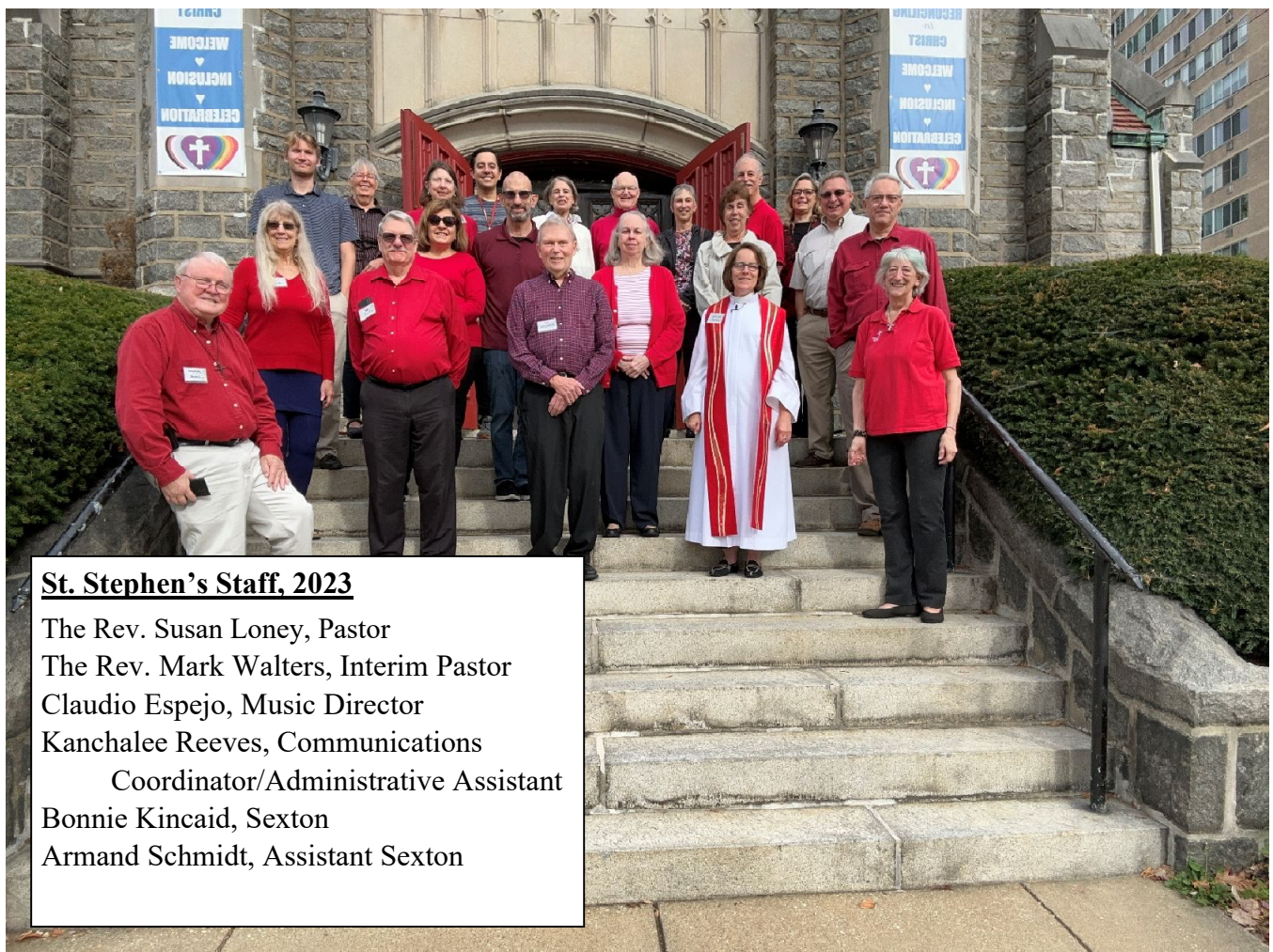


ANNUAL REPORT 2023



St. Stephen's Staff, 2023

The Rev. Susan Loney, Pastor
 The Rev. Mark Walters, Interim Pastor
 Claudio Espejo, Music Director
 Kanchalee Reeves, Communications
 Coordinator/Administrative Assistant
 Bonnie Kincaid, Sexton
 Armand Schmidt, Assistant Sexton

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Annual Report for 2023

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

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Report of the Pastor

The Rev. Susan Loney



*¹Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,
in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.*

*²Great are your works, O LORD,
pondered by all who delight in them. (Psalm 111:1-2)*

My first six months as St. Stephen's pastor has been a whirlwind of activity and meeting people. Thank you for the ways you have welcomed me and my family. First impressions matter so here are some of mine.

