

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



ST. ARMANDS KEY  
LUTHERAN CHURCH





# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

All around us, we see signs of God's love and goodness. A person who has stepped away from church for many years steps back into a congregation, feeling the call of the Holy Spirit. Young adults feeling isolated in a digital-first world start gathering in person in a small group, enjoying the warmth of a hug and a new friend asking about their week. A mother plants a garden, and it yields fruits and vegetables, giving her nutritious food for her kids and extra produce to sell at the local market. Everywhere we look, we see signs of Christ's love. In Psalm 93, we read: "More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore" (4-5).

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

I am so grateful for you, dear church. Your generosity to each of these three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has bolstered the church's ability to share the message of God's love to people who are longing for it. Through your

“More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.”

—Psalm 93:4-5

financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices, you've helped carry this message of God's majestic love. Thank you, dear church. As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to stand steadfast in God's promises, sure of God's love and goodness.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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





St. Armands Key Lutheran Church  
Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda  
Sunday, February 9, 2025, 10:00 to 10:55 a.m.  
In-person and via Zoom Participation

<b>Call to Order</b>	Ernie Smith
<b>Opening Prayer</b>	Pastor Blyth
<b>Election of Council</b>	Kris Soderman

Remaining on Council: Mary Aaland (term ends January 2026); Steve Gunderson (term ends January 2027); Ellen Kelleher (term ends January 2026); Judy Matthies (term ends January 2026); Karen Randolph (term ends January 2027); Tom Siegfried (term ends January 2026); Ernie Smith (term ends January 2026); Chris Williams (term ends January 2027)

Leaving Council: Doug Engebretson and Susan Graf

2025 Council Nominees:

- Lynda Menuetz for a second 3-year term ending in January 2028
- Kevin Randolph to fill a 2-year vacancy ending in January 2027
- Lois Robinson for a second 3-year term ending in January 2028
- Ryan Smith for a 3-year term ending in January 2028

Floor Nominations, if any; Closing of Nominations; and Vote

**Finance:**

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| • Audit Report      | Mike Armour      |
| • Treasurers Report | Doug Engebretson |

**Presentation of FY 2025 Budget:**



- Revenue Projections Paul Holland, Chair Finance Committee
- Hurricane Restoration Funds Paul Holland, Chair Finance Committee
- General Operations Budget Alan Graf, Co-Chair Budget Task Force

Motion to Approve the FY2025 Budget as presented.

**Nominating Committee for 2025**

Kris Soderman

- Roger Arnholt
- Debra Buttaggi
- Doug Engebretson
- Marge Jeffers
- Karl Kaminski

Floor Nominations, if any; closing of nominations; Vote.

**Other Business:**

Ernie Smith

**Closing Prayer:**

Pastor Blyth

**Motion to Adjourn:**

Ernie Smith



Minutes  
St. Armands Key Lutheran Church  
Congregational Meeting  
February 4, 2024

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A meeting of the Congregation ("Congregational Meeting" or "Meeting") of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church ("Church") was held at 10:15 A.M. on February 4, 2024 at the Church located at 40 N. Adams Drive, Sarasota Florida 34236. The Congregational Meeting was called pursuant to written notice given by first class mail at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting and also announced at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays ("Notice"). Mr. Ernie Smith, President of the Church Council ("Council"), presided at the Meeting. An Annual Report for 2023 ("Annual Report") containing an agenda for the Congregational Meeting and other reports and information was available on-line in advance of the Meeting and hard copies were available at the Church in advance of the Meeting.

### **Call to Order and Quorum**

Mr. Smith called the Meeting to order and declared a quorum for the Meeting based on the presence of more than twenty (20) voting members of the Congregation, including Rev. Dr. Kenneth Blyth and Mr. Michael Bodnyk. Pastor Blyth led an opening prayer.

### **Minutes of Prior Meetings**

Mr. Smith informed the Congregation that minutes of previous congregation meetings held on February 19, 2023 and July 30, 2023, copies of which were included in the Annual Report, had been approved by the Council.

### **Purpose of the Congregational Meeting; Compliance with the Constitution; and Discussion**

The Agenda for the Congregational Meeting was included with the Annual Report. The Annual Report included the following materials in addition to the Agenda: Message From the Bishop, Minutes of the Congregational Meetings held February 19, 2023 and July 30, 2023; Pastor's Report, Treasurer's Report, Proposed SAKLC Budget for 2024, including an Executive Summary of the Capital Reserve Plan as well as Threshold Funding Model Projection and Annual Expenditure Detail; Membership Statistical Report; President's Report; Music Ministry Report and Director of Operations Notes; Property Report; Community Service Ministry Report; Growth Committee Report; Report on Christian Education; Report on Women's Ministry; Refugee Ministry Report; SAKLC Foundation Report including information on Donations by Category, Community Impact Fund and Church Support Fund; Quilters Report; and Pilgrimage of Faith, A History of SAKLC, including Stepping Stones of Faith.

### **Nominating Committee Report; Election of Council Members and Nominating Committee**

Ms. Joyce Hart, Chair of the Nominating Committee, placed the following names in nomination for service on the 2024 Council:

Ms. Mary Aaland to complete a term ending January 2026

Ms. Susan Graf for a first term ending January 2027

Mr. Steve Gunderson for a second term ending in January 2027



Ms. Karen Randolph for a first term ending January 2027

Mr. Chris Williams for a first term ending January 2027

Mr. Smith then requested nominations from the floor, and none being received, the motion was seconded. Mr. Smith called for a vote on the motion and the nominees were elected without opposition.

Ms. Hart placed the following names in nomination for service on the 2024 Nominating Committee: Ms. Kathy Kussy, Ms. Kris Soderman, Mr. Bob Stobaugh, Mr. Paul Tomass, and Mr. Ron Toshner.

Mr. Smith then requested nominations from the floor, and none being received, the motion was seconded. Mr. Smith called for a vote on the motion and the nominees were elected without opposition.

### **Report of the Finance Committee**

Mr. Mike Armour and Mr. Doug Engebretson provided the audit report and treasurer's report on behalf of the Finance Committee. Mr. Armour reported on the detailed audit procedures undertaken by the audit team and informed the Congregation that the audit team was able to conclude that the financial statements included in the Annual Report fairly reflect the financial position of the Church. Mr. Engebretson reported that the Church ended the year with a budget surplus despite having faced challenges during the course of the year primarily related to increased insurance costs, storm damage and aging infrastructure. Mr. Engebretson informed the Congregation that the \$77,000 budget surplus from 2023 along with \$12,000 of unused hurricane funds will be transferred to 2024 capital reserves to partially replenish capital reserves depleted during 2023. He informed the Congregation that capital reserves were also favorably impacted by generous donations from the Congregation. Mr. Engebretson concluded by saying that prudent management of the budget during 2023 to offset unexpected costs had allowed the Church to maintain focus on its property, people and programs.

### **Presentation and Approval of the 2024 Budget**

Mr. Paul Holland, Chair of the Finance Committee, described 2023 as having delivered better than expected revenues such that the 2024 Budget contains only an approximate \$60,000 increase in revenue over actual 2023 revenue and described the revenue projections in the 2004 Budget proposal as very conservative.

Mr. Graf, Co-Chair of the Budget Task Force, informed the Congregation that the Church has experienced expense pressures over time (especially in 2023) and that there was an overall effort to manage total expenses in light of increases such as insurance which are beyond the control of the Church. Mr. Graf stated that the reduction in payroll expense was due to a shift to a third party audio visual team rather than having an employee responsible for this function and that the Foundation had responded to a grant request for \$30,000 to support the Church's Community Service Ministry in 2023.

Mr. Engebretson further addressed the information on capital reserves included in the Annual Report and highlighted that the Council engaged a third party to perform a reserve study on the Church's buildings which provides guidance for the Congregation in terms of understanding what future capital needs will be and while we have a good starting point for 2024, the projected budget contribution is \$30,000 which is short of the suggested annual contribution amount.

Mr. Smith informed the Congregation that because the 2024 Budget had been recommended by the Church Council, no motion or second was needed, but that the question of approval of the 2024 Budget as presented would be submitted to a vote. After discussion, Mr. Smith called for a vote on the approval of the 2024 Budget as presented. Mr. Smith determined that, based upon the vote, that the 2024 Budget as presented, was approved by the Congregation.

## Other Business

Mr. Smith addressed questions from the floor.

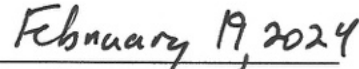
## Adjournment

Pastor Blyth delivered a concluding prayer. There being no further business to be conducted by the Congregation and upon a motion duly made and seconded, Mr. Smith adjourned the Congregational Meeting at 10:50 A.M.



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Ellen Kelleher, Secretary  
St. Armands Key Lutheran Church  
Church Council



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Date of Approval



Minutes  
St. Armands Key Lutheran Church  
Special Congregational Meeting  
June 9, 2024

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A special meeting of the Congregation (“Special Congregational Meeting” or “Meeting”) of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church (“Church”) was held at approximately 11:15 A.M. on June 9, 2024 at the Church located at 40 N. Adams Drive, Sarasota Florida 34236. The Special Congregational Meeting was called pursuant to written notice given by first class mail at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting and also announced at services of worship on at least the preceding two consecutive Sundays (“Notice”). Mr. Ernie Smith, President of the Congregation Council (“Council”), presided at the Meeting. Mr. Steve Gunderson acted as parliamentarian for the Meeting and Ms. Ellen Kelleher acted as Secretary.

### **Congregational Materials and Resources**

In advance of the Meeting, the following materials and resources were made available to members of the Congregation: (i) Letter to the Congregation dated May 9, 2024 announcing the Special Congregational Meeting to be held June 9, 2024, including Exhibit A thereto which was the recommended motion (“Recommended Motion”); (ii) a Video Message to the Congregation from the Council; (iii) a Slide Presentation supplementing the Council Video; and (iv) a Slide Presentation outlining options for 25 North Washington Drive. In addition to the Congregation Materials, the Council held the following Question and Answer Sessions on the items to be presented at the Congregational Meeting: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 via Zoom; Sunday, May 19, 2024 in person and via Zoom; and Sunday, June 2, 2024 in person and via Zoom. Collectively, these materials and resources will be referred to as the “Congregation Materials.” A copy of the May 9, 2024 Letter to the Congregation is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

### **Call to Order and Quorum**

Mr. Smith called the Meeting to order and declared a quorum for the Meeting based on the presence of more than twenty (20) voting members of the Congregation, including Rev. Dr. Kenneth Blyth. In addition to approximately 78 members present in person, twenty-four (24) members attended the Meeting on-line. Mr. Smith reviewed the process for voting in person and on-line and informed the Congregation that paper ballots would be used for voting on the Recommended Motion while motions from the floor would be addressed by voice vote and/or a show of hands if necessary. Mr. Smith provided detailed instructions for on-line voting as well. Mr. Smith introduced Mr. Sam Randolph as the on-line moderator and Ms. Kelleher as chair of the tellers. Mr. Smith indicated that Mr. Siegfried and Ms. Robinson would assist as tellers and he also requested volunteers from the Congregation to help in the voting process and several people responded and provided much appreciated assistance.

