



Annual Report 2023-2024

For Annual Congregation Meeting on June 9, 2024

Congregation Council

Ellen Young, President
Bill Fink, Vice President
Sarah Sburlea, Treasurer
Jennifer Krankowski, Secretary
Abby Alusheff
Bill Wahl

Pastor

The Rev. Marissa Harrison

Office Administrator

Cara Rovella

Worship and Music Coordinator

Bryna Bailer Mango



**Good Soil Lutheran Ministries
2023-2024 Annual Report
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Good Soil Lutheran Ministries

Purpose Statement, Guiding Principles, Priorities and Welcome Statement

Purpose Statement

Growing together in Christ to love and serve

Guiding Principles

- ❖ Encouraging spiritual growth through Christ-centered worship and faith formation
- ❖ Fostering a faith community of love, support, and discipleship
- ❖ Embracing the joyful energy of families and children and supporting them through life's struggles
- ❖ Inviting all people with grace, compassion, and affirmation
- ❖ Following the Holy Spirit by serving and partnering with the wider community
- ❖ Sharing God's abundance with generosity

Priorities

- ❖ Provide opportunities to build and deepen supportive and authentic relationships within the congregation
- ❖ Nurture spiritual growth and facilitate faith formation opportunities for children, families, and adults
- ❖ Strengthen relationships with our ministry partners and with our neighbors in the community where the Spirit is at work
- ❖ Cultivate a culture of invitation and enthusiastic welcome, especially for those for whom the church has not always been a welcoming place

Welcome Statement

We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, or relationship status. We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ.



*"The ReLENTless Love of God" sermon series heart wall created by the congregation throughout Lent, Spring 2024
To read the sermon reflection responses on each heart, click [here](#)*



**Annual Congregation Meeting
June 9, 2024
Agenda**

- I. Opening Prayer**
- II. Determination of Quorum and Call to Order**
- III. Approval of Agenda**
- IV. Approval of Minutes from December 2023 Congregation Meeting**
- V. Presentation of Annual Report and Celebration of 2023-2024 Ministry**
- VI. Nominating Committee**
 - a. Nominations: Kathy Aloj, Evan Paine, and Beau Reddington
 - b. Open Nominations for Congregation Council from the floor
 - c. Election of Congregation Council for 2024-2025 Term
- VII. Closing Remarks and Closing Prayer**



Minutes from Congregation Meeting

December 10, 2023

1. Quorum was established.
2. Pastor opened the meeting with prayer.
3. Agenda Approval: Alex Alusheff made the motion, Bill Fink seconded. Approved.
4. Approval of Minutes from the June meeting: Abby Alusheff made the motion, Dave Blocksom seconded. Approved.
5. Approval of the 2024 Ministry Funding Plan: Eric Carlson made the motion, Abby Alusheff seconded. Approved.
6. Nominating Committee: The following slate of names were put forward for consideration: Jim Kulma, Alex Alusheff, Deb Yandala, Ellen Young, Pastor Marissa Harrison. Joe Lanter made the motion to approve, Trey Harrison seconded. Approved.
7. The congregation was reminded about many events coming up in December and January.
8. Paula Maeder Connor made the motion to adjourn. Kim Wylie and Bill Fink seconded. Approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Krankowski



President's Report

*Submitted by
Ellen Young*

My Dear Brothers and Sisters of Good Soil,

On behalf of myself and the rest of Good Soil council, in this Annual Report for 2023-2024, it is with great pride that I share with you the hard work, passionate service and creativity of your Congregation Council from the past year. We have made great strides in honing our vision for our future while deepening the bonds within our congregation and with our community.

We continue to be quite blessed with financial gifts, and the Council has been committed to ensuring that these blessings have been paid forward. We continued our support of key community partners through the execution of our Multiplying Ministry event. In addition, council has been actively planning ways to preserve, grow, and apply these gifts for future use and congregational impact.

The Dandelion Team delivered our Purpose Statement and Guiding Principles, from which we launched our new major initiative to become a Reconciled in Christ congregation. At the end of the process, the knowledge and awareness of the congregation will have been elevated and allow Good Soil to fulfill our guiding principle of inclusion by being even more welcoming to all.

Good Soil's youth is engaged, vibrant and growing, and one only need to attend Sunday worship (either in person or online), paying special attention to Pastor Marissa's Children's Sermon to see our youthful energy each week. Our membership continues to grow – notably so in this year as we welcomed members from Trinity and others in search of a new church home. We celebrated milestones with births, baptisms, first communions, confirmations, adult forums, and bible studies we are sowing the seeds of God's word and love in many ways.

We continue to actively support our various ministry partners including Meals on Wheels, Suburban Co-Operative Nursery School, and the West Side Hungarian congregation led by Pastor Eva Tamasy. In addition, our church collaborates with several other community groups who use our meeting spaces to complete their missions.