I'm heartened by the commitment to St. Stephen's ministries, from the enthusiasm and camaraderie of the Church Council to the Property Committee's diligence in maintaining our beautiful almost-100-year-old building to the Altar Guild's care in preparing our sanctuary for weekly worship to the Tech and Worship Teams' behind-the-scenes planning to the bonds of affection and compassion you so easily share with each other. These are all marks of a healthy congregation.

I am encouraged by the regular stream of visitors and guests we've encountered on Sunday mornings, some simply passing through Wilmington, others looking for church community where they can grow in faith and practice following Jesus. Nothing fills me with greater hope than to have kids in worship, helping us see familiar experiences in new ways.

Our external partnerships are "pearls of great price" and steppingstones to future ministry opportunities. I am excited to see what possibilities arise from our continuing collaboration with Lutheran Community Services through the food pantry. Bootless Stageworks' support for emerging artists, often including our LGBTQ neighbors, aligns with our identity as a Reconciling in Christ congregation. By offering space to New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church and Abundant Life Faith Center we share the gospel with more people, from different traditions, than we could do by ourselves.

Finally, St. Stephen's is blessed by a strong staff whose work makes everything else possible and enjoyable. I'm grateful for Claudio's *joie de vivre* and his eagerness to learn the ways of Lutheran church music; for Kanchalee's hospitality, attention to detail even while multi-tasking, and



excellence in running our food pantry; for Bonnie's kindness and dedication to caring for our building as if it were her home; for Tony's and Armand's cheerfulness and willingness to pitch in where help is needed. It is a pleasure to come to work each day.

Like every congregation, we have challenges ahead of us. The future won't look like the past. Yet, God is faithful. As we love, invite, and serve our neighbors, we will have many reasons to give thanks for God's good works among us.

With joyful anticipation for all that is to come,

--*Pastor Sue*



Report of the Music Department

Claudio David Espejo, Music Director



I enjoy working at St Stephen's. This is a place where I feel and hear the love and support towards what I do, and it feeds my love for music even further. As we have discussed with Rev. Loney, there are certain areas of growth, such as

- a) being able to start a choir by getting to the point where there are enough people to do so.
- b) programming in a way that the congregation feels included.
- c) being a more active part of choosing music.
- d) being more active in the process of fixing/taking care of the organ (I dropped the ball earlier this year.)

I appreciate how St. Stephen's has opened their arms to my gifts and being supportive of my "other" job at Cab Calloway. I am also grateful for the approach of Rev. Loney towards me, towards being "on the same page" and having clear communication.

--Claudio Espejo



Report of the Communications Coordinator/Office Administrator

Kanchalee Reeves



2023 was a year marked by both continuity and change at St. Stephen's.

We connected with our community, both in person and online. Our livestream worship services reached a wider audience than ever before, with 1.2k views on YouTube, an increase of over 25% from 2022. While watch time hours decreased slightly, this may reflect the return of some members to in-person worship.

On social media our Facebook posts reached 15,487 accounts and our Instagram posts reach 1,362 accounts. This includes tags, check ins and page profile visits.

Our second Peace of Pizza, an official Peace Week Delaware event, brought together our food pantry clients, church members, neighbors, and community members for a shared meal, conversation and a concert performed by Cab Calloway School of the Arts students. Food pantry clients enjoyed the event and told me they felt welcomed and heard. Attendees said it was one of the best events they attended because of the conversation and engagement with so many different people. This was our 8th year participating in Peace Week Delaware, which brings together community organizations and people for an annual week of free events to promote harmony, equity and justice in our community.



We continued our "Concerts at St. Stephen's" series with organ and piano concerts, which brought Cab Calloway families and new people to our sanctuary.