### **Purpose of the Special Congregational Meeting; Compliance with the Constitution; and Discussion**

The Congregation Materials summarized the purpose of the Meeting:

1. Creation of a Stewardship Committee to encourage stewardship through the devotion of time, talent and treasure to the Church.

2. Creation of Legacy Campaigns through the SAKLC Foundation and otherwise to provide a corpus of funds to support Church operations in perpetuity.
3. Creation of a Church Capital Fund under the control of the Congregation Council to fund ongoing capital needs of the Church in the future.
4. The sale of the Church House to provide a base of funds necessary for future capital needs of the Church and the deposit of proceeds from the sale into the Church Capital Fund.

Following distribution of a copy of the Recommended Motion (which had been included in the Congregation Materials), Mr. Smith opened the floor both in person and on-line for discussion. Mr. Smith called the Congregation's attention to the fact that the Congregation Council, the Finance Committee and the Strategy Committee had made it a priority to gather the facts, do the proper studies, and debate alternatives before making recommendations to the Congregation. Mr. Smith also reminded the Congregation of the reserve study that had been provided at the time of the February 2024 Annual Meeting. Members of the Congregation engaged in lengthy conversation and debate regarding the Congregation Materials and the Recommended Motion. The following motions were made and resolved as follows:

**Motion 1 (To Split the Recommended Motion).** The following motion was made by Mr. Arnholt and seconded by Mr. Lang: **“The Congregation moves to subdivide the Recommended Motion into two (2) parts as follows: (i) “Number 1(b) and Number 2 which would establish the Stewardship Committee and Legacy Giving Campaign ” and (ii) “Number 1(a) and Number 3 regarding creation of the Church Capital Fund and approval of the sale of the Church House”.**” After discussion, Mr. Smith called for a voice vote on Motion 1. Mr. Smith deemed the results to be inconclusive and he asked for a show of hands. Based on a count of hands, Motion 1 was passed by a majority vote.

**Motion 2 (On items Number 1(b) and Number 2 which would establish the Stewardship Committee and Legacy Giving Campaign).** As part of the Recommended Motion, not requiring a second, Mr. Smith called for a paper ballot vote on the following Motion: **“1. On an advisory basis, the Congregation authorizes the Congregation Council to: (b) establish a Stewardship Committee to work with members individually and collectively in communicating the on-going financial needs of the Congregation and to otherwise promote Christian stewardship through devotion of time, talent and treasure to the Church; and 2. Recognizing the ongoing value and contributions to the Church by the St Armands Key Lutheran Church Foundation, the Congregation directs the Council and the Foundation Board to cooperatively establish a Legacy Giving Campaign to enable members to better understand the opportunities to help fund the Church's long-term future life and work.”** After discussion, Mr. Smith called for a paper ballot on Motion 2. Based upon the results of the paper ballot, Motion 2 was passed by a majority vote.

**Motion 3 (To Further Split the Recommended Motion).** The following motion was made by Mr. Wittlinger and seconded by Ms. Beljean: **“The Congregation moves to subdivide Number 1 (a) regarding the Church Capital Fund and Number 3 regarding the sale of the Church House into two (2) separate parts as follows: (i) “Number 1(a)” and (ii) “Number 3.”** After discussion, Mr. Smith called for a voice vote on Motion 3, the



results of which he deemed to be inconclusive. Mr. Smith then asked for a show of hands. Based on a count of hands, Motion 3 was passed by a majority vote.

**Motion 4 (On item Number 1(a) which would establish the Church Capital Fund).** As part of the Recommended Motion, not requiring a second, Mr. Smith called for a paper ballot vote on the following Motion: “On an advisory basis, the Congregation authorizes the Congregation Council to: **“(a) create a Church Capital Fund, to be controlled by the Church Council for the purpose of paying for ongoing and emerging capital needs of the Church’s property, including but not limited to, technology infrastructure, other infrastructure, and the physical needs of all the Church property, including the parking lot.”** After discussion, Mr. Smith called for a paper ballot on Motion 4. Based upon the results of the paper ballot, Motion 4 was passed by a majority vote.

**Motion 5 (To Table Number 3 Regarding Sale of the Church House).** The following motion was made by Mr. Hauser and seconded by another member of the Congregation: **“The Congregation moves to table item Number 3 until March 15, 2025.”** A motion to table being non-debatable, Mr. Smith called for an immediate voice vote on Motion 5. Mr. Smith deemed the voice vote to be inconclusive and he asked for a show of hands. Based on a count of hands, Motion 5 failed.

**Motion 6 (To Call the Question on Item Number 3 Regarding Sale of the Church House).** The following motion was made by Mr. Armour and seconded by another member of the Congregation: **“The Congregation moves to call the question on Item Number 3 Regarding Sale of the Church House.”** Based on a voice vote, Motion 6 passed by a two-thirds vote.

**Motion 7 (On item Number 3 from the Recommended Motion, authorizing sale of the Church House).** As part of the Recommended Motion, not requiring a second, Mr. Smith called for a paper ballot vote on the following Motion:

**“To comply with sections C12.05 (b) and (d) of the Constitution:**

**3. The Congregation hereby approves the sale of the Church House (located at 25 N. Washington Drive, Sarasota, Florida 34236) and such approval carries with it the following authority given to the Congregation Council:**

**(a) the Council is authorized to proceed with the listing of the Church House at an asking price of \$1,995,000.**

**(b) the Council is authorized to create a Property Sale Task Force which will be vested with the authority to determine the final sale price, and other terms and conditions of the sale, which will include the authority to (i) decline any and all offers that do not, in the Property Sale Task Force's discretion, reflect the best interests of the Congregation; (ii) accept an offer that the Property Sale Task Force determines is in the best interests of the Congregation and proceed to closing on such offer; and (iii) take any and all other actions with respect to the listing of the Church House and sale of the Church House necessary to carry out the sale of the Church House in the best interests of the Congregation; notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Property Sale Task Force determines that none of the offers received reflect the best interests**



of the Congregation, then the Property Sale Task Force may decline to enter into any contract for sale of the Church House.

(c) The Property Sale Task Force will be composed of the members of the current Executive Committee membership (Mr. Smith, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Engebretson, Ms. Kelleher, and Pastor Blyth) and Mr. Siegfried, Mr. Graf and others as agreed by the Council. The Property Sale Task Force need not be unanimous in its actions but will be governed by a simple majority.

(d) The President of the Church Council is authorized to execute any and all documents necessary to carry out the sale of the Church House and other officers have authority to sign any document requiring more than one signature.

(e) The Congregation authorizes any lender, bank or title company or other third parties having an interest in the transaction to rely on the authority given pursuant hereto by the Congregation of St Armands Key Lutheran Church.”

After discussion, Mr. Smith called for a paper ballot on Motion 7. Based upon the results of the paper ballot, Motion 7 was passed by a majority vote.

### Other Business

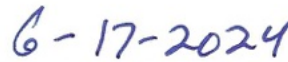
This being a special meeting, there was no other business to come before the Congregation.

### Adjournment

Mr. Smith delivered a concluding prayer. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, Mr. Smith adjourned the Congregational Meeting at 12:35 P.M.



Ellen Kelleher, Secretary  
St. Armands Key Lutheran Church  
Church Council



Date of Approval

## **Letter to the Congregation**

**Congregational Meeting to be held June 9, 2024**

**May 9, 2024**

Dear Members of the Congregation,

In March 2024 we were blessed to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Sanctuary and have with us at Worship the Church leaders who were instrumental in making our beautiful sanctuary a reality twenty-five years ago. We look forward to further celebrations in 2025 when we will see and hear for the first time, the new Schantz Organ which the Congregation approved last summer. As you may have heard, construction of the organ is ahead of schedule and we hope to celebrate Easter 2025 with this wonderful instrument which will enhance worship not only for us, but literally for people attending St Armands Key Lutheran Church for generations to come.

As Pastor Blyth indicated in his sermon during the sanctuary celebration, like those before us, we must look ahead to what is needed to be done to make sure that the buildings, property and programs that make up our Church are sustained for the long term. We need to carry on the legacy of those who have gone before us – planning for the future and sustaining the Church for the long term. While there is no doubt our Church is unsurpassed in the quality of its Worship Services, Community Engagement, and Musical Offerings, the fact is that we face increasing cost pressures to maintain this level of operation. And, the capital reserve plan commissioned in 2023, gives us a view of the future expenditures needed to maintain our property. It is our obligation to now plan for the future and set a course that will allow others to celebrate 25 and 50 years down the line as we have this year and expect to do in 2025.

With these obligations in mind, we call a special congregational meeting for June 9, 2024 at 11:00am. to consider the Motion set forth on Exhibit A to this Letter. To summarize the Motion before you, the Council is urging you to support and authorize:

1. Creation of a Stewardship Committee to encourage stewardship through the devotion of time, talent and treasure to the Church.
2. Creation of Legacy Campaigns through the SAKLC Foundation and otherwise to provide a corpus of funds to support Church operations in perpetuity.
3. Creation of a Church Capital Fund under the control of the Congregation Council to fund ongoing capital needs of the Church in the future.
4. The sale of the Church House to provide a base of funds necessary for future capital needs of the Church and the deposit of proceeds from the sale into the Church Capital Fund.

The Council is providing an online video presentation and documents containing background and context for the Motion that will be voted upon at the June 9 Congregation

meeting. Additionally, there will be presentations followed by Q&A sessions to provide multiple opportunities for Members to seek clarification on the recommendations being brought forward by the Council.

Q&A Sessions:

Tuesday May 14 Online via Zoom at 7pm

Sunday May 19, In the Sanctuary and Online via Zoom between Worship Services (approximately 10:15am)

Sunday June 2, In the Sanctuary and Online via Zoom after the single Sunday Worship Service (approximately 11:00am).

No pre-registration is required to use Zoom for the Q&A Sessions. The meeting link shown below will be active a few minutes before each session begins:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4758553758?omn=86355234254>

### Meeting Notice

Pursuant to Section C10.03, we are required to provide notice of any congregational meeting on the two (2) preceding Sundays, as well as by mail/email at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.

This letter is our official notice of a Special Congregational Meeting called for 11:00am on Sunday, June 9, 2024. You may participate by attending in person at the Church or on-line. As required by Section C 12.05 (b) and (d) of the Constitution, the sale of the Church house may only proceed with Congregational approval. The purpose of the meeting is set forth on Exhibit A hereto in the form of a Motion to be voted on at the meeting. You will have the opportunity to vote whether you attend online or in person. Please contact the Church Office if you'd like to register to attend the June 9 meeting online.

Members of the Congregation will have access to extensive information on this proposal before the meeting on June 9. Please feel free to reach out to the Church's professional leadership and/or members of the Congregation Council with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Ernie Smith,  
President of the Congregation Council  
[ernie@saklc.com](mailto:ernie@saklc.com)



## EXHIBIT A

The Congregation Council proposes the following motion to be voted upon both electronically and in-person on June 9, 2024 during the Special Meeting called for the Congregation of St Armands Key Lutheran Church:

1. On an advisory basis, the Congregation authorizes the Congregation Council to:

(a) create a Church Capital Fund, to be controlled by the Church Council for the purpose of paying for ongoing and emerging capital needs of the Church's property, including but not limited to, technology infrastructure, other infrastructure, and the physical needs of all the Church property, including the parking lot; and

(b) establish a Stewardship Committee to work with members individually and collectively in communicating the on-going financial needs of the Congregation and to otherwise promote Christian stewardship through devotion of time, talent and treasure to the Church.