We are also grateful for our staff, including Joe Dudas and Gary Smith who guide the maintenance of our facilities and are delighted by the addition of Cara Rovella as church administrator and Brynna Bailer Mango as worship and music coordinator. We navigated many challenges large and small from the completion of the water damage remediation to other minor repairs with their support.

Our major new project has been lifted by the generosity of the congregation in our Paving the Way campaign. We exceeded our fundraising goal and will be starting the new parking lot project in June. The project will start with a trench to enable water and electric service to the back lot for future

projects. Paving will take place in July, so by August we will be even more ready to welcome current members as well as new guests and community partners into an upgraded lot.

I am grateful for the service of all of our Council members as well as the dozens of volunteers that help across all our worship servant positions – from altar care, to ushers, to financial volunteers, and more. Your contributions are immeasurable, and we owe you each many, many thanks.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen Young



*Good Soil assists with Trinity's Lakewood Community Outreach, May 2023
L to R: Alexandra, Edward, and Amanda Inman*



*Aaron Krankowski's
Confirmation, Oct 2023*



*Reformation Fair, Oct 2023
L to R: TJ Lanter, Pam Lanter, Chris Jacobson, Evan Lanter, & Sean Lanter*



Pastor's Report

Submitted by
The Rev. Marissa Harrison

We have many parts in one body, but the parts don't all have the same function. In the same way, though there are many of us, we are one body in Christ, and individually we belong to each other.

- Romans 12:4-5 (Common English Bible)

Grace and peace to you, the body of Christ at Good Soil,

Our faith community continues to grow and evolve, especially with the addition of new faces (26 “official” new members since June 2023 and many additional guests and friends). We are blessed by their willingness to serve, their fresh perspectives, and the various gifts/skills/presence shared as we participate together in the life of this faith community: “growing together in Christ to love and serve.”

Many of those siblings in Christ came to Good Soil from Trinity Lutheran in Lakewood, after they celebrated 111 years of ministry and navigated Holy Closure in June of 2023. As a part of Good Soil's welcome, we blessed and rededicated many of their items including hymnals, worship banners, and a special Bible handwritten verse-by-verse by Trinity members (on display in the back of Good Soil's sanctuary).

In my one-on-one meetings with new folks (including several people who have come to Good Soil after participating in worship online through livestreaming), there's been a common refrain of gratitude for the warm welcome, authentic hospitality, and vibrant spiritual life of this faith community—thank you for being the body of Christ that you are and leaning into that verse from Romans that we belong to each other.

Your council leaders continue to discern, discuss, and take action in order to meet the needs of our growing congregation:

- 1) Hiring 5 staff/contractors this past year (Church Administrator, Worship & Music Coordinator, Maintenance Contractor, Sexton, and Bookkeeper)
- 2) Capitalizing and expanding use of our worship servant scheduling software so more people are able to serve (over 80 people volunteer in various worship leadership roles!)
- 3) Acquiring a new copier with a folding function so we no longer have to fold bulletins by hand since we have so many more people participating in worship
- 4) Developing and implementing a personnel policy, emergency policy, and child protection policy as well as updating Good Soil's constitution
- 5) Exploring additional staff roles for programmatic ministry

As a congregation, we continue to align our ministry energies with the priorities that came from the Dandelion Project's focus groups (see page 3). This year we've been emphasizing the 4th priority area—"creating a culture of invitation and enthusiastic welcome, especially for those for whom the church has not always been a welcoming place"—as we've been engaging the RIC ([Reconciling in Christ](#)) process (see report on page 12).

We also look ahead with excitement to the Spirit-breathed possibilities of using the back acre of land for additional ministry as the parking lot is replaced and lines for electricity and water are installed. Thanks for the outpouring of generosity supporting this project!

In terms of the pastoral office, since June of 2023 I've presided over 1 baptism, 1 house blessing, 1 wedding, 2 pet blessings, 7 funerals/graveside services, and preached 1 ordination. I've taught Lutheran confirmation classes in partnership with Bethesda on the Bay (Bay Village), First (Lorain), Trinity (Vermillion), and Christ (Avon Lake). I've also accompanied our confirmation students to confirmation camp and helped lead quarterly confirmation gatherings for our region. Additionally, I help lead and facilitate the Gather Together (20's/30's) faith group, and I continue to offer pastoral care and visits with members who are homebound, hospitalized, in rehab, or in hospice.

I share my gifts with the wider church by serving on the synod's consultation committee and as a facilitator for the ELCA's congregational vitality training for revitalizing congregations. I also served as academic mentor/supervisor for TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) candidate Vicar Scott Wylie as he pursues his certificate to become an ELCA Rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament. Together we attended the annual TEEM conference at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Oct 2023 with the theme, "Doing Ministry and Theology of Hope in a Post-Pandemic Reality."

