



# 2025 Ministry Funding Plan & Capital Projects

Good Soil Lutheran Ministries | Rocky River, Ohio

## MINISTRY FUNDING PLAN

Good Soil's name is grounded in the Parable of the Sower <sup>1</sup> in prayerful hope that our ministry offers a safe and vibrant place to hear the Word of God, be nourished in community, and grow in faith and love for God and all of God's people and creation. Purpose Statement: "Growing Together in Christ to Love and Serve!"

The following ministry funding plan for 2025 aligns with our Guiding Principles to support and propel our ability to serve God and our neighbors as we grow together in Christ:

- ❖ 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



Figure 1 – Welcoming new members to Good Soil on January 28, 2024.

<sup>1</sup> The Parable of the Sower is a story told by Jesus about the extravagant and unconditional love of God. It appears three times in the bible: Matthew 13:1-9, Mark 4:1-9, and Luke 8:4-8.



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God equips us with what we need to accomplish the ministry to which God is calling us. Thank you for your generous support that continues to empower God’s mission through Good Soil!

## **Spiritual Growth: Worship, Faith Formation, Community & Discipleship**

The impact of worship, hospitality, pastoral care, faith formation, and connecting with one another as the Body of Christ are the foundation of what we offer as a faith community. This plan accounts for the costs of sustaining ministry excellence for Sunday worship services, Sunday school, adult forums, confirmation, baptisms, and fellowship events, as well as operating the church office.



Figure 2 - Brynna Bailer Mango and the brass choir (L to R: William Eversole, Dave Paine, and Erik Bogen) enhance Good Soil’s Easter Sunday service with their musical gifts, March 2024



Figure 3 – A group attends a centering prayer Lenten journey led by Dee Willis, Spring 2024



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Figure 4 – Counting change for Souper Bowl of Caring (L to R: Ryan Williamson, Bill Fink, Michael Wancata, Kim Wylie, Luke Williamson, and Jessica Berkshire), February 2024

| <u>Administration &amp; Programs</u> | <u>Plan</u>     |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Office Operations                    | 27,123          |
| Worship                              | 6,950           |
| Programs                             | 3,450           |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>\$37,523</b> |

As disciples of Christ, we are called to support one another, our community, and the wider world by sharing God’s love. We do this, in part, by growing deeper in our relationships with God and one another. The use of social media, online worship, and other online activities has expanded our faith witness in the communities of Rocky River, Lakewood, Cleveland, and beyond. We aim to continue engaging in fellowship and growth activities that are enriching and faith-deepening, as well as connecting spiritually with others — including young people and families — through online platforms and tools.

## Compensation

We recognize that compensation that meets the salary and benefit guidelines outlined by the Northeastern Ohio Synod enables a pastor to joyfully fulfill their responsibilities and obligations while also encouraging vocational satisfaction. We



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also recognize that music is a life-giving and faith-forming feature of our worshiping experience. Brynna Bailer Mango continues to be our Worship and Music Coordinator. This fall Cara Rovella transitioned to a new role, Communications and Community Life Coordinator, and we welcomed Sean Kennedy as our new Church Administrator. We are excited for the expansion of the Administration team to support the day-to-day operations as well as growth in our ministry.

Joe Dudas, Facilities Maintenance Contractor, and Gary Smith, Sexton, will both continue in their roles in 2025. They continue to be extremely helpful with our building operations and with projects completed in 2024, including the Paving the Way parking lot renovation. We are thankful for the work they continue to do.

| <u>Staff</u>                                                                                   | <u>Plan</u>      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Pastor, Worship & Music Coordinator, Office Administrator, & Facilities Maintenance Contractor | 182,166          |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                   | <b>\$182,166</b> |



Figure 5 - Confirmation Camp Event, March 2024

## Mission Center & Stewarding of Space

This plan accounts for the financial costs to maintain and operate our church property and land located at 20300 Hilliard Boulevard. While we use this property for Good Soil worship and events, the building belongs to God, and it hosts a variety



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of other life-giving, ministries in the community. We have multiple rental partners including several Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) groups, Meals on Wheels, Tower City Men’s Barbershop Chorus, Suburban Nursery Cooperative School and our Hungarian Lutheran siblings from West Shore Hungarian. We want all parts of the building to be functional, comfortable, hospitable places for all who enter these doors, so that we can share God’s love with as many people as possible.

| <u>Building &amp; Property</u>                | <u>Plan</u>     |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Utilities, Insurance, Maintenance, & Supplies | 73,312          |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>\$73,312</b> |

## Serving/Partnering with the Wider Community & Sharing with Generosity



Figure 6 – Some of the Good Soil folks (L to R: Pastor Marissa, Matthew Molnar, Steve Regan, Sharon Regan, and George Andrews) who served at the God’s Work Our Hands service project at Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries, September 14, 2024.

We covenant to give a full biblical tithe (10%) of our weekly offerings toward domestic and global ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) through our “Mission Support” (previously called “Benevolence”) sent to the Northeastern Ohio Synod. To explore stories from some of the ELCA ministries funded by Mission Support such as ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, and ELCA new start congregations, go to <https://www.elca.org/sofia>.