2. Recognizing the ongoing value and contributions to the Church by the St Armands Key Lutheran Church Foundation, the Congregation directs the Council and the Foundation Board to cooperatively establish a Legacy Giving Campaign to enable members to better understand the opportunities to help fund the Church's long-term future life and work.

In addition, to comply with sections C12.05 (b) and (d) of the Constitution:

3. The Congregation hereby approves the sale of the Church House (located at 25 N. Washington Drive, Sarasota, Florida 34236) and such approval carries with it the following authority given to the Congregation Council:

(a) the Council is authorized to proceed with the listing of the Church House at an asking price of \$1,995,000.

(b) the Council is authorized to create a Property Sale Task Force which will be vested with the authority to determine the final sale price, and other terms and conditions of the sale, which will include the authority to (i) decline any and all offers that do not, in the Property Sale Task Force's discretion, reflect the best interests of the Congregation; (ii) accept an offer that the Property Sale Task Force determines is in the best interests of the Congregation and proceed to closing on such offer; and (iii) take any and all other actions with respect to the listing of the Church House and sale of the Church House necessary to carry out the sale of the Church House in the best interests of the Congregation; notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Property Sale Task Force determines that none of the offers received reflect the best interests of the Congregation, then the Property Sale Task Force may decline to enter into any contract for sale of the Church House.

(c) The Property Sale Task Force will be composed of the members of the current Executive Committee membership (Mr. Smith, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Engebretson, Ms. Kelleher, and Pastor Blyth) and Mr. Siegfried, Mr. Graf and others as agreed by the Council. The Property Sale Task Force need not be unanimous in its actions but will be governed by a simple majority.

(d) The President of the Church Council is authorized to execute any and all documents necessary to carry out the sale of the Church House and other officers have authority to sign any document requiring more than one signature.

(e) The Congregation authorizes any lender, bank or title company or other third parties having an interest in the transaction to rely on the authority given pursuant hereto by the Congregation of St Armands Key Lutheran Church.

## Pastor's Report to the Congregation

### February 2025

The annual report of the pastor often provides a summary of the year just ended and looks in general terms towards the year to come. However, this year, I encourage you to read the reports within this annual report to discover for yourselves – straight from the horse's mouth – the many ways in which this congregation lived out its life of mission and ministry in and for the world. Instead, in this report I shall point to two significant hinge moments in the life of this congregation, which shall set our path for many years to come.

The twin hurricanes of 2024, Helene and Milton, swept our plans and our plant aside. By that, I mean that projects long planned for the fall of 2024 and the season of 2025 were made irrelevant compared with the mitigation and restoration tasks which filled our calendar. And our buildings, our spiritual and missional home, were destroyed from the ground up to the 4' mark (a zone which comprises... well, pretty much everything!). When all is said and done, we will have lost six months of ministry – beyond several superb musical events and Christmas worship services – and fifty years of possessions. It is easy to focus solely on the emotional whiplash of the past several months; mourning that which was lost; unable to see the tomorrow into which God calls us. It is easy to lose hope in the future and lose trust in our Great Shepherd. And yet...

At the time of writing, our Finance Committee and Congregation Council have every reason to believe that we will be able to complete the refurbishment of SAKLC without incurring any debt. To be sure, our reserve funds will be depleted, and we have been indebted to the generosity of congregants, friends and strangers to fund the rebuilding project. Not to mention the fact that we await a decision from our insurers with bated breath! However, by Easter we will have a new, fully restored and beautiful church home, which will also be much better prepared to withstand lightning and flood than at any time in our history.

The mitigation project began the same hour in which the police department reopened the Ringling Bridge. A team of volunteers swept into action – many of them spending hours on their hands and knees until professional help and equipment arrived. And then our folks focused on throwing out tons (literally!) of sodden paperwork and books, and damaged equipment and furniture. Believe me, the several dumpsters which washed onto our property were put to good use! The teams of volunteers who showed up each day are too numerous to mention here by name – you know who you are, and I know who you are and give thanks for you often in my heart and in my prayers. Having said that, recognition must be given to three incredible people who have spent countless hours leading us towards recovery: director of operations Michael Bodnyk; custodian Dave Dreschler; and property lead Tom Seigfried.



With new drywall in place, the building began to look like home again. Porcelain tile flooring not only looks lovely but will resist future water intrusion. And easily installable barriers at each door will help keep floodwater out in the future. Sanctuary chairs can be easily moved to higher ground in the face of future storms. And metal-framed office furniture will not soak up water like a sponge the way old pressboard furniture did. Even the console which comes with our new pipe organ will be raised a few inches, in light of the flood. In other words, our renovation motto has been: *An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure*. And so, we have rebuilt on the assumption that we will face a flood every year – and when we don't, we'll be pleasantly surprised. And if twenty-five years go by before we are hit again, although we will all be gone, those who come after us will say, "Wow, those folks back in 2024 really knew what they were doing!"

Just imagine the incredible benefits a completely refurbished building offers us. True, we would not have sought out such a refurbishment, but now that it is here... To worship in an even more beautiful and bright space. To hold classes in carefully redesigned rooms. To host neighborhood events in attractive and comfortable surroundings. To invite friends and neighbors into a church home which is welcoming, functional and pleasing to the eye. In short, the process of mitigation and restoration is nothing other than a renewal of SAKLC, a new day, a resurrection. "Behold, I make all things new!" (Revelation 21:5).

I also believe that SAKLC is facing an existential new day. Let me explain. When a congregation is first established, it bears a resemblance to its founding members. After all, their theology, outlook, polity (organizational structure), worldview, and what used to be called churchmanship, all make their mark on the new congregation. And those who come immediately after them are attracted to that particular way of being Church and adopt it as their own, even if it differs a wee bit from their own tradition. And this will repeat itself, with relatively minor changes, until something forces a change.

SAKLC was formed as a congregation of the American Lutheran Church (ALC) which was somewhat different from the other Lutheran bodies in the US. Arguably, the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) and Missouri Synod (LC-MS) shared more in common with each other than they did with the ALC. The ALC was often described as low-church, not very clerically based (more lay-led than clergy-led), with a DNA of what some refer to as *mid-Western pietism*. And the founders of SAKLC came from a time of significant church volunteerism, which meant that congregational operating costs could be kept relatively low. It was also an era of denominationalism, where there was pride in one's Lutheran heritage in general and in one's own branch of Lutheranism in particular. And so, if a congregation was financially blessed, it became a source of righteous pride that it generously supported Lutheran causes and organizations and significantly supported the district (now synod) and national Church. And that is how SAKLC began, and how it grew, with a basic budget funded by pledged contributions, with wealthier members funding special projects as they arose, a

Foundation assisting the mission of the congregation by supporting worthy causes aligned with congregational values, and playing a major leadership role in the ALC and subsequently ELCA. Over the years, this model was maintained by Lutherans of all traditions as they relocated to Sarasota, and by non-Lutherans who found a home at SAKLC, because this was the way of being Church which first attracted them to this place – this was what sang to their hearts. True, folks brought their own wee twists on and tweaks to this model, and it was adapted somewhat by each new generation. But, absent a significant shock to the system, this was the status quo.

The shock to the system of SAKLC came in multiple, quite gradual ways. The “twists and tweaks” mentioned above, added up over time to a gradual diminishment of the original DNA. As the years went by, fewer folks shared a denominational mindset, because fewer came from an ALC heritage. Also, the ‘new’ denomination – the ELCA – never really managed to inspire the same love which its predecessors did (as a product of the 1980s, with its beginnings in the contentious 1970s, and coming into ‘adulthood’ in the 1990s, how could it!). And, in the 2000s, as many social scholars have documented, volunteerism and membership in community groups in the United States began to diminish. These were the decades in which fraternal lodges, bowling leagues, and congregations began to see attendance numbers plummet. At SAKLC this diminution was more subtle – after all, a relatively older membership means that we experience societal effects a wee bit later than does society in general. And so, our volunteer crisis was delayed until the second decade of the new century, at which time SAKLC’s operating costs increased to meet the new professionalized model of being Church.

As our budget expanded, folks began to address the need to fund this new reality and began to question the old assumptions of congregational life. The previous model, which assumed that the congregation would easily fund its own operations, no longer applied. The previous model which saw SAKLC as a leader in the denomination seemed outmoded. The previous model in which a significant amount of dollars went out from the congregation seemed dangerously shortsighted at a time in which resources were increasingly needed to fund our own budget. Added to which, our financial forecasts - including the need to cover the costly upkeep of increasingly older buildings - led leadership to begin to move the congregation into a new model. This new reality was shared with the congregation in the leadup to the July 2024 special congregation meeting which approved the sale of the church house on Washington and which established new financial plans for the future.

Why am I rehashing all this history at a time like this, you may be asking. I have several reasons in mind:

1. Our history is part of who we are. Understanding it, and honoring it, can help us move into the future not only with greater *confidence* but also with greater

*sensitivity*. In other words, knowing where we came from can help us know where are and where we're going.

2. Some folks at SAKLC are faithfully living out our historical model of being Church, because it resonates with them, and it is close to their hearts. That must be honored, even as we develop a new model.
3. While many in leadership at SAKLC are immersed in the data which led to the special congregational meeting in July and see the need to move to a new model right now (if not yesterday!), many other folks are not as immersed and are concerned that this still-emerging new model abandons who we have been and who we are as a congregation.
4. Physics tells us that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. History and Psychology 101 tell us that reactions often go too far. To put it another way, people often throw out the baby with the bathwater. So, as this new model emerges and develops, my hope is that the best of who we have been can meet the best of who we are and thereby shape who we will be.
5. SAKLC leadership was in the process of more fully sharing their financial analysis with the congregation and were working diligently to implement the July decisions of the congregation when the storms hit, and the floods came. And so, at this point, it is good and salutary to remind ourselves of who we are and what we were about as we look forward to where we are going.
6. Change is difficult. Knowing *what*, *when* and *why* helps make it less so.

But here is the crux of what this report is about. Just as our renovation is leading us into a new day at SAKLC, so too is the new reality of being Church together in 2025. The flood took many precious things from us, as does any transition in to a new financial and ministry model, whatever shape that takes. Yet from loss comes life; through death comes resurrection. We have a precious opportunity to carry the ministry of SAKLC, handed to us by those saints who ministered here before us, into God's future. We, in our turn, will pass the baton on to another generation, and we must trust that they too will faithfully adapt to whatever new reality comes their way in their day. But this is *our* new day - may we be found faithful to our calling as ministers of the Gospel, and as stewards of this special place we call home.

*Pastor Blyth*



# TREASURER'S REPORT

The good news is that we are ALL HERE!

While last year at this time we were pleased to announce we had successfully made our way through a complicated 2023 . . . little did we know what was in store for 2024!

Bottom line, as you can see in the first column of numbers, we arrived at the end of 2024 with a grand total of \$87 to the good in the Operating Account! We received \$37,238 more than budgeted and needed nearly all of it to get to the end of the year. But as you can imagine, there is much more to the story.

Hurricane Helene and Milton were a force to be reckoned with. And, we must take comfort in the significant way our membership has risen to the challenge. It is truly amazing. You will hear much more about those costs and contributions in the other reports and presentations.