Our food pantry continued to bring together many people in our community to volunteer and receive and donate food. We added a sandwich board sign outside to highlight the number of people receiving food

and to advertise our concerts. The sign has moved our neighbors to donate food especially around Thanksgiving and Christmas.

This year we said farewell to Interim Pastor Mark Walters who guided St. Stephen's as we emerged from the pandemic emergency and we welcomed our new pastor, The Rev. Susan Loney. Together Pastor Sue and I have worked to update and streamline our website keeping in mind that the website is our virtual front door. Take a look when you get a chance!

I am deeply grateful for the dedication of our staff and volunteers who keep St. Stephen's running smoothly. Bonnie Kincaid, our Sexton, ensures the church is pristine and alerts us to any maintenance needs. Assistant Sexton Armand Schmidt and his coach Tony Hodge recycle mountains of cardboard and keep the grounds tidy.



Many thanks go to Pastor Mark Walters, Pastor Sue Loney, Council President Bob Linderman and all the members for their guidance and support. The Property Team regularly monitors repairs and meets with technicians. Carol Landry continues to handle all mailings from the weekly E-Courier to congregation wide ones. Bob Linderman keeps our communications error-free with his eagle eye proofreading.

I look forward to continue working with our members and community to fulfill our mission To Love, To Invite and To Serve in 2024.

--Kanchalee Reeves, Communications Coordinator/Office Administrator

Report of the Council

Bob Linderman, Council President



When reviewing this past year, of all of the activities our congregation was involved in, the one that stands out to me as the most significant was the change we experienced in pastoral leadership. We started the year with Pastor Mark Walters preaching and providing sound guidance as our interim pastor. While the Call Committee worked diligently to identify and select the right pastoral candidate to lead us into our future, Pastor Mark kept us on sound footing with his positive energy, his inciteful sermons, his shared wisdom, and his genuine desire and ability to shepherd us through the interim period.

In April, the Call Committee, led by Karleen Strayer, with dedicated members Michael Farthing, Matt Johnson, Claire Morse, Betty Sperati, and Leah Strayer, presented their recommendation to the Congregation Council. After a lengthy interview with the candidate, the Council members voted unanimously to recommend Pastor Susan Loney to the congregation for approval as our next full-time pastor.

On May 7, the congregation was led in worship by Pastor Sue who preached what is known in the parlance as her “Call Sermon.” After worship, the congregation voted in a special meeting to extend a Call to her as our pastor and she accepted.

On July 9, Pastor Mark preached his last sermon as our interim pastor and, directly after worship, we celebrated his ministry at St. Stephen’s. The next day Pastor Sue started her ministry with us.

Throughout the process of searching for a new pastor, our congregation continued to be blessed with the right people in the right place at the right time. From pastoral leadership to congregational leadership, to members willing to take on additional responsibilities, to dedicated support staff members, and to helpful friends and volunteers, our small, yet strong, community of believers did much more than just “keep the lights on.”

That thought leads into the recognition of other important parts of our ministry mission this past year:

- Peace of Pizza – Under the leadership of Michele Torchia and Rick Feltman, with many volunteer helpers, we served free pizza, ice cream, and beverages to 130 neighbors and friends as part of Peace Week Delaware. The Tap Room Trio provided live jazz to our guests.
- The Concert series – Under the direction of our Music Director, Claudio Espejo, with support



from our music team of Ann Warner, Ann Dransfield and Betty Sperati, a special concert was performed in the sanctuary on the third Sunday of all but the summer months. The free concerts provided outstanding musicianship and were attended by many members and outside guests.

- LCS Food Pantry – Under the direction of our office administrator, Kanchalee Reeves, the pantry served in excess of 28,600 people this past year.
- Abundant Life Faith Center – this small congregation continues to hold their Sunday worship services in our sanctuary directly after our worship service is over.
- New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church – this small congregation continues to use space in our former Sunday School building to hold their Sunday worship services.
- Bootless Stageworks – this eclectic band of thespians continues to offer a number of theatrical performances in our former social hall.
- Emmanuel Dining Room – Under the leadership of Ken and Debbie Nicholson, we continued to provide food for the EDR ministry of meals to the needy.
- Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center – generous members and friends provided the Center with backpacks for young students, baskets of food accessories for Thanksgiving meals for families, and Christmas gifts for young children.
- Building maintenance and upkeep - Numerous repair projects were completed under the direction of John Rodammer and Betty Sperati.



