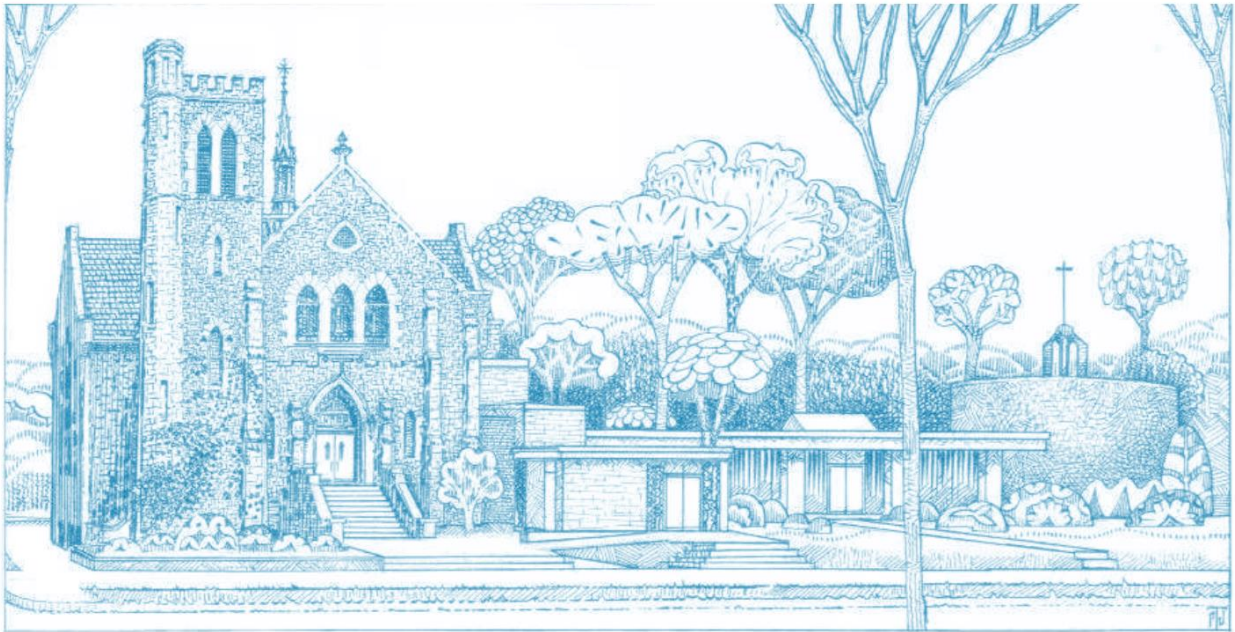


University Lutheran Church of Hope

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*University Lutheran Church of Hope
is a welcoming, Christian community of faith
centered in God's grace and
called to demonstrate God's love for the world.*



2024 Annual Report to the Congregation

Presented at the Annual Meeting

February 9, 2025

Complex World. Thoughtful Church

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See Separate 2024 Annual Meeting Financial Report Packet

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Trust Board 2024 ending totals

Thank you to Linda Herman, Tim Gustafson, Nathan Obrestad, and Ann Agrimson for collecting, compiling, editing, formatting & printing this report.



Complex world. Thoughtful church.

Congregational Meeting

Agenda for February 9, 2025

Welcome

Opening prayer and song, "Now Thank We All Our God"

Adoption of rules of the meeting

Approval of minutes from February 11, 2024

Treasurer's report for 2024

Presentation and approval of 2025 budget

Transition Team update

The 2024 Neighborhood Party

Call Committee election

Election of new leaders

Recognition of outgoing board members and others completing service

Recognition of staff

Passing of the gavel

Closing blessing

Motion to adjourn

Now Thank We All Our God

1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voic - es,
 2 Oh, may this boun-teous God through all our life be near us,
 3 All praise and thanks to God the Fa - ther now be giv - en,

who won-drous things has done, in whom this world re - joic - es;
 with ev - er joy - ful hearts and bless - ed peace to cheer us,
 the Son, and Spir - it blest, who reign in high - est heav - en,

who, from our moth-ers' arms, has blest us on our way
 and keep us all in grace, and guide us when per - plexed,
 the one e - ter - nal God, whom earth and heav'n a - dore;

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

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586–1649; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878
 Music: NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT, Johann Crüger, 1598–1662

University Lutheran Church of Hope

Congregational Meeting, February 9, 2025

Proposed Rules of the Meeting

- 1. Robert's Rules of Order** – The 12th edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the meeting, except as particular matters are set out in these Rules for the Meeting.
- 2. Voting** – Only members of the congregation are entitled to speak and vote at congregational meetings.
To vote in person: when the presiding officer calls for a vote, members will physically raise their hand and keep them raised until the vote is noted.
To vote by Zoom: **A.** When the presiding officer calls for a vote, use the “Raise your hand” feature on Zoom or physically raise your hand on the screen and wait for it to be noted. **B.** For those in a household with more than one voting member present on the same device, the additional person (people) should add their vote (yes, no, abstain) in the chat line.
- 3. Quorum** – The ULCH Constitution does not specify a particular number of members or percentage of the congregation necessary for a quorum.
- 4. Speaking during discussion** – **A.** Each speaker on any matter is requested to keep their remarks brief and to the point. If necessary to keep the meeting moving along, the presiding officer may request any speaker to wrap up their remarks. **B.** Speakers for and against the question on the floor shall be recognized alternately. Each speaker shall be required to say their name and whether they rise to speak for or against the question before making other remarks. No more than two consecutive speakers to the same view shall be recognized without a speaker of the opposite view. **C.** If someone wishes to speak and they are participating on Zoom, they can either physically raise their hand so it shows on their screen or they can click on the reactions and click on the “raise hand” button. The Zoom facilitator will acknowledge them and inform the presiding officer that someone would like to speak through Zoom. **D.** Participants on Zoom also have the option of putting their questions and comments in the chat. The Zoom facilitator will read their comments during the meeting.
- 5. Time Frame for the meeting** – **A.** In order to assure that all business is able to be concluded within a reasonable time period, the presiding officer has assigned specific time periods to the various agenda items. It is within the discretion of the presiding officer to expand or constrict these time frames as they see fit. **B.** In order to extend debate on a question after the presiding officer has declared debate ended, a voting member must move to extend debate for a specific number of minutes, which motion must be seconded and then adopted by a two-thirds majority of voting members present. This motion is not debatable. **C.** In order to cut off debate on a particular question, a voting member must move to “call the question.” This motion must be seconded and then adopted by a two-thirds majority of voting members present. This motion is not debatable.

President's Report

It has been an eventful year at University Lutheran Church of Hope. By the grace of God, Hope carries on with the values and mission we share in Christ.

In this transition time, Hope's leadership has remained steadfast in keeping a watchful eye and providing stewardship of the gifts members have so generously shared. I thank the members of the Vision & Governance Board with whom I have been honored to serve:

John Pignatello, Vice-President, liaison with the Facilities Committee and the Building Projects Donation Exploration Group

Ann Agrimson, Past President and liaison with the Wellness Donation Exploration Group

Ruth Hedman, Treasurer

Micki (Kruse) Odum, liaison with Worship and Music

Paige Whitney, liaison with Education and Themed Programming Donation Exploration Group

Zach Rau, liaison with Youth and Young Adults

Deb Bordsen, liaison with Relational Ministries

Sheila Hougen, liaison with Hope in the World and the Hospitality Spaces Donation Exploration Group

And we are grateful to Karen Jorstad, who has ably and conscientiously served as Vision & Governance Board Secretary

Our thanks to Deb Bordsen, Sheila Hougen, Ann Agrimson, and Paige Whitney, who have completed their terms of service and are leaving the Board.

During the past year, the donation discernment journey has been a significant part of the Vision & Governance Board's responsibilities. Four Donation Exploration Groups completed research on the feasibility and costs of ideas that bubbled up from the congregation and presented their proposals to the Board. In June, the Board approved projects for funding from the donation (see the accompanying chart).