The major driver of expense in the budget was not really an expense, but a contribution to Reserves in excess of the \$30,000 that was budgeted. We actually were able to attribute \$191,964 to Reserves which nearly met the projected Ending Reserves amount of \$197,564 needed for 2024. For more detail, please refer to the 2023 Annual Report.

You will see in the 2025 proposed budget, while the recommended Reserves contribution is \$187,621 we are leaving the budgeted amount open for a determination of ability to fund to be known later in the year. The budget proposed for your consideration is a barebones budget.

The 2025 Budget has no increase in total spending or anticipated contributions. There is a recognition of the need to realign spending to keep the bottom line the same.

As you know, there has been so much happening here that we are fortunate to have kept our heads above water.

Douglas Engebretson, Treasurer

# BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT

The proposed 2025 operating budget has been prepared assuming no increase in income over the 2024 budget. At the moment, it appears that SAKLC will need financial support for facility restoration that is currently unknown as the amount and timing of final insurance proceeds is uncertain. Additionally, many of our members and visitors are experiencing substantial financial challenges of their own from the hurricanes.

Therefore, we believe we need a prudent expense budget that reflects these uncertainties. As the vast majority of our operating budget expense is fixed, this budget attempts to reduce variable expenses that are not absolutely necessary for operations and mission. Importantly, a Reserve has been established as either a buffer for shortfalls or a source should financial results surpass this plan.

The largest category of expense is salaries and benefits for our staff. Recommendations from the Personnel Committee are reflected in this budget. Insurance premiums are likely to increase and an estimate is included. However, it is unknown what coverages at what prices will be available.

Reductions in Mission Support and Music and Worship are included which can be revisited from a positive Reserve. Health and Wellness is assumed to be self funded by participants. Community Service will be funded by the Foundation and/or private contributions.

SAKLC Budget Committee

Alan Graf, Chair

Chris Williams

Doug Engebretson

**ST. ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
FINANCIAL MINISTRY PROPOSAL - 2025**

20250113a

		YTD Actual	Budgeted for	Budgeted for
		2024	2024	2025
<b>Income Accounts*</b>				
<b>ENVELOPES</b>				
01	REG OFFERING	\$ 925,489	\$ 945,000	\$ 945,000
02	MISC ENVELOPE OFFERING	2,513	6,000	6,000
	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>928,002</b>	<b>951,000</b>	<b>951,000</b>
<b>LOOSE OFFERING</b>				
01	LOOSE OFFERING	108,987	90,000	90,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>108,987</b>	<b>90,000</b>	<b>90,000</b>
<b>ENDOWMENTS</b>				
01	ENDOWMENT FUND - FOUNDATION	70,822	25,000	25,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>70,822</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>
<b>MISC RECEIPTS</b>				
01	FLOWERS	4,931	5,000	5,000
04	PARKING RECEIPTS	32,667	32,000	32,000
05	INVESTMENT INCOME	48,981	30,000	30,000
07	MISCELLANEOUS & WEDDING INCOME	6,710	8,000	8,000
08	RENTAL INCOME	3,230	5,000	5,000
10	MUSIC INCOME	18,170	38,000	45,500
11	HEALTH & WELLNESS INCOME	3,224	4,000	-
12	FELLOWSHIP INCOME	1,264	2,000	2,000
13	COMMUNITY SERVICE - FOUNDATION	30,000	30,000	-
14	AV UPGRADE INCOME			
16	HOME SCHOOL INCOME	250		
		0		
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>149,427</b>	<b>154,000</b>	<b>127,500</b>
<b>Total Income:</b>		<b>\$ 1,257,238</b>	<b>\$ 1,220,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,193,500</b>



## Expense Accounts\*

	YTD Actual 2024	Budgeted for 2024	Budgeted for 2025
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### STAFF

01	Pastor's Salary & Housing	\$ 133,659	\$ 133,000	\$ 140,000
02	Pastor's Benefits	42,499	43,000	45,263
03	Pastor's Car Allowance	4,200	5,000	5,000
05	Pastor's Continuing Education	1,467	2,000	2,000
06	Pastor's Professional Expense	2,246	3,000	3,000
07	Pulpit Supply	557	2,000	2,000
08	Minister of Music Salary	119,191	112,000	125,000
09	Minister of Music Benefit	21,777	24,000	26,786
10	Substitute Musician	5,300	4,000	4,000
11	Support Staff Salaries	131,430	127,000	132,080
12	Support Staff Benefits	12,068	8,000	8,320
13	Admin Professional Expense	256	2,000	6,500
15	FICA Employer's Share	18,390	18,000	19,214
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>493,040</b>	<b>483,000</b>	<b>519,162</b>

### BENEVOLENCE

01	Mission Support	28,000	84,000	21,000
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>28,000</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>21,000</b>

### WORSHIP & MUSIC

05	Instrumentalist/Vocalist	29,635	46,000	22,700
06	Music Materials & Maint	16,787	12,000	5,000
07	Music Workshops and Events	798	4,000	-
08	Worship Materials	6,607	5,000	5,300
10	Choral Scholar Program	31,100	48,000	50,000
11	Flowers	7,796	6,000	12,500
13	Substitute Musician for Worship	5,100	3,000	-
17	Special Concerts	21,599	24,000	24,900
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>119,422</b>	<b>148,000</b>	<b>120,400</b>

### TECHNOLOGY

01	Audio/Visual Supplies	12,126	5,000	5,000
02	Tech Support	59,462	80,000	80,000
03	A/V Upgrades - Phase 1	-	-	-
04	Website Maintenance & Development	9,411	7,000	7,000
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>80,999</b>	<b>92,000</b>	<b>92,000</b>

### MISSION

01	Outreach	6,233	5,000	5,000
03	Education	128	7,000	7,000
04	Advertising	21,356	15,000	15,000
06	Stewardship/Contrib. Env.	2,064	1,000	1,000
07	Communications	1,100	1,000	1,000
08	Fellowship	4,513	7,000	7,000





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

28 January 2024

Dear Finance Committee Members of SAKLC,

On January 28th, the audit committee consists of Michael Armour, Barbara Dzumela, Larry Garberding, and Barbara Hilt reviewed the financial records of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church Foundation for the year 2024.

The review process consisted of the following:

- We reconciled all accounts at year end to be sure internal records matched third party account statements.
- We randomly sampled donations and grants and verified board approval
- We reviewed foundation holdings to be sure holdings are consistent with the Foundation's policy statement.

Based on our review, we believe that the financial statements accurately reflect the financial position of the foundation as of December 31, 2024.

We would like to thank Denise Watermeier for her help and dedication to the church throughout the year.

Very truly yours,

**Michael Armour**  
Audit Committee, Chair

**Barbara Dzumela**

**Larry Garberding**





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

28 January 2025

Dear Finance Committee Members of SAKLC,

On January 28, 2025, the audit committee consisted of Michael Armour, Barbara Dzumela, Larry Garberding, and Barbara Hilt. They reviewed the financial records of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church for the year 2024.

The review process consisted of the following:

- We discussed all procedures and controls currently in place (collections, payments, etc.)
- We reconciled all accounts at year end to be sure internal records matched third party account statements.
- We randomly sampled invoices and vouchers across each month to be sure all payments were properly documented.
- We traced dedicated receipts throughout the ledger.
- We randomly selected weekly cash and check donations and online donations (restricted and unrestricted) and traced them through the books and bank statements.

Based on our review, we believe that the financial statements accurately reflect the financial position of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church for 2024.

Financial statements for the period ending December 31, 2024 will be distributed in advance of the Annual Congregational Meeting.

Very truly yours,

**Michael Armour**  
Audit Committee, Chair

**Barbara Dzumela**

**Larry Garberding**

# MEMBERSHIP STATISTICAL REPORT

	TOTAL	FULL	SEASONAL	ASSOCIATE
Active Members 12/31/2023	482	410	22	50
TOTAL GAINS 2024				
Affirmations of Faith	33	26	5	2
Transfers	6	6	0	0
Baptisms	0	0	0	0
TOTAL LOSSES 2024				
By death	11	8	3	0
By transfer	6	6	0	0
For other reasons	5	1	4	0
TOTAL MEMBERS 12/31/2024	499	427	20	52

Members of the congregation who died in 2024: Luisa Andrae, Raymond Smith, Gary Lawson, Eugene Pererva, Art Schulte, Norma McDaniel, Betty Hendry, Lynn Nieting, Janice Lorenz, Lucy Colonese, & Margaret Demey

Marriages performed: 3

Baptisms: 7

Confirmations: 0

Total 2024 Sunday Attendance: 9,836 \*

Average 2024 Sunday Attendance: between 150-400 (season dependent)

2024 Roll Updates Statistical Adjustment- Total Gains: 6

2024 Roll Updates Statistical Adjustment- Total Losses: 16

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

\*Attendance numbers were largely affected by damage that occurred from Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton

2024 events offered to the congregation included concerts at SAKLC, performances by local musicians and dancers, tours of historical sites in Sarasota, and other outings to provide the congregation with fellowship and community opportunities.

# 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

Dear Members of the Congregation,

**2024 was very much a story of two halves.**

The first half of the year saw the congregation and community making the most of the facilities at SAKLC. Too many to list, but examples include:

- Continued growth in attendance at Worship Services,
- Exciting music events with performances from members of our church, our community, and artists from around the world.
- A full house at volunteer opportunities in Fellowship Hall including “Kids Against Hunger” and “Personal Care Kits.”
- A full house for the Education Series “God’s Family – Jews and Christians Face to Face.”
- Countless Ministry and volunteer gatherings in Ogram Hall, Fellowship Hall, and our conference rooms.

During this time the Congregation Council also assessed the results of the “Capital Reserve Study” completed in 2023. This study provided guidance on what it may cost to maintain our wonderful facilities for decades to come; the newest built 25 years ago and the oldest 50 years ago. At a Congregation meeting held in June, the Congregation directed the Council to take four actions:

1. Re-launch the Stewardship Committee to encourage stewardship through the devotion of time, talent, and treasure to the Church.
2. Create Legacy Campaigns through the SAKLC Foundation and otherwise to provide a corpus of funds to support Church operations in perpetuity.
3. Create a Church Capital Fund under the control of the Congregation Council to fund ongoing capital needs of the Church in the future.
4. Sell the Church House to provide a base of funds necessary for future capital needs of the Church and deposit proceeds from the sale into the Church Capital Fund.

Those actions, along with the previous commitment to install a beautiful pipe organ in the sanctuary demonstrate the health, vitality, and long-term vision of SAKLC to remain a beacon of hope to the community and praise for our Lord, Jesus Christ. As I discuss below, while the storm events delayed full implementation of these plans, progress was made and you will hear more about these efforts in the months to come. Unfortunately, the damage to the Church House was so extensive that demolishing the house is the most prudent path. We await insurance proceeds before carrying out this plan. Speaking of the organ,



at this point construction is underway to prepare the sanctuary for the instrument, but we need to have all the dusty work done before we bring this beautiful new instrument into the building. We expect to have the organ by Easter.

**Then came the second half of 2024. In a very short time, everything changed:**

- Hurricane Debbie in August, flooding many buildings in St Armands Circle with water coming within inches of entering the Church buildings.
- Hurricane Helene in September, where for the first time ever flood waters entered the buildings on the SAKLC campus including the church house.
- Hurricane Milton two weeks later in October, with a second round of flooding, slightly less than from Helene, but with greater winds causing their own type of damage.