For continuing education, I attended the ELCA Rostered Minister's Gathering in Phoenix, AZ and served as a facilitator for the "renewing congregations" workshop there. I also attended a 3-day course, Stepping up to Supervision, through Faith+Lead Academy, and I participated in Northeastern Ohio Synod's Boundaries Training, which is required every 3 years for Rostered Ministers.

I'm so grateful to be a part of this special faith community with all of you—one body in Christ, belonging to one another. Looking forward to continued ministry ahead of us!

With gratitude, Pastor Marissa Harrison



Acolyte Training, Oct 2023



Confirmation Camp at Hopewood Pines, Mar 2024



Worship and Music Coordinator Report

Submitted by
Brynna Bailer Mango

It is such a joy to be Good Soil's Worship and Music Coordinator! First and foremost, thank you all for being so welcoming and enthusiastic since I began this past October. It has been wonderful to get to know you all.

As Music and Worship Coordinator, I work closely with Pastor Marissa to select hymns for each service based on the liturgical season, scripture readings, past precedent, and current considerations. Coming from a more contemporary background myself, I've loved learning so many new hymns from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal—it is such a rich collection!

Good Soil is blessed to have a wealth of musical congregants, and it has been such a privilege to make music with you not only in worship but also in a special music context. Just since October, we have had the opportunity to feature many of Good Soil's finest:

- Jim Kulma: vocal and guitar (Christmas Eve, Mother's Day)
- Dave Paine and William Eversole, trombones (Transfiguration Sunday)
- Dave Paine, William Eversole, and Erik Bogen: trombones and trumpet (Easter Sunday)
- Deb Yolanda: viola (Maundy Thursday)
- Nancy Welliver: flute
- Small group vocal ensembles (Christmas Eve Morning and Candlelight services, Palm/Passion Sunday, and more!)

We are also so grateful to our core group of cantors who support our singing of the Psalms as well as lead hymns throughout the service: Bryan McGucken, William Eversole, Kaitlyn Regan, Dave Paine, and Brenna Connor.

It is beautiful to see so many of you bring your expertise and eagerness to Good Soil's music ministry and I hope to build on that even more. If you'd like to get involved in music ministry, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at brynnabailermango@gmail.com—we'd love to have you! I look forward to continuing to make music with all of you in the coming year.

Brynna Bailer Mango



*Easter Brass Ensemble, Mar 2024
L to R: Brynna Bailer Mango, William Eversole, Dave Paine, Erik Bogen*



RIC Committee Report

Submitted by
Abby Alusheff

The Reconciling in Christ (RIC) committee has been diligently serving our congregation, fostering inclusivity and education within our community. The committee that makes up our wonderful RIC team includes Abby Alusheff, chair, and with the guidance of Pastor Marissa, Chuck Mosberger, Kirsten Reading, Mandy Forshey, William Eversole, and Amanda Inman. Our overall goal is to become RIC certified congregation, and our committee has embarked on a journey of impactful initiatives and thoughtful discussions and events to further educate our congregation on what that means and how we can become an inclusive and more welcoming faith community.

RIC Committee Members:

- Abby Alusheff
- Pastor Marissa
- Chuck Mosberger
- Kirsten Reading
- Mandy Forshey
- William Eversole
- Amanda Inman



Good Soil pronoun board

We started the year with a productive first meeting, filled with meaningful discussions and strategic planning for the months ahead.

Throughout the year so far, the committee has identified several action items to advance our goals of inclusivity and education. These include:

- Preferred pronouns poster in the hall outside of the congregation.
- Including pronouns for those who wish to include them on their nametags
- Black History Month movie events in February
- MLK service
- Cottage Meetings to meet throughout the calendar year for congregation members to further discuss welcome and our RIC efforts.
- Cle Pride parade
- Distribution of additional article resources
- Inclusive Movie events scattered throughout the year (1946, for example)

1:1 Discussions:

Additionally, the committee is committed to engaging in 1:1 discussions about the process with congregation members, dividing and conquering so that each team member has a chance to connect with and reach 8-10 families.

As we continue on this journey together, the RIC committee remains dedicated to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our congregation. We expect to vote on our RIC status in early 2025.

In solidarity and progress,
Abby Alusheff, RIC Committee Chairperson



RIC Kickoff Event, Aug 2023



Good Soil marching in the Cleveland Pride Parade, June 2024



Generosity Report
Submitted by
Michael Wancata

The “Generosity Team” was formed in 2021 with a mission of producing a consistent, credible and meaningful change in the culture of generosity at Good Soil, both short term and long term. When possible, team members remotely attend training programs ahead of the stewardship campaign. The team has continued to meet periodically in order to review and update Good Soil’s vision and strategy for generosity. Team members have varied since its inception in 2021.