It is gratifying to see that the first projects funded by the donation have begun. The integrated proposal submitted by the Hospitality Spaces group to renovate the kitchenette (partially funded by the Open Doors 2 Capital Campaign), refurbish the lounge/hallway and library, and add an ADA-compliant restroom on the East side, will make these spaces more functional and aesthetically welcoming. Proposed Building Projects include technological/electronic upgrades to enhance the functionality of our facilities for worship, concerts, and meetings.

Envisioning ambitious, new ways to Open Doors, make porous our walls, and witness to Hope's identity as a "Thoughtful Church in a Complex World," the Wellness and Themed Programming Groups identified opportunities to work in new ways with our long-cherished ministry partners (think of the guest speakers in worship last month) and develop new partnerships with community organizations to expand and diversify events hosted at Hope that benefit members and neighbors.

The donation is in an interest-bearing savings account. Projects estimated to cost approximately 90% of the donation have been approved.

Respectfully Submitted, Linda Herman

Donation-Funded Projects and Status

Project Description	Cost Estimate* Unless otherwise noted, the cost estimates come from proposals acted on June 30, 2024	Status
Kitchenette Remodel, Library Modification	\$57,485* \$16,335* *Revised Nov. 8, 2024	Nearing Completion
East Side ADA Bathroom	\$31,388* *Revised Nov. 8, 2024	Nearing Completion
Custodial Closet Addition	\$4,422* *Revised Nov. 8, 2024	Nearing Completion
Lounge Renewal	\$38,595	Delivery of furnishings pending
East Side Hallway Furniture	\$6,800	Delivery of furnishings pending
Sanctuary Sound System	\$77,000	Research continuing
Assisted Hearing Devices	\$13,750	Research continuing
Restored Exterior Signs	\$30,000	In progress
Enhanced image projection and streaming camera	\$9,400	VGB approval pending
Wellness Programming	\$25,000 Set Aside	Funding for special events co-sponsored with Hope's ministry partners
Theme Programs	\$25,000 Set aside	Funding for special events co-sponsored with community organizations

Pastor Susan Debner, Interim Lead Pastor

*“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8*

Remember who you are!

My friend, Joyce, told me a story shared at her friend’s funeral. Her friend had raised six children, and in the eulogy, one of the children told how their dad and mom would stand on the steps of the house every time any one of them was leaving with a date. Waving as the kids backed out of the driveway, the parents would joyfully call out, “Always remember who you are!”

Joyce was flabbergasted! She told me when her daughter was that age, she would start on the top step but inevitably wind up following the car down the block as she called out every instruction she could think of: “Be home by curfew! No drinking! No drugs! Wear your seatbelt! Don’t speed! Stay in groups!”

“All those years I could’ve gotten by with just calling out, ‘Remember who you are’?! Think of all the strain and stress I could’ve avoided.”

“Remember who you are,” is good advice for this interim season—and a good way to keep stress and strain in check! As I have been working with the Transition Team to complete the Ministry Site Profile (the paperwork needed to call a new lead pastor), I regularly reflect on how many assets you have as a congregation and community. When you pause to remember who you are, what things come to mind?

Hope is vibrant. Hope is generous. Hope is progressive. Hope is musical. Hope is edgeless. Hope is porous. Hope is inclusive. Hope is thoughtful. Hope is relational. Hope is resource rich. Hope is curious. Hope is authentic. Hope is hungry for justice.

Since I joined you in June of 2024, I have experienced the richness and depth of who you are, and I delight in all you have shared with me. Thank you! I also share with you an excited and hopeful spirit for the call process! Please keep your next lead pastor in your prayers, alongside the call committee, Pastor Maria and the staff, the congregation and your community. God is doing such beautiful things in your neighborhood, in your neighbor, and in you! As you read through the pages of this annual report, may you be flooded with memories of who you already are, even as you are invited into dreams about the future God is preparing for you and your next lead pastor.

In Hope and with hope,

Interim Pastor Susan

Pastor Maria Anderson-Lippert

Ministry at Hope in 2024 was full, wasn't it?!

The first half of the year was fairly typical in my experience here at Hope. We enjoyed a beautiful Epiphany together, centered in prayer practices during Lent, walked through a moving Holy Week (complete with great storytelling at the Easter Vigil!), and had a joyous Easter season. In May and June, we navigated the transition of Pastor Jen's leave-taking with grace.

As you might imagine, Pastor Jen's election to Bishop and Pastor Susan's arrival as Interim Pastor has shifted my work. Largely, it has made me more of a "go-to" person for a wider range of questions and needs. In addition, I took on the leadership of confirmation, some of our sanctuary/immigration ministries, and some other small/one-time ministries that benefit from having a consistent person relating to them. In addition to these shifts here at Hope, we had 9 funerals and 2 burials in 2024. I also officiated 5 weddings - 4 of which were for Hope members. Although all these shifts were at times busier than I would have liked, I have enjoyed the deepening relationships I have been able to develop because of these shifts.

In the Care and Nurture portion of my ministry at Hope, Compassion Care continues to be a vital ministry with 11-15 caregivers providing listening, prayer, and healing presence with other members of our community or neighbors. You can read more about the Friendly Visitor ministry and the Hope Diamonds in the Relational Ministries portion of the report. I also shepherd our Children's Ministry and Racial Justice Ministry, which can be found in other parts of the report.

Addressing the spiritual realities of the climate crisis has been a big part of my ministry this past year. In February and March, I participated in a Wild Church Leadership Course once a week online, we began regular Wild Church gatherings March - December, and we now are partnering with First Congregational and University Baptist in providing Wild Church gatherings in our neighborhood. This has been a really life-giving exploration and partnership for me and others. In addition, we hosted the Minneapolis Area Synod Eco Faith Summit in November. Many of you were present and helped to host the event - thank you!

This summer I also experimented with leading two Spiritual Direction Groups of Hope members from June-August. It was a joy to share a different way to practice our faith together and to watch relationships build. One of these groups continues to meet regularly - what a gift!

For Continuing Education in 2024, I participated in the following: An Embodied Antiracism Clergy Cohort, silent retreat at Amnicon in July, BTS Center Convocation, and an Eco Preacher Cohort (this continues into 2025.) If you want more details about any of these things, let's grab coffee!

I look forward to our continued ministry together in 2025 and couldn't be more grateful to be practicing my faith and working alongside you all.

With Gratitude, Pastor Maria Anderson-Lippert



Minneapolis Area Synod
of the ELCA

Bishop Jen Nagel

On the evening of Jesus' resurrection, as two of his followers were walking along the road that leads from the city of Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus "talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them." - Luke 24

Grace and peace to you, beloved of Christ Jesus.

This resurrection story is a favorite. We walk together as church, and Jesus draws near and walks with us. The labors of the day, the content of our discussions, the swirl of society and politics, the hopes and fears, these things shift, and yet, Jesus walks with us and is known once again as we gather together around the table.

What a year this has been. This report to the worshipping communities of the Minneapolis Area Synod is an opportunity to look back on 2024, and to look ahead at the year to come. Most of all, it is an opportunity to name and celebrate some of the ways the Holy Spirit continues to enliven God's church. We give thanks to you and your congregation for your partnership in this ministry we share.

On May 4, 2024, you elected me to serve as your Bishop. On August 1, 2024, I took office, and on September 21, 2024, I was installed during a festive and moving worship service at Central Lutheran Church. This election represents a significant threshold in our synod life as we continue by the Spirit's leading along paths yet unknown. Thank you for your trust and your continued prayers. We are particularly grateful for the intentional work of the Bishop's Election Committee. My deep thanks to Bishop Ann Svennungsen for her 12 years of faithful leadership, and for her generosity of wisdom and spirit as I learn the ropes. As I have restructured parts of our synod's ministry team, we have had several staff transitions. Some have completed their service, over the summer and fall we welcomed a few new staff, and in 2025 we will welcome more. Thank you to our staff for their patience, perseverance, faithful ministry, and good courage during a long transition.