You have all seen the pictures or witnessed in person the severe damage done by these storms to our Church campus. Wall boards needed to be removed up to four feet, carpeting had to be removed, our pews could not be saved, and a great deal of other furniture and contents had to be disposed of. Many of you experienced similar property damage of your own and, rest assured, we keep you in our prayers. We are grateful that our Church community experienced only property damage and no loss of life or serious injuries. We immediately took steps to remediate the Church and were able to return to worship by Reformation Sunday albeit in a sanctuary with bare stud walls, concrete floors and temporary folding chairs. Our fantastic AV team put us in a position to stream our services on the internet until we were able to use the Church building. In the face of loss and devastation, this Congregation has shown faith, fortitude, resilience, and determination.

We have been blessed by the generosity of the Congregation in contributing toward the cost of restoring our church facilities. It has given us a wonderful opportunity to begin the necessary restoration work. Amazingly, the bare stud walls in the sanctuary had new wallboard and paint by Christmas Eve. The worship and music were as beautiful and touching as ever, if not more so!

Outside of the Sanctuary, the rest of our facilities remain unusable. Many events and activities have had to be cancelled or postponed. But, through the efforts of creative and resourceful people, many activities have continued! The Community Service Ministry, the Refugee Ministry, the Music Ministry, and the Women's Ministry are a few examples of teams that are forging ahead doing God's work.

SAKLC is fortunate to have some flood insurance for the buildings. It does not cover contents inside the buildings and as of this writing, we continue pursuing confirmation of just how much the insurance will payout for building restoration. Even with the tremendous generosity that you have shown, there is likely to be an additional gap to close. We will strive to quantify and close that gap. And we will focus once again on what the Congregation requires to assure the long-term maintainability and sustainability of St Armands Key Lutheran Church.

Many people who were instrumental in creating the successes in the first half of 2024 were personally impacted by the storms. They have been challenged in new and different ways and have prayerfully stepped up to do what is required. Thank you all!

We are moving forward, planning for our future and, God willing, we will come together at Easter to celebrate in a newly restored church with the new pipe organ installed.

The actions of the Congregation in the second half of 2024, perhaps even more so than the actions of the first half, demonstrate the health, vitality, and long-term vision of SAKLC to remain a beacon of hope to the community and praise for our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Sincerely,

Ernie Smith  
Congregation President

## MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT

Isaac Watts, considered the father of English hymnody, penned a hymn text in 1719 that has remained powerful across Christian denominations through today. The first Sunday we were able to get back into our beloved church after Hurricane Milton, the text of this beloved hymn kept coming into my head. Kris Soderman and I began worship with a beautiful piano duet based on these words.

*O God our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home.*

2024 was a year with some wonderful high points and, as we all know, serious challenges. We certainly had our own “stormy blast”, actually two of them (!), but through hard work, our members’ generosity, and community, we made it through. Although we did have some program interruption after the storms, I am so proud of what SAKLC’s Music Ministry was able to accomplish this year. Here are the highlights  
....

### ***OUR MUSICAL OUTREACH***

Our year began with several exciting and interesting concerts, bringing many new faces to our church.

January started off with a visit from The King’s Brass. This group has become a highlight of our musical year at SAKLC. We had a packed house for this program with people from Sarasota and all across the state of Florida who came to hear this amazing group. If you have not had the opportunity to hear them, mark down their next concert when it is announced!

We welcomed Omaldo Perez to St. Armands Key Lutheran Church on January 21st. Omaldo is one of the country’s most prominent and creative church musicians. He has worked in churches of various denominations across the country and is currently a key guiding force on the national board of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians. In addition to assisting in worship that weekend, he led a fantastic afternoon program, “*Dancing Around the Cross*”, featuring well-known and new hymns, “jazzed up” with a jazz quintet. We were grateful to our choir for helping to lead that festival. We did, literally, dance out the door!



On February 4th, we welcomed Danny Lyons for a solo handbell concert. He is a solo handbell artist, handbell director, composer, and clinician. He is known as the inventor of a method of playing 8-in-hand (i.e. playing 8 handbells at one time) and has named it “Danny’s 8”. We had a terrific audience for this program, including people from all over the state of Florida and some who traveled from Georgia to hear him. If you missed it, we hope to have him back in the future!



During his visit, Mr. Lyons gave a ringing workshop to our own SAKLC Ringers working on refining some basic techniques and prepared a piece with them that they played during his concert. It was a lot of fun!



Our favorite Lido Beach Commodores visited us on Transfiguration Sunday. It is always a joy to have these gentlemen with us in worship!

In March, our SAKLC Choir led a moving Lenten vespers service, featuring Bach's cantata, "*Komm, du süße Todesstunde*", BWV 161. Our soloists were Gabriel Welch, an SAKLC Choral Scholar, and Thea Lobo, a wonderful Sarasota mezzo-soprano. The cantata was accompanied by a string ensemble from Sarasota Orchestra. I cannot emphasize enough how proud I am of our SAKLC singers for taking on these demanding pieces and doing them so well - we are fortunate to have such amazing talent and dedication in our church!

In March, our Lenten observance was briefly interrupted with the joy and celebration of the 25th anniversary of SAKLC's "new" sanctuary. What a joy it was to gather together for festive worship with choir, brass, and percussion. Most importantly, how wonderful it was to have our pastors (Pastor Blyth, Pastor Wogen, and Pastor Zimmer) with us, as well as some of the key people who spearheaded the sanctuary's building project - Kurt Wilkening and Klaus Lang. This was such a special moment in the life of our congregation!

On Palm Sunday, we welcomed Adam Aceto, the organist for the Walt Disney Company, to SAKLC for the silent film, "The Ten Commandments". He provided the soundtrack for the entire film from our organ. It was wonderful! This was Adam's second time at SAKLC and he is looking forward to returning when our new instrument is installed!



Our singers and instrumentalists led our Holy Week and Easter liturgies beautifully. These musicians put in an immense amount of work preparing music for worship all year, but especially for the Triduum.

The Illyrian Symphony Orchestra offered a spring performance at SAKLC in April featuring some excellent music by Mozart and Mendelssohn. The orchestra featured a marvelous young piano soloist, Yongqui Liu who has played on five continents with notable orchestras including: Minnesota Symphony Orchestra, Serbia National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, Yale Philharmonic Orchestra, Armenia Symphony Orchestra, Novosibirsk National Symphony Orchestra, Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra, Sichuan Conservatory Orchestra, among others

In May, we hosted Sarasota Contemporary Dance for a special program in Fellowship Hall.

In years past, Sarasota has been somewhat quiet during the summer months. Over the past few years, with more people moving to Florida full time, we have noticed an uptick in activity and church attendance during these months. Generally, Sarasota's main arts organizations go on hiatus in the summer, so we decided to try something new to fill a musical void. We hosted our first "*Midsummer Nights Music on the Circle*" - a series of four concerts in August. These included the Astralis Ensemble, Jazz DaddyO's (a garden concert), Sarasota Piano Trio, and Strings Con Brio. I was especially honored to be asked to sing on the program with Strings Con Brio! This was a fantastically successful series and brought many new people into our church. We are already planning this coming summer's festival!



During the Sundays in September, we had a hymn sing before each worship service, “*Sing a New Song*”. There are so many wonderful songs and hymns in our various hymnals and I wanted to introduce some of the lesser-known gems. It’s always great to see how many people show up early for these; it’s nice to enjoy some music together before worship.

The early fall months were understandably quiet due to unforeseen repair needs from Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton. Sadly, we had to cancel or postpone several of our planned programs including our spooky silent movie, Reformation concert with John Behnke, our Bach Advent Vespers, and our Carols for Cows. Still, we were able to host Strings Con Brio for their annual holiday concert - they had a packed house!

Although SAKLC could not host the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service this year (it was our turn), we had several choir members that participated in the combined choir at All Angels Episcopal Church. This is always such a wonderful event that brings our community together.

Even though St. Armands Circle was still in recovery mode from the hurricanes, our island community was still able to pull off a wonderful, festive evening on the first Friday of December to celebrate the season. SAKLC offered a special event, “*Journey to Bethlehem*”, a re-telling of the wondrous Christmas story through music, word, and a live nativity! Pastor Blyth, Pastor Wogen, and Pr. Arnholt took us beautifully through the Christmas story, our choir & instrumentalists offered meaningful hymns and songs, and our living nativity brought the story to life in front of our eyes ... and even some animals came inside the church! It was a spectacular evening that took many hands to put together — thank you to all!

We are thankful to Sarasota Orchestra for sending the Sarasota Brass Quintet to offer music during our 11am worship service on December 15th. This is an annual gift from the orchestra to remember SAKLC’s beloved Virginia Toulmin.

Our Christmas Eve services were nothing short of spectacular. Thanks to our choir, the Choral Scholars, and our brass quintet and instrumentalists. There is nothing quite like singing that stirring last verse of “O Come, all ye faithful together”!

We certainly ended the year, one filled with joy and challenges, on a high note!

## ***GRATITUDE***

Most importantly, I want to thank our wonderful singers who volunteer their time each week - some throughout the whole year - to help beautify and enrich our liturgies. Many of the above programs could not happen without them. SAKLC is so fortunate to have so many dedicated and talented people in our congregation.

I also want to thank our Choral Scholars - Nina Moroney, Kelly Collins, Gabriel Welch, Kevin Moroney, and Brandon Guzman. Easter Sunday was Kelly’s last weekend with us — working full time as an elementary music and theatre teacher, and living in Tampa, made the commitment too difficult. We are so proud of her and everything she is accomplishing! We welcomed Brandon Guzman late in the year; he will be leaving us in early 2025 to pursue a music career in Colorado, but we are grateful for all his good work!

Sincere thanks to SAKLC’s Paul Thurner (oboe) and Kevin Randolph (bells and bass guitar) for the gift of their talents throughout the year!

We are so fortunate to have a variety of professional instrumentalists who join us in worship throughout the year. In a particular way, I



would like to thank Jane Hoffman (flute) who has become part of our SAKLC family and is with us quite regularly. Her music adds sparkle and beauty when she is with us!

Lastly, please let me express my deep gratitude to Kris Soderman. She is a blessing to SAKLC and a great gift to our music ministry. Kris gives so much of her time all throughout the year. She accompanies our choir, assists with service playing, substitutes for me if I am away, and helps whenever and wherever she can.

### ***OUR NEW SCHANTZ PIPE ORGAN***

It has been exciting to watch the progress of our pipe organ over 2024. It is planned for delivery and installation in February/March of 2025.

The fundraising for the cost of the instrument is complete. We are now focused on raising funds for the Organ Fund, a vital element of the project. This fund will help supplement the cost of programming for the instrument throughout the year, as well as assisting the church with maintenance and upkeep of the instrument.

In July, I made a site visit to the Schantz workshop in Orville, Ohio. I was delighted to be joined by SAKLC Council members, Ellen Kelleher and Lynda Menuz. We spent a few hours touring every part of the Schantz factory with Jeffrey Dexter learning about each part of the organ building process. While we walked through, we were able to chat with some of the artisans — some were actually working on pipes for SAKLC’s new instrument! What was clear is that this is not just a beautiful musical instrument; it will be a true work of art!



