

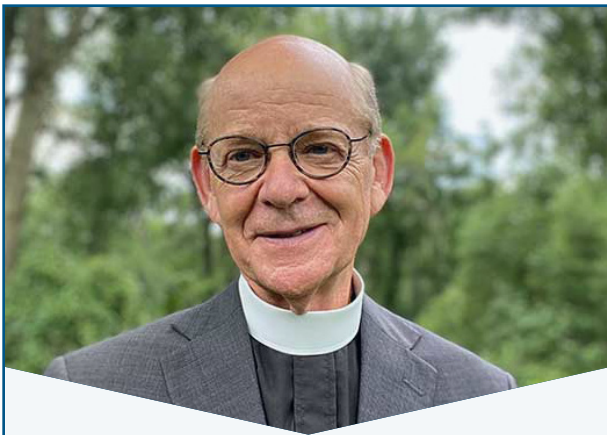
20 ANNUAL 23 REPORT



**Nativity
Lutheran Church**



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



A Report From The Senior Pastor

Glenn Seefeldt

2023

“Why does the church exist?”

“Why does the church exist?” If you were asked such a question, what would you say? I think the best answer I’ve heard is this: “to carry on the work started by Jesus.”

In Matthew 22:37, Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment is. He replies, “Love God, Love Neighbor.” His answer summarizes our reason for being as a church. The work of the church is to help people grow spiritually, growing in understanding of who we are in relation to God’s unconditional love, and to help people use their giftedness to be conduits of God’s love in a troubled world. People grow spiritually when they experience the transforming love of God in community as they talk about God in safe places, as they engage in ways of justice, volunteer in acts of service, and encounter God in habits of faith.

Love God, Love Neighbor

In Matthew 22:37, Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment is. He replied, “Love God, Love Neighbor.” Jesus’ answer summarizes our reason for being as a church. In 2022, we focused on four mission objectives in our work of Loving God and Loving Neighbor.

In 2023, we showed growth in all areas of ministry. Here are seven key accomplishments.

Growth in Service: Nativity volunteers and staff, guided by the Holy Spirit, brought renewed energy to the tasks of ministry as Nativity adjusted to post-pandemic life and to both Pastor Ben’s and Dr. Kelly Sherman-Conroy’s departures. More volunteers were recruited, equipped, and empowered for all aspects of ministry.

Growth In New Households: Nativity’s ministries attract new households across all demographics, from youth to elders—approximately 2 new households each week.

Growth in Worship Participation increased by 23% over 2022. (The average in-person attendance in 2022 was 244 and in 2023 was 301.) Those participating in the full worship online increased 10% in 2023. Sound and video production for worship in person and online have improved, resulting in a more engaging worship experience for all. The positive energy from the music ministry is contagious, and the variety of preachers is appreciated.

Growth In Giving: The 2022 fall stewardship program led to a 12% increase in giving for 2023 and an increase of automated giving by 40 households.

Growth in Communications: Jen Wannen and Joanna Hallstrom are an effective team. Nativity is doing a better job telling our story and God's story. Nativity has a reputation in the community as a church that really does practice love. In a posting on the St. Anthony Village Facebook Group earlier this year, someone asked for church recommendations. Many Nativity members recommended Nativity. One resident who is very involved in social justice issues in the area shared that while she didn't attend Nativity, she knew Nativity is a community that practices LOVE.

Growth In Facility: The southeast parking lot was resurfaced. HVAC upgrades to energy management and a new compressor provide a more comfortable environment for ministry.

Growth in Caring for Neighbor

1. Growing in Awareness of Mental Health Issues, providing support for individuals and families dealing with mental health concerns and embracing restorative practices each month.
2. Growing in our Understanding of Inclusivity for all people as part of being a Reconciling in Christ congregation. New bathroom signs were added to be more inclusive of our LGBTQIA+ siblings and their families. Rainbow Connections, a peer group of people supporting LGBTQIA+ family members and friends was formed and meets regularly.
3. Supporting People in Grief with Nativity's funeral

worship format, the Dragonfly Project, and the Growing Through Loss program. We average 77 views per archived funeral worship.

4. Growing in Awareness of Racism with 100+ people taking and receiving feedback for the IDI (Intercultural Diversity Inventory).
5. Providing Education and Advocacy around Homelessness, partnering with LSS of MN and providing \$7957 for youth homelessness as well as partnering with Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative by providing \$15,000 to build an apartment for an at-risk family.
6. Addressing Food Instability in our community. Nativity volunteers served 700 meals for Meals on Wheels, provided 228 hours of service and 1200 pounds of food for Little Kitchen Food Shelf, and worked with community partner Nourish 282 to serve 300 people per month.
7. Providing Educational Opportunities around the Christian Nationalist movement's perversion of Jesus' teachings and its threat to the U.S. Constitution.

