>	<b>951,000</b>
<b>LOOSE OFFERING</b>				
01	LOOSE OFFERING	94,102	54,557	90,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>94,102</b>	<b>54,557</b>	<b>90,000</b>
<b>ENDOWMENTS</b>				
01	ENDOWMENT FUND - FOUNDATION	24,936	38,373	25,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>24,936</b>	<b>38,373</b>	<b>25,000</b>
<b>MISC RECEIPTS</b>				
01	FLOWERS	5,708	5,482	5,000
04	PARKING RECEIPTS	26,615	32,337	32,000
05	INVESTMENT INCOME	27,154	44,000	30,000
07	MISCELLANEOUS & WEDDING INCOME	7,418	3,994	8,000
08	RENTAL INCOME	26,112	23,124	5,000
10	MUSIC INCOME	17,412	38,745	38,000
11	HEALTH & WELLNESS INCOME	3,370	3,090	4,000
12	FELLOWSHIP INCOME	1,321	533	2,000
??	COMMUNITY SERVICE - FOUNDATION	0	-	30,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>115,110</b>	<b>151,305</b>	<b>154,000</b>
<b>Total Income:</b>		<b>\$ 1,164,768</b>	<b>\$ 1,122,121</b>	<b>\$ 1,220,000</b>

## Expense Accounts\*

	Preliminary Actual 2023	Budgeted for 2023	Budgeted for 2024
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### STAFF

01	Pastor's Salary & Housing	\$ 131,827	\$ 128,617	\$ 133,000
02	Pastor's Benefits	36,634	40,033	43,000
03	Pastor's Car Allowance	4,192	4,200	5,000
05	Pastor's Continuing Education	1,193	2,100	2,000
06	Pastor's Professional Expense	2,706	2,100	3,000
07	Pulpit Supply	450	2,100	2,000
08	Minister of Music Salary	110,122	108,653	112,000
09	Minister of Music Benefit	20,032	22,118	24,000
10	Substitute Musician	550	2,400	4,000
11	Support Staff Salaries	148,348	197,862	127,000
12	Support Staff Benefits	11,872	12,600	8,000
13	Admin Professional Expense	937	2,100	2,000
15	FICA Employer's Share	18,972	21,891	18,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>487,835</b>	<b>546,774</b>	<b>483,000</b>

### BENEVOLENCE

01	Mission Support	84,000	84,000	84,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>84,000</b>

### WORSHIP & MUSIC

05	Instrumentalist/Vocalist	30,325	42,320	46,000
06	Music Materials & Maint	10,476	13,800	12,000
07	Music Workshops and Events	681	4,500	4,000
08	Worship Materials	4,535	5,200	5,000
10	Choral Scholar Program	33,785	45,000	48,000
11	Flowers	10,038	4,420	6,000
??	Substitute Musician for Worship			3,000
17	Special Concerts	8,745	23,100	24,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>98,585</b>	<b>138,340</b>	<b>148,000</b>

### TECHNOLOGY

01	Audio/Visual Supplies	15,759	5,107	5,000
02	Tech Support	37,002	2,200	80,000
03	A/V Upgrades - Phase 1	11,188	-	-
04	Website Maintenance & Development	6,794	25,000	7,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>70,743</b>	<b>32,307</b>	<b>92,000</b>

### MISSION

01	Outreach	3,768	2,500	5,000
03	Education	4,378	6,500	7,000
04	Advertising	17,878	20,000	15,000
06	Stewardship/Contrib. Env.	552	1,500	1,000
07	Communications	674	1,800	1,000
08	Fellowship	4,852	10,000	7,000



**Preliminary  
Actual 2023**      **Budgeted for  
2023**      **Budgeted for  
2024**

## Expense Accounts (Continued)\*

### MISSION (Continued)

09	Fellowship Special Events	5,713	-	8,000
10	Fellowship Coordinator	4,560	4,000	5,000
11	Christmas on the Circle	4,006	5,500	5,000
19	Health & Wellness	5,935	10,500	13,000
??	Community Service			30,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>52,316</b>	<b>62,300</b>	<b>97,000</b>

### ADMINISTRATION

26	Office Supplies	15,256	12,000	17,000
27	Printing & Postage	7,102	4,500	8,000
29	Convention/Travel	1,211	2,000	5,000
31	Office Equipment Maint	7,678	7,000	10,000
33	Miscellaneous Expenses	224	600	1,000
34	Payroll/Bank Processing	2,402	3,000	3,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>33,873</b>	<b>29,100</b>	<b>44,000</b>

### INSURANCE

01	Insurance	92,674	61,900	92,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>92,674</b>	<b>61,900</b>	<b>92,000</b>

### PROPERTY MAGMT

03	Building Repairs & Maintenance	34,975	24,300	30,000
05	Cleaning Services	17,921	14,000	15,000
06	Air Conditioning Service	7,652	15,000	13,000
07	Landscape Maintenance	29,264	25,000	32,000
08	Fire Alarm & Security Sys	8,365	4,700	5,000
09	Pest Control	1,339	3,200	5,000
10	Special Projects	-	4,400	5,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>99,516</b>	<b>90,600</b>	<b>105,000</b>

### UTILITIES

01	Gas & Electric	27,604	27,000	28,000
02	Telephone/Cable/Dsl	5,033	6,000	6,000
03	Water/Sewer/Trash	5,990	9,000	5,000
04	Non-Ad Valorum Taxes	5,708	10,800	6,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>44,335</b>	<b>52,800</b>	<b>45,000</b>

### TRANSFERS

	Capital Reserve Provision	24,000	24,000	30,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>

**Total Expense \$ 1,087,877    \$ 1,122,121    \$ 1,220,000**

**Income Less Expense            76,892                    0                    0**

#### Use of funds:

**Additional Transfer to Capital Reserves \$    76,892**

\* Unaudited year end results

# THE 2024 SAKLC CAPITAL RESERVES BUDGET

## Executive Summary

With regard to the Capital Reserves, the Council has moved into getting a greater understanding of the funding that will be needed to maintain our complex which is now 25 years old for this main space and 50 years old for the other portions. There are 4 sheets of information that were provided by a Reserves Specialist who reviewed our building conditions and recommended/suggested the items of expense that we could expect over the next few decades.

As you can see, the recommended contributing \$182,156 this year and a similar significant amount over the next years to be able to have the funds when the major repairs are estimated to be needed. This year the budget provides a contribution of \$30,000 to Capital Reserves which together with the starting balance of \$201,176 will put us on track to exceed the projected 2024 year-end estimate of \$197,564 in reserves. We already know that we will have more costs associated with Capital Reserve expenditures than the \$0.00 shown in the schedule, so we need to transition into a more realistic funding schedule to be able to take care of the facility we are currently enjoying. As we can see in the "Threshold Funding Model Projection, a significant increase is suggested for 2025.

**St. Armands Lutheran Church  
Threshold Funding Model Projection**

Beginning Balance: \$6,000

Year	Current Cost	Annual Contribution	Annual Interest	Annual Expenditures	Projected Ending Reserves	Fully Funded Reserves	Percent Funded
2024	2,076,975	182,156	9,408		197,564	1,261,854	16%
2025	2,139,284	187,621	16,015	64,890	336,309	1,361,311	25%
2026	2,203,463	193,249	26,478		556,037	1,536,507	36%
2027	2,269,567	199,047	23,412	286,841	491,655	1,416,680	35%
2028	2,337,654	205,018	34,834		731,507	1,601,720	46%
2029	2,407,783	211,169	47,134		989,810	1,796,586	55%
2030	2,480,017	139,977	6,999	989,810	146,976	951,615	15%
2031	2,554,417	144,176	14,558		305,709	1,135,919	27%
2032	2,631,050	148,501	22,711		476,921	1,330,426	36%
2033	2,709,981	152,956	31,494		661,371	1,535,580	43%
2034	2,791,281	157,545	40,946		859,861	1,751,847	49%
2035	2,875,019	162,271	44,185	138,423	927,894	1,832,854	51%
2036	2,961,270	167,139	54,752		1,149,785	2,068,404	56%
2037	3,050,108	172,153	63,894	44,056	1,341,777	2,269,698	59%
2038	3,141,611	177,318	66,501	189,074	1,396,523	2,328,761	60%
2039	3,235,859	182,638	73,583	107,500	1,545,243	2,481,885	62%
2040	3,332,935	188,117	14,976	1,433,845	314,491	1,238,401	25%
2041	3,432,923	193,760	21,280	82,642	446,889	1,397,201	32%
2042	3,535,911	199,573	9,979	446,889	209,552	1,180,616	18%
2043	3,641,988	205,560	20,756		435,868	1,438,106	30%
2044	3,751,248	211,727	32,380		679,975	1,709,982	40%
2045	3,863,785	218,079	29,741	303,228	624,567	1,675,182	37%
2046	3,979,699	224,621	42,459		891,648	1,968,101	45%
2047	4,099,090	231,360	56,150		1,179,158	2,277,087	52%
2048	4,222,063	238,301	65,791	101,640	1,381,610	2,495,011	55%
2049	4,348,724	245,450	81,353		1,708,413	2,835,026	60%
2050	4,479,186	252,813	29,164	1,377,954	612,435	1,731,325	35%
2051	4,613,562	260,398	43,642		916,475	2,064,578	44%
2052	4,751,969	268,210	55,802	68,638	1,171,849	2,343,450	50%
2053	4,894,528	276,256	57,677	294,571	1,211,211	2,399,688	50%