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We are also committed to serving in our community and supporting mission partners including the ministry of [Trials for Hope](#); an organization that accompanies and resources people experiencing homelessness and hardship in our community. All financial earnings from the St. Pauly's clothing shed in Good Soil's parking lot are given in support of Trials for Hope.

| <u>Service &amp; Partnerships</u> | <u>Plan</u>     |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| NEOS/ELCA Mission Support         | 19,500          |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>\$19,500</b> |

Good Soil relies on the generosity of our congregation to fund our ministry expenses. Historically, our budgeted expenses have exceeded budgeted income, our goal is to be a self-sustaining congregation. We'll achieve this goal by continuing to deepen our spiritual practices around giving, as well as practicing and celebrating generosity.

Our fall 2024 generosity campaign had some exciting results.

- ❖ 44 intents have been received as of 11/22/24
- ❖ 8 households are pledging for the first time at Good Soil
- ❖ 27 households are growing in their generosity for next year
- ❖ 26 are signed up for automatic giving (surpassing our 25 goal!)

This generous response will have a meaningful impact expanding our ability to accomplish the ministry to which God is calling us. Once again, thank you for your generous support. If you would still like to submit an intent you can do that [here](#).

| <u>Financial Support</u>                   | <u>Plan</u>      |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Weekly Offerings                           | 195,000          |
| Rents, Gifts, Savings, & Investment Income | 101,500          |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>\$296,500</b> |



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| SUMMARY                                   | 2025<br>Plan <sup>2</sup> | 2024<br>Projection <sup>3</sup> |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <u>Ministry Spending</u>                  |                           |                                 |
| Service & Partnerships                    |                           |                                 |
| NEOS/ELCA Mission Support <sup>4</sup>    | 19,500                    | 19,241                          |
| Administration & Programs                 | 37,523                    | 40,350                          |
| Payrolls                                  |                           |                                 |
| Pastor Compensation/Benefits <sup>5</sup> | 123,254                   | 114,471                         |
| Other Compensation <sup>6</sup>           | 58,912                    | 50,418                          |
| Building & Property                       |                           |                                 |
| Utilities                                 | 15,876                    | 15,720                          |
| Insurance                                 | 10,831                    | 10,642                          |
| Maintenance & Supplies                    | 29,000                    | 27,742                          |
| <b>Total Ministry Spending</b>            | <b>\$312,501</b>          | <b>299,063</b>                  |
| <u>Financial Support</u>                  |                           |                                 |
| Weekly Offerings                          | 195,000                   | 192,415                         |
| Rents & Gifts                             | 30,300                    | 29,706                          |
| Savings & Investment Income <sup>7</sup>  | 71,200                    | 181,912                         |
| <b>Total Financial Support</b>            | <b>\$296,500</b>          | <b>\$404,034</b>                |
| <b>Balance</b>                            | <b>(\$16,001)</b>         | <b>\$104,971</b>                |

<sup>2</sup> Plan approved for recommendation to the congregation by Council on November 19, 2024. A detailed line-item budget is available from the church office upon request, [admin@goodsoillutheran.org](mailto:admin@goodsoillutheran.org)

<sup>3</sup> Year-end projection based on income and expenses through September 30, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Mission Support is given as 10% of monthly total of pledged and non-pledged offerings, regardless of budgeted amount.

<sup>5</sup> 2025 will be the final year in a 3-year plan to get pastor up to the synod’s minimum salary guidelines. Council has incorporated the compensation guidelines for rostered ministers revised by the NEOS in 2022. Total Pastor compensation and benefits include salary, Social Security offset, housing allowance, pension contributions, health benefits, and disability and life insurance benefits. Pastor professional expenses include mileage reimbursement, cell phone reimbursement, continuing education, and synod conferences.

<sup>6</sup> Other compensation includes staff positions for Office Admin, Communications & Community Life Coordinator, Worship & Music Coordinator, Facilities Maintenance Contractor, and Sexton, as well as related costs such as payroll tax, workers comp, and withholdings.

<sup>7</sup> Incomes include unrealized gains/losses, dividends, and interest from the ELCA Ministry Growth Fund/investment, Good Soil’s brokerage account, and certificates of deposit.



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## CAPITAL PROJECTS

*“To be mature is to build schools in which we will not study, to plant trees under which we will not sit, and to grow churches in which we will not worship.”*

– The Rev. Ernest Campbell

At Good Soil, capital projects are funded through both dedicated fundraising campaigns and a process of allocating existing assets. Existing assets include but are not limited to gifts, savings, and investments. These assets applied to capital projects are referred to as our Building Fund.

Our goal is to develop a self-sustaining and forward-looking capital program. We’re taking steps towards achieving this goal by replenishing and growing our Building Fund with a variety of funding streams including portions of undesignated estate gifts, savings interest, and dividends paid by our investments in the ELCA Ministry Growth Fund through the ELCA Foundation. We’re also taking steps towards reducing operational risks and emergency repairs to our mission center by proactively identifying and planning for large capital expenditures.