We are excited to announce the Organ Dedication Concert has been scheduled for March 3, **2026** and will feature Olivier Latry, the titular organist of the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris. As a concert performer Latry has played in over 40 countries across five continents. He has recorded extensively for Deutsche Grammophon records. If you followed the news of the reopening of the cathedral this past December, you will have heard Latry performing on the instrument (which was saved from the fire and dates back to 1730!). This will be a program not to be missed!

### ***NEW HANDBELLS***

Through the generosity of Bob Rowe and the Randolph family, SAKLC was able to purchase several new Shulmerich bass bells for our handbell choir. These very large bells add a great sense of depth and beauty to our pieces and we are so fortunate to have them!

Also in 2024, SAKLC purchased a “like new” 3-octave set of Malmark handbells from the Florida Bahamas Synod. They acquired the instruments from a Lutheran church that was closing. This set will be useful to some of our handbell choir members who are interested in solo ringing.





## ***OPPORTUNITIES AND FRESH IDEAS***

**“Inspiring Worship” A Sacred Music Workshop at University of Florida** - I am *sincerely grateful* to the church for allowing me time during the year to attend workshops and festivals. In May, I attended the “Inspiring Worship” workshop sponsored by the Sacred Music Department at University of Florida (Gainesville). Led by Dr. Laura Ellis, one of the nation’s top organ and carillon instructors, I was treated to three days of wonderful organ & carillon recitals, engaging lectures, roundtable discussion groups, and helpful networking opportunities with other church musicians from around the state.

What was **most inspiring** to me was to experience the undergraduate and graduate sacred music students leading some of the programs. The hymnody class, for example, led a hymn festival they researched and executed. The instructor made clear this was entirely student driven — the musical and text choices they made were sensitive, thoughtful, and (though sometimes contemporary with text) all rooted in time tested tradition. And their technical capabilities on their respective instruments were impressive! It was refreshing to get to chat with them over the days and learn about their work and classes — this is the future of church music in America.



Inspiring and encouraging the next generation of church musicians is critical. To this end, I will be working with Dr. Ellis to send students from her organ studio down to Sarasota to be featured in recitals on our new Schantz instrument; she is very excited. Additionally, I am working with a graduate sacred music composition student on a possible world premier of one of his choral works this coming fall. All very exciting — and made possible by attending and networking at these types of events! Thank you again!

Being mindful of travel costs, I chose to participate this year in the Association of Lutheran Church Musician’s annual summer conference virtually. **“PONDER ANEW: From Generation to Generation”** was hosted from July 22-25 at Valparaiso University. Some of the highlights included: a brilliant lecture about using the cantatas of J. S. Bach in the context of liturgy by Michael Costello, a seminar about understanding copyrights with the president of MorningStar Publishing, a class in composing music for church by Anne Krentz Organ, a fascinating lecture on Bach’s *St. John Passion* by Chad Fothergill, a session on visual arts in worship, and several worship services and a full performance (with choir, soloists and orchestra) of Bach’s *St. John Passion*.

## **OPERATIONS HIGHLIGHTS**

### ***HURRICANE HELENE & HURRICANE MILTON***

The biggest challenge for SAKLC in 2024 was the recovery from Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton. While our building’s exterior remained largely undamaged, unfortunately, our church took on several inches of standing water throughout the campus after both storms. As access to the St. Armands was blocked for several days after both storms, this contaminated water had several days to soak into drywall, furniture, and other contents. Sadly, we lost approximately 80% of our contents including our



beautiful sanctuary pews, almost all the flooring (except the tile in the bathrooms), office furniture, many volumes of books from Pastor Ken's library and Michael's music library, and more. In addition to all of this, our church house at 25 N. Washington Drive sustained major damage from flooding. There is additional information about this in the annual report.

Even with all these challenges, we moved forward.

Sincere thanks to all our church members and friends who were on site as soon as access to the church was possible. They helped us begin drying out the church and start the cleaning out process. We were grateful for the help of a professional cleaning company, ChemDry. It is because of their involvement in our cleanup that we were fortunate to have Belfor Property Restoration.

Belfor's remediation team was onsite almost immediately with dozens and dozens of air purifiers and dehumidifying equipment. This equipment was only installed for a few days before it all had to be removed in anticipation of the second storm, but they were back as soon as the island opened back up. The remediation process began again, and they have been our main point for remediation and restoration.

Over the course of the next few months, we worked (and continue to work) seven days a week to get SAKLC back in shape.

Due to the state of the facility, we could not have in-person worship for a few weeks. During that time, though, I am grateful to Andres Paz and his crew for coming in immediately to create fixes for the damaged AV equipment so that we could continue streaming. Thanks also to our musicians who came in to enrich those streamed services!

We were thrilled to be able to welcome our congregation and community back for in-person worship on Reformation Sunday, October 27th. The sanctuary looked different: there was no carpet, 4' of drywall was removed all around, we had folding chairs for seating, and the only working restrooms were back in Ogram Hall. But it was a wonderful, joyous service - and it was awesome to see everyone in person again!

Church Council quickly formed a Restoration Committee including Karen Randolph, Ann Walborn, Tom Siegfried, Doug Engebretson, Michael Bodnyk, Joyce Hart, Ernie Smith, and Pastor Blyth. This team was tasked with assessing the necessary replacement details and making recommendation for the Council's consideration. This was a big job and I am deeply grateful to all the members of this team for their efforts and dedication!

In every decision the committee made, one of the principal considerations was how to protect SAKLC in future storms. We chose to replace the flooring throughout the church with porcelain tile because that was the only flooring that made it through the storms — our carpeting and vinyl laminate flooring were all ruined. The choice to install high-quality upholstered chairs in the sanctuary instead of pews is because we will be able to pick up, stack, and move the chairs in future storms. The committee is also considering a flood control system that will be installed over doors and windows to block water from entering the building.



Simply put, we know St. Armands will flood again in the future, but SAKLC will be much better prepared to weather these storms.

We have made tremendous progress over the past few weeks.

- Remediation has been completed.
- New sanctuary seating has been ordered and will arrive in a few weeks.
- All of the drywall has been repaired, and painting is completed.
- Our new tile flooring is being installed and is near completion.
- New office furniture and shelving systems have been ordered and will be here in February.

I want to thank Tom Siegfried (who dislikes being thanked!) for his *countless* hours of work over the past few months on the church's behalf. Words cannot express how fortunate SAKLC is to have his expertise and guidance, especially in this moment. I'd also like to thank John Teller for his work spearheading the church's insurance policies and working through these claims with us - his help has been so valuable. Lastly, I want to acknowledge and thank Dave Dreschler for all his extra time and attention during this time.

As you can imagine, there is a significant cost to all this work. In the end, the total cost of remediation, restoration, and replacement will likely exceed \$1.8 million.

While that is a serious & challenging number, we are grateful to our congregation and friends who have already stepped up over the past few months and contributed a total of \$938,943 (as of 1/25/25). SAKLC is sincerely grateful for your generosity. We also thank the SAKLC Foundation for their recent gift of \$56,500 to fund the purchase of all the church's new office furniture and shelving systems.

We have submitted two flood claims as part of this damage and have already received a partial payment of \$125,000 towards one of those claims. As of this report's printing, we are still waiting to hear from our insurance adjustor about the outcome of our two claims. We are in communication with the adjustors, but this process is very slow due to how many homes and business were affected by these storms, and now complicated with the destructive fires in California. Church Council has set up a task force to help continue to guide us through this insurance process.

### ***MEDITATION GARDEN***

As many of you are aware, our award-winning and beloved Meditation Garden was flooded last year in a storm and needed almost complete restoration including new sod, irrigation, lighting, and planting. We worked with our landscaper, Marin Brothers. The project was completed this past spring and looked absolutely beautiful. You may have noticed that some of our beautiful statues have been moved around the garden — this was done so that a visitor can more easily see the statues from any point in the garden.

We are grateful for the generous major gift towards our garden's restoration in loving memory of David Gill.

Sadly, the garden sustained major damage this past fall in the two hurricanes. In addition to plantings, we lost a few trees, one of our benches, and one of our fountains. As this is not the right season to put in new plantings, we have been advised to wait until the early spring to see what, if anything, comes back. In the meantime, we have developed a replacement plan with our landscaper. More information will be shared with the congregation as we move into the spring.

### ***CHRISTMAS & EASTER AT SAKLC***

Christmas & Easter at St. Armands Key Lutheran Church is unlike anywhere else I have served. The energy of our congregation, the joy and energy of the music, and especially the beauty of the sanctuary all combine to make an extraordinary experience for our worshippers. I would like to especially thank Steve Gunderson and Ethan Ngo for their dedication and extra efforts in creating the truly breathtaking floral displays for these holidays. And they don't work alone - thanks also to Sandy Bodnyk, Lynda Menez, Judy Matthies, Helga & Reinhard Shwartz, and others who help out.

### ***NEW FACES***

This spring we welcomed a new face to the SAKLC, Maggie Dougherty. You may not have met her in person, but you have certainly talked to Maggie on the phone or received an email from her. She has been a wonderful addition to SAKLC!



### ***AUDIO VISUAL (AV)***

Over the summer, we made the decision to change AV vendors. We are now working with FAMA Productions, led by Andres Paz. Since our transition, we have been so impressed by the significantly increased quality of our production, and the consistent reliability in streaming. There are hiccups from time to time as Andres and his team work to troubleshoot pre-existing problems, but everything is basically working really well.

Our Sanctuary AV system did receive some damage from the hurricanes as many of the audio wires ran under the floor. As I've mentioned, Andres and a sound engineer were on hand, almost immediately, working on repairs.

SAKLC streaming has become a critical element of our church's ministry. I am so happy to hear our members talk about watching our services and programs online while they are out of town for the season or away on vacation. We are able to engage our seasonal members in ways never before possible. And this includes committee work, too. While AV is certainly a major expense in our budget, it is a necessary and worthwhile one.

### ***PARKING MANAGEMENT***

SAKLC has always kept our parking lot open for community use. As you know, over the past several years that has become somewhat problematic. The lot was mainly being used by Circle workers or construction crews. Parking in our lot was becoming unavailable during the week for our own members coming for committee meetings, quilting, music rehearsals, or other events. And closing the lot for concerts or special services become difficult as it required attendants.

A parking task force was formed. After considering two vendors, We made a decision to contract with Easy Parking Group, a local company based here in Sarasota. This company now monitors the lot 24/7.

For SAKLC church members, with a parking sticker on your car, parking is free in any spot in the lot at any time.

Parking in the lot is free for anyone on Sundays up until the afternoon; visitors coming to church do not need to worry about paying.

If someone is coming to an event or meeting during the week, there are church only spaces that are left unmonitored during business hours.

Of course, this was all interrupted by the hurricane, but we feel it is working well. There are certainly kinks to still be worked out, but our hope is to ensure we have parking for our members and friends coming to SAKLC for worship, meetings, or events - and still be able to bring in contributions from the lot.

***MAKING ALL THINGS NEW***

As I said at the beginning, this has been a year with some wonderful highs and some serious challenges. We are so very grateful to the entire congregation, and also to our church's friends locally and around the country, for your support, prayers, and encouragement. We are looking forward, making lemonade out of lemons, and are excited and enthused about the church's continuing mission and ministry!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael".