I continue to be deeply moved by the dedication of so many members and staff who work tirelessly to support our congregation. With Pastor Sue's strong leadership, we are all pulling in the same direction to live out our mission TO Love, TO Invite, and TO Serve.

-- Bob Linderman

2023 Council



Richard Feltman



Ann Dransfield



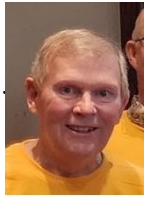
Matt Johnson



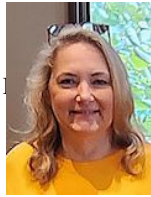
Michael Lehm



Bob Linderman



John Rodammer



Karleen Strayer



Michele Torchia



Ann Warner

Our volunteer Council secretaries (THANK YOU)



Carol Landry



Claire Morse

Parochial Report

Deaths: Scott Jones
 Chris Poslock

Transfers: Sue and Ralph Heiss
 Matt Johnson
 Mark Walters

Altar Guild

Altar Guild is responsible for the care of the worship space. This includes the placement of the furnishings, appointments and ornaments used during the worship service and assisting with communion. Altar Guild members, with the help of non-members, also decorate the Sanctuary for high holy days, such as Christmas and Easter.

Our group is small - we only have four members. One person is assigned each Sunday, and they are on a four-week rotation. The responsibilities are not difficult. Set-up on Sunday morning to prepare the Altar and Chancel for worship takes about 15 minutes. After the service, the process is reversed. Experience is not necessary to join Altar Guild. The time commitment is small. The preparation process has been streamlined over the past few years. Our goal is to be easy and efficient, but liturgically correct.

Thank you, Pr. Sue, for your support of this ministry team. Thank you to the congregation for your help decorating for Christmas and Easter and other times when there are calls for assistance. If you think you might be interested in joining Altar Guild, contact Carol Landry – she will be glad to answer your questions.

carolrlandry@verizon.net

Cell: 302.559.9501

--Carol Landry

PS The schedule is flexible. Members are always willing to pick up a Sunday if you can't make your scheduled day.

Call Committee

St. Stephen's Call Committee completed its work in 2023 with the installation of Pastor Sue Loney.

I'd like to thank Call Committee members: Michael Farthing, Claire Morse, Betty Sperati, Leah Strayer, and Matt Johnson. You each brought unique talents to our work, and I appreciated your dedication, openness, and respect for one another most of all.

The committee is indebted to the Reverend Robin Simpson Litton, Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership, for her help as we navigated the call process.

We are also tremendously grateful for the prayers and support of the congregation.

And, especially, we are grateful to Pastor Sue, Kevin, and the entire Loney family!

--Karleen Strayer, Chair



Property Team

Over the past several months, Willie McGrath was hired and has completed many renovations to our church.

- He and his crew completed altar renovations and painting. Then, he completed more work in the sanctuary where there was rotted masonry work at the exit door, demo rotted plaster around exit door, top and both sides, back wall where window is, scrapped plaster around the church-stained glass windows. Willie also sealed cracks on the plaster around the walls.
- Willie patched walls with plaster/stucco and two coats of finish paint to match the rest of sanctuary. Concrete molding was tightened with extra-strength plaster. A stain blocker was applied to the wall where the wooden ceiling leaked and ran down existing walls.
- The two HVAC units that serve the food pantry were replaced in May. LCS contributed \$10,000 to St. Stephen's which was used to defray costs.
- Lights were also replaced in the sanctuary with LED lights. They should last longer and require less electricity.
- Willie removed the leaves from down-spouts and roof that were caused by neighbor's trees.
- Work was completed on the upstairs room by the fire escape that had a major roof leak, rotting ceiling and floor.
- Hoopes performed our annual fire extinguisher inspection. We were certified for another year.
- Sobieski worked to resolve smoke detector and alarm issues. The programming on the fire alarm panel was upgraded so it will automatically reset after a power outage.
- Tree and bush pruning were completed outside pastor's office and light poles.
- The timer for outside light at Chapel area door was replaced.
- State inspected our boilers and pressure vessel. They passed for another year.
- Yellow curbs were repainted for the drive-through area.
- Removal of items from the Pastor's office was completed so that the carpet could be stretched.
- Mounting screws on the vestibule double doors were replaced so they would securely latch.
- The broken faucet in the kitchenette was replaced.
- Repaired bathroom water issues.
- Placed signs on 13th St for dog walkers to curb their dogs.
- As Bootless received new chairs, we donated 48 bucket chairs to Sojourners Place.
- The sprinkler system had its annual inspection and passed.
- Bootless received permission to disconnect gas and capping the supply pipe. Also, the electricity was cut off and secured the supply line. The stove was removed from the kitchen.