Stepping into this role, I am more mindful than ever that we are **Church Together: Learning Together, Listening Together, Serving Together, Worshipping Together**

A few highlights from 2024:

- 137 worshipping communities, including
 - 3 new starts congregational
 - 8 strategic ministries
- 3 congregations marked Holy Closures this year, honoring their years and ministry, and in closing, stewarded their assets by contributing to the Resurrection Fund.
- 11 languages spoken in worship
- 62 call processes in 55 congregations
- 8 ordinations of new pastors and deacons
- 24 rostered ministers installed into new positions
- 34 people discerning a call to ministry and active in our candidacy process
- 305 pastors and deacons currently serving in our synod, and around 370 retired ministers
- 52 pastors and deacons serving in specialized ministries, including chaplains, educators, social ministry leaders, and missionaries
- 5 years of Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices cohorts supported by a grant from the Lilly Endowment's Thriving Congregations Initiative, with plans to apply for a scaling grant in 2025
- 17 congregations in the current cohort of Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices, and
- 13 in the first cohort (that's nearly 1/4 of our synod's congregations!)
- \$1.25 million grant received from the Lilly Endowment for Family Faith – a project accompanying parents and caretakers from the Synod's new and strategic ministries. Watch for more details coming soon!
- 800 people attended the Bishop Installation in person, including 220 clergy
- \$2,681,409 pledged in Mission Support, with 50% supporting MAS ministry and 50% for ELCA ministry
- 2 companion synod partnerships: Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) and the Leipzig District-Evangelical Lutheran Church in Saxony, Germany, including visits from Archbishop Musa Filibus (LCCN), Superintendent Sebastian Feydt and Pastor Cristoph Reichl (Leipzig)
- Synod staff supported leaders and congregations, convening, communicating, collaborating, and navigating conflicts
- Hosted many special events such as an Eco Faith Summit, Boundaries Workshop, Bishop's Theological Conference, Ministeriums, and Communicators Gatherings

What a gift to reflect on the amazing ways we were Church Together in 2024! We look forward to 2025 with the Conference Assemblies in February, Synod Assembly (May 2 - 3), and the ELCA Churchwide Assembly (July 28 - August 2). We walk together as church, trusting that Jesus continues to come near and walk with us. We are Church Together.

Thank you for your prayers and support.

Bishop Jen Nagel

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Lutheran Campus Ministry-Twin Cities continues to celebrate our partnership with University Lutheran Church of Hope, and we are grateful for our collective ministry among students, faculty and staff at the U. As we continue to stretch and grow, and learn what it means to be a community of faith in this twenty-first century, please know that I cannot imagine our ministry, or my ministry, without the gift of being in relationship with you, people of Hope, and the steadiness your intergenerational presence provides on campus. I am deeply grateful.

Some things to note from our ministry over the past year:

- Our ministry last Spring was marked by an energetic class of leaders who took deep ownership of our ministry. We'd lost that muscle memory during the pandemic, and after shifting leadership models, the ministry took off! We traveled to Northern Ireland for Spring Break and learned about reconciliation work over the long haul. We took a similar number of students to Camp Amnicon for a Spring Retreat. We served, played, prayed and rested well together over the course of the semester, in preparation for whatever the Fall semester would bring. We knew there would be both challenges and opportunities, but we did not yet know what those would be.
- In early May, we sent seven seniors – the class that joined us on zoom during the pandemic. Their vocations led them to environmental law school and gap year programs at Holden Village, engineering master's program and nursing jobs right next door. They held the last remnant of memories from our pandemic days, and it was bittersweet to let that go with them. This sending is one of the hardest and most beautiful things I do.
- In the fall, we celebrated the arrival of 18 new servant leaders! They saw the impact of being a leader in our ministry and volunteered quickly to lead, though without the background and formation that comes with more longevity in a community. Our community of leaders is positive, outgoing, and incredibly kind. They are also creative and energetic, which comes with both challenges and opportunities, of course. A few highlights of their contributions:
- The students who host our weekly free meal continued to do incredible outreach and extend abundant invitations to the meal. We are now consistently serving lunch to around 50 students (mostly Health Sciences grad students) a week. There is abundant warmth and welcome and food (which some of you provide!). Our outreach team has shifted their work to offering blessings around campus. It is a standing commitment of this group to embody God's grace and mercy and expansive love, especially juxtaposed with the loudest Christian voices on campus that are often judgmental and can be cruel. Through blessings on the First Day of School, Coming Out Day and Election Day, students initiate conversations about the ways that faith intersects with ordinary life, and proclaim the very good news of Christ's love for all people. Because of this strategic and energetic outreach work, we welcomed a large group of new students this Fall and are working hard to welcome and integrate them more fully into community life and leadership.
- Our worship has grown from 35-40, to 50-60 people on any given Wednesday this Fall. Pause is a space marked by beautiful music, creative liturgy, and a hermeneutic of curiosity. As students transition through college life, we are grateful to those who continue to show up to worship and be community.

- We hosted our annual Fall Retreat at Luther Crest Bible Camp for a healthy group of students. We celebrate robust participation in 2 staff led bible studies, the first which is open to all and focuses on a close study of scripture; and the second which is for students identifying as Queer or questioning and creates a space for healing, learning and growing in relationship to scripture for students in attendance.
- Last of all, our board has done tremendous work towards making our organization more sustainable for an uncertain future. They have done good and hard work guiding our communications work and re-discovering what engagement looks like for our organization. A special thanks to Hope members Tim Gustafson (retired Spring 2024) and Carol Flaten for their service.

Our ministry continues to face the real challenges of significant student transition and shifting energy in our community, but through the grace of God, the accompaniment of this congregation, and a lot of hard work, we are continuing to thrive – albeit in new and ever-changing ways.

We look forward to continuing this important work together.

Thank you for everything,

Pastor Kate Reuer Welton,

on behalf of Lutheran Campus Ministry-Twin Cities' Board of Directors

Transition Team Report

When a pastor leaves a congregation, there is an opportunity for the congregation to reassess who they are and how they will join God's good work going forward. The Transition Team is a small group whose task is to write the Ministry Site Profile (MSP), a 10-page document from the Synod, which will be given as an introduction to those who may be interested in applying for Lead Pastor of University Lutheran Church of Hope.

Our Transition Team, which includes Uli Koester, Dan McLellan, Britta Anderson, Ann Agrimson, and Interim Pastor Susan Debner, started work in October. We have been meeting weekly to determine how best to answer the following questions:

- Who are we as a congregation?
- What is our vision for mission? What does God invite us to join?
- What are we seeking in a leader?

We have used various ways to get input from the congregation through activities during Sunday Forums, during worship, during fellowship time, and we've invited feedback through email. We have reviewed church documents, including those created by the Donation Discernment Team and past Transition Teams; we have also reached out to some who find it difficult to physically get to church. In February of 2025 we hope to wrap up the MSP and send it to the Synod, thus starting the Call process. We are grateful for the help and assistance provided by the members of this congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Agrimson, Chair of the Transition Team and Past President

Personnel Committee

2024 has been an eventful year for the Personnel Committee. When Pastor Jen announced in January that she would allow her name to go forward to be the Bishop of Minneapolis, a number of the leaders started thinking and planning what to do if she became Bishop. In the meantime, the new Employee Handbook was completed in spring. We also updated the Lead Pastor job description, which hadn't been updated in 9 years.