For the Fall 2023 campaign, “More Than We Can Imagine”, a total of 50 individuals / families returned an intent card for 2024. Of those responses, 20 individuals and families elected to increase their giving amount from the previous year, and represents a 40% increase in giving from year 2023. We also received intent cards from 12 new givers who had not submitted intent cards in the past, and 11 households elected to begin their new level of generosity prior to the new year. Overall, the projected annualized gifting amount for ministry in 2024 is \$168,405.00. Thank you for your generosity!

For the Spring 2024 new parking lot campaign, themed “Paving the Way”, a fund-raising goal of \$20,000.00 was established. The response has been a huge success. As of 5/12/2024, 41 intents have been received totaling \$27,515.00. Nine intents have accounted for \$17,000. Thirty-two intents account for \$10,515.00. Thank you for your generosity!

Good Soil continues to tith 10% of weekly offerings to the Northeastern Ohio Synod for Mission Support of wider ministry in our region and world. We also introduced new “I give online” pew cards this year so people can participate in the act of worship of placing something in the offering plate during the service if they give online.

Thank you for your ministry and support of God’s work.

With gratitude,
Michael Wancata



*Completed Paving the Way intent tracker
Spring 2024*



Sunday School Report

Submitted by
JoAnne Wancata

The Fall 2023 – Spring 2024 schoolyear has been a special time of learning and growing for the Sunday School program as well as for the children!

NEW OPPORTUNITIES DURING WORSHIP

Building on the gifts our children bring to worship at Good Soil, we launched new opportunities for learning about God's love during the worship service.

The Playground

A special place to worship within in the sanctuary while being a kid! The set-up and materials within the playground encourage the children to build relationships within their church family while learning about God's love. Older children can pause their play to recite the Lord's Prayer or sing parts of the liturgy and familiar hymns with family members.

Chris Jacobson maintains the playground and plans the weekly materials (including copies of a bible story coloring page that aligns with the weekly readings and sermon for adults).

Learn and Grow time

Children approximately Grade 1 and younger move from the Sanctuary to a classroom after the Children's Sermon for approximately 15 - 20 minutes of activities before a final prayer.

Activities include coloring pages or individual drawings, simple bible stories, games or crafts. They return to the Sanctuary during the Passing of the Peace or Offering.

Louise DeBell, Mandy Forshey and Sarah Sburlea rotate as the weekly leaders and appreciate the grandmas, siblings and others who join in to assist.

TRADITIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL FOLLOWING WORSHIP

We have two Sunday School classrooms. One for children in grades 1 – 6 and another for those in Pre-school/Kindergarten. We use the Spark "All Kids" and "Frolic" curriculums by *Sparkhouse, Augsburg Press*.

Louise DeBell, Sarah Sburlea and Darlene Wahl rotate weekly as teachers for pre-school/kindergarteners.

Mandy Forshey, Pam Lanter and Becky Williamson rotate weekly as teachers for the older children.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- 10/29/23 Reformation Sunday – Confirmation and Craft Table Fellowship
- 12/03/23 Advent Fair Crafts and Activities Fellowship & Advent Giving Tree
- 12/17/23 Children's Christmas Pageant
- 03/24/24 Palm Sunday Resurrection Eggs Activity
- 03/31/24 Easter Egg Hunt
- 05/19/24 Sunday School Classroom Graduation Celebrations

We're continuing to discuss and explore the best ways to engage our children as we look forward to the next Sunday School Year starting up in Fall 2024.

Thank you everyone for your support of the Sunday School.
Submitted by JoAnne Wancata



Top: Children's Christmas Pageant, Dec 2023

Middle L: Fun after "Land Sunday", Sept 2023

Middle R: Helpers with adorning sanctuary for Season of Creation (Sammie Forshey, Edith Young, George Young)

Lower Left: Regional Confirmation Event, Oct 2023



Livestream and YouTube Channel Report

Submitted by
Jessica Berkshire

All has been great in the world of livestreaming! Below are a few updates:

- We had an issue with the back camera in March and April but thankfully it was still under warranty and when we sent it back for repairs, they sent us a brand new one. We're back up and running! Thanks for the patience of those watching from home as we had to work from one camera for a few Sundays.
- Earlier this year we welcome our newest member to the team Isaac Krankowski! Isaac has jumped right in and has been a great addition. If you're interested in learning more about how you can join our team, grab Trey one Sunday morning or email him at treyharrison33@gmail.com.
- For those who enjoy worship from back in our Cry Room you may have noticed you can finally hear the service! Thanks to the hard work of our consultant Jared, we are extending audio to the nursery as well. We have also extended our WiFi to reach the back of the sanctuary. It's a different network so be sure you're connected to the "Good Soil Sanctuary" network in addition to our regular Good Soil network.
- Reminder – we have hearing devices available for use when attending the service in person. We have worked to fine tune the speakers, but we know that doesn't work for everyone. So, if you have issues hearing the service clearly in person, feel free to grab a hearing device from an usher on your way in.
- Finally, we are working on a "Worship Experience" survey to get a feel for how the people of Good Soil experience God on Sundays. Where do you experience God during worship? What makes worship "worshipful" for you? Can you hear the readers? The pastor? How are the bulletins and the worship slides working as worship guides? Be thinking about these things as we'll be putting out the survey this fall!