Grateful for the Staff of Nativity Child and Family Center and the 21 dedicated Nativity Staff who love courageously and live generously in full- and part-time ministry.

We said goodbye to Pastor Ben Schori and Dr. Kelly Sherman-Conroy as they pursued new chapters in ministry. I give thanks for Pastor Ben and Dr. Kelly and for the years of ministry we shared.





NATIVITY'S MISSION:

Loved by God, we love others courageously.

VISION:

Nativity aspires to be a beloved community.

CORE THEOLOGY:

As we experience God's unconditional love in Jesus, we are transformed.

CORE FUNCTION:

Spiritual Growth: people grow spiritually when they experience the transforming love of God; as they talk about God in safe places; as they engage in ways of justice, volunteer in acts of service, and encounter God in habits of faith.

VALUES:

Lifelong spiritual growth • Radically inclusive (Welcoming to all) • Serving our Community • Justice and Mercy



2024 PROPOSED Strategic Plan

Three strategies are planned for 2024. This is in addition to our usual work of faith formation for all ages, worship, and pastoral care—cradle to grave.

ONE

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

TWO

FAITH PRACTICES & NEIGHBORING PRACTICES

THREE

CAPITAL & STEWARDSHIP FUND DRIVE



A Letter From The Congregation

President, Karen Volker

Who doesn't love a good story? As a recent retiree, I relish having more time to indulge in reading, and I've spent many evenings lately lost in a good book. Stories are powerful. They transport us across time and place, touch our hearts, and help us grow our understanding of the world and our place in it. Nativity has its own story to tell and it, too, is powerful. Attendance, giving, and membership are on the rise—all important, leading indicators of vibrancy and health. But what's the story behind the numbers?

Our passionate, dedicated staff and engaged membership are quite the cast of characters as we strive to grow in faith and community, loving God and loving neighbor. We support spiritual growth for all and have a long tradition of caring for youth and their families. We have a heart for justice and support causes such as mental health, homeless youth, equitable housing, and many more. We are intentional in our efforts to increase inclusivity and clearly declare that Nativity is a safe, welcoming place for ALL. We create relationship with the broader community through bridging events like Trunk or Treat and the Neighborhood Extravaganza. And our music ministry is vibrant and energizing.

This faith community performs countless other acts, large and small, that are making a real difference in the lives of others. Nativity continues to surprise and delight with its

energy and passion for bringing God's love to the world. I know I speak for the entire Council in saying, "Thank you for who you are and all you do!"

As we embark on the next year, we are bound to experience challenges and change. But we will continue our efforts to discern and develop our roadmap for the future, humbly seeking opportunities for spiritual growth, connectedness, and collaboration. As we turn the page to the next chapter in our collective faith story, I'm both proud of our progress and optimistic about our future.

Your partner in Christ,
Karen Volker, President







Nativity Child and Family Center

Jen Evenson, Center Director

Mission Statement

To courageously love and educate.

Vision

Nativity Child and Family Center (NCFC) is a mission partner of Nativity Lutheran Church providing a Christ-centered learning environment for surrounding communities

What Do We Do?

NCFC provides quality education in a nurturing, play-based environment. Our teachers foster quality learning and social opportunities that support each child on an individual basis.

We provide care for 150 children, ages 16 months through 12 years of age. We provide full-time and part-time care, including before/after school and summer care for elementary children.

Our programming includes;

- State approved curriculum and assessment
- Onsite cooked meals
- Certified Nature Explore playgrounds
- Weekly music classes
- Bi-Weekly Chapel
- Offsite field trips to explore the community

Board of Directors

Chair: Bryan Helminiak

Vice Chair:

Treasurer: Amy Babcock

Secretary: Emily Sauey

Board members: Bryan Helminiak, Amy Babcock, Emily Sauey, Lori Onger, Meagan Bachmayer, Pastor Glenn Seefeldt

Our Team

- Director, Jen Evenson
 - Assistant Director, Jan Merrell
 - Food Service Specialist & Aide
 - 13 full-time teachers
 - 15 part-time teachers and aides
 - 8 part-time toy washers and center cleaners
- Evening cleaners are adults with disabilities hired through Hennepin County.