- Gary Gooden has been working with our landscaping crew so that everything on the grounds is maintained.
- Home Paramount completed a termite inspection. None were found.

Respectfully submitted:

--Betty Sperati, John Rodammer Co-Chairs of Property

Members: Ken Nicholson Gary Gooden

Stewardship

There were 15 pledges from households for 2024. The total dollar amount pledged was \$121,800, of which \$115,420 was pledged to the general fund. This is slightly ahead of the 2023 pledge total of \$115,850. Three households that did not pledge in 2023 have pledged for 2024, and three who pledged in 2023 have not pledged for 2024.

--Rick Feltman

Service Assistants

There are three positions filled each Sunday which help our mission TO love, TO Invite and TO serve.

Assisting Minister assists the pastor during the service. They read prayers and readings and help with the distribution of communion. If you might be interested in participating a little, but not helping with everything, we can arrange for you to read one or two readings. We can also schedule you if you might be available to read during some of our special services such as Good Friday and Lessons and Carols.

Camera operator runs the live stream camera. Once you figure out what needs to be plugged in where, it's not a challenging job. We have one camera, with a number of presets to make it easy to show various parts of the sanctuary. There were some sound system challenges during 2023, but they have hopefully been worked out.

Usher. This person is the first person that people interact with as they arrive at church. They pass out bulletins, direct people during communion, and ensure that visitors are greeted and given any information they need. The Usher is also responsible for collecting the offering and bring it up front for a blessing.

We have been able to add a few new people to some of these positions. If you are interested in participating, please let Ann Warner know, 302-598-7239, anniona@comcast.net

Food Pantry

2023 was marked by the end of the pandemic health emergency in May and an uptick in the number of families in need of food.

The end of the pandemic meant SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) also known as food stamps were reduced to pre-pandemic levels and resulted in deep cuts to many families who had been receiving the maximum benefit. Families also had to reapply to receive benefits. Some missed the deadline. Others were missing information or had procedural errors. This led to new families and families we hadn't seen since 2019.

In 2023, we served 12,558 households. Of those households, 1,848 were new. Those households equaled 28,653 people – 19,465 adults and 9,188 children. This was a 46% increase from 2022 when we served 19,567 people. We are seeing more families who speak Spanish, Arabic, and other languages. Kristie Augenblick put together pictures of food so our volunteers can communicate options better. We also use Google Translate.

In addition to serving families in the food pantry, we participated in a Food Bank of Delaware program which delivered food to Wilmington residents through DoorDash. The program focused on clients who could not come to a local food pantry because they were homebound or disabled. Lutheran Community Services ended the program in December 2023 because it took a significant time away from our volunteers' ability to serve St. Stephen's pantry clients. In the two years we were part of the program more than 6,000 meal boxes were delivered.

In May we started receiving fresh produce deliveries under the Local Farm Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Lutheran Community Services has with the Delaware Department of Agriculture. LCS is one of only two nonprofits in the state to receive fresh food from Delaware farmers over the next several years. Under the agreement, we also receive fresh eggs and meat every week. Our clients have been thrilled to receive food from Delaware farmers, especially the eggs and chicken breasts, turkey bacon and pork tenderloin. These are items we could not order from the Food Bank of Delaware.

Through a partnership with the Food Bank of Delaware, Donate Delaware, and a formula company, we are distributing free baby formula. We are one of several organizations that have been distributing 44,000 large cans of powder formula. Families do not need to register to receive formula.