In early May, Pastor Jen was elected Bishop of the Minneapolis Synod. We sadly but with good wishes said goodbye to our pastor of the past 9 years on Sunday, June 9th. And in mid-May, our Minister of Worship and Music, Bobby Ragoonanan, notified us that he would be leaving his position effective July 21st. Personnel along with the Executive Committee had their work cut out for them, which included:

- Planning a celebration for Pastor Jen's last Sunday – June
- Hiring Pastor Susan Debner as Interim Lead Pastor – June
- Hiring Maureen Armstrong as Interim Music Director – July
- Planning a celebration for Bobby's last Sunday – July
- Creating a Search Committee for the Minister of Worship and Music – July
- Rewriting the Job Description for the Minister of Worship and Music – July
- Posting the Minister of Worship and Music position in various locations – August
- Hiring Paul Stever as Hope's new Minister of Worship and Music – October

All this work could not have been done without the time and expertise of the following:

- Employee Handbook: Bishop Jen Nagel, Uli Koester, Ann Agrimson, Sonja Peterson
- Bishop Jen's Celebration: Linnea Becerra, Karen Westwood, the ULCH Quilters, Wayne Lee, Phoebe Worthington, Carol Worthington, Doug Hartmann, Ann Beane, Mary and Julia Reimann-Perez, John Pignatello
- Hiring the Interim Lead Pastor: John Pignatello, Linda Herman, Pastor Maria Anderson-Lippert, Ann Agrimson
- Bobby Ragoonanan's Celebration: Linda Herman, John Pignatello, John Beane, Pastor Susan Debner, Ann Agrimson
- Search Team for the Minister of Worship & Music: Carol Flaten (co-chair), Eric Ringham (co-chair), John Beane, Mark Nelson, Ruth Hedman, Jacklyn Hawkins, Lisa Morse, Pastor Maria Anderson-Lippert, Pastor Susan Debner, and additional help from Matt Fry.

My gratitude to those on the Personnel Committee for their hard work and care. These folks are: Linda Herman, John Pignatello, John Beane, Linnea Becerra, Mark Nelson and Pastor Susan Debner.

Going through a transition of a Lead Pastor and church musician can be difficult and turbulent. Hope is grateful to have such a talented and dedicated staff that keep us organized, grounded and focused on what is truly important. Thank you to all the staff this year: Pastor Maria Anderson-Lippert, Maureen Armstrong, Geremew Beshah, Interim Pastor Susan Debner, Nathan Obrestad, Kari Olson, Bishop Jen Nagel, Bobby Ragoonanan, Paul Stever, and Seth Stutthof. We are truly blessed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Agrimson, Personnel Committee Chair and Past President

Liaison Reports

Education

We have had a wonderful year full of faith formation and education for all ages at ULCH! First let us walk through some of the highlights for the children and youth. We've enjoyed fellowship with First Congregational UCC church, from their Mardi Gras celebration to their company at Intergenerational Family Camp at Amnicon. The summer of 2024 included Building Beloved Community Day Camp at Diamond Lake Lutheran Church, and a week of Adventure Camp at Amnicon for some of our 9–12-year-olds! Pastor Maria Anderson-Lippert has been instrumental in helping to organize and set the schedule for Sunday School this year. This fall our youngest children have been learning with Evan Peterson and his wonder-dog, Molly, while our 2nd-5th grade cohort has been learning about messages in the Bible related to economic classes (poor, middle class, wealthy) with Donna Neste and Paige Whitney. If you have any questions or would like to be more involved, please contact a member of the Children's Ministry Team: Pastor Maria Anderson-Lippert, Linnea Becerra, Paige Whitney, Donna Neste, Evan Peterson, or Melissa Odenbach.

Sunday Forums continue to provide experiences that challenge, inform, and inspire our members. We aim for variety by offering forums on theological and biblical topics, congregational concerns, social justice, local and global issues, and the arts. We also continue to hear about members' faith journeys through our twice-annual Stories of Hope forums. Presenters are occasionally resources from outside the congregation, but Forums more often utilize the gifts and expertise of our own congregational members. Forums meet in-person in Heritage Hall but are also available for those at home through a Zoom option, as well as through links in the Thursday Epistle. The members of the Sunday Forum committee are open and eager to hear about topics that you would like Sunday Forums to cover. Feel free to send your ideas to any of the members of the planning team: Rick Chapman, Marty Lewis-Hunstiger, Dan McLellan, Ann Rolle, and Alden and Rebecca Tetlie.

Paige Whitney, Liaison for Education

Hope in the World

Hope in the World provides ULCH with ways to actively share God's love beyond our walls and throughout the world—locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. Hope in the World partners with other communities and organizations to help address homelessness, poverty, hunger, injustice, and environmental damage. We work to provide welcome and hospitality to students in our neighborhood as well as those who come from farther away.

Every Meal

Every Meal is a nonprofit organization in the Twin Cities with a mission to fight child hunger. The organization has volunteers who bring food to schools and put the food in students' backpacks so that students will have food on the weekend and during school breaks. Hope's youth take a "Noisy Offering" every month and that money goes to Every Meal.

Affordable Housing:

Beacon Interfaith for Affordable Housing has been busy this year creating and advocating at the city, county and state levels for funding to build deeply affordable housing at 30% of the MN Median Income, (MMI). The kickoff rally at the Capitol in St. Paul in Jan. 2024 was attended by Hope member, Donna Neste, who kept housing activists abreast of Beacon actions via emails. She also attended a Beacon Zoom meeting with Minneapolis City Council Member Chughtai who sits on the budget committee and is in support of more funding for rental assistance. Donna attended a budget committee meeting and full council budget meeting, testifying at one of them for Beacon in favor of an increase in rental assistance. The city of Minneapolis has not passed their budget yet, but the increase in funding toward rental assistance looks very promising.

Bread for the World

University Lutheran Church of Hope joined in an Offering of Letters in March, writing 87 letters to legislators in support of passing the Farm Bill and better nutrition and development programs in the Foreign Aid package.

The Federal 2018 Farm Bill expired in September of 2024 and was given an extension until another extension of the Farm Bill passed in December. Bread for the World worked to expand this bill in 2024 and is grateful that it wasn't allowed to expire, as it funds most of the domestic hunger programs, such as SNAP (also known as food stamps), the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program, and School and Summer lunch programs. Both domestic and foreign nutrition bills passed. Throughout the year emails were sent to Hope's BFW supporters for continued actions in support of these bills.

Thank you to the congregation for your efforts. Without you these programs would be allowed to expire, and millions of people would fail to thrive or would possibly starve.

Submitted by Donna Neste

Neighborhood and Campus

In September 2024 we had a gathering for neighborhood residents and students returning to the U of M. Pizza was made in the bread oven, and it tasted great! Neighbors and students stopped by. Tables were set up for representatives from neighborhood organizations. The food was delicious, and there were things to do with all ages. It was a success.

St. Peter's Lutheran Church

ULCH continues to pray for our ministry partners in Jos, Nigeria at St. Peter's Lutheran Church.

Hope with Creation

Hope with Creation, previously called the Green Team, continues to explore ways to integrate our faith with caring for the environment. Karen Jorstad and Tim Gustafson recently agreed to be co-leaders for this group. They welcome ideas and participation from anyone who is interested. Here are some things that are happening:

- ULCH continues to be a member of MN Interfaith Power and Light and ULCH is designated as a Climate Justice Congregation.
- The Clean Energy team successfully has us on 100% solar power and now they are investigating the feasibility of transitioning to geothermal heat.

- In November ULCH hosted the Mpls. Synod’s Eco Faith Summit. It was attended by about 60 people. Some ideas of how we can continue to be a leader in our neighborhood around environmental justice are being explored.
- ULCH is part of the “Wild Church Network”. Pastor Maria has organized monthly outdoor gatherings to connect spiritually with others and with nature.

Submitted by Karen Jorstad

Clean Energy Team

Our faith in God’s creative purpose calls us as a congregation to reduce the amount of carbon we contribute to global warming, and we can do that by producing environmentally clean electricity from the sun. And indeed, we are. The 225 solar panels on the roof and canopy continue to produce electricity without pollution or disturbance of any sort. The system finished its second full year of operation by generating more electricity than we used. That makes ULCH net-zero in electricity—the current fashionable term for indicating that our church is part of the solution to climate change rather than part of the problem.