**MICHAEL BODNYK**  
*Minister of Music & Director of Operations*





## Community Service Ministry Annual Report Year End 2024

**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 the generous support of the St Armands Key Lutheran Church Foundation and the time, talents, and in-kind donations of our congregation. We are inspired and encouraged by all of you and appreciate your kindness and love!

Community Service Ministry received a \$30,000 grant from the SAKLC Foundation that enabled CSM to fund projects and events during 2024. CSM is grateful to the Foundation for its support and generosity.

Community Service Ministry was very active in 2024 and is thankful for Gods many blessings.

CSM participated in the 2024 Festival of Ministries in January sharing information and fellowship with other SAKLC ministries.

In February CSM supported the Super Bowl of Caring event raising awareness and support of local charitable organizations. CSM also partnered with Christ Church on Longboat for an event highlighting education and awareness for Selah Freedom and its mission to end human and sex trafficking in the Sarasota area. February brought the annual Lutheran World Relief project. Volunteers assembled 1000+ Personal Care Kits and over 200 Quilts. CSM sponsored February God's Work Our Hands Recognition Sunday to share information and build excitement for all things community service related.

In April, CSM with the assistance and coordination by Nina Moroney, Growth & Engagement Director, ran a very successful Kids Against Hunger event. 106 volunteers packed 60,000 kids' meals for Second Chance Last Opportunity, Harvest House, Englewood Helping Hands, Feeding Empty Little Tummys, All Faiths Food Bank and Schoolhouse Links.

CSM held a very successful gratitude breakfast in May to celebrate the support received from SAKLC congregation.

CSM promoted and helped organize two volunteer opportunities over the summer of 2024. Ten volunteers sorted and boxed food including tons of potatoes for All Faiths Food Bank in June. Eight volunteers sorted and distributed food to over 200 families with Harvest House in August.

In October, following Hurricane's Helene and Milton, CSM helped coordinate and provided volunteers in a partnership with Harvest House for the unloading and sorting of Hurricane Supplies and Donations received from loving and giving churches in Georgia. Food and various

supplies were distributed throughout the community and clothing was provided to Second Chance Last Opportunity and other agencies as part of CSM’s Share the Warmth Drive.

In December CSM partnered with SAKLC Women’s Ministry to provide the leftover food from the Women’s Advent Lunch to our local Fire Department and other groups.

Throughout the year, CSM collected the food, clothing and other donations provided on an ongoing basis by our generous congregation and distributed as needed to our supported agencies.

Over the course of 2024, CSM conducted 7 in-kind drives and the outpouring of support from our congregation provided food, clothing, cleaning supplies, baby supplies, children’s books, hygiene supplies, blankets, Easter and Christmas cards and gifts for Pines Nursing Home residents. CSM and volunteers cooked monthly meals for Resurrection House and the Sarasota Youth Shelter. CSM sent cards and made calls to the sick and homebound. SAKLC supported CSM’s Angel Tree Christmas gift giving effort for Lutheran Services Florida. Christmas gifts and food were provided to Sarasota homeless youth. Christmas treats were provided to the residents at Second Heart Homes.

CSM added a new in-kind drive opportunity in 2024 to benefit local school children and their teachers. In July, a variety of school supplies were donated by the SAKLC congregation to benefit Alta Vista Elementary School in Sarasota.

In November, after careful consideration and thoughtful prayer, CSM voted to withdraw its SAKLC Foundation grant request submitted in August 2024. Projects scheduled for the first quarter of 2025 needed to be deferred until 2026 due to the two catastrophic hurricanes. CSM has the financial reserves to cover the balance of the 2025 expenses. CSM will resume its full event and project schedule in 2026.

CSM financial contributions in 2024\* were:

Foundation Grant	30,000
LWR-Personal Care Kits	5235
Quilting	1397
SouperBowl of Caring	2525
CSM	10423
CSM - Schoolhouse Link	<u>3100</u>
<u>Total:</u>	52680

**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 2024:

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

CSM announces its 2025 committee leaders: Gayle Galloway, Chair, Tammara Williams, Vice Chair, Don Anthony, Treasurer, Jan Voigts, Communication Director, Karyn Hawksley Smith, Recording Secretary and Marge Jeffers, Backup Recording Secretary.

Thanks and recognition also to the members of the CSM team who have served as committee liaisons to the organizations selected this year; Don Anthony, Diane Bruce, Gayle Galloway, Marge Jeffers, Kathy Kussy, Stacy Musel, Christine Ortiz, Bonnie Resler, Karyn Hawksley Smith, Cheryl Speaker, Jan Voigts, Beth Way and Tammara Williams.

Special thanks to Maggie Dougherty and Nina Moroney for their administrative support and assistance throughout the year.

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***

Submitted by:

Karyn Hawksley Smith, CSM Chair

December 2024

\*Financial contributions end of September 2024

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION REPORT

In the course of 2024, the Christian Education committee lost several members due to relocation and ill-health and is in the process of rebuilding. Our task was further complicated by a major lightening strike which destroyed much of our audio-visual equipment. And then came the hurricanes. However, the weekly **Online Bible Study** led by Pastor Blyth continued through 2024 and into 2025. This study looks at each of the Scripture readings assigned for the coming Sunday worship service. The study begins with the Old Testament reading and works towards the Gospel text. And so, the emphasis is on those texts which will likely not make it into pastor's sermon, but which nonetheless are inform and shape the forthcoming service.

In February of 2024, SAKLC and Temple Beth Shalom (TBS) held a joint class which alternated between church and synagogue, taught by Pastor Ken and Rabbi Stuart Altschuler. The class covered **Jewish and Christian history and beliefs**, and was extremely well-attended, with over a hundred participants at each session. In December, Pastor Ken preached at TBS and Rabbi Stuart at SAKLC on the topic of **hope**. And, at Christmas 2024, SAKLC received fifty **Hanukkah** menorah from the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, allowing congregants to join their Jewish sisters and brothers in lighting candles to observe that wonderful season of light. In February/ March 2025, SAKLC and TBS will once again study together, following the same model, but this time on the topic of **Biblical texts each community knows very well but interprets very differently**.

Given the tragic events in the Holy Land in 2024 and 2025 (which led to the cancelation of the SAKLC pilgrimage scheduled for May/June 2024), it is clear that the Christian community could benefit from the formation of a closer relationship with our Jewish friends. This realization has led pastor Ken and Rabbi Stuart to form a Christian-Jewish alliance which seeks to allow each community to learn of the history, faith, hopes and dreams of the other. And Pastor Ken is also working to develop a Christian-Jewish-Muslim dialog in Sarasota. More details will become available in the course of 2025, as plans develop, and funding is secured.

As the education team at SAKLC is reformed, as the restoration of our building is completed, and as our A/V capabilities are reestablished, new classes will be developed and will be advertised in Connections and elsewhere.

*Pastor Blyth*



# STEWARDSHIP REPORT

In 2024, SAKLC reestablished its Stewardship Committee with the following members: **Pastor Ken (chair), Michael Bodnyk, Ernie Smith (*ex officio*), Doug Engebretson (*ex officio*), Jan Voigts, Karyn Smith.**

The team explored and analyzed the financial and budgetary needs of the congregation as well as giving patterns both current and historic, and began to develop a 2025 Stewardship campaign/focus. By early 2025 it became clear to the committee and to the Congregation Council that it would be counterproductive to run a traditional campaign while restoration costs and funding were still being fully established. It was agreed that even a relatively brief pause in implementing our plans would allow the picture to become clearer, our needs to be better identified, and a single and well-focused approach to the congregation be made. The committee continues to refine its analysis and produce materials which the congregation would find informative and helpful. We are likewise prepared to work alongside other SAKLC teams in establishing a firm financial footing upon which to engage in mission and ministry in 2025 and beyond.

*Pastor Blyth*

## WOMEN'S MINISTRY REPORT

The purpose of the Women's Ministries is threefold: 1. to provide social opportunities for women to become acquainted and develop a social network, 2. to provide opportunities for women to become more involved in our church, and 3. to become better acquainted with the Bible and how it applies to our lives.

We have two major events each year, one a Women's Advent Luncheon and the other a Women's Spring Tea. These have included music, discussions, getting to know new people, having a talk about a pertinent topic, and, of course, delicious food.

The Women's Book Group meets on Tuesday mornings six times between October and April to discuss an interesting book and then to socialize at a local restaurant.

The Women's Bible Study takes place on Tuesday mornings several times a month from January to the end of March, and each season focuses on men or women who have had a significant role in the history of God's people. This season we're studying Game Changers in God's Plan.

All women are welcome and invited to attend any or all of our events. For further information contact Judy Matthies at 609 915 3040 or judymatthies@gmail.com.









## REFUGEE MINISTRY REPORT

We serve only legal refugees that have been assigned to Lutheran Services of Florida by the State Department of the Federal Government. The refugees come from Cuba, Haiti, Venezuela, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Columbia.

This has Been a banner year for our Ministry. We have helped 44 families with whole or partial household furnishings, delivered 45 bikes, helmets, locks, pumps, 1 family nursery items and 3 green cards.

We have had 73 pick ups of donations from our congregation and the broader community.

We have spent \$9383.14 for items not donated. Much of those costs are the storage which is absolutely necessary to do our work. Our income was \$16,222.56, \$7100 was from the campaign run in conjunction with Lutheran services and the Patterson foundation.

We thank the congregation for their support both financial and in-kind donations. The refugees are so grateful for our help and tell us that every time we deliver items to their homes.



# Launching of the SAKLC Tech Training Program

In 2024, St. Armands Key Lutheran Church initiated a formal tech training program by developing and launching the Training to Go program, which consists of a series of short, self-paced tutorials targeting congregants who are new and uncomfortable using technology. As a result, the tutorials focus on technologies that promote and provide access to online information, live and recorded worship services, meetings, and events. The tutorials include.


- **Tutorial 1: Using QR Codes to Access Online Information**
- **Tutorial 2: Accessing Live Worship Services Using the SAKLC Website**
- **Tutorial 3: Accessing Live Worship Services Using Social Media**
- **Tutorial 4: Accessing Past Worship Services and Events**
- **Tutorial 5: Using Zoom as a Participant**

The training was in response to the AV Tech Task Force's 2023 study and survey findings on the technological needs of SAKLC and the congregants.

SAKLC rolled out this program to the entire congregation last summer and made it available in print through the Training to Go training station in the Narthex and online through the SAKLC Training Hub on the SAKLC website. SAKLC will continue to offer other training opportunities, both online and in-person, based on newly introduced technologies and the congregants' needs.

We want to thank AV Tech Task Force members, SAKLC staff, and the congregants for supporting this training program.

-Ladd Skelly



**What is a QR Code?**

A QR code is a type of barcode that can be read easily by your mobile device, such as your smartphone or tablet. The code pulls up information from the Internet. It can be linked to a website, an email address, a phone number, and even a PDF document. The code is unique for each link. Often, SAKLC uses QR codes to give you quick and direct access to church information, events, and Zoom meetings. You may have noticed them in our church bulletins. QR codes are very useful. So, how do you use them?

