



Annual Report 2024-2025

Submitted to the Congregation for Annual Meeting on June 8, 2025

Congregation Council

Kathy Aloï
Bill Fink
Jennifer Krankowski
Evan Paine
Beau Reddington
Sarah Sburlea
Ellen Young
Bill Wahl

Pastor

The Rev. Marissa Harrison

Office Administrator

Sean Kennedy

Communications & Community Life Coordinator

Cara Rovella

Worship and Music Coordinator

Brynna Bailer Mango



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Good Soil Lutheran Ministries Purpose Statement, Guiding Principles, Ministry 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

Ministry 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 (see proposed Welcome Statement in the RIC report on p. 12)

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.



**Annual Congregation Meeting
June 8, 2025
Agenda**

- I. Opening Prayer and Presiding Bishop's Churchwide Address Video**
- II. Determination of Quorum and Call to Order**
- III. Approval of Agenda**
- IV Approval of Minutes from December 2024 Congregation Meeting**
- V. Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Vote**
- VI. Presentation of Annual Report and Celebration of 2024-2025 Ministry**
- VII. Nominating Committee**
 - a. Nominations: Kim Wylie (2nd term: Jennifer Krankowski and Bill Wahl)
 - b. Open Nominations for Congregation Council from the floor
 - c. Election of Congregation Council for 2025-2026 Term
- VIII. Closing Remarks and Closing Blessing**



Minutes from Congregation Meeting

December 8, 2024

Exceeded quorum in attendance

December 8, 2024

1. Devotions and opening prayer
2. Motion to approve the agenda
 - a. Beau Reddington motioned; Trey Harrison