We reached out to Serena Cotrell and asked her to share a few words about the livestream. Serena is a former member who moved out west several years back. Her local church does not share her values and the best option is 23 miles away. Here's what Serena shared...

Serena: To be able to livestream and hear the wonderful and inspirational messages put forth by Pastor Marissa has been such a joy and blessing. It is also fun to see the faces I

used to know and watch the kids grow up. Those children's messages are quite entertaining. The service is 7:30am my time, but I try to listen every Sunday. I look forward to a great message and good music. Livestream means a lot to me. Makes me feel that I still belong to Good Soil.

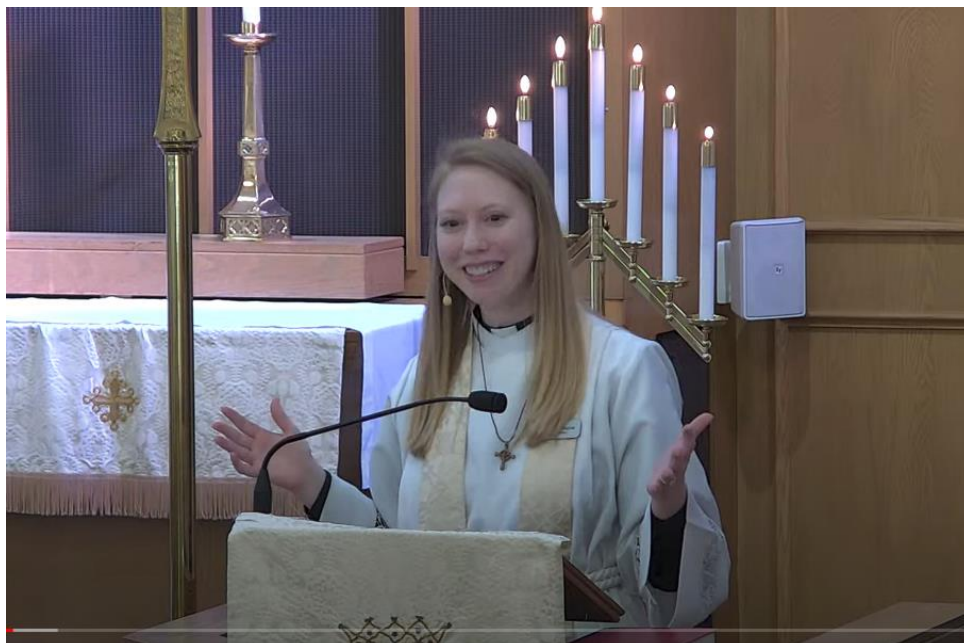
Thanks Serena!

Here's to another great year ahead!

Jessica Berkshire, on behalf of the Livestream Team (Trey Harrison, Joe Lanter, Sean Lanter, and Isaac Krankowski)



Great shot captured by the livestream from the MLK Commemoration Service, January 2024



Livestream view of the sermon



Multiplying Ministry Report:

Submitted by
Pastor Marissa Harrison

The Word of the Lord continued to grow and be multiplied.” - Acts 12:24

Good Soil has been blessed with the privilege of multiplying ministry with gifts that have been given to the congregation for the sake of sharing the gospel of Christ. In 2022-2023, Good Soil received an estate gift from Gary Dennison, and the congregation had the opportunity to decide where a portion of the tithe from that gift would be distributed (additional details about that event shared in last year’s annual report [here](#)).

Another portion of the tithe was set aside for Mission Support in the Northeastern Ohio Synod. On Nov 19th, 2023, Bishop Laura Barbins was with Good Soil to accept this check for Mission Support in the amount of \$18,000—thanks be to God! Click [here](#) to watch the giveaway and [here](#) to watch Bishop Barbins' sermon from that day.

Mission Support allows us to do more together as church for the sake of the world. In our own story, legacy congregations of Good Soil were the beneficiaries of grants from the wider church than were funded by Mission Support. Likewise, Mission Support helps to fund synodical and churchwide ministries, the processes for calling a pastor, and many other ministries of hope and healing across the church—you can read examples of those here in the "[Stories of Faith in Action](#)" publication (Good Soil was featured in the 2018-2019 "Stories of Faith in Action" publication [here](#)).