In 2024, we completed the Paving the Way campaign to repave the parking lot and setup electrical and water access for the back lot for future ministries. We are excited for the opportunities for the back lot and energized from the success of the Paving the Way campaign.

Everything we “have” continues to belong to God who entrusts it to us for God’s purposes in the world. This includes Good Soil’s mission center. The following capital projects are a list of examples in which we can steward our mission center with care so that it might better serve God’s purposes here and in our community.

### **West Cry Room Painting – 2025 Priority**

This room, damaged by water many years ago, can be repaired similar to the east cry room, with a new drop ceiling, lighting, floor, and painting so that we can utilize this as ministry space (office for staff members, prayer room etc.), rather than storage.





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## Video Doorbell – 2025 Priority

Replacing the existing buzzer doorbell system with a video doorbell is a safety improvement for our staff and our renters, such as Meals on Wheels. Staff members and renters have both expressed challenges of knowing who is at the door. A system with a video feed would allow us to open the doors from afar where staff could see who was trying to access the building without risking direct engagement if the visitor is unwanted.

## Windows – Future

It is proposed that the windows in the Education Wing be replaced for both levels, front and back. The proposed windows would be fiberglass, energy-efficient, low-maintenance, attractive, and durable. Additional window replacement in Fellowship Hall could be considered as well. Windows will likely be replaced over more than one year to help defray budget impact.

## Sanctuary Repairs & Painting – Future

Improve the appearance of the sanctuary for Sunday worship and livestream. Repair the cracks and paint the walls. Prior to proceeding with this, the Property Team is investigating if there are foundation issues that would need to be addressed to prevent cracks from reemerging.

| <b>CAPITAL PROJECTS SUMMARY</b> | 2025<br>Plan <sup>8</sup> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Capital Projects                |                           |
| West Cry Room                   | 6,000                     |
| Video Doorbell                  | 6,000                     |
| <b>Total Capital Projects</b>   | <b>\$12,000</b>           |
| Capital Funding                 |                           |
| Building Fund <sup>9</sup>      | 12,000                    |
| <b>Total Capital Funding</b>    | <b>\$12,000</b>           |



<sup>8</sup> Plan approved by Council on November 19, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Building funds in the “2025 Projects” column will be allocated by Council from existing assets.



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## DANDELION SEEDS

In the 2025 budget we are proposing to continue our commitment and allocation of a portion of recent legacy gifts for investment in our Dandelion Priorities.

The priorities come from the Dandelion Project; a synod-wide two-year vitality journey that provided a framework for congregational discernment, discovery, and growth. Good Soil's Dandelion Team (Bill Fink, Mandy Forshey, Barbara Munch, Adam Pate, and Pastor Marissa) lead us through this process by attending workshop trainings, meeting with a congregational coach, and implementing various activities, experiments, goals, and outreach projects into the life of the congregation. The congregation also participated in focus groups that resulted in identifying values of the congregation and subsequent ministry priorities. The conclusion of the Dandelion strategic process resulted in 4 ministry priorities for Good Soil:

- ❖ 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.

As a congregation, we are currently engaging the Reconciling in Christ process (exploring becoming an affirming congregation for LGBTQ+ and BIPOC people). This ministry decision comes out of the "culture of invitation and enthusiastic welcome" priority, which we have engaged as a congregation since Fall 2023. The "building and deepening supportive and authentic relationships" will be the priority area of focus for 2025, after the RIC vote in Spring 2025. Each Priority will help guide ministry efforts and decisions and allow for continued "seeding"



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through innovative activities, events, and new resources through these budget allocations.



Figure 7 - Reconciling in Christ Conversations (L to R: Jeanne Livingood, William Eversole, Donna Handy), April 2024



Figure 8 – Communion Class for Littles (Faith Formation) L to R: Jack Smith, Tom Smith, Sarah Sburlea, Maddie Sburlea, and Luca Sburlea, February 2024



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Figure 9 – Special music during one of the outdoor services for the Season of Creation (Mother-Son Duo: Deb Yandala and Matt Bishop), September 2024

|                                 | 2025<br>Plan <sup>10</sup> |  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| <b><u>Dandelion Seeds</u></b>   |                            |  |
| Authentic Relationships         | 2,500                      |  |
| Faith Formation                 | 2,500                      |  |
| Community Ministry              | 2,500                      |  |
| Culture of Invitation           | 2,500                      |  |
| <b>Total Dandelion Projects</b> | <b>\$10,000</b>            |  |
| Dandelion Funding               |                            |  |
| Legacy Fund <sup>11</sup>       | 10,000                     |  |
| <b>Total Dandelion Funding</b>  | <b>\$10,000</b>            |  |

<sup>10</sup> Plan approved by Council on November 19, 2024.

<sup>11</sup> Dandelion Seeds in the “2025 Projects” column will be allocated by Council from existing assets.