Events

- All Center Ice Cream Social/Open House
- Halloween Parade
- All Center Christmas Party
- Staff Appreciation Week
- All Center Picnic



Accomplishments

- National accreditation through NAEYC and ELEA
- Four-star Minnesota Parent Aware rated program
- Certified Nature Explore Playground
- School Excelling in Emotional Development

Issues addressed in 2023

- Adjusted COVID policies to maintain best practices and recommendations from the State
- Continued navigation of staff turnover and staffing
- Expanded summer program offering to 75 students with demand reaching an all-time high
- Moved all staff evaluations and annual raises to coincide with rate increases for the school year (September 1).
- Reapply monthly for continued state funding through the Great Start Compensation Payments that replaced the Stabilization Base grants during COVID. This was passed by the state legislature last spring. 100% of these funds must go toward staff compensation. Unless renewed, these funds end in 2026.

- Due to state licensing changes, the treasurer and chair of the board must be background checked (fingerprint). Our current chair and treasurer are completing these to be in compliance. Best practices indicate we will need these requirements added to our bylaws for these positions.
- The NCFC Board is undertaking the development of a 3-5 year strategic plan that will incorporate a strategic look at our program, physical classroom needs/upgrades, staffing, finances, and board member recruitment. Some of these will require the involvement of Nativity Lutheran Church.

NCFC has been given a wonderful opportunity to share our faith and values with children and families. We feel blessed to be able to positively impact children and families in this community. We sincerely and joyfully thank the congregation of Nativity Lutheran Church for your ongoing support. We look forward to another year of partnership together!

Sincerely,

Jen Evenson, Center Director

Items to address in 2024

- As of January 1, 2024, there will be a new sick and safe time policy implemented and added to our employee handbook to comply with state statute requirements.





From the Business Administrator
Beth Schuman

GENERAL FUND INCOME STATEMENT

	Fiscal Year Ended 12/31/2022	Fiscal Year 2023 Budget	Fiscal Year Ended 12/31/2023	Fiscal Year 2024 Budget
REVENUE				
Contributions	1,141,597	1,374,850	1,267,766	1,365,010
Payments & Misc Receipts	62,076	79,750	83,902	95,430
Designated funds transfer & ERC	124,158	67,205	77,391	2,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,327,831	\$1,521,805	\$1,428,058	\$1,462,440
EXPENSE				
Mission & Benevolence	36,175	52,000	48,650	36,500
Personnel Expense	1,011,590	1,115,820	1,030,606	1,060,960
Faith Formation—all ages	63,531	85,575	59,108	87,770
Public Ministry & Community Outreach		8,550	3,590	7,220
Worship & Outreach	47,895	70,770	60,354	65,170
Building, Office and Maintenance	161,393	189,090	217,983	204,820
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,320,584	\$1,521,805	\$1,420,291	\$1,462,440
EXCESS or (DEFICIT)	\$7,247	\$0	\$8,767	\$0



Statement of Receipts and Disbursements

Designated Funds

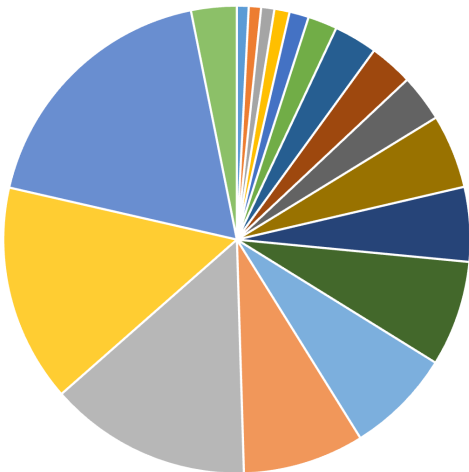
Donations and giving designated for a specific purpose as stated by the giver.

Calendar Year Ended 12/31/2023

DESCRIPTION	Beginning Balance	Receipts	Disbursed	Ending Balance
Grants: Canopy & Ministry Imagination	3,017	0	3,723	-706
Designated General Fund Support	90,100	0	0	90,100
Nativity Mission Appeals	24,122	16,502	8,020	32,603
Parish Life, Faith Formation-all ages	16,819	1,101	16	17,904
Worship, Outreach and Music	11,807	2,150	1,877	12,080
Building, Fixtures & Land	99,199	76,696	72,387	103,508
Belden Drive Properties	-246,932	80,353	51,693	-218,273
Special Activities (classes, dinners, retreats)	3,245	710	1,399	2,556
Memorials	71,481	21,550	16,463	76,569
Missions Outside Nativity	30,982	57,110	59,030	29,062
Global Funds for Humanity	37,343	18,206	23,253	32,295
Bangladesh School Projects & Global Scholars	120,724	32,670	25,055	128,339
Endowment Funds	1,017,428	123,854	85,006	1,056,277
Subtotal	1,279,334	430,901	347,922	1,362,313
Transfer between Designated & Endowment		-48,878	-48,878	
TOTAL	1,279,334	382,022	299,044	1,362,313