**St. Armands Lutheran Church  
Annual Expenditure Detail**

Description	Expenditures
<i>No Replacement in 2024</i>	
<b>Replacement Year 2025</b>	
Asphalt mill/repave	64,890
<b>Total for 2025</b>	<b>\$64,890</b>
<i>No Replacement in 2026</i>	
<b>Replacement Year 2027</b>	
HVAC	286,841
<b>Total for 2027</b>	<b>\$286,841</b>
<i>No Replacement in 2028</i>	
<i>No Replacement in 2029</i>	
<b>Replacement Year 2030</b>	
Asphalt Shingle Roof	142,033
Church Floor	89,554
Exterior Paint/Waterproofing	591,056
Restroom Remodel	47,762
Stormwater Management	119,405
<b>Total for 2030</b>	<b>\$989,810</b>
<i>No Replacement in 2031</i>	
<i>No Replacement in 2032</i>	
<i>No Replacement in 2033</i>	
<i>No Replacement in 2034</i>	
<b>Replacement Year 2035</b>	
Camera Surveillance	34,606
Church Pews	103,818
<b>Total for 2035</b>	<b>\$138,423</b>
<i>No Replacement in 2036</i>	
<b>Replacement Year 2037</b>	
A/V System Ogram	44,056
<b>Total for 2037</b>	<b>\$44,056</b>

**St. Armands Lutheran Church  
Annual Expenditure Detail**

Description	Expenditures
<b>Replacement Year 2038</b>	
A/V System Sanctuary	75,629
Landscape/Irrigation	<u>113,444</u>
<b>Total for 2038</b>	<b>\$189,074</b>
<b>Replacement Year 2039</b>	
Flat Roof TPO	<u>107,500</u>
<b>Total for 2039</b>	<b>\$107,500</b>
<b>Replacement Year 2040</b>	
Door Replacement	104,306
Exterior Paint/Waterproofing	794,330
Interior Remodel Allowance	160,471
Railings Back Entrance	29,727
Steeple Rehab/Structural	16,047
Structural Reserve	160,471
Window Replacement	<u>168,494</u>
<b>Total for 2040</b>	<b>\$1,433,845</b>
<b>Replacement Year 2041</b>	
Commercial Kitchen	<u>82,642</u>
<b>Total for 2041</b>	<b>\$82,642</b>
<b>Replacement Year 2042</b>	
HVAC	<u>446,889</u>
<b>Total for 2042</b>	<b>\$446,889</b>
<i>No Replacement in 2043</i>	
<i>No Replacement in 2044</i>	
<b>Replacement Year 2045</b>	
Asphalt mill/repave	117,199
Electrical	93,015
Plumbing	<u>93,015</u>
<b>Total for 2045</b>	<b>\$303,228</b>
<i>No Replacement in 2046</i>	
<i>No Replacement in 2047</i>	



**St. Armands Lutheran Church  
Annual Expenditure Detail**

Description	Expenditures
<b>Replacement Year 2048</b>	
FACP A/V Alarm	101,640
<b>Total for 2048</b>	<u>\$101,640</u>
<i>No Replacement in 2049</i>	
<b>Replacement Year 2050</b>	
Asphalt Shingle Roof	256,527
Camera Surveillance	53,915
Exterior Paint/Waterproofing	1,067,513
<b>Total for 2050</b>	<u>\$1,377,954</u>
<i>No Replacement in 2051</i>	
<b>Replacement Year 2052</b>	
A/V System Ogram	68,638
<b>Total for 2052</b>	<u>\$68,638</u>
<b>Replacement Year 2053</b>	
A/V System Sanctuary	117,828
Landscape/Irrigation	176,742
<b>Total for 2053</b>	<u>\$294,571</u>

## MEMBERSHIP STATISTICAL REPORT

	TOTAL	FULL	SEASONAL	ASSOCIATE
Active Members 12/31/2022	459	396	20	43
TOTAL GAINS 2023				
Affirmations of Faith	29	16	6	7
Transfers	16**	14	2	0
Baptisms	0	0	0	0
TOTAL LOSSES 2023				
By death	13	12	1	0
By transfer	9	4	5	0
For other reasons	0	0	0	0
TOTAL MEMBERS 12/31/2023	482	410	22	50

Members of the congregation who died in 2023: Eugenia Finstad, Grace Ellison, Paul Sletten, Margaret Bechtel, Lore Gollnick, Gene Saunders, Mary Ellen Shoop, Carole Scutt Malcolm, Chip Dreger, Linda Werley, Anita Bedessem, Ben Bates, Norman Sandrib

Marriages performed: 5

Baptisms: 5

Confirmations: 0

Total 2023 Sunday Attendance: 9,708 \*

Average 2023 Sunday Attendance: between 150-400 (season dependent)\*

\*These attendance numbers are not inclusive of our significant online attendance and participation

\*\* Most transfers due to members moving out of state

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,  
for those who are called according to his purpose.*

Romans 8:28

2023 was a tremendous year for the Church on the Circle. I will summarize some of the very many highlights and very few lowlights of the year. You'll find more information about many of these items elsewhere in this annual report.

## **2023: A Year in Review.**

**Growth and Engagement.** The year began with the first Welcome Back dinner in January. This fun, social event packed Fellowship Hall with over 140 members to kickoff "the season" together and allow us to get to know each other a little better. Thanks to work in 2022 by the Growth Task Force, 2023 saw the creation of an ongoing Engagement and Growth Committee led by Steve Gunderson and the creation of a Director of Engagement & Growth staff position filled by Nina Vannucci. Based on these multi-year efforts, we welcomed over 40 new members in 2023.

**Music Ministry.** In 2023, the Council created the Organ Task Force, led by our Minister of Music, Michael Bodnyk, to review alternatives for a new organ. Ultimately, their recommendation was to purchase a custom pipe organ from the Schantz Organ Company and to create an Organ Fund to support the purchase and maintenance of the new organ as well as to promote broad use of the organ for concerts, student training sessions, competitions, scholarships, and other activities with a goal of raising a \$1.5 million for this fund. Michael conducted many information sessions and by the time of the Congregational vote on the proposal, \$1 million was already committed by generous donors who are passionate about this investment in the future of the Church. The Congregation approved the proposal, and the organ is anticipated to be installed in late 2025.

**Community Service Ministry.** Our Community Service Ministry partnered with over 14 local and global organizations providing time, money and services to help meet basic human needs. The Committee conducted "in kind" drives to collect and distribute food, cleaning supplies, clothing and other items for children, the elderly and the disadvantaged in Sarasota and Manatee Counties as well as conducting a fundraising campaign to support local and global organizations. Looking ahead to 2024, the Committee proposed, and the Council approved, a change in their mission. The Committee will shift its efforts from soliciting and distributing monetary donations to benefit other organizations to using budgeted funds to financially support volunteer, hands-on

projects. Thanks to the efforts of the Joint Working Group between the Council and Foundation, this budget item will be funded in 2024 by the SAKLC Foundation.

**Joint Working Group with the Foundation.** Also established in 2023, the Joint Working Group between the Council and the SAKLC Foundation met regularly throughout the year with a focus on creating a better understanding of the respective history and work of the organizations. Many thanks to Don Resler, the outgoing Chair of the Foundation Trustees, for his service as a Trustee and efforts in the Joint Working Group. His leadership was instrumental in bringing forward a positive set of recommendations for the Council and Trustees to work more closely in the future which resulted in the Foundation's commitment to funding both the Community Service Ministry and certain AV needs in 2024. This Joint Working Group will continue in 2024.

**AV Task Force.** Newly created by the Council in 2023, the AV Task Force gathered ideas and perspectives from across the congregation related to optimizing the Audio/Visual experience for both inhouse Worship and remote participation in Worship Services, Christian Education, and various committee work. The AV Task Force completed their work on a multi-year road map and identified AV equipment for Fellowship Hall as the most beneficial first step in the road map. One other recommendation of the AV task force was to continue third-party expertise in managing our AV equipment and online offerings. You will see this recommendation incorporated into the 2024 Budget.

**Women's Ministry.** In early 2023, the Council established the Women's Fellowship and Ministry Committee under the continuing faithful leadership of Judy Matthies. The Women's ministry sponsored an Advent event as well as a Spring Tea along with many other fellowship opportunities during the year.

**Worship and Education.** As all these efforts were underway, Pastor Ken not only continued to provide us multiple worship services every week, as well as weekly bible study and ongoing Christian education offerings, he also stepped-up to lead a pilgrimage trip for members and friends of the Congregation to the Holy Land. The Congregation responded by quickly reserving the maximum seats. Sadly, the invasion of Israel on October 7, 2023, resulted in the trip being canceled by the tour operator. We hope and pray for another pilgrimage opportunity in the future.

### **Overcoming the Effects of Nature**

In July a lightning strike on the Church steeple resulted in damage to our lighting, sound and electronic equipment. We engaged specialized experts to troubleshoot, repair, replace and resolve issues from this major damage. We had several rocky months where the Sanctuary and Ogram Hall were both less than 100% operational, but thanks to a new third-party relationship, we have seen operational improvements compared to before the lightning strike.

On the heels of the lightning strike, in late August, hurricane related flooding swamped much of St Armands Key. The water didn't rise to the level of the church buildings, but the salt water irreparably damaged landscaping all around the property, especially in the Meditation Garden. Repairs and replacements have begun and will need to continue in 2024.

The damage from the lightning strike and the flood, the replacement of several failed air conditioners and the rise in the cost of insurance resulted in extraordinary expenses and capital costs for 2023. These were readily handled through very generous donations, particularly those donating to restore the Meditation Garden, and by the financial reserves that have been established at SAKLC. In March 2024, we will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sanctuary. This milestone anniversary is a reminder that there are bound to be increased maintenance and replacement costs in the years to come. In 2023 the Council commissioned a capital reserve analysis to anticipate how much we should have in reserves so that we'll be able to handle future costs. There will be more about this in 2024.