**So, how do you use a QR code?**

You use a QR code by scanning it with an app on your Apple or Android mobile device. It is worth noting older smartphones may not have a scanning app. You can download one from the Apple App Store or Google Play App Store. However, most people use their camera app instead. Once launched, the app will recognize the code and open a message window displaying a link or descriptor. By tapping either one, you will go to the associated website via your phone's web browser, which should launch automatically.

**What are the steps?**

There are three short steps for scanning a code with your camera app. Review these general steps.

**Tech Tip:** Your phone or tablet requires a camera to scan QR codes.

**Tech Tip:** Remember, you can scan a QR code using an iPad or tablet as well.

1. Tap camera app
2. Scan QR code
3. Tap QR code link



## 25 North Washington Property Sale Task Force

The sale of 25 North Washington was authorized on June 9, 2024, at the Special Congregation Meeting. Included in that approval was the formation of a Task Force to manage the sale process. The task force members are Lois Robinson (chair), Ellen Kelleher, Ernie Smith, Doug Engebretson, Tom Siegfried, Alan Graf Jr. and Kurt Wilkening. Details of the sale approval and task force formation are in the meeting minutes from June 9, 2024, elsewhere in this annual report.

Multiple Realtors were evaluated before selecting an agent who did a very professional job preparing the listing materials. The property was listed for sale at the end of July. While there was some interest, no offers were made prior to Hurricane Helene. After Hurricane Milton, the house was taken off the market.

The compounding effect of two flooding events resulted in such damage to the house that the Task Force, along with the Congregation Council, have determined that it is not financially responsible to repair the house. A flood insurance claim is in progress. A minority portion of the anticipated insurance payout will be used to tear down the house, with the remaining funds being applied to the restoration of the church facilities.

Once the property has been cleared, the task force will reconvene, and with our realtor will evaluate market conditions and determine how to go forward with selling the property.



## SAKLC Foundation Report

The Trustees for the 2024 year were: Michael Armour (Chair), Sandy Bodnyk, Steve Gunderson, Lee Krompart, Jeffrey Olesen (Vice-Chair), Ladd Skelly, Ann Walborn (Secretary), Denise Watermeier (Treasurer), Joanne Will-Kaminisk, Fred Wittlinger, Jura Zibas, Pastor Ken Blyth (ex officio), Ernie Smith (ex officio)

The Foundation uses our *Foundation Fundamentals* document for guidance. The Foundation's two missional roles, both of which emanate from our theological heritage and our acknowledged responsibility as God's earthly stewards, are (1) to receive and manage funds for use in proclaiming and extending the reach of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and (2) to distribute those funds to or for the benefit of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church and to other qualifying organizations on behalf of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church, to promote charitable and religious purposes. The Trustees are guided by the Missional Plan of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church. To implement our mission, the Foundation receives and manages financial gifts placed into two endowment funds, the Community Impact Fund and the Church Support Fund. The Foundation makes grants annually from the earnings of each endowed fund according to its purpose.

The **Community Impact Fund** was established concurrently 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.

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. Grants to SAKLC from the Church Support Fund are unrestricted and can be used for any purpose as authorized by the SAKLC Church Council.

During 2024, the hurricanes caused catastrophic damage to our Church and communities, derailing many of us last year, including some of the Foundation year end activity. Grants awarded during 2024 totaling \$61,990 from both funds were as follows:

Lutheran Bible Translators	10,000	Fund translation of two New Testament books
Saint Armands Key Lutheran Church	20,750	Fund SAKLC Fellowship Hall AV project
Safe Children Coalition	15,000	Contribution to build new youth shelter
Luther Springs Camp	10,000	Fund additional scholarships for youth camp attendees
Saint Armands Key Lutheran Church	3,000	Fund production of 3-minute videos with Pastor
SAKLC Refugee Ministry	3,240	Fund additional storage to enhance capacity

During the three years of 2022, 2023, and 2024, a total of \$281,990 was awarded from both endowment funds by the Foundation.

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 sincerely thank all who have supported the Foundation with gifts in 2024 and in previous years of the Foundation's existence. Financial information regarding both endowment funds can be found in the Foundation Treasurer's reports that follow.

The SAKLC website ([saklc.com](http://saklc.com)) has additional information about the Foundation (look under the "ministries" menu) with links to make a gift or submit a grant request.

**Mike Armour**

Chair, SAKLC Foundation



## Church Support Fund

	Full Year 2024	Full Year 2023	Full Year 2022
<b>Income and Expenses</b>			
Income:			
Dividends/Interest	\$ 7,687	\$ 7,547	\$ 7,463
Donations	48,909	1,152	13,282
Total Income	<u>56,596</u>	<u>8,699</u>	<u>20,746</u>
Grants & Expenses:			
Grants	(36,250)	(24,000)	(24,000)
Administrative Expenses	(736)	(171)	(1)
Total Grants & Expenses	<u>(36,986)</u>	<u>(24,171)</u>	<u>(24,001)</u>
Net Income	19,610	(15,473)	(3,255)
Market Value Change	40,803	53,069	(72,372)
Fund Balance Beginning of Year	502,261	464,665	540,293
Ending Fund Assets	<u>\$ 562,674</u>	<u>\$ 502,261</u>	<u>\$ 464,665</u>
<b>Assets by Type</b>			
Cash/Money Market Funds	\$ 26,803	\$ 14,150	\$ 21,508
Money Market Funds	-	5,000	
Bonds/Fixed Income	162,945	147,380	161,127
Equities	372,926	335,731	282,030
Ending Fund Assets	<u>\$ 562,674</u>	<u>\$ 502,261</u>	<u>\$ 464,665</u>
<b>Assets by Availability</b>			
Corpus	\$ 410,996	\$ 362,087	\$ 360,935
Earnings	151,678	140,174	103,730
Total Assets	<u>\$ 562,674</u>	<u>\$ 502,261</u>	<u>\$ 464,665</u>

Note: Grants 2024 Plan is \$25,000.

As of October, the Schwab reports combine dividends and interest.

1/6/2025





## Community Impact Fund

<b>Income and Expenses</b>	<b>Full Year 2024</b>	<b>Full Year 2023</b>	<b>Full Year 2022</b>
Income:			
Dividends & Interest	\$ 28,459	\$ 28,370	\$ 27,317
Donations	19,399	6,446	30,433
Total Income	<u>47,858</u>	<u>34,816</u>	<u>57,750</u>
Grants & Expenses:			
Grants	(61,990)	(87,000)	(85,000)
Administrative Expenses	(1,294)	(1,515)	(1,206)
Total Grants & Expenses	<u>(63,284)</u>	<u>(88,515)</u>	<u>(86,206)</u>
Net Income	(15,427)	(53,699)	(28,456)
Market Value Change	128,256	168,157	(233,594)
Fund Balance Beginning of Year	<u>1,765,879</u>	<u>1,651,420</u>	<u>1,913,470</u>
Ending Fund Assets	<u>\$ 1,878,708</u>	<u>\$ 1,765,879</u>	<u>\$ 1,651,420</u>
<b>Assets by Type</b>			
Cash/Money Market Funds	\$ 60,234	\$ 15,934	\$ 25,520
Money Market		25,000	
Fixed Income	526,995	549,990	619,562
Equities	1,228,300	1,111,776	944,160
Sub Total Schwab	<u>1,815,529</u>	<u>1,702,700</u>	<u>1,589,242</u>
Certificates of Deposit (ELCA)	57,179	57,179	57,179
Checking Account	6,000	6,000	5,000
Ending Fund Assets	<u>\$ 1,878,708</u>	<u>\$ 1,765,879</u>	<u>\$ 1,651,420</u>
<b>Assets by Availability</b>			
Corpus	\$ 1,160,453	\$ 1,141,054	\$ 1,134,608
Earnings	718,255	624,824	516,812
Total Assets	<u>\$ 1,878,708</u>	<u>\$ 1,765,879</u>	<u>\$ 1,651,420</u>

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

Grants 2024 Plan is \$89,000.

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

As of October, the Schwab reports combine Dividends and Interest.

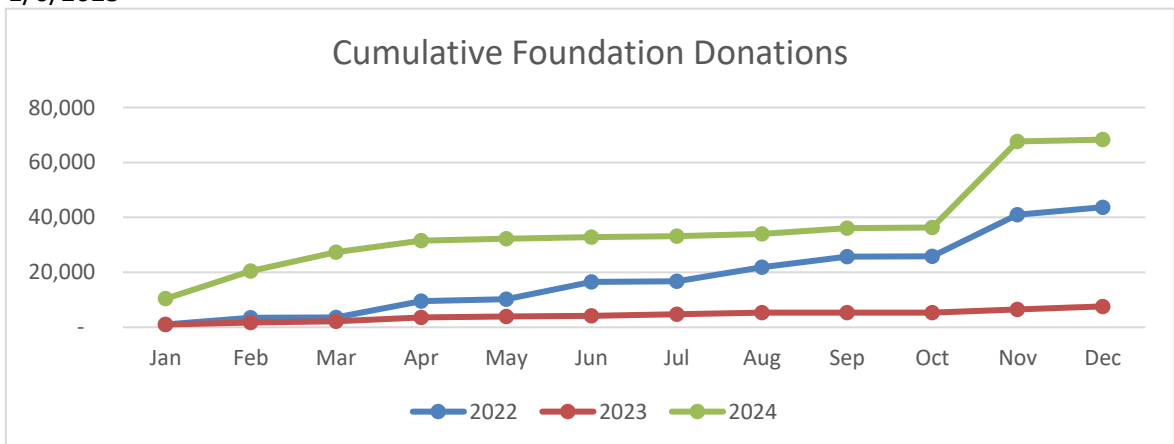
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### Donations by Category

	Full Year 2024	Full Year 2023	Full Year 2022
<b>Community Impact Fund</b>			
Anniversary	\$ -	\$ 250	\$ 956
Birthday Blessings	-	618	1848
General	19,199	3,838	16,374
Memorials	200	1,740	11,255
Bequests	-	-	-
Total Community Impact Fund	19,399	6,446	30,433
<b>Church Support Fund</b>			
Anniversary	-	-	-
General	47,451	648	13,087
Memorials	1,458	504	195
Bequests	-	-	-
Total Church Support Fund	48,909	1,152	13,282
Grand Total	\$ 68,307	\$ 7,598	\$ 43,716

1/6/2025



## QUILTING REPORT

We are so fortunate to have a wonderful group of quilters at SAKLC that meet on Mondays throughout the year. The quilters are busy making quilts, in spite of Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton coming and destroying our Fellowship Hall, including the part of our storage closet. We have been meeting in one of the quilter's garages and continue our work. The quilts we make are sent all over the world to bring warmth and comfort to those in need. Thanks to all of you who support us!



## 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.

On September 26, 2024, our area suffered significant impacts from Hurricane Helene, a Category 4 storm. Just a few days later, on October 9, 2024, Hurricane Milton, a Category 3 storm, made landfall near Siesta Key. There was significant flooding on St. Armands Circle after both storms. Our church took on several inches of water after each one resulting in a significant loss of our contents. Through the generosity and hard work of our congregation and community, our restoration began right away. We were thrilled to be able to welcome our congregation back to in-person worship on Reformation Sunday, October 27th, 2024. We look forward to the next chapter in our church's history!

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.

## 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)
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.

October 27, 2024

Reformation Sunday - our return to in-person worship after damages from Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton

**TO GOD BE THE GLORY!**

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at **[LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA](https://LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA)**.



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America