We also are called to be good financial stewards—saving money for use in ministry. Here we also have succeeded. We generated almost 90,000 kWh during the year while consuming less than 80,000kWh, which greatly reduces our electric bill. Monthly bills usually run less than \$100 per month, compared to \$500 or more per month before the system was installed. (A full year’s accounting is not available due to Xcel’s lag in sending bills.) Still, transitioning to clean electricity is not enough.

Our next and more ambitious target is to eliminate carbon pollution from our heating system. After a year of sporadic consultation, we have settled upon geothermal (heat from the earth) energy run through heat pumps into our existing radiator system. To educate ourselves, we recently toured a similar system that Mt Olive Lutheran Church installed seven years ago. We have an architect on retainer and an engineer as a consultant. And we are talking with two engineering firms for bids to conduct the “heat load” study we need to determine whether such a system is technically feasible and financially worthwhile. By fall 2025 we hope to have sufficient information for the congregation to decide whether to proceed with the project.

ACTION Project (A Commitment to Inclusion In Our Neighborhood)

The Year A cohort group continued to participate in the ACTION Project, i.e., monthly somatic experience meetings, weekly email somatic experience prompts, IDI and feedback sessions, and field trips for the ACTION Project.

The Year B cohort group from ULCH took a one-year hiatus from the ACTION Project to do somatic work due to ULCH circumstances with changing pastoral and worship leadership.

Embodied Anti-Racism Training

In the hiatus from the ACTION Project, twelve ULCH members joined once a month Embodied Anti-Racism Training, led by Rachel Svanoë Moynihan, that provides members with deepened relationships with each other, greater familiarity with how whiteness shows up in our bodies, increased sense of connection with our bodies, and development of skills to disrupt harm in daily life. “In our efforts to distance from the harm of whiteness, we often distance from each other, leaving us fractured and without relationships or reparative ways of being that can replace our patterns of racist harm and hold us through the pain of change.” - Rachel Svanoë Moynihan

Sanctuary and Immigration Team

This team continues supporting immigrants in the following ways:

- We participate with the University Area Sanctuary Coalition by meeting together with others in the coalition.
- We participate in monthly meals with other coalition members. This is a potluck meal that is held at a different church in the coalition each time and its main purpose is to gather and support each other.
- We make tamales and other good food with our talented cook.
- In February we participated in a project to provide backpacks for people being deported to their country after being incarcerated. The backpack had various things one would need when traveling (such as hygiene items, a change of clothing, and other necessities). A grant from the Trust Fund was used to buy necessities and ULCH volunteers filled backpacks.

Racial Justice Team

In 2024, the Racial Justice Team (RJT) continued to develop the ULCH Land Acknowledgement (LA) and consider activities Beyond Land Acknowledgement. To deepen the dialog, RJT held Adult Forums on “Toward a Land Acknowledgement & Beyond” in 2024, including: Why a Land Acknowledgement – Historical Background; Land Acknowledgements in S.E. Minneapolis; and Hope’s Land Acknowledgement; What Follows. The Racial Justice Team also held 1-on-1 conversations with 25 ULCH members in various ministry areas to get their input on its Land Acknowledgement efforts. The Racial Justice Team hopes to further develop the Land Acknowledgement and ULCH reparations through Land Acknowledgement Congregational Meetings in February 2025.

The Racial Justice Team donated \$11,000 in 2024 to 6 local BIPOC-led (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) religious and justice organizations supporting racial equity initiatives. The funds came from the Rolling Waters Fund for Racial Justice - a dedicated racial equity fund supported by ULCH members.

In addition, the Racial Justice Team hosted book studies for the congregation on two books in 2024:

- *Solito: A Memoir*, by Javier Zamora, about Zamora’s migration from El Salvador to the United States at the age of nine in a “gripping memoir of bravery, hope, and finding family.” NPR.org
- *The Land is Not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery*, by Sarah Augustine. “What was done in the name of Christ must be undone in the name of Christ The good news of Jesus means there is still hope for the righting of wrongs. Right relationship with God, others, and the earth requires no less.” Goodreads.com

Sheila Hougen, Liaison for Hope in the World

Relational Ministries

Relational Ministries include the many and varied small groups and ministries that build and nurture our connections with one another. Whether learning and sharing in small groups, encountering God and community in nature, making bread, crafts, or going on retreats together, the people of Hope have found ways to love and encourage one another, to serve, and to simply have fun and enjoy life together. Our relational ministries thrive through committed and compassionate lay leaders. The sections below highlight the joys and vision for our Relational Ministries.

Hope Connections (led John Beane)

Hope Connections is a small-group bible study ministry that brings people together to share what is going on in their lives and to discuss what the Bible has to say to those situations. In 2024 there were two Hope Connections groups meeting regularly. A curriculum team of Stewart Herman, Ann Beane, Alden Tetlie, Brian McCaffrey, and John Beane created lessons based on Paul's Letters to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians. If you are interested in joining a group or participating on the curriculum team, please call John Beane at 651.338.4492 or email pilgrim.beane@gmail.com.

Bereavement Ministry (Coordinated by Lisa Morse)

This ministry sends cards to members or their families when someone passes away. There is a core team of volunteers who do this when needed.

Hope Men's Group (led by Eric Ringham)

The Hope men's group continues to offer a midweek fellowship opportunity for anybody who cares to attend, meeting for an hour online the first and third Thursday of each month. The discussion is guided by the needs of the group. New members are always welcome.

Bible and Brews (led by Dan Bielenberg)

Exactly what it sounds like: bring your bible, your favorite brewed beverage, and a penchant for laid-back but totally engaging conversations about faith, scripture, and current events. This group meets on the 4th Monday of the month in members' homes and features open and free-ranging discussions on the upcoming Sunday's Scripture readings. New members are always welcome.

Recreational Ministry (led by Bryan Kufus)

This group offers a variety of wonderful opportunities to get to know others in the great outdoors with activities such as walking, biking, camping, and canoeing/kayaking. Only one activity was organized this year with the hope of doing more walking and biking events in 2025. Our annual Father's Day weekend camping occurred at Interstate Park with canoeing/kayaking on the St Croix River from Taylors Falls to Osceola. It's a beautiful stretch of river rich in history and natural beauty.

Crafting Group (led by Ann Agrimson)

Everyone from beginners to experts who creates art or crafts is welcome to join the Crafting Group. We gather in the evening on the second Friday of the month from 7:00pm-10:00pm to talk, relax, get inspired by each other's creations, learn new skills and enjoy each other's company. People can stop by at any time and stay for however long it works for them. We meet in person in

the lounge at Hope, but we also have a Zoom link for those who want to participate from home. If you would like more information or to be on the list to get a reminder, contact Ann Agrimson at 612-214-6446 or ann.agrimson@yahoo.com.

Women's Retreat and Prayer Shawl Ministry (led by Ann Beane and Beáta Rydeen)

The 2024 Women's Retreat was held in person at Dunrovin Christian Brothers Retreat Center, January 19-21, 2024. The theme was "Rhapsody of Rest – Pausing into Gratitude and Joy". There was much laughter, meaningful conversation, faith exploration, and building a closer community.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is being phased out due to the environmental concerns found in fleeces. But there was still plenty of fleeces remaining through December. Once prayer shawls are completed, something new will replace them, which is in the exploration stage and will be tested out at the 2025 retreat. The Prayer Shawl Ministry rack is in the hallway near the Welcome Center. They are available to the pastors, the Friendly Visitors, any ministry area, and all!

Reimagining the 2025 Women's Retreat

After the wonderful January 2024 Women's Retreat, the hope was that there would be a way to continue at Dunrovin despite the cost challenges for participants and general retreat funding. The reality is that with deficits for the past two years, we cannot continue without some significant changes.

- **Discernment - What's Next?**

We explored the possibility of sharing the Dunrovin retreat center space with another group in order to bring down costs. After reaching out to four churches, no one could make a commitment. Time to pivot! Ann and Beáta met with pastors Jen and Maria and discussed ways to reimagine the retreat. While the "getaway" factor of a retreat center is desirable, we know that for many, the rising cost has become a challenge (\$350+ for the weekend). We know that other roadblocks to attending include time commitment, distance, physical limitations and sleep challenges.