**Moving Forward to 2024.** In October, Pastor Ken and his wife Amy purchased a home and moved out of the Church House that they had rented for several years. Having owned a home in Sarasota previously, they are delighted to be homeowners again. With congratulations, we wish them much happiness there!

With the Church House now being vacant, study is underway as to the best approach to take with the property. More information will be brought to the congregation for consideration in 2024 regarding not only the future of the Church House, but other strategic planning considerations.

In closing I want to recognize and thank everyone who contributed to the Church's success in 2023. We look forward to our continued service in 2024.

Sincerely,

**Ernie Smith**

Congregation President



# MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT

## & OPERATIONS NOTES

Fred Pratt Green penned the words in 1971 to one of my very favorite hymn texts, “When in our music God is glorified”. As I sat down to write this annual report message, the beginning stanza of that hymn kept coming to mind:

*When in our music God is glorified,  
and adoration leaves no room for pride,  
it is as though the whole creation cried: Alleluia!*

As I reflect on the Music Ministry here at St. Armands Key Lutheran Church, I am proud of the vibrant program we have been building. Our SAKLC musicians truly glorify God with the beauty and joy they add to all our worship services. The above verse makes me remember the packed Congregation on Easter Sunday singing the “Hallelujah Chorus” together. We are so fortunate to have such an awesome team of musicians who have made a year of tremendous music-making possible.

Our Sunday Singers (for both the 9am and 11am Sunday services), the SAKLC Ringers, and our Choral Scholars are the backbone of our music program. These dedicated musicians give of their time each week to help beautify our liturgies, helping the congregation to pray more deeply and fervently. The sheer amount of music they learn and execute in a year is extraordinary, especially for a church our size! I am deeply grateful to each one of these musicians for their dedication.



Our Music Ministry is also blessed to be able to host a variety of guest instrumentalists and groups throughout the year. Too many to name individually, these musicians add an extra layer of beauty to our worship music. I am particularly thankful to our resident brass quintet that make our Easter Sunday, Reformation, and Christmas Eve services so very special.

We hope that the concerts and programs sponsored by the Music Ministry help to bring in local community members. In 2023 we hosted some awesome events!

In January, The Kings Brass returned for their second concert at SAKLC. We had a great turnout for this event, and Tim Zimmerman and his players did not fail to disappoint. Sincere thanks to the church families who housed the musicians - we could not host this type of group without your help - and also to Christine Ortiz for going above and beyond with cooking and hospitality!

Our winter and spring were filled with wonderful music. The Lido Beach Commodores returned for their annual Mardi Gras worship on Transfiguration Sunday — this is always a real treat for us! Our choir and instrumentalists worked hard to offer meaningful and beautiful music during the Lenten season.

The Sunday Singers prepared a special Lenten cantata, “Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten”, by Felix Mendelssohn. This was presented on March 19th with a string ensemble and soloists from the choir.

Easter Sunday was extraordinary. We had four services; two in the Garden and two in the Sanctuary. The inside services featured our awesome Sunday Singers and Choral Scholars, our brass quintet, timpani, and the Daige family (playing flute, oboe and violin). The singers offered a beautiful anthem, “Easter Bells Set Free Your Music”, which I arranged for the entire instrumental ensemble. We closed the worship service with a congregational version of G. F. Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus” from *Messiah*.

We are grateful to our Choral Singers and volunteer musicians who helped provide special music over the summer months. In August we hosted a “Hymn Sing” each Sunday before worship. It was awesome to see (and hear!) so many people show up early for church to hear and sing their favorite tunes from the hymnal!

We had a busy fall at SAKLC!





We had over 60 SAKLC members and friends join us for a special presentation by the Sarasota Orchestra at the Van Wezel — a screening of “Star Wars: A New Hope” accompanied by the orchestra. What a fun night!



We hosted our 3rd annual Oktoberfest event. We had an amazing turnout — everyone enjoyed the tasty meal from Geier’s Sausage Kitchen and the great music by the Oktoberfest band. If you missed this event, we hope you’ll join us for the next one!



A few days later, we hosted Adam Aceto, the organist for the Walt Disney Company, for a special silent film version of “Phantom of the Opera”. We had a huge turnout for this show — everyone wanted to know when he would be back (and he will be in 2024!).

December was a busy month for our SAKLC Musicians. We gave our very first “Carols for Cows” program

to benefit the ELCA’s Good Gifts program. All the money donated towards the concert was used to purchase an item from the Good Gifts catalog. These included: a cow, a fish farm, a fruit tree farm, goats, chicks, a motorbike for a Pastor, and more! These gifts will go to families all over the world with the dual purpose of helping sustain that family, and also providing the family with a small business they can use for income.

The Music Ministry sponsored an Advent Bach Vespers which featured Johann Sebastian Bach’s cantata “Nun komm der Heiden Heiland” (BWV 61). Our Choir and soloists (Nina Vannucci, Gabriel Welch, and Paul Thurner) all did an outstanding job. Special thanks to Pastor Blyth for helping to lead this beautiful evening liturgy.

Throughout the year, we hosted several Garden Concerts in our award-winning Meditation Garden. We are so fortunate to have such a beautiful outdoor venue for musical programs. These have become very popular with our congregation and local community.

Our Choral Scholar program continues to be an important part of Music Ministry. I am thrilled Kelly Collins, Kevin Moroney, and Nina Vannucci have all continued in the program this year. In

2023, we welcomed Gabriel Welch as our new tenor. He has become a great asset to the team. Our Choral Scholars help to lead music at the 9am Service each Sunday, sing with the Sunday Singers at each 11am Sunday service, and help lead our summer worship music from June through September when so many of our regular singers are “up north”.

I continue to be extraordinarily grateful to Kris Soderman for all the many ways she assists SAKLC’s Music Ministry — accompany the choir on Sunday morning, playing for our weekday choir rehearsals, and substituting for me on Sundays when needed. We are so grateful that Kris found her way to our congregation and that she is so willing to joyfully share her musical gifts with us!

### **Our New Carillon**

We had two major musical additions to the church in 2023 — one that has already been installed, and one that we are eagerly awaiting.

A new electronic carillon from Chime Master was installed in December. This was an extraordinarily generous gift made to the church in honor of Maryanne Mayer by her family. It has been a beautiful addition to a church and we have received some wonderful comments about how nice it sounds.

### **SAKLC’s Schantz Pipe Organ**

Our current electronic organ in the Sanctuary is 18 years old. It has served the congregation well over almost two decades. Unfortunately, a digital organ uses the same basic type of technology as a cell phone or tablet. How long do we keep our phones before they either break or become outdated with newer, better technology? Our organ is having some problems requiring significant, costly repairs. The question was whether we make the repairs on an instrument that is nearing the end of its life, or do we invest in a world-class pipe instrument that will complement our music ministry and last for generations to come.

In 2019, Church Council gave the Music Ministry permission to begin investigation of a new pipe organ for the church. Dr. John Behnke, one of the country’s most prominent church musicians (and one of my former teachers), was brought on as our organ consultant. Slowed down by Covid 19, after two years of work and conversations with 9 organ builders from around the world, and site visits to various instruments, 3 designs were chosen based on:

1. A timeless design
2. Placement at the front of the sanctuary (the best acoustical spot)
3. Maintaining as much of the coral stone wall as possible
4. The cross needing to remain central
5. Maintaining the look and view of the Luther Rose window
6. Use of the existing pipework donated in 2007 by Art & Helen Kuh



These three designs were brought before an Organ Task Force approved by Church Council. This task force assessed the designs through the lenses of financial feasibility and aesthetics. After a site visit to hear one of the instruments, the instrument from the **Schantz Organ Company** of Orrville, Ohio was chosen.

A project budget of \$1.4 million was set. This includes the cost of the instrument (and installation), and the creation of an Organ Fund to help assist the church with programming and maintenance for the instrument.

The Finance Committee agreed to recommend the purchase of the instrument if \$1 million could be raised - the approximate cost of the instrument. The committee did not want the church to incur debt for this project.

Our Minister of Music was able to secure donations and pledges for the needed amount. It was then brought to Church Council which voted unanimously to move the project to a Congregational Meeting for approval.



At a special congregational meeting on July 30th, the Congregation unanimously approved our Pipe Organ Project — this includes the purchase of a new pipe organ, and the establishment of an Organ Fund to assist with maintenance and programming.

This is truly a musical milestone for SAKLC. Our new Schantz pipe organ will be a musical calling card for the church. It will beautify all our liturgies, be used as a concert instrument to bring in and engage our community members, and it will be used to help encourage and inspire future generations of church musicians. Our hope is to establish a scholarship competition for young musicians that will draw national and international attention to SAKLC.

Sincere thanks to Pastor Blyth, The Organ Task Force, Church Council - and the whole congregation! - for the support of this major project!

We still have quite a way to go in securing the funds for the Organ Fund, an essential element of this whole project. I hope you will consider learning more about the instrument and considering support!

The Schantz Organ Company celebrated their 150th anniversary in 2023. This company is known internationally for their excellent in organ building and their instruments which stand the test of time. The new instrument will be a part of SAKLC for many decades and generations to come

### **Educational Opportunities**

Over the spring and summer, I was fortunate to be able to attend two different church music conferences.

In May, I traveled to Gainesville to be part of the Summer Sacred Music Festival sponsored by the University of Florida. This was a great opportunity to network with church musicians from all around the state. Guest artists and teachers included Vicki Schaeffer, Dr. Laura Ellis, David Stultz, Will Keeling, and more. I attended some wonderful and useful workshops on organ improvisation, church music administration matters, choral reading sessions, rehearsal techniques, and more!

Later in the summer, over the 4th of July weekend, the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians hosted their first biennial conference since Covid in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I have been going to these meetings for the past fifteen years and they are my favorite events (sadly only once every two years). To hear a church filled with 300 Lutheran Church musicians singing hymns is like nothing else on earth — it is as close to what I envision



the music in heaven being. This was a spectacular opportunity to reconnect with old friends, and make new contacts from around the country. The workshops and concerts were exceptional!