Read impact story “A Gift of Hope” published in the synod’s e-news below:

The leaders at Good Soil Lutheran Ministries understand what it is like to receive an incredible gift. Ellen Young, council president, and Bill Fink, vice president, were both members at the legacy congregations when Faith Lutheran and Our Savior Lutheran consolidated in order to “strengthen and expand” their ministry through Good Soil.

Faith and Our Savior were just two miles apart and in desperate financial straits. There was a time that the leadership knew money would run out and they weren’t sure what would come next. Through the redevelopment process, and grants from the wider church funded by Mission Support, Bill saw there was hope. People saw that there was “something worth investing in.”

Now Bill sees all the ways Good Soil is active and engaged in their community and is proud of the ministry they have built “both within and without” of their building. Just

over five years after Good Soil's commissioning worship, the members of the church are choosing to pay it forward. Last fall, the congregation held a "Multiplying Ministry" event to help decide where Good Soil's tithe from an estate gift would go. "We're grateful to be able to 'multiply ministry' in meaningful ways because of the generosity and legacy gift of Gary Dennison." Each household was given the opportunity to designate a portion of the tithe to 10 different organizations "doing God's work in our wider community and the world."

On Sunday, November 19th, Ellen presented Bishop Barbins with a check designated for our Northeastern Ohio Synod in the amount of \$18,000. "It was important to council to designate a portion of the tithe to our Northeastern Ohio Synod as Mission Support as a way to give back to the larger church and support ministries across the ELCA and beyond." Bill says, "We were the recipients of an incredible gift. The gift of hope. We wanted to pay that forward."

Mission Support allows us to do more together as church for the sake of the world. Through your generous Mission Support, we can share God's abundant grace and hope with others by providing support for congregations, raising up new pastors and deacons, and offering educational and training opportunities. Thank you for recognizing the importance of our shared ministry.

Accessed from: <https://www.neos-elca.org/our-stories/archives/12-2023>



On November 19th, 2023, Good Soil presented Bishop Laura Barbins with a check for \$18,000 in Mission Support to the Northeastern Ohio Synod after receiving a legacy gift from Gary Dennison's estate.