- **The Solution**

Our reimagining means that the retreat will be held on our home turf at ULCH. The key pluses in having an "in house" retreat are:

- Community building.
- Minimal cost: \$25 suggested donation. More is welcomed for future retreats/speakers.
- Flexibility and accessibility for a wider range of people.

The 2025 on-site retreat will take place on March 28-29.

Bread Ministry (led by Rebecca Tetlie and Bryan Kufus)

The Baking Hope Wood-Fired Ministry team is fired up about our new name, and newly crafted vision and mission statements! In the 6 years since the oven was built, we've established a wood-fired ministry of baking bread and pizza, training volunteers and sharing the artisan loaves along with a healthy dose of fun and community building thoroughly mixed throughout. Our enthusiastic crew of volunteers was driven to put these activities into a vision and mission of ministry. Led by Lisa Morse and Pastor Maria, our "Bread Board" spent a day in January talking through our purpose, ideals, dreams, and goals. Our passionate group recently finalized the ministry's vision

and mission statements. This vision serves as a broadly defined aspiration, while our mission provides an operational framework for purposeful decision-making. We strive to add new members to our group at each baking event.

- Vision: A connected community, nourished in mind, body and spirit.
- Mission: We transform grain, water, yeast, and each other through craft, fire, and fun using a wood-fired oven in a spirit of generosity.

- In 2024, we:
 - Held 6 bread bakes with 6 varieties baked (Dinkytown Country, Country Rosemary, Golden Durum Sourdough with Sesame, Multi-Grain, Maroon & Gold, and Deli Rye).
 - Hosted 3 congregational pizza bakes serving approximately 60-75 pies at each. Our pizza specialties this year were White Caramelized Onion, BBQ Chicken, and Dill Pickle. Our refurbished dough press allowed homemade pizza crust production to scale.
 - Hosted a pizza bake for the ELCA Minneapolis Synod “Gather” Young Adult group in June. We fired up the oven and provided pizza skins for the group.
 - Hosted a volunteer appreciation pizza bake in July.
 - Are exploring ways to partner with Lutheran Campus Ministry for a pizza bake in the coming year.
 - In February, we finished building the stone bench by the oven. This project was funded by the Trust Board and bread bake proceeds.
 - We continued to donate bread to Portland House from each bread bake and learned more about their ministry at an October Sunday Forum when their director, Lauri Woodward, came to speak. Friendly Visitors and Compassion Care members brought freshly baked bread to congregational members on home visits.

Hope Diamonds (led by Pastor Maria)

Geared towards our seniors, this ministry gathers on the 3rd Wednesday of the month for a light soup lunch and simple program. Julaine Kobiske, Alpha Lundquist, and Rosalie Eldevik regularly volunteer to help with cooking meals and setting up the meeting space. Many people volunteer to drive so those who don’t drive are able to attend. Over the past year our numbers have dwindled due to health issues and the passing of beloved members. Although this ministry is geared towards our older adults, all are welcome!”

Compassion Care Ministry (Pastor Maria, Muffi Abrahamson, Karen Jorstad, Ann Agrimson)

Individual lay members in our community who have completed training to become a compassion care giver are paired with those who are grieving or struggling in some way with the realities of life. Often these pairings happen through the pastors. These relationships are built around listening and prayer, providing care for a mutually agreeable time between the caregiver and the care receiver.

Friendly Visitors (led by Rosalie Eldevik)

This group of visitors connects our homebound members to the life of our community by building trusting relationships with others in our community. Through the building of trustful and meaningful relationships, our 15 dedicated Friendly Visitors keep our homebound members connected to our church community. Easter plants, poinsettias, and oven baked bread are provided by the church to support their monthly visits. This year we both mourned and celebrated the lives of those who died this year: Brian McCaffrey, Leona Reyelts, Arloene Stevens, Tom Magnon, and Anita Smith. Thank you to the congregation for the continual support of this ministry, and of course to our dedicated Friendly Visitors themselves.

Fellowship Meals (led by Sheila Hougen)

A fellowship meal is a shared meal and social gathering where people can enjoy food and conversation. The term is often used in a Christian context, where it can symbolize spiritual fellowship and a welcoming of others into the community. This event typically has been an activity that supports itself financially with a goodwill offering.

Fellowship meals can:

- Strengthen friendships providing an opportunity to strengthen friendships and celebrate God's goodness.
- Symbolize fellowship. By eating and drinking together can symbolize fellowship and mutual obligation, which can strengthen a person's identity within a faith community.
- Encourage conversation. Food itself can be a natural topic of conversation, and by eating together we can encourage people to have personal conversations.
- Break down barriers. The act of eating food can help to break down barriers and put people at ease.

After 15 years of coordinating and cooking the fellowship meals, Becky and Dan stepped down from their leadership role following the May 2024 fellowship meal. A BIG thank you goes out to them for their commitment to the fellowship meals.

Two successful potlucks were held in late 2024:

- Chili and cornbread potluck
- Christmas smorgasbord and cookie extravaganza

If you are interested in assisting this ministry, please contact Sheila Hougen at shougen03@gmail.com or Pastor Maria at mariaa@ulch.org. We shall see what transpires in 2025 with a redesign of these monthly meals.

Deb Bordsen, Relational Ministries Liaison

Worship and Music

This was a year full of transitions and yet remained bright and vibrant! We bid farewell to both Bobby Ragoonanan, our Minister of Worship and Music, as well as Pastor Jen Nagel as she moved into her new role of Bishop. Following their departures, we welcomed Pastor Susan Debner and Maureen Armstrong, our interim staff, whose lively presences brought new energy into our community that was feeling the absence of beloved staff members. We were fortunate to also welcome Paul Stever as our new Minister of Worship and Music this past fall and to enjoy the talents he employs on the organ and with the choir.

Throughout the year, the musical offerings during worship, as well as the music series, have continued to be varied in style and connect our community to many world cultures, languages, and different periods of history. In our summer worship, we had the opportunity to utilize Tim Gustafson's lovely liturgy in our outdoor worship experiences that were led by the ULCHers. Their leadership and the work of our selfless volunteers have made outdoor worship possible, offering us connection and visibility to our greater neighborhood.

Alongside changes in staff this year, we also had changes introduced to our worship space.

- The temporary prayer wall that had been introduced in December 2023 ended up staying with us throughout the year. We saw prayers grow (and change colors with the seasons) and we now look forward to crafting a new, more permanent, prayer wall for our community in 2025.
- In Lent, we were able to use the walking labyrinth that had been commissioned in 2023. It spent time in the chapel offering a chance for reflection and to journey inward throughout the season.
- We blessed newly, and lovingly, crafted green ordinary seasonal paraments and retired the old green paraments.
- The Steinway grand piano took its leave from the sanctuary while it was in the process of being rebuilt. It will grace our worship space with its beautiful sound again in 2025.
- Due to challenges we had been facing with worship streaming, a new computer was purchased to once again connect more seamlessly with our online worshippers.
- We introduced several sermon series this year, one of which extended our advent season by several weeks to include themes of Care, Faith, and Justice, alongside the traditional advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, Love.

Throughout all of these changes, we are so grateful to all of the invaluable volunteers that assist in both visible roles during worship as well as the invisible roles that make it all possible. The time, effort, and dedication you show shines through. Your volunteering allows us to come together (virtually and in-person) and makes our community stronger. Thank you.

Micki (Kruse) Odum, Liaison for Worship and Music

Youth and Young Adults

Confirmation

Our current confirmation cohort at Hope consists of 5 students. In the first half of the year, they were led by Pastor Jen with a focus on the Bible. When Pastor Jen was elected Bishop, Pastor Maria took on this role and has been walking with the students through faith practices, church history, and Lutheran theology. We meet roughly once a month for a couple of hours after worship on a Sunday. They will be confirmed on Reformation Day 2025!