### **The Final Stanza**

The final stanza of “When in Our Music God Is Glorified” exclaims:

*Let every instrument be tuned for praise;  
let all rejoice who have a voice to raise;  
and may God give us faith to sing always: Alleluia!*

The music we make at SAKLC helps to add joy and uplift spirits at every worship service we offer. There is a little something for everyone in the concerts and programs we offer during the year — and these programs help to bring in many new faces to SAKLC. And we are preparing to “sing always” as we look to install a world-class instrument that will glorify God in music for generations to come! Again, sincere thanks to the many people who participate in this ministry, and to all of our angels who make possible what we do!

Submitted by

**Michael J. Bodnyk**

Minister of Music & Director of Operations

## **DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS NOTES**

I am happy to continue my dual role as Minister of Music & Director of Operations. For the past 50+ years, St. Armands Key Lutheran Church has been a bright light in our community. We are a warm and welcoming church home for so many people, and the gift of technology has allowed us to broaden that reach. And the generosity of our church family and friends allows us to make an impact on so many people - both here in our Sarasota community and abroad. As Pastor Blyth reminds us often, we are a busy, active congregation!

You will read about some of the major operational items in other reports within this booklet, but I want to single a few key items out.

Coming out of Covid, the new reality for every church, nonprofit organizations and business is that technology is critical. For us, the ability to stream our worship services and programs in the highest quality way as possible has become a major focus. We are also making an effort to make all of our committee and ministry meetings available by Zoom. This now allows so many of our “seasonal” members and friends to become involved in the life of SAKLC year-round.

## **Technology**

In order to better understand the technology needs of SAKLC, Church Council created an AV Task Force. Chaired by Debra Buttaggi, this task force did an incredible amount of work to better understand the needs of our members, and to make recommendations to council based on what the church's future needs might be. If you have not yet read the results of this test force, please check out the "Resources" section of our website.

With increasing technical needs comes the need for additional staff. We found that one AV person was not able to handle all the the various specialities our needs require (i.e. sound production, camera work, video streaming, Zoom presentations, video editing, website knowledge, etc.). The decision was made to outsource our technology needs to a third-party vendor.

Vann Presentation Services (VPS) has been working with us since the late summer. Due to several issues beyond their control (i.e. damage from the lightning strike, faulty equipment, etc.) it took them several weeks to assess, diagnose, and resolve our various challenges. Although we still have a way to go, we have made great headway.

## **Church Staff**

In 2023, we welcomed back Dave Dreschler as our Maintenance Technician. We are all so glad he is back on staff. He is a critical part of our SAKLC team and has been doing a tremendous job.

We also welcome a new member to our office staff, Maggie Dougherty. Maggie handles almost all our office responsibilities and is the first person someone encounters when visiting the church or calling in. She has been a welcome addition to SAKLC.

Nina (Vannucci) Moroney took on a new role for SAKLC as our Growth & Engagement Director. Nina is responsible for following up with the many visitors and guests who join us each weekend and for concerts/events. She is also working hard to connect our current members with the church's various ministries and develop new programs and activities. If you are someone who is looking to get more involved in the life of SAKLC but don't know how, have a chat with Nina!

Barbara Hilt continues as our church's bookkeeper. We are so grateful for all her hard work and help!

## **Activities and Events**

Our Growth and Engagement Director arranged several fun outreach events outside of SAKLC in 2023.

We had a great group travel to Bok Tower Gardens. It was a beautiful day to stroll the landscapes crafted by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (the son of the senior Olmsted who designed NYC's Central Park). We also enjoyed a beautiful afternoon carillon concert.

We hosted a great group of SAKLC members and friends for a lunchtime Marina Jack's cruise. It was a lovely afternoon of connecting with old and new friends, great food, and beautiful scenery.



Thanks to Bob and Chris Stobaugh for leading a group of members and friends to Marauders Faith & Family night in June. In September, Nina shared a lovely lunch with a group at The Reserve, and we finished off the fall with a production of "Crazy for You" at the Asolo in November.

### **New Members**

44 new members were received in 2023.

### **Welcome Back Dinner**

In January, we hosted SAKLC's very first "Welcome Back Dinner". This event was designed to help greet our seasonal friends coming back to the season, but also to help connect ALL our members. It featured a delicious catered dinner and open bar by Nellie's Catering, and awesome music provided by the Jazz DaddyOs. We had over 120 people attend this event!

### **Advent & Christmas**

December is always one of the most busy months at SAKLC; we have so many activities and events. None of these would be possible without YOUR help.

- Thanks to Jane and Fred Wittlinger for once again spearheading the Salvation Army bell ringing — and thanks to ALL the many volunteers who signed up to fill the ringing spots.
- Our "Christmas on the Circle" was another great success. There are too many people to thank — the costume helpers, the food/drink servers, the people who were part of the living nativity, our SAKLC musicians, etc.



- Our church always looks so beautiful on Christmas Eve, and in 2023 it was more breathtaking than ever before! Sincere thanks to Steve Gunderson and Ethan Ngo for their hours and hours of work preparing this for us — and to Lynda Menezes, Helga and Reinhard Schwartz, Judy Matthies, and Sandy Bodnyk for giving their time to decorate the Sanctuary. You all are a wonderful team!

### **Hurricane Idalia & the Lightning Strike**

The inside of our church was spared by Hurricane Idalia. Unfortunately, because of the significant amount of salt water that came inland, we had major damage to our Meditation Garden. As you will read in the Property Report, significant repairs are needed. Our November “Giving Tuesday” campaign was dedicated to assist with this project. We are so grateful for your generosity; we were able to raise over \$50,000 to help defray the initial costs of this major projects.

Our church was also struck by lightning. Our lightning suppression system prevented the worst damage, but a lot of our technology was damaged including AV equipment, our fire alarm, and security cameras. At the time of this report, all the necessary repairs and replacements have been made. As you will note in the treasurer’s report, we drew heavily on our capital reserves for several of these project.

### **Columbarium**

The Columbarium Committee voted to approve the purchase of the necessary materials from Armento to complete the unfinished niches in our Columbarium. The project is now complete.

### **Exercise Program**

We are grateful to Heather Koester for all her work with our exercise program at SAKLC. Heather’s extremely busy professional life prevented her from continuing to lead the group. We have identified a wonderful new instructor, Kerri Webber. She now leads two classes each week on Tuesdays and Thursdays - both in-person and online. The class is growing quickly. At the end of 2023, we had between 20-25 people per class. These sessions are free an open to the community, though we do ask for a free will offering. It is a wonderful growth opportunity for the church!

### **Looking Forward**

Our Leadership Team and Church Council at SAKLC are always looking forward, wanting to ensure SAKLC remains active, vital, and strong in the decades to come. To that end, a Growth Task Force was formed by Council to look at how we can strengthen various aspects of the church and also work on new programs and initiatives. This has now become a standing

committee which helps to support our Growth & Engagement Director. We have also assembled a terrific group of people for a Strategic Planning Task Force; their work began just at the end of 2023.

### **Gratitude**

Sincere thanks to Louise Hauser for proofreading this Annual Report - and also every worship bulletins we produce, Sunday announcements, articles for *Connections*, and more. We are so grateful for the hours and hours of time she graciously gives helping us catch all our mistakes and errors.

Submitted by

**Michael J. Bodnyk**

Director of Operations & Minister of Music



# PROPERTY REPORT

Property in conjunction with the SAKLC Staff had once again in 2023 a very challenging and busy year. It was successful but very challenging maintaining the entire property to include the buildings and exterior landscape areas. As the buildings age (Fellowship hall is 55 years old) the challenges to maintain them becomes increasingly complex and costly.

Property and the SAKLC Staff accomplished the following projects in calendar year 2023:

The completion and installation of a Lightning Surge Protection System for the entire church campus excluding the residence.

The complete replacement of the Fire Alarm System which was 55 years old. The new system has been installed in accordance with all codes. Permits were obtained and we are waiting only for the Fire Marshall inspection to approve the installation.

Three air conditioning units and a main water heater were totally replaced. There is a total of 19 air conditioning systems for the campus and there are a few units over 20 years old which will probably need to be replaced soon.

In 2023 new AV equipment was installed to include replacing the signal processor, an amplifier, a video camera and the Black Magic video switcher all as a result of a lightning strike. The Yamaha microphone mixer was replaced because of age. The studio in Ogram Hall was evaluated and prepared to begin using it for on line classes in January of 2024. Vann Presentation Services has been retained to provide in person technicians for all services and special events!

A new Carillon Chime System was installed by Chime Masters after a generous private donation was secured by Michael Bodnyk. The electronic chimes service the exterior of the church building and the Meditation Garden at different programmed times during the day (9am, 12, 3, and 6pm).

Property coordinated with the architectural consultant with The Schantz Organ Company who will be supplying the new church pipe organ. This includes structural, architectural, electrical and air flow items.

Hurricane Ian devastated the Meditation Garden. The garden is designed as a holding pond and the salt water killed almost the entire turf and many plants, bushes and trees. Property oversaw the removal of the dead turf and any other vegetation that died. 106 palm trees have been trimmed on the property and a new sprinkler system was installed to support the spring planting plan for the Meditation Garden which will take place in the spring of 2024. The new turf is

scheduled to be installed in January of 2024. The fountains in the Meditation Garden have also been refurbished.

Property oversaw the installation of additional capacity of urn receptacles in the Columbarium.

Three security cameras were added and four were replaced in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Tom Siegfried**

Property Liaison to the Church Council

## COMMUNITY SERVICE MINISTRY

**Mission Statement:** To **SERVE** those in need in the Sarasota & Manatee County areas, by **LIVING** into the Gospel of Christ, **MINISTERING** to the needy and **SEEKING** justice for **ALL**.