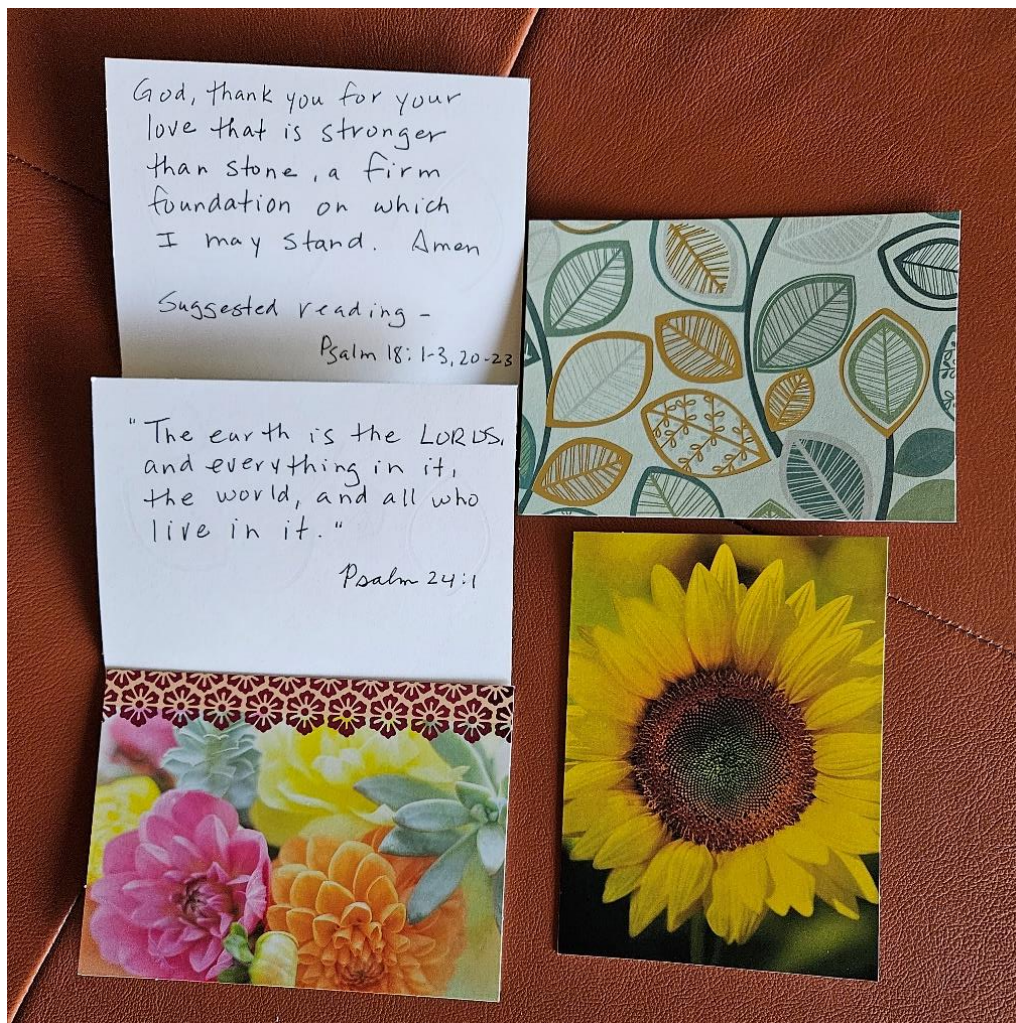
Card Ministry and Prayer Team Report

Submitted by

Sharon Hollowell and Pastor Marissa

Card Ministry

Good Soil's Card Ministry has been in place since 2019 and going strong. It's a rewarding way for us to let our homebound and out of state folks know they are lovingly remembered as vital members of our faith community. Printed and handwritten cards are sent 4-6 times a year to approximately 20 people. Here's an example of the cards sent September, 2023:



Prayer Team

Good Soil launched an email prayer team last program year. The prayer team (currently about 20 people) actively prays for those in need in our congregation and beyond, adding another layer of intentional praying alongside the pastor's prayers and congregation's weekly prayers in worship. Emailed prayers are typically sent out to the team once a month and as urgent needs arise. Anyone can join (or leave) the prayer team email list at any time.

If you'd like to join the prayer team, please contact Pastor Marissa pastormarissa@goodsoillutheran.org and George Andrew george_n_andrews@yahoo.com who currently steward the Prayer Team email list and send out prayer updates. Thank you for your prayers!



*Joan Zeager leads participants in a craft activity about how to pray the Advent wreath
Advent Fair, Dec 2023*

L to R: Aaron Krankowski, Sammie Forshey, Amelia Forshey, and Joan Zeager



Property Committee Report

Submitted by
Larry Jacobson

The role of the property committee has changed significantly in the past year with Joe Dudas & Gary Smith joining the staff of Good Soil. Joe handles certain projects for the congregation (such as the recent drainage corrective work) & Gary serves as church sexton. As a result, many “day to day” matters are handled by Gary & certain projects are led by Joe.

Matters that have been led by the property committee include:

- Late in 2023, the committee assisted the church council in developing priorities for capital projects for 2024 and beyond.
- Invitations to bid on our parking lot improvements were sent to nine asphalt paving contractors. Seven responses were received and clarifications were requested from four firms. Ultimately, Cunningham Paving from Warrensville Heights was selected, and as of this writing the work is planned for early July.
- In April 2024, replacement of two expansion tanks and two check valves were completed on our boiler.
- In the spring and summer of 2023, planting and caring for flowers and shrubs on our church grounds took place (others from the congregation often participated). Similar efforts are anticipated for 2024.
- Arranging for lawn care.
- Arranging for snow removal.

Members of the property committee are Linda Beebe, Barbara Demko-Werner, Paula Maeder Conner, Sharon Hollowell, Bill Fink, Stan Zeager, Bill Wahl, Larry Jacobson, and Steve Regan, who was recently welcomed to the committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Jacobson





Gather Together (20's/30's) Report

Submitted by

Mary Washburn, member of Bethany English Lutheran Church

Gather Together formed in 2023 growing out of an idea sparked by the Gather Network, an ELCA young adult ministry, to establish a ministry for younger adults. Our Gather Together group seeks to provide a place of belonging for the 20s and 30s of our congregation to build community and faith. We do this through events that bring together young adults at Bethany, and also neighboring congregations like Good Soil in Rocky River, the now closed Trinity Lutheran in Lakewood, and hopefully soon Messiah Lutheran in Fairview Park (and perhaps others to come).

In 2023, we held five events including two spiritual hikes, a “pub theology” meeting at a local brewery, a dinner church worship service, and a Christmas party. Each of our meetings is structured to allow time for fellowship, study of the Bible or other Christian writings, and moments of reflection. For our Christmas party, we also sought to add a service component and collected two hampers full of donated winter items for the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless. So far in 2024, we have held a Pre-Lenten Evening Prayer service and are currently planning a sunset vespers service for June. We will look to host similar gatherings every 4-8 weeks, and are exploring hosting a longer format retreat style event during the warmer months.