Gather

Gather Twin Cities is a young adult ministry for those ages 19-35 who are looking for connections with other young adults. It began in 2018 and has since blossomed into a once-a-month gathering, usually on Sunday evenings, as a place for young adults to meet and engage in conversation, worship, forums, and fun activities. ULCH has been a longtime supporter of the Gather Twin Cities ministry. This past year Gather Twin Cities hosted a variety of events including worship, fellowship meals, ice cream social justice, and outdoor events. Most recently, Gather Twin Cities had its first winter retreat (January 18-19) with the Gather Lakes Area at Luther Crest Bible Camp in Alexandria. Gather Twin Cities is an essential ministry for young adults in the metro and one that ULCH helped start and will continue to support.

Zach Rau, Liaison for Youth & Young Adults

Gratitude and Generosity

A small but enthusiastic team, Gratitude and Generosity (G and G) team, we were inspired to highlight more stories from members within our congregation sharing how ULCH plays a role in their lives.

In 2024 our team:

- The G and G team hosted fellowship time following service in the fall of 2024 to show appreciation for the congregation's generosity and come together to talk about what generosity and gratitude mean to us.
- Leading up to Stewardship Sunday, the committee recruited 4 ULCH members to share stewardship testimonies representing diverse parts of our congregation. A special thanks to Pauline Hendrickson, Jacklyn Hawkins, Tom VanHeuvelen, and Randy Brooks for sharing their stories.
- In preparation for the fall 2024 Annual Campaign, the team selected the theme of "Gently Held," drafted the congregational stewardship letter, and—once again—enlisted the artistic talents of Jack Dant to produce a beautiful visual for the pledge cards. With the help of Sharla Aaseng, we created a banner and poster to visually highlight the "gently held" theme from the balcony of the sanctuary.

We are very happy to report on the final figures from the 2024 Annual Campaign. 110 households pledged this year for a total amount pledged of \$460,922, a 2% increase from last year. We are blessed not only to have such strong financial support but also with a congregation where individuals share their many talents to create a varied and vibrant ministry and worship community. We are grateful for the generosity of our congregation and already excited about the plans for 2025!

Respectfully submitted by Don Hauge and Benjamin Hartmann, Gratitude & Generosity

Facilities

On many levels, 2024 has been a significant year in managing every aspect of our property including our buildings, parking lot and landscape. The Facilities team and other volunteers bring skills ranging from electrical, HVAC, plumbing, carpentry, and project management resulting in significant cost savings to the church through the timely repairs/replacement of the church facilities without using contractors.

In 2024, several significant accomplishments should be noted. These include:

- Installed beautiful new Sanctuary doors. Special thanks to Tim Abrahamson for his tireless efforts. These doors are a dramatic upgrade to our grand entry.
- Painting of the interior of the Sanctuary. A tedious project contemplated for years.
- Implement major upgrades to the Lounge, Kitchenette, and Library. Many thanks to Tim and Muffi Abrahamson for their tireless efforts in managing these much-needed improvements.
- Design and installation of a new ADA compliant bathroom next to the Library
- Renewal of the landscaping in the Courtyard with new drought resistant plants.
- Design and purchase a new accordion curtain for separating Heritage and Fellowship Halls.
- Carpet removal and replacement in PEASE classroom 203-204 and office next to the chapel.
- Boiler maintenance, inspections, and service to maintain and optimize the heating system ably done by Tim Speidel and Paul Demeules.
- Replacement of the broken AC unit in the lead Pastor's office and installation of a new AC unit for PEASE 107 classroom.
- Continued parking lot maintenance and replacement of asphalt pavement section adjacent to the dumpsters.
- Removal and replacement of the deteriorated public sidewalk east of the Patio.

Looking forward to 2025, our larger projects/goals include:

- Complete the new ADA compliant bathroom next to the Library.
- Complete the Fellowship Hall kitchen upgrades and improvements to the kitchenette.
- Complete the installation of the accordion curtain between Heritage Hall and Fellowship Hall.
- Replace the Patio wall cap with a new limestone cap.
- Complete the installation and renewal of the two outdoor signs.
- Renew the south exterior doors similar to the southwest exterior doors near the dumpsters.
- Replace carpeting in PEASE classroom 206 as part of the ongoing carpet replacement program.
- Explore a Courtyard irrigation system.
- Evaluate outdoor security cameras and light improvements for the parking lot and grounds.
- Continue to explore options to address our natural gas consumption through short term heating optimization and longer-term review of alternate cost-effective technologies.
- Develop a long-range plan to address the needed exterior stone repairs.

We are extremely grateful to all Facilities members who have generously contributed their time and skills. Together we made a difference in 2024.

Craig Nelson and Robert Paschke, Facilities Co-chairs

“Opening Doors 2” Capital Campaign

The Opening Doors 2 Capital Appeal began in February of 2024 and runs through December of 2026. Prior to the beginning of the appeal, a committee was formed by the Vision and Governance Board in 2023. The “Opening Doors 2” appeal committee met monthly beginning in September of 2023 to plan the January 2024 events and communications to introduce the 35- month appeal. A pledge goal of \$400,000 was set to address a variety of building/property issues for our 120-year-old building to support the expansive ministry of ULCH as a place of extravagant welcome that lives out a generous sending out into the world to advocate and serve.

The Vision and Governance Board designated appeal funding for these exciting projects:

- a rebuild of our 1920 Steinway piano in the sanctuary; continuing upgrades to the main kitchen.
- replacement of the partition between Heritage Hall and Fellowship Hall
- upgrades in the courtyard,
- upgrades in the lounge kitchenette (coordinated with the new lounge design, funded the donation)
- support for the payment of our mortgage
- again, as has been our practice, benevolence gifting beyond the congregation.

In addition, not only are we using the appeal funds to support the pay down of the mortgage, but at the end of this appeal we will be able to PAY OFF our mortgage. Completion of our mortgage at the end of 2026 will enable us to consider what new opportunities lie before us as we testify in word and deed to the gracious YES of God for the world.

Sunday morning worship moments along with mailed written materials and a series of four gatherings were held in January of 2024 to communicate and invite participation by members. Currently, the amount pledged of \$412,375.00 exceeds our goal – reminding us of the deep commitment of members to the ministry and mission of ULCH.

We are also pleased to report that the new sanctuary doors funded by the first Opening Doors capital appeal have been installed.

Thank you all for your support of ULCH.

Tim Abrahamson, Deb Bordsen, Sharlene Hensrud, Ben Hartmann, Gretchen Peik and Erik Strand,
Opening Doors 2 Committee

Financial Controls

The Financial Controls Committee (FCC) works with the Executive Team, in particular with the treasurer, to review the quarterly financial statements, to review the annual budget projections, and to make financial suggestions as needed.

This year we consulted with the Vision & Governance Board concerning the need to maintain adequate funds in our Bremer Bank checking account and made suggestions on the minimum balance in this account. To better track funds given to ULCH as stock gifts, we created a stock

transfer form and an addendum to the contribution statement which states how ULCH determines the value of the stock gift based on IRS guidelines.

Our investment position in US Treasury bills was sold at the end of their maturity, and the funds were invested in a Federal Money Market Fund to provide ULCH with better liquidity. We are keeping the funds from the large donation in a separate Federal Money Market Fund. Both of these funds are currently paying around 4.25% for the current 7-day yield. This is down significantly from last year’s 5.23% annual yield, but it is still significantly higher than the 0.25% that Bremer Bank has paid in the past years.

We reviewed the 2025 budget at the end of January.

Tim Abrahamson, with Emma Carpenter and Dan O’Loughlin, Financial Control Committee

Trust Board

I. Grants

The ULCH Trust Board received 19 requests for 2024 funding and was able to provide funding for 18 of them, for a total of \$34,110 (the unfunded request had been submitted after the deadline).