Community Service Ministry works on behalf of our congregation to improve the lives of many in our community. We cannot do it without your generous support of money, time, talents, and in-kind donations. We are truly grateful for each and every one of you!

Community Service Ministry was very active in 2023. The Super Bowl of Caring event raised awareness and support of local charitable organizations. The Lutheran World Relief project assembled 1000+ Personal Care Kits and over 200 Quilts. We ran a very successful Kids Against Hunger event in February providing over 40,000 kids meals for Feeding Empty Tummies and Gladiolus Food Pantry. CSM sponsored the February *God's Work Our Hands* event to share information and build excitement for all things community service related. CSM had the March Fundraising Appeal raising \$30,000 to fund our projects and support organizations. We partnered with St. Paul Lutheran Church Vacation Bible School for the Vacation Bible School in July. With your dollars CSM provided food, clothing, cleaning supplies, blankets, cards and gifts for Nursing Home residents, monthly hot meals, gift cards for homeless youth, personal hygiene products, toys, diapers, Christmas trees and decorations, Angel tree gifts at Christmas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Heart Homes and Safe Children Coalition.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter the Church Council approved our Proposal to update our Purpose Mission and Guidelines to evolve our ministry to include homebound, injured, and ill SAKLC worshipers. This expansion will begin in January 2024. It was also approved that CSM will no longer issue checks or provide money directly to our supported organizations. Our purpose is to fund our projects by purchasing or reimbursing necessary items including supplies for Quilts and Personal Kits. Lastly, Council approved CSM to receive funding directly from the Church Budget. This will replace the need for annual fundraising appeals.

Your financial contributions in 2023 were:

- \$ 34,593.26 - Community Service Ministry including March Appeal
- \$ 2,500.00 - Souper Bowl of Caring
- \$ 5,671.79- Lutheran World Relief
- \$ 6,713.23 - Refugee Ministry
- \$ 3,202.01- Quilting
- \$7,438.00 - Kids Against Hunger Project

Total \$58,618.29

**YOU** have made this and more possible through your generosity and commitment to loving our neighbors!

The following charitable organizations were the recipients of your generosity in 2023:

- All Faiths Food Pantry – Money and In-Kind Food Drives
- Baby Basics – Money, Baby Wipes and Children’s Books
- Harvest House – Money and In-Kind Food Drives
- Kids Against Hunger – Food Packing Event
- Lutheran Services of Florida Guardianship Program – Christmas Giving Tree
- Lutheran Services of Florida Refugee Ministry – In-Kind Food and Clothing Drives
- Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits – Money for Supplies and Volunteer Event
- Lutheran World Relief Quilts – Money for Supplies
- Pines of Sarasota – Valentines, Easter and Christmas Cards and Christmas Gifts
- Resurrection House – Hot Lunch Monthly
- Safe Children Coalition Homeless Youth Shelter – Hot Lunch Monthly, Bedding and In-Kind Food and Clothing Drives and Drive Thru Food Drop
- Safe Children Coalition Schoolhouse Link Program –Christmas Gifts, Graduation Gifts, Backpacks, and In-Kind Food and Clothing Drives and Drive Thru Food Drop
- Second Chance Opportunity – Food Purchases, Holiday Food, In-Kind Food and Clothing Drives
- Second Heart Homes – Yard Work Volunteers, In-Kind Food and Clothing Drives, and Christmas Goodies and Decorations
- SPARCC (Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center) – In-kind Clothing Drive

Special Thanks and recognition also to the members of the CSM team who have served as “liaisons” to the organizations selected this year; Nona Arnholt, Don Anthony, Diane Bruce, Gayle Galloway, Marge Jeffers, Kathy Kussy, Christine Ortiz, Bonnie Resler, Karyn Smith, Cheryl Speaker, Phyllis Stephens, Ron & Karen Toshner, Tammara Williams, Jane Wittlinger and Ann Walborn.

Please consider being a part of Community Service Ministry in making a difference in the lives of those in need.

***“We are all leaves of one tree. We are all waves of one sea.” Thich Nat Hanh***

**Karyn Smith**

CSM Chair

## GROWTH COMMITTEE

In 2022, the Church Council created a Taskforce on Growth. In September of that same year the Taskforce submitted a comprehensive report to the Council. The key elements of this report suggested:

### Short Term:

- Our primary focus of outreach should be to the 45-60 age demographic, primarily people moving to the area on either a temporary or permanent basis.
- Our outreach should prioritize those social media items that are most comfortable to this demographic, like Facebook and print advertising.
- We need a branding that only our church can use which separates us from all others in the area. This is the origin of “The Church on the Circle” now so prevalent in all communications.

### Long Term:

- Creation of a new position, a Growth & Engagement Director.
- Expand the use of both Fellowship and Ogram Hall for both internal and external (rental revenue) use.
- Lift-up our Social Ministry Programs, probably the best kept secret of our church!
- Design and deliver new training and marketing programs to emphasize and implement our commitment that “All Are Welcome Here – and we mean it!”

The success of this task force led President Ernie Smith to call for the creation of a permanent Committee on Growth in January of 2023. The motion was unanimously adopted by the Council. Steve Gunderson was named chair with the following members: Doug Engebretson; Alan Graf; Susan Graf; Gil Jones; Austin Rentsch; Ernie Smith; Bob Stobaugh; Lynn Wellings; Jane Wittlinger; and Pastor Eric Wogen. Pastor Blyth, Michael Bodnyk, and Nina Vannucci participate in all our meetings as professional staff and members of the committee.

We define growth in very broad – and important – ways. Growth means expanding our programs; expanding our reach; and increasing our membership! Growth is essential for the continued life and work of this congregation!

Our 2023 budget funded the new position for Growth & Engagement (Nina Vannucci); and increases in advertising. Both commitments continue in the 2024 budget proposal. We have focused on collecting new/better data to guide such investments including growth in attendance/participation at worship and other events and growth in revenue. We have expanded outreach to visitors and celebrate the growth shown in the large number of new members.

Some of our work might seem operational, but it is essential to growth. For example, we have worked with the church leadership to address the technology challenges -- especially live streaming. Because we do not have a Worship & Music Committee, we have spent significant time on how we can best grow the 3<sup>rd</sup> Worship Service. We are in the midst of addressing the need for better, user-friendly signage to guide visitors. We are reviewing all current advertising while considering new options. This Committee recommended “The Kings Brass” Concert be paid for by the church (with free-will offering) to expand both the signature of our church’s music programming, and community engagement. It clearly worked!

Our immediate priority is to finish the important audio and video needs necessary to make Fellowship Hall a premier location for the 3<sup>rd</sup> service; for our internal events; and to make the hall available to community events that result in both increased exposure and rental income. Thanks to the SAKLC Foundation’s funding support this work will be done early this year.

Growth is everyone’s responsibility! It is not the work of just this committee. But if you have an interest in the analytical work leading to strategic recommendations supporting growth in programs, outreach, and membership we invite you to join us!

We are guided by these words, “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

**Steve Gunderson**

Growth Committee Chair



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In 2023 the following classes were offered at SAKLC:

## EIGHTH-DAY DISCIPLESHIP: A NEW VISION FOR FAITH, WORK & ECONOMICS

led by Rev. Richard H. Bliese and based upon his book of the same name. The book “Draws on the historic architecture of eight-sided churches to call attention to an important but often overlooked emphasis on the eighth day of creation. Early Christians were focused on God's new creation that began in Christ's resurrection on Sunday, the first day of the week. But these Christians understood resurrection as the continuation of God's creative and redemptive activity. So, the first day of the week became the eighth day of creation, and therefore the day of resurrection work and time to join with Christ in transforming the world. Christian disciples do this work by living out their baptismal vocations, especially in their daily work and through their ethical economic choices.”

## GOD’S TWOFOLD KINGDOM: LUTHERAN PERSPECTIVES ON KINGDOM-CENTRIC MINISTRY

A workshop led by Rev. Gabriel Morgan, which offered “A basic summary of what Luther means by ‘two kingdoms,’ the problems in Luther’s underdeveloped thinking here, important updates to this teaching from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and how it can help guide the church on how to approach ministry in a Kingdom-centric way.”

## THE HOLY LAND: REFLECTIONS ON A PILGRIMAGE

Pastor Ken was on pilgrimage in the Holy Land in February 2023, and returned with photographs, memories, and reflections on his pilgrimage which were offered in this class.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT YOU NEVER KNEW: EXPLORING THE CONTEXT, PURPOSE, AND MEANING OF THE STORY OF GOD

Led by Pr. Ken, and based upon videos produced by scholars N.T. Wright and Michael Bird, the class encompassed “A tour of the story behind the explosive story of the New Testament... Things you never knew about Jesus’ baptism and journey into the wilderness, the meaning behind his parables and miracles, the significance of his death and resurrection, the incredible expansion of the early church into the Greco-Roman world, and how the transforming mission of Jesus can still turn the world upside down today.”