A typical Gather Together meeting will bring together 10-12 individuals, and in total we have had more than 20 different people take part in at least one event. We have been fortunate to have the support and participation of Pastor Marissa Harrison of Good Soil, a fellow younger adult, who has been able to add theological heft and communion to many of our events. While Mary Washburn is coordinator for each of these events, in fact every meeting is planned in collaboration with a handful of interested members. We strive to keep this grass-roots, informal model to ensure ongoing participation is a joy rather than a commitment. Anyone interested in taking part or helping in any way (big or small) is encouraged to reach out to Mary Washburn, mhestilow@gmail.com



Gather Together sharing communion at Dinner Church, October, 2023



Nominating Committee Report

Submitted by
Alex Alusheff

On behalf of the Nominating Committee (Ellen Young, Pastor Marissa, Jim Kulma, Deb Yandala, and myself), we present the Congregation Council-approved slate of candidates to serve the 2024-2026 term. For consideration and election by the Congregation of Good Soil Lutheran Ministries, the following individuals have been nominated for the Congregation Council for the 2024-2026 term:

1. Kathy Aloï
2. Evan Paine
3. Beau Reddington

Floor nominations also may be made and considered during the Congregational meeting on June 9th, 2024.

The following currently serving members will remain on Council until their term ends in 2025. They will be eligible to renew for an additional 2-year term at that time:

1. Abby Alusheff
2. Bill Wahl
3. Jennifer Krankowski

The following currently serving members will remain on Council. They have elected to serve an additional 2-year term, ending in 2026:

1. Bill Fink
2. Sarah Sburlea
3. Ellen Young

There are no council members whose term is ending in 2024 who have elected to roll off of council.

Respectfully submitted,
Alex Alusheff



Council gathers for their quarterly mixer and writes thank you cards for people in the congregation. Around the table from L: Sarah, Jennifer, Ellen, Bill F, Abby, Darlene, and Bill W., Jan 2024



Treasurer's Report (to come!)

Submitted by
Ellen Young, Sarah Sburlea, and Pastor Marissa

Good Soil is currently in the midst of a recent bookkeeper transition—now working with Welsh Accounting & Financial of North Olmsted as of last month. A few additional weeks are needed to complete the transition and ensure reporting for 2024 is accurate. We will provide this report along with the mid-year contribution statements/thank you letters which will be mailed later this summer. In the meantime, below is the financial congregation report for 2023 that we submitted to the ELCA:

18. Receipts during 2023	
a. Regular giving	\$ 197,289
b. Designated giving	\$ 8,631
c. Earned income (any source)	\$ 26,067
d. Grants (any source)	\$ 7,000
e. All other receipts	\$ 0
f. TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 238,987
19. Assets as of December 31, 2023	
a. Church real estate	\$ 3,850,000
b. Endowment and memorial funds	\$ 453,790
c. Cash, savings, bonds, etc.	\$ 689,530
d. All other assets	\$ 0
e. TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 4,993,320
20. Total indebtedness as of Dec. 31, 2023	\$ 4,765
21. Budgeted/projected 2024 Mission Support	\$ 18,200
22. Gifts from the estates of deceased individuals received during 2023	
a. Number of gifts received	1
b. TOTAL VALUE of gifts received	\$ 686,670
23. Disbursements during 2023	
a. Current operating expenses	\$ 243,489
b. Capital improvements	\$ 23,182
c. Payments on debts	\$ 0
d. Mission Support (regular synod benevolence)	\$ 37,595
e. Other benevolence sent directly to the synod (for any synod or churchwide appeal including ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, etc.)	\$ 0
f. Other benevolence sent directly to the churchwide organization (for any churchwide appeal including ELCA World Hunger, Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, etc.)	\$ 3,997
g. Benevolence sent directly to any of the following:	
1. An activity in another country including a missionary, a congregation, a companion synod, a hunger program, disaster response, etc.	\$ 0
2. Camps	\$ 3,092
3. Campus ministry	\$ 1,153
4. Colleges	\$ 0
5. Seminaries	\$ 0
6. Social service group, agency, or institution	\$ 15,348
h. All other benevolence sent directly to the recipient	\$ 7,979
i. Other expenses and realized losses	\$ 0
j. TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$ 335,835



Membership Report

Submitted by
Pastor Marissa Harrison

Membership Highlights

Baptized Membership end of 2020: 107
Baptized Membership end of 2021: 108
Baptized Membership end of 2022: 112
Baptized Membership end of 2023: 122
Baptized Membership as of 6/2024: 140*

*Of those 140 people, 109 are confirmed (voting) members and 31 are kids who are baptized, but not yet confirmed (non-voting).

Numbers reflected here account for membership changes due to transfers in and out, baptisms, deaths, and welcome of new members.



Celebrating Welcome of [New Members](#), January 28, 2024