Hope Church Trust grants for 2021 were distributed for the following:

MNCAN (Aphasia support)	\$1,600	
Joyce Uptown Food Shelf	\$3,850	
My Very Own Bed	\$1,980	
Give Us Wings (Uganda)	\$1,650	
Lutheran Campus Ministries	\$2,200	
Wood Fired Oven Ministry Team	\$1,650	
Peace House	\$4,100	
Women of Hope	\$1,650	
Global Health Ministry	\$1,000	
ULCH Sanctuary & Immigration Team	\$2,200	
ULCH Clean Energy Team	\$2,100	
ULCH Little Library & Food Pantry	\$1,200	
Pursuing the publication of Homeless in Minneapolis (by ULCH member Chris Zann)	\$1,100	
ULCH Youth	\$2,500	
ULCHERS recording project	\$ 780	
ULCH Choir Music	\$2,750	
Be That Neighbor (community-building in Minneapolis)	\$ 900	
Giving Voice (support individuals with memory issues)	<u>\$ 900</u>	
	\$34,110	Grants Total

Financial numbers in section **II. Finances** will be reported in the 2024 Annual Meeting Financial Documents report distributed separately from this report.

The 2024 grant-making process was the first implemented with a new timeline. The Trust Board made preliminary decisions in the fall of 2023, so congregational leadership would be aware of the potential grants while they developed the church budget. We then finalized grant decisions in early 2024, after year-end financial information was available.

II. Finances	Year-end Value:
a. Bremer Bank Checking Account	See Separate Financial Documents
b. ELCA Foundation	See Separate Financial Documents
c. ULCH Solar Loan (outstanding balance)	See Separate Financial Documents
d. Raymond James Account	See Separate Financial Documents

Total Assets	See Separate Financial Documents
decrease/increase for 2024)	

Gifts, Bequests, and Memorials donated to Hope Church Trust in 2024:
See Separate Financial Documents

For more information on the ULCH Trust Board, go to www.ulch.org/trust-board, or contact a Trust Board member.

- Co-Chairs: James Flaten and Scott Hvizdos
- Treasurer: Ruth Hedman
- Secretary: Leena Rapacz
- Board Members: Meri Hauge, Tim Hopkins, Robyn Swenson, Shelly Parry

Leadership Development

“Leadership Development” is the ULCH committee responsible for nominations and recruitment for constitutionally mandated leadership positions in the Congregation. This includes executive leadership roles (President, Vice President, Past President and Treasurer), Vision and Governance Board members, and other select congregational committees. In any given year, the Committee identifies open positions and, in consultation with Executive leaders and the lead pastor, creates lists of possible candidates. Committee members then reach out to individuals to gauge their interest and availability and develop a slate of candidates. The elected members of this year’s committee were Esther Dant, Karen Westwood and Jacob Lanthier. Our committee grieves Esther after her sudden death in December and we have missed her skill, grace and friendship as we completed this year’s work.

We are blessed with strong and abundant leaders in this congregation and all those we corresponded with thoughtfully considered the invitation to accept a leadership role in the congregation. We are thus pleased to be able to present another exceptionally strong list of candidates for ULCH leadership.

Karen Westwood, Jacob Lanthier, Esther Dant (deceased) - Leadership Development Committee

Leadership Nominations

Names in **bold** are nominees. * Ending is the annual meeting held in February of that year.

Officers

<i>Title</i>	<i>Term Length</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ending*</i>	<i>Term</i>
President	1 year	John Pignatello	2026	N/A
Past President	1 year	Linda Herman	2026	N/A
Vice President	1 year	Kelly Brooks	2026	N/A
Treasurer	2 years, 1x re-elect	Ruth Hedman	2026	Term 1

Vision and Governance Board Members -at-Large

<i>Title</i>	<i>Term Length</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ending*</i>	<i>Term</i>
Worship and Music	2 years, 1x re-elect	Micki (Kruse) Odum	2026	Term 1
Education		Nan Knutsen	2027	Term 1
Youth and Young Adults		Zach Rau	2026	Term 1
Relational Ministries		Tomi McLellan	2027	Term 1
Hope in the World		TBD	2027	Term 1

Financial Controls Committee

<i>Title</i>	<i>Term Length</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ending*</i>	<i>Term</i>
Member #1	3 years, 1x re-elect	Tim Abrahamson	2026	Term 1
Member #2		Dan O'Loughlin	2027	Term 1
Member #3		Emma Carpenter	2028	Term 2

Personnel Committee

<i>Title</i>	<i>Term Length</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ending*</i>	<i>Term</i>
Member #1	3 years, 1x re-elect	John Beane	2026	Term 1
Member #2		Mark Nelson	2027	Term 1
Member #3		Stephanie Struthers	2028	Term 1

Facilities Committee

<i>Title</i>	<i>Term Length</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ending*</i>	<i>Term</i>
Member #1	3 years, 1x re-elect	Bob Paschke	2026	Term 1
Member #2		Tim Speidel	2027	Term 2
Member #3		Tim Abrahamson	2027	Term 1
Member #4		Paul Demeules	2027	Term 2
Member #5		Craig Nelson	2028	Term 2

Gratitude & Generosity

<i>Title</i>	<i>Term Length</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ending*</i>	<i>Term</i>
Member #1	3 years, 1x re-elect	Ben Hartmann	2026	Term 1
Member #2		Don Hauge	2026	Term 1
Member #3		Bill Sanden	2028	Term 1
Member #4		Karen Westwood	2028	Term 1

Leadership Development Committee

<i>Title</i>	<i>Term Length</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ending*</i>	<i>Term</i>
Member #1	2 years, 1x re-elect	Karen Westwood	2027	Term 2
Member #2		Jacob Lanthier	2026	Term 1
Member #3		Jan Sanden**	2027	Term 2

** completing the term for Esther Dant

Synod Convention

<i>Title</i>	<i>Term Length</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ending*</i>	<i>Term</i>
Lay Delegate #1	1 year	John Pignatello	2025	N/A
Lay Delegate #2		TBD	2025	N/A
Alternate		TBD	2025	N/A
Youth Delegate		TBD	2025	N/A

Trust Board

<i>Title</i>	<i>Term Length</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ending*</i>	<i>Term</i>
Member #1	4 years, 2 consecutive terms max	Ruth Heman	2027	Term 1
Member #2		Meri Hauge	2026	Term 2
Member #3		Tim Hopkins	2026	Term 1
Member #4		Leena Rapacz	2028	Term 2
Member #5		Shelly Parry	2028	Term 1
Member #6		James Flaten	2029	Term 2
Member #7		TBD by the Trust Board	2029	Term 1

University Lutheran Church of Hope Staff For 2024

Lead Pastor	Jen Nagel (into June 2024)
Interim Lead Pastor	Susan Debner (since June 2024)
Pastor	Maria Anderson-Lippert
Minister of Worship and Music.....	Bobby Ragoonanan (into July 2024)
Minister of Worship and Music.....	Paul Stever (since November 2024)
Interim Minister of Worship and Music....	Maureen Armstrong (Aug-Oct 2024)
Church Administrator.....	Nathan Obrestad
Financial Administrator.....	Kari Olson
Sunday Opener/Closer	Seth Strudthoff
Worship Technology	Seth Strudthoff
Custodian	Geremew Beshah

Statistical Report

Membership beginning of 2024 763

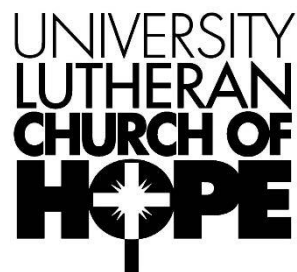
Members received in 2024

Baptized Children	2
Baptized Adults	0
By Affirmation of Faith	0
By Transfer	0
From Other Sources	2
Total Gains	4
Number of Baptized who were Confirmed	0

Members removed in 2024

Deaths	11
Transfer.....	8
Other	0
Total Removed	19

Membership as of December 31, 2024 748



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