## WE MUST PLANT THE CHURCH: THE STORY OF LUTHERANS IN AMERICA

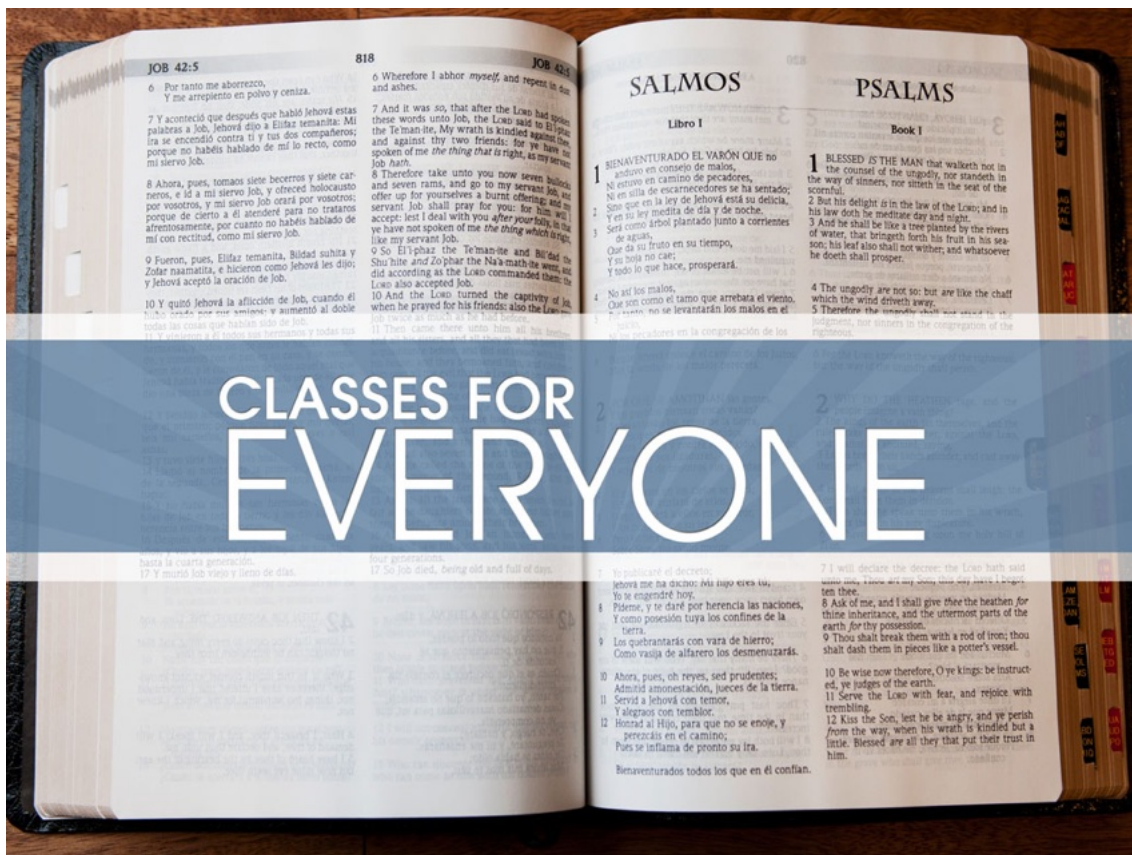
“When Lutherans came to America, they brought with them Martin Luther’s belief that people of faith engage the big questions of the day. This story is characterized by the tension between

honoring the European roots of the church and adapting to the new realities of American life. The Lutheran church, from its earliest days, faced religious pluralism, intolerance, racism, war, lack of state support and diversity of languages and traditions. It wasn't easy then, and it isn't easy now. Understanding American Lutheran history can change the way we see ourselves and our future.” The class was led by Pr. Ken.

The classes met in Ogram Hall and were held in-person, as well as online. However, due to technical difficulties, participants in the final class were given a link which allowed them to view instructional videos at their leisure. This final class, HOW LUTHERANS INTERPRET THE BIBLE, was an exploration of “seven important questions about Lutherans and the Bible.”

## Pastor Blyth

Christian Education Committee



## WOMEN'S MINISTRY

The WF&M meets during the months of October through April and schedules the following activities:

- six monthly book group discussions, weekly Bible studies during the winter season about women in the Bible,
- an Advent event
- a Spring Tea
- casual lunches and reserved luncheons at nearby restaurants average about one a month

Participation varies between ten and fifty women. The development of good friendships and pleasant conversations, as well as discussions and the encouragement of spiritual growth are the focus for all women attending. All women are welcome.

Submitted by

**Judy Matthies**

Director of Women's Fellowship and Ministries



# REFUGEE MINISTRY

Our ministry has continued to grow and expand. We work with Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) which identified the legal Refugees eligible for resettling in this area. LSF gets grants from the government which determine what refugees qualify for resettling. The Refugee ministry then helps supply the items necessary to furnish the house or apartments for the Refugees and also any other emergency needs. We also supply bags of food, cleaning supplies, personal hygiene products, as well as bikes used for transportation. LSF does not get money in these government grants for these items. That's why our work is so vital. The amount of refugees coming to Florida is only increasing due to the unrest in our world.

## Financials:

Beginning balance, January 1, 2023: \$12,877.01

Donations: \$8,567.77

Expenses: \$16,220.24 (this includes two storage units, green cards, employment cards, supplies needed that aren't donated).

Ending balance 2023: \$5,241.74

## List of activities:

32 Families given household furnishings and kitchen and bathroom supplies.

40 refurbished, bikes, helmets pumps and locks

7 baskets of supplies for newborn babies, plus car seats, cribs and strollers

30 baskets of cleaning supplies

30 bags of personal hygiene products

50 bags of food

\$250 worth of Christmas toys

15 bags of Clothing

Over 60 pick up of donations and managing them

## Goals for 2024

1. Continue supplying household goods and furnishings for the families
2. Helping Refugees where and whenever possible
3. Responding to emergency needs of Refugees
4. Growing our Volunteer base

**Nona Arnholt**

Refugee Ministry, Chair

## SAKLC FOUNDATION

Trustees: Michael Armour (Vice Chair), Sandy Bodnyk, Steve Gunderson, Heather Koester (partial term), Lee Krompart, Jeffry Olesen, Kris Soderman (partial term), Don Resler (Chair), Ann Walborn (Secretary), Denise Watermeier (Treasurer), Fred Wittlinger, Jura Zibas, Pastor Ken Blyth (ex officio), Ernie Smith (ex officio)

The Foundation's broad purpose is "proclaiming and extending the reach of the Gospel of Jesus Christ forever through St. Armands Key Lutheran Church." The Foundation's mission is "to promote charitable and religious purposes" by making grants "primarily to or for the benefit of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church and otherwise to such other ... qualified ... exempt organizations ..." To implement that mission the Foundation receives and manages financial gifts placed into two endowment funds, the Community Impact Fund (CIF) and the Church Support Fund (CSF) and makes grants annually from the earnings of each endowed fund according to its purpose.

In mid-year the Council and Foundation formed a Dialogue Group to improve the understanding, partnership and cooperation between the two entities. The Group's several meetings to review actions and decisions resulted in the development of a set of recommendations to guide activities in the future. Recognizing that much more work will be required to implement all the recommendations, the Foundation Trustees accepted the recommendations to guide their future decision processes. The immediate action was a decision to support two grant applications with funding from the Community Impact Fund for church-related activities identified as priorities by the Council. As shown below, the Trustees approved grants to fund the refocused mission of the Community Service Ministry (\$30,000) and to support the initial partial funding of the project to install AV equipment in Fellowship Hall (\$13,000). These two grants amounted to 49.4% of the total CIF grant funding available in 2023.

Descriptions, details of Grant Year 2023 activity and five-year history are shown below.

The **Community Impact Fund** was established concurrent with the Foundation in 1978. Grants from the fund are awarded based upon requests received, reviewed and recommended by the Foundation's Grants Committee and approved by the Trustees. Grants are made to SAKLC ministries, other ELCA Lutheran ministries and established non-profit organizations that are local, state, national or international in service location. The selection process focuses on organizational "capacity building" addressing humanitarian needs.

In 2023 the following seven grants totaling \$87,000 were awarded:

- Hope for Community: \$10,000 – Purchase school basics for Sarasota school students
- Meals on Wheels: \$10,000 – Fund frozen meals for six holidays

- St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church Pensacola: \$10,000 – fund sign replacement
- St. Paul Lutheran Early Learning Center: \$5,000 – fund student scholarships
- SAKLC: \$13,000 – Partial funding for Fellowship Hall AV project
- SAKLC Community Service Ministry: \$30,000 – Fund supplies to support CSM mission
- Samaritan Counseling: \$9,000 – Funding for 2024 Speaker Series

In the last five years (2019 – 2023) the Foundation has granted \$386,000

- 13% (\$49,000) to SAKLC
- 14% (\$55,000) to ELCA Florida-Bahamas Synod
- 8% (\$30,000) to ELCA
- 12% (\$45,000) to Lutheran-affiliated organizations
- 44% (\$170,200) to local non-profit organizations
- 10% (\$36,800) to national and international non-profit organizations

The **Church Support Fund** was established in 2011 to enable church members to create an on-going legacy that endows a perpetual continuation of their stewardship to support the church’s ministry in the future. Donors to this endowed fund can have confidence that the earnings from the invested funds will support an annual grant that can only be given to SAKLC and that such grant being unrestricted can be used for any purpose as authorized by the Church Council.

In 2023 the grant totaled \$24,000 and over the last five years (2019 – 2023) grants from the fund have totaled \$107,000.

The Foundation strives to respond to the present needs of the Church and community as it aggregates and invests funds to respond to their future needs. Congregation members and others are encouraged to contribute to the endowment fund(s) of their choice through their legacy estate gifts, significant benevolent gifts, memorial gifts and other gifts.

The work of the Foundation is only possible with the continuing support of the SAKLC congregation members. The Trustees take this opportunity to thank all who have supported the foundation with gifts in 2023 and in previous years of the Foundation’s existence. Financial information regarding both endowment funds can be found on the following three pages.

The SAKLC website ([saklc.com](http://saklc.com)) has additional information about the Foundation (look under the “ministries” menu) and provides an opportunity to make a gift or a grant request.