Our volunteers are the heart of the food pantry. They serve all our clients with kindness and compassion. In addition to volunteers who work in the food pantry, we have volunteers who pick up food rescue from Acme Trolley Square and Sprouts Farmers Market every weekday and volunteers who stock the pantry on Monday evenings. Last year they served 5,246 hours.

We're grateful for our community partners. In 2023, Sprouts Farmers Market and Acme Trolley Square. donated 54,617 pounds of food and



other items which would have been thrown away. Sprouts also continued their Grab 'N Give campaign this year. Customers paid \$12.99 to donate a discounted bag of cereal, macaroni and cheese and Larabars.

The Junior League of Wilmington donates thousands of period supplies from September to May. Sanitary pads and tampons are not covered by food stamps or WIC so it's a huge help to our families to have these available. In the summer months we rely on donations from the community.

Hagley Museum donated hundreds of pounds of heirloom garden vegetables. We received everything from crookneck squash to lettuce to heirloom tomatoes. The gardens are kept as they appeared during E.I. du Pont's time in the 1800s.

The University of Delaware Cooperative Extension taught a six-week nutrition class for clients.

We have strong support from local schools. Tatnall School, Tower Hill School and Wilmington Friends School hold food drives for the pantry. Tower Hill also donates books their students no longer need. All three schools have students who volunteer in the pantry during days of service. We started a new partnership with Salesianum School. Students who need community service hours volunteer on Monday and Wednesday evenings.

We're grateful for the generous support from churches. Members and friends of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd donated 2,500 pounds of fresh garden vegetables. They have been donating fresh produce from the Shepherd's Community Garden since 2017. Our clients love the variety of fresh vegetables from the Shepherd's Garden. Good Shepherd also hosts a food and toiletry drive for the food pantry almost every month. Good Shepherd has a member who volunteers weekly.

St. Philip's donated 360 macaroni and cheese packages as part of their "Summer of Service" project. The women's book club also donates adult diapers. They also have two members who volunteer weekly.

St. Mark's hosted a food and toiletry drive and has six members who volunteer weekly.

Church of the Holy City donates nonperishable food monthly and Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church donates nonperishable food weekly. Holy Trinity has two members who volunteer weekly.



We continue to have regular donors who ask me each week what we need. They help to fill in the gaps from the Food Bank, especially the need for diapers.

We're grateful for the monthly nonperishable food donations from St. Stephen's.

Thank you for your generosity and for making a difference in the lives of families in need!

--Kanchalee Reeves, Food Pantry Coordinator

St. Stephen's in Pictures





Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center

2023 was a year of success for Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center. We were able to maintain enrollment, retain and hire new staff, increase pay and provide bonuses for staff. We also provided bonuses for staff who retired with 20 years or more of service again this year. We began a capital improvement campaign to provide additional classrooms, meetings spaces and a full-size gym. Several staff enrolled in higher education through The Early Childhood Innovation Center (ECIC) program at Delaware State University.

The Reverend Clarence and Helen Pettit Scholarship Program continued to thrive. Three recipients received scholarships totaling \$5,000. Kiah Spinks, a former Hilltop participant, became a judge in Virginia. Dr. Daman Harris, former Hilltop participant, wrote a book and is scheduled to have a book signing at Hilltop in March 2024. Our deputy director was named the Community Father of the Year by Every Man Counts Foundation. Our executive director successfully defended her dissertation.

Health and mental health were big topics at Hilltop in 2023. A certified clinical health coach and a licensed massage therapist were brought in bi-weekly for staff. A wellness room was created for staff and families. Mental health was also incorporated for our early childhood education participants. This was done through a Music, Movement, and Mindfulness program that was instructed to give children the tools to handle BIG emotions.

We would not have been able to achieve the 2023 successes without the ongoing and increased support received from various donors and sponsors. The State of Delaware through Purchase of Care, Department of Education - State Funded Early Care and Education (formerly known as ECAP), New Directions Early Head Start (University of Delaware) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) continued to be major contributors to agency operations. Our long-standing partnerships with New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS) and the Department of Education- State Funded Early Care and Education (formerly known as ECAP), allowed us to continue providing comprehensive services to participants from infant to five years old and their families. Funding from the United Way of Delaware and Grant in Aid continued to support and enhance our after-school and evening programs and services for youth. Programs included literacy, free haircuts, DJ workshops, cooking and percussion classes and Vacation Bible School.