2023 Donations to Outside Missions

Designated and Budgeted Mission Donations = \$123,182



MISSION PARTNERSHIPS	TOTAL \$	Percent
Reconciling Works	1,000	0.8%
Luther Park	1,050	0.9%
Good Gifts	1,125	0.9%
ELCA World Hunger	1,298	1.1%
Meals on Wheels	1,650	1.3%
Dignity Center	2,500	2.0%
Mental Health Connect	3,700	3.0%
NEED Food Shelf	3,708	3.0%
Scholarships	4,000	3.2%
Disaster Response	6,294	5.1%
Center For Leadership & Neighborhood Engagement	6,347	5.2%
Little Kitchen Food Shelf	8,987	7.3%
Bangladesh School Projects & Global Scholars	9,000	7.3%
Lutheran Social Service	10,340	8.4%
Global Fund for Humanity	17,253	14.0%
Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative	18,535	15.0%
Mpls. Synod ELCA	22,500	18.3%
Miscellaneous	3,894	3.2%
Total	123,182	100%



Endowment Funds

Gifts to the endowment fund are invested, and the earnings from these accounts are carefully used to further our mission and realize Nativity's vision. Nativity uses the gifts in a manner that reflects the interest and the passion of the one memorialized and their family.

Nativity Lutheran Church currently has 28 endowment funds. The current balance of these investment funds is \$1,056,277.

Worship Life (includes Music)

- **Hans Bonde Fund** for music ministry of healing, youth music ministry, life-enriching youth events, and equipment for recreational activities for youth.
- **Pam Bridson New Member Fund** for the benefit of new members.
- **Getter Cole Fund** for organ maintenance.
- **Goldie and George Johnson Music Fund** to support and enhance the music ministry of Nativity.
- **Richard Sowden Fund** for Nativity's baptism ministry.
- **Mike Steadland Fund** for the music ministry at Nativity.

Intergenerational Ministry (includes FF, CYF)

- **Jim Cobourn Kids Camp Fund** helps kids experience camp.
- **Helen Groskreutz Fund** for Nativity's Faith Formation for Children.
- **Nelson Older Youth Fund** benefits the youth director and youth in grades 6-12.
- **Elmer and Margaret Peterson Children Faith Formation Fund.** To be used for activities that will help children grow in faith.
- **Donna Ripley Junior High Fund** is used for related programs benefiting junior high students.
- **Franky Sandberg Fund** to be used for life-enriching events for youth.
- **Mary Severson Adult Education Fund** supports adult education at Nativity Church.

- **Stanley Daniel Smith Children Fund** to be used for Nativity's children's (in process)

Property, Fixtures and Building

- **Allen Eberlein Fund** for furnishings of Nativity.
- **Eberlein Family Fund** for outdoor landscaping around Nativity buildings.
- **Robert R & Doris Gehrke Maintenance Fund** for building maintenance.

Creation Care, Human Hurt and Need, Social Concerns

- **Flysjo Social Ministry Fund** to help those in need.
- **Rikka Weiberg Fund** for outreach.

Educational Grants to ELCA Seminaries and Colleges

- **Scholarship Funds: Kristin Seefeldt, Arvidson Ripley, and Phleghaar,** all provide annual educational grants to youth and adults attending ELCA seminaries and Lutheran colleges.

Undesignated Currently Used for Scholarships

- **Mike & Helen Kosiak** Undesignated fund currently used for school scholarships.
- **Undesignated**

Bangladesh School

- **Bangladesh Endowment Fund** for capital projects at Livingstone School.

Global Fund for Humanity

- **Global Fund for Humanity** to support small grants to address basic human needs.

Use in Transition

- **Hermundslie Endowment** is undergoing a reconsideration of how funds are used.

The total amount of grant dollars available for 2023 was \$24,871. In addition, educational grants distributed during 2023 totaled \$4,000.