**Don Resler**

Chair – SAKLC Foundation



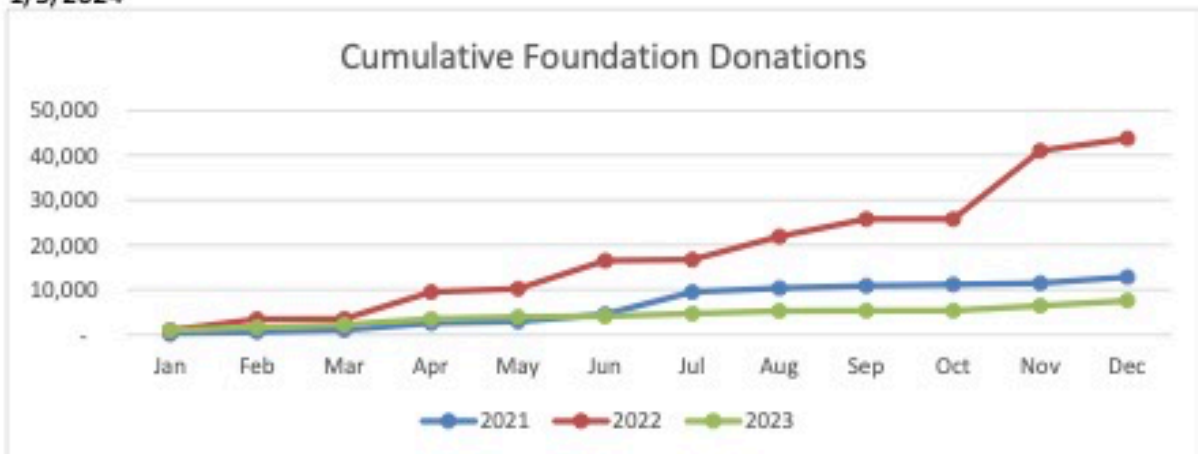


### Donations by Category

	Full Year 2023	Full Year 2022	Full Year 2021
<b>Community Impact Fund</b>			
Anniversary	\$ 250	\$ 956	\$ 704
Birthday Blessings	618	1848	3,451
General	3,838	16,374	1,960
Memorials	1,740	11,255	1,250
Bequests			
<b>Total Community Impact Fund</b>	<b>6,446</b>	<b>30,433</b>	<b>7,365</b>
<b>Church Support Fund</b>			
Anniversary			
General	648	13,087	455
Memorials	504	195	5,080
Bequests			
<b>Total Church Support Fund</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>13,282</b>	<b>5,535</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 7,598</b>	<b>\$ 43,716</b>	<b>\$ 12,900</b>

Note: The 2023 goal for donations is greater than \$45,000.

1/5/2024





## Community Impact Fund

Income and Expenses	Full		Full	
	Year		Year	
	2023	2022	2021	
Income:				
Interest Earned	\$ 12,245	\$ 12,463	\$ 12,383	
Dividends Earned	16,125	14,854	15,736	
Donations	6,446	30,433	7,365	
Total Income	<u>34,816</u>	<u>57,750</u>	<u>35,483</u>	
Grants & Expenses:				
Grants	(87,000)	(85,000)	(75,000)	
Administrative Expenses	(1,515)	(1,206)	(1,749)	
Total Grants & Expenses	<u>(88,515)</u>	<u>(86,206)</u>	<u>(76,749)</u>	
Net Income	(53,699)	(28,456)	(41,265)	
Market Value Change	168,157	(233,594)	296,808	
Fund Balance Beginning of Year	1,651,420	1,913,470	1,657,928	
Ending Fund Assets	<u>\$ 1,765,879</u>	<u>\$ 1,651,420</u>	<u>\$ 1,913,470</u>	
<b>Assets by Type</b>				
Cash/Money Market Funds	\$ 15,934	\$ 25,520	\$ 124,533	
Money Market	25,000			
Fixed Income	549,990	619,562	491,242	
Equities	1,111,776	944,160	1,240,517	
Sub Total Schwab	1,702,700	1,589,242	1,856,291	
Certificates of Deposit (ELCA)	57,179	57,179	57,179	
Checking Account	6,000	5,000		
Ending Fund Assets	<u>\$ 1,765,879</u>	<u>\$ 1,651,420</u>	<u>\$ 1,913,470</u>	
<b>Assets by Availability</b>				
Corpus	\$ 1,141,054	\$ 1,134,608	\$ 1,096,811	
Earnings	624,824	516,812	816,659	
Total Assets	<u>\$ 1,765,879</u>	<u>\$ 1,651,420</u>	<u>\$ 1,913,470</u>	

Corpus assumes that the 2008 year-end Fund balance was 100% Corpus.

Grants 2023 Plan is \$87,000.

The checking account has been increased to \$6,000 and will pay bills as well as receive deposits.

1/5/2024



## Church Support Fund

<b>Income and Expenses</b>	<b>Full Year 2023</b>	<b>Full Year 2022</b>	<b>Full Year 2021</b>
<b>Income:</b>			
Interest Earned	\$ 3,039	\$ 3,220	\$ 3,322
Dividends Earned	4,508	4,244	4,519
Donations	1,152	13,282	5,535
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>8,699</b>	<b>20,746</b>	<b>13,376</b>
<b>Grants &amp; Expenses:</b>			
Grants	(24,000)	(24,000)	(21,000)
Administrative Expenses	(171)	(1)	(36)
<b>Total Grants &amp; Expenses</b>	<b>(24,171)</b>	<b>(24,001)</b>	<b>(21,036)</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(15,473)</b>	<b>(3,255)</b>	<b>(7,660)</b>
<b>Market Value Change</b>	<b>53,069</b>	<b>(72,372)</b>	<b>89,079</b>
<b>Fund Balance Beginning of Year</b>	<b>464,665</b>	<b>540,293</b>	<b>458,873</b>
<b>Ending Fund Assets</b>	<b>\$ 502,261</b>	<b>\$ 464,665</b>	<b>\$ 540,293</b>

### Assets by Type

Cash/Money Market Funds	\$ 14,150	\$ 21,508	\$ 36,204
Money Market Funds	5,000		
Bonds/Fixed Income	147,380	161,127	144,999
Equities	335,731	282,030	359,091
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 502,261</b>	<b>\$ 464,665</b>	<b>\$ 540,293</b>

### Assets by Availability

Corpus	\$ 362,087	\$ 360,935	\$ 347,653
Earnings	140,174	103,730	192,640
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 502,261</b>	<b>\$ 464,665</b>	<b>\$ 540,293</b>

Note: Grants 2023 Plan is \$24,000.  
1/5/2024



## QUILTERS

Our dedicated team of quilters work hard each Monday morning making beautiful quilts and blankets. The quilts are sent off to Lutheran World Relief to comfort those in need all around the world, including here in the United States. Our blankets are lovingly given to each child who is baptized here at SAKLC. This year, the quilters made 190 quilts and 4 baptismal blankets/bibs.

Our quilting team includes: Ruth Veit, Vicky Scott, Nona Arnholt, Marsha Hove, Lynn Nieting, Jackie Michaelided, Cheryl Skelly, Mary Schulte, Janet Forstrom, Kim Raymond, Suzette Bingham, Jan Bolt, Jean Daily, and others.



## PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH A HISTORY OF SAKLC

St. Armands Key Lutheran Church is 55 years young in history, but already rich in heritage. Our ministry began as a Mission Church with seven interested couples and vacationers on Lido Beach. Dr. Hermann Siefkes was invited to minister to the Mission during the winter months of 1966-67. Services were held in the Lido Beach Casino. Attendance at the first service was 34. It was known as Lido Key Lutheran Church. In November 1967, a parsonage at 504 Boulevard of the Presidents was purchased for the Siefkes family, that also served as an office for church administration.

St. Armands Key Lutheran Church was organized on Palm Sunday, April 7, 1968 at the Casino on Lido Beach. Dr. Gordon Huffman of the ALC officiated at the installation of Dr. Siefkes and the first Church Council. The text of his sermon was "Ye are the Light of the World". Sixty-two (62) members were received. Attendance was 143.

North Adams Drive would be the site for a new church building. The Blix family donated two lots on Ringling Boulevard and additional lots were purchased on Adams Drive. Plans for the church were approved and a groundbreaking service was held on August 4, 1968. Dedication of the new church was held on February 2, 1969 with 407 in attendance.

Pastor Siefkes retired in April 1969 and The Reverend Paul Disbro was installed as Pastor on November 2, 1969 and served through 1972. In 1973, The Reverend Jul Quello assumed leadership of a growing, vibrant church. The congregation purchased two lots on Ringling Boulevard extending our property to Washington Drive. Promissory notes were issued to members and the response was amazing. Not only was the building debt repaid, but also enough additional funds were received to enlarge the Sanctuary, add Ogram Fellowship Hall, and redecorate the interior and exterior of the church. Dedication of the renovation was held on February 25, 1976. From this date, we have been known as the "**Church of the Lighted Cross**".

In June 1980, Pastor Quello resigned, and The Reverend William Nies was installed as Pastor on December 7, 1980. In 1988 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was formed. Under Pastor Nies' able leadership, a major renovation/expansion building program was launched which included an enlarged sacristy, choir loft, music room, 63 Rank Allen organ, educational building, and Columbarium/Memorial Chapel.

Pastor Nies retired in April 1990, having served the congregation for 10 years and having completed 40 years of ministry.

On December 30, 1990, The Reverend Robert Zimmer was installed as Pastor. Through his leadership, Promissory Notes on church property were retired, the Washington Drive conference/guest house was purchased, and a contemporary worship service was formed.

On March 22, 1998, a worship celebration was held for the groundbreaking of a new sanctuary. Dedication of the new church facility was held on March 21, 1999.

Pastor Zimmer retired on June 30, 1999 and The Reverend Eric P. Wogen began his ministry at SAKLC on April 9, 2000 and was installed on July 9, 2000.