Funding from the Lutheran churches continued to enable us to provide medical benefits for full-time staff and assistance to families in need. Lutheran church members provided more than 300 Thanksgiving baskets for Hilltop staff, families, and greater community, as well as Christmas gifts for all Hilltop participants. Funding from Herb and Marie Bollman continued to be vital to programming offered at Hilltop in 2023.

We look forward to continued success in 2024.

Sincerely,

Michelle J. Williams

Michelle J. Williams, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Delaware

It's a joy and privilege to work with the amazing, gifted, and inspiring students of LCM! Amid challenging times in the wider world, our students give me hope as they serve generously, prioritize their faith, and engage respectfully with tough questions. Tuesday evening gatherings remain the core of our program, with wonderful, home-cooked dinners and desserts provided by local parishioners, alumni, and board members, as well as meaningful worship times. Worship activities and topics during the year have included the popular Human Continuum exercise; sharing faith items; Lenten and Holy Week worship; discussions about Scripture, prayer, worry, blessing, and faith; candle-lighting for All Saints' Day; and Advent worship. In addition, we've been journeying through the Gospel of Luke together.

In the area of service, students have continued to volunteer with FISH, *Fellowship in Serving the Hungry*. FISH is a wonderful cooperative outreach to Newark area families facing food insecurity, together with committed volunteers from St. Paul's Lutheran Church. LCM has enjoyed many social activities over the past year: *UDairy* ice cream runs, Easter dinner, a spring retreat to Bethany Beach (which included a service project), informal monthly get-togethers for coffee and conversation, a fall retreat to Ocean City, Maryland (along with other synod campus ministries), a fall bonfire at a senior's home, a "Friendsgiving" meal, an Advent brunch, and a joyous Advent Party (pictured below.)

LCM held two fundraisers this year, an online version in early February and our first in-person event in four years in November, the latter graciously hosted by Hope Lutheran Church. Student leaders and board members offered beautiful testimonials, Bishop Bill Gohl kept us laughing, we raised welcome support for LCM, and a good time was enjoyed by all! We're so grateful for the generous support of our synod, local congregations, and individuals: alumni, local parishioners, parents, and other friends of this ministry. Thank you for sharing the vision of LCM!

The LCM students love to bless other organizations, as they vote how to steward annual interest from our ministry's endowment fund. This year's gift recipients included Bear Creek Lutheran Camp and Lutheran Disaster Response.

Together with our Directing Committee, staff, and students, I thank you from the heart for your continued partnership and prayers for LCM! We love interacting and sharing with those who join us for Tuesday dinners. We're grateful to others who regularly keep our students and leaders in their prayers. Your support and donations allow us to continue to shape welcoming and harmonious spaces in which students grow in leadership, service, and faith in Jesus. We could not do this without you! May God richly bless you, your community, and the ministries of which you are a part.

Mindy Holland, Chaplain and Minister of Word and Service
302-368-3078; chaplain@lcmde.org

Thank you for your continued support for LCM at UD! ☺



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Son of God, Eternal Savior

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

1 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,
 2 As you, Lord, have lived for oth - ers, so may we for oth - ers live,
 3 Come, O Christ, and reign a - mong us, King of love and Prince of peace;
 4 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,
 Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race,
 Free - ly have your gifts been grant - ed; free - ly may your ser - vants give,
 hush the storm of strife and pas - sion, bid its cru - el dis - cords cease.
 Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race:
 you our head, who, throned in glo - ry, for your own will ev - er plead:
 Yours the gold and yours the sil - ver, yours the wealth of land and sea;
 By your pa - tient years of toil - ing, by your si - lent hours of pain,
 by your pray - ing, by your will - ing that your peo - ple should be one,
 fill us with your love and pit - y, heal our wrong, and help our need,
 we but stew - ards of your boun - ty held in sol - emn trust will be,
 quench our fe - vered thirst of plea - sure, stem our self - ish greed of gain,
 grant, oh, grant our hope's fru - i - tion: here on earth your will be done.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 655

Text: Somerset C. Lowry

Music: IN BABILONE, Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse Boerenlities en Contradansen, 1710;

arr. Julius Röntgen

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