Consolidated Balance Sheets

ASSETS	Dec. 31, 2022	Dec. 31, 2023
Checking Account - all funds	547,793	548,813
Money Market Account	47,917	48,398
Hermundslie Endowment Fund	144,062	144,062
Nativity Funds Endowment	491,201	550,506
Bangladesh Endowment	150,000	152,483
Global Fund for Humanity Endowment	134,887	145,284
Land and Buildings	6,251,400	6,251,400
Furniture and Equipment	765,000	765,000
TOTAL ASSETS	\$8,532,259	\$8,605,945
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	3,194	4,214
Belden & 33rd Property Loans	280,757	245,926
Prepaid Donations	37,680	18,600
Lighting Loan	1,000	0
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$322,631	\$268,740
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	6,930,294	6,974,891
Temporarily Restricted	1,279,334	1,362,313
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$8,209,628	\$8,337,205
TOTAL LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS	\$8,532,259	\$8,605,945

Membership

	2021	2022	2023
Total Membership	1560	1552	1619
Households	666	661	715
Associate	30	28	27
Baptized	362	377	390
Confirmed	778	760	773
Covenant	390	387	419
Statistical Adjustment			10

Membership

Received	32	36	86
Removed	37	32	31

Pastoral Acts

Child Baptisms	25	16	26
Adult Baptisms	0	0	0
Confirmation	33	24	17
Weddings	2	1	1
Funerals	33	23	30

Active Prospects

	599	659	642
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Attendance

Avg. Weekly Attendance	204 (in person 31 weeks)	225	301
Avg. Weekly Streaming	1223	663	780
*Christmas Attendance	1441	1527	1473

Faith Formation – Children & Adults

Age 0-1	32	36	41
Age 2-K	76	78	87
Grade 1-4	71	75	82
Club 56 (Grade 5-6)	23	31	45
Youth (Grade 7-12)	112	130	131
Adult Faith Formation, avg. weekly participation	82	108	82

*Christmas of 2021 in person & video views | Christmas of 2022 999 in person & 528 video views | Christmas of 2023 1079 in person & 394 video views



Nativity Staff

Glenn Seefeldt, Pastor

gseefeldt@nativitychurch.org, ext. 1009

Gerald Hoffman, Pastor Emeritus

jerjohoffman@msn.com (763) 443-3353

Heather Anderson, Office Manager and Hospitality Coordinator

heather@nativitychurch.org, ext. 1004

Annie Archambault, Wedding Coordinator

annie.k.archambault@gmail.com, (612) 875-7116

Jeanne Cotter, Director of Music Ministry

info@jeannecotter.com, (612) 201-2632

Jan Frederickson, Visitation Minister

jfreder49@gmail.com, (651) 454-5351

Michael Garrett, Facilities Supervisor

(612) 298-2962

Joanne Griffin, Minister of Belonging (membership)

joanne@nativitychurch.org, (612) 812-4868

Joanna Hallstrom, Communications

jhallstrom@nativitychurch.org

Spencer Heller, Worship Audio Engineer

spencer@nativitychurch.org

Pat Hendricks, Coordinator of Adult Faith Formation & Vital Aging

pat@nativitychurch.org, (763) 221-8149

Renee Hoffman, Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry

renee@nativitychurch.org, ext. 1018

Freda Myhrwold, Worship Leader

freda@nativitychurch.org, (612) 296-9265

Bob Parrott, Minister of Worship Technology

bparrott@nativitychurch.org, (651) 285-0269

Leah Reddy, Children Minister

leah@nativitychurch.org, (612) 600-5484

Karla Reiland, Children Minister & Adult Hand Bell Choir Leader

kreiland@nativitychurch.org, ext. 1027 or (612) 940-5705

Beth Schuman, Business Administrator

beth@nativitychurch.org, ext. 1006

Kyle Soderberg, called as Deacon of Word and Service, Serving as Director of Operations and Outreach

kyle@nativitychurch.org, (612) 388-7135

Jen Wannen, Communications

jennifer@nativitychurch.org

2024 Nativity Council

Keith Setterholm, President

ksetterholm@gmail.com

Karen Volker, Vice President

karen.volker@comcast.net

Donna Steinwand, Secretary

donnasteinwand95@gmail.com

Leigh Erickson, Treasurer

leigh.j.erickson@gmail.com

Kim Borton, Member-At Large

kim.borton@gmail.com

Julie Chattopadhyay, Member-At Large

julie.chattopadhyay@gmail.com

Jodi DeFeyter, Member-At Large

jodi.defeyter@rbc.com

Josie Gustafson, Member-At Large

josie@the-gustafsons.com

Erik Hegg, Member-At Large

ewhegg@gmail.com

Nativity Child & Family Center

Jen Evenson, Director

director@nativitychurch.org, (612) 781-1537

3312 Silver Lake Road | Minneapolis, MN 55418

612.781.2766 | nativitychurch.org