Under Pastor Wogen's leadership, a Meditation Garden was developed on the empty lots east of the sanctuary. A Health Ministry was formed, and a Parish Nurse position was established. The congregation grew in membership and as a part of the 40th Anniversary celebration an Outreach Ministry partnership in the Newtown area was established. The neon cross on the steeple was lit again, and a new (Diane Bish Signature Series) Allen Renaissance Quantum Organ was installed. The windblown pipes and festival trumpets were added in 2008.

Pastor Wogen retired on June 30, 2008 after serving the congregation for 8 years and having completed over 40 years in the ministry.

The Reverend Mark A. Bernthal began his ministry at SAKLC on September 1, 2009 and was installed as pastor at SAKLC on October 18, 2009.

On December 8, 2011, the Church Council voted to approve a call for an intern from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC for a period of one year.

Seminarian Student, Ms. Marilyn Beyer, began her role as SAKLC's first Vicar on Sunday, July 1, 2012.

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary student, Aretha Ernst, from Suriname, shared a six-month internship between Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Venice and SAKLC. Her role of Seminarian began at SAKLC on September 1, 2012.

Our second Seminary Student, Vicar James Henricks, began his pastoral internship at SAKLC on July 8, 2013.

On Sunday, August 17, 2014, SAKLC welcomed Seminarian Student, Drew Ingram, our third pastoral intern, and his wife Leigh.

Seminarian Student, Kyle Bates, began his role as SAKLC's fourth Vicar on August 17, 2015. Kyle's wife, Andrea, also a Seminarian Student at Lenoir Rhyne/Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, served as the first pastoral intern at Faith Lutheran Church, our sister church in south Sarasota.

In June 2016, Pastor Mark Bernthal notified the congregation that he had accepted a call to join a staff ministry team at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Vero Beach, Florida.

Under Pastor Mark's leadership, God's table is set, and the Eucharist is celebrated every Sunday at both worship services. SAKLC teamed with our sister congregations of the Mid Gulf Conference to do a "Luther Build" with Habitat for Humanity, and in 2015, a major facility restoration/renovation project was completed that included new roofing and flooring, new storage closets in Fellowship Hall, along with many other improvements. The Foundation established a second fund in the congregation's endowment for donors to give perpetual offerings to the church. We were privileged to witness Pastor Bernthal's commitment to the church-wide Fund for Leaders, which provides for Seminarians of the future, through the Vicar program he initiated at SAKLC.

Sunday, June 26, 2016, was Pastor Mark Bernthal's last Sunday at SAKLC. A celebration to honor Pastor Bernthal's ministry and the gifts he brought to SAKLC during his seven-year tenure was held immediately following worship.

On July 9, 2017 the congregation voted to extend the call to serve as Pastor of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church to The Rev. Dr. Kenneth C. Blyth. A service of Holy Communion and the Order of Installation of Pastor Blyth was originally scheduled for Sunday, September 10, 2017; however, all services, including the regular morning service, were cancelled that day due to the arrival of Hurricane Irma. The Rev. Dr. Kenneth C. Blyth was installed as pastor at SAKLC on November 5, 2017.

Under Pr. Ken's leadership the congregation embarked on discerning a new Mission Statement and Ministry Plan. Using the materials and outcomes of conversations that were held during the interim and following up with an off-site retreat, new initiatives were identified and a refreshed ministry organization was introduced.

In March 2018, the congregation held a special meeting to extend a call to serve as Deacon at St. Armands Key Lutheran Church to Kimberly Heindl. Kimb began ministry in 2017 under contract during the time of interim. On April 15 she was installed for the ministry of Word and Service. Dcn. Kim's call ended on July 14, 2019 with a Sending Service.

On September 1, 2018, Michael Bodnyk became SAKLC's first full-time Minister of Music, assuming responsibility for a new and exciting approach to music at SAKLC - both in worship and in concerts, and musical outreach to the community.

In 2020, From March 13th through Pentecost, in-person worship and in-person meetings at SAKLC were cancelled, due to the world-wide Covid-19 pandemic. From Pentecost onwards, in-person worship resumed, with attendees wearing face masks, and observing social distancing. In-person activities, gatherings and meetings resumed slowly over several months. Worship services and meetings were held via Zoom videoconferencing, as were some fellowship events, funerals, and classes.

Our congregation is blessed by many people with open hearts and willing hands to do the work to which God has called this community.

Our Pilgrimage of Faith keeps going and growing as we lift high our Lighted Cross and commit ourselves to St. Armands Key Lutheran Church's Mission.

**Grounded in Christ + Building Relationships + Transforming Lives**

*Within our Walls and Beyond*



## STEPPING STONES OF FAITH

July 1966	American Missions, Minneapolis, approved action for Mission Church on Lido Key
December 18, 1966	Dr. Hermann Siefkes conducted the first 1 <sup>st</sup> winter service in Lido Beach Casino. Attendance was 35
Fall 1967	Dr. Siefkes returned. Steering committee organized.
October 8, 1967	Articles of Incorporation for Lido Key Lutheran Church were signed
November 1967	Purchased first parsonage at 504 Boulevard of the Presidents
February 18, 1968	Lots on Adams purchased -- Blix family donated lots 3 & 4 on 11/10/68.
April 6, 1968	An Organizational Meeting was held at St. Armands Palmer Bank
April 7, 1968	Installation of Dr. Siefkes at Lido Beach Casino. Congregation accepted name of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church, receiving 62 members, installed Charter members and first Church Council.
August 4, 1968	Ground Breaking Service at new property on Adams Drive
November 3, 1968	First Annual Meeting of Congregation
January, 1969	Final Service in Lido Beach Casino
February 2, 1969	Dedication of the new church building. 407 were present
April 6, 1969	Pastor Siefkes completes his Ministry.
May-Nov. 1969	Interim Ministry of the Reverend Theo Lynn
November 2, 1969	The Reverend Paul Disbro was installed.
September 30, 1972	Pastor Disbro completes ministry.
Oct. '72-Feb. '73	Interim ministry of The Reverend Theo Lynn
February 4, 1973	The Reverend Jul Quello was installed
November 18, 1973	Congregation purchased two (2) lots on Ringling Boulevard. Entire debt of ALC Mission Board of Missions was paid off
February 25, 1976	Renovation of Sanctuary & new Ogram Fellowship Hall Dedication

January 1978	Church steeple was blown down
June 1980	Pastor Quello completes his ministry
June - Dec. 1980	David Olson Interim Ministry
December 7, 1980	The Reverend William Nies Installation Service
October 22, 1989	Dedication & Renovation/Expansion. New organ, choir loft, music room, Sunday school classrooms, multi-purpose room, and Columbarium.
April 22, 1990	Pastor Nies completes his Ministry
April 23-Dec. 1990	Dr. Herbert Mayer Interim Ministry
December 30, 1990	The Reverend Robert Zimmer Installation Service
October 1991	Church Constitution was ratified to conform to the ELCA Constitution. All Promissory Notes were retired.
December 1994	House on Washington Drive purchased to be used as a Conference/Guest House
February 26, 1995	The Reverend David McCoy was called as Associate Pastor
March 22, 1998	Ground Breaking for new Sanctuary & 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration
September 30, 1998	Pastor McCoy leaves to assume another call
March 22, 1999	Dedication of the present Church Sanctuary
June 30, 1999	Pastor Zimmer completes his Ministry
June-Dec. 1999	The Reverend Dr. Lavern Franzen Interim Ministry
Jan-April 2000	The Reverend Dr. Priit Rebane Interim Ministry
April 9, 2000	The Reverend Eric P. Wogen begins Ministry
July 9, 2000	Pastor Wogen's Installation Service
April 6, 2008	40 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary --- One Service
June 30, 2008	Pastor Wogen completes his Ministry
July 13, 2008	The Reverend Dr. Mark Hillmer Interim Ministry
September 1, 2009	The Reverend Mark A. Bernthal begins his Ministry

October 18, 2009	Pastor Bernthal's Installation Service
July 1, 2012	Vicar Marilyn Beyer begins one year Internship
September 1, 2012	Seminarian Aretha Ernst begins three-month Internship
July 8, 2013	Vicar James Henricks begins one-year Internship
August 17, 2014	Vicar Drew Ingram begins one-year Internship
August 17, 2015	Vicar Kyle Bates begins one-year Internship
June 30, 2016	Pastor Bernthal completes his Ministry at SAKLC
August 2016-17	The Reverend Dr. Keith Copeland Interim Ministry
August 21, 2017	The Reverend Dr. Kenneth C. Blyth begins his Ministry at SAKLC
November 5, 2017	The Reverend Dr. Kenneth Blyth's Installation Service
April 8, 2018	50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Festive Worship Service
April 15, 2018	Deacon Kimberly Heindl's Installation Service
September 1, 2018	Michael Bodnyk joined SAKLC as its first full-time Music Minister
July 14, 2019	Sending Service for end of Deacon Kimberly Heindl's call
February 6, 2021	Lois Habib's retirement after 26 years of Music Ministry at SAKLC was celebrated at Laurel Oak Country Club.
March 13, 2020	In-person worship and gatherings at SAKLC end due to the world-wide Covid-19 pandemic.
June 14, 2020	In-person worship resumes with several health and safety measures.
February 1, 2021	Michael Bodnyk became the church's Director of Operations (in addition to the Minister of Music)
August 2021	Barbara Hilt was brought on as SAKLC's bookkeeper.
November 2022	A special concert was held on Christ the King Sunday to celebrate the renovation of Fellowship Hall.
July 30, 2023	The purchase and installation of a new pipe organ built by the Schantz Organ Company of Orrville, Ohio was unanimously approved at a special Congregational Meeting.

**TO GOD BE THE GLORY!**



**CHURCH ON THE CIRCLE**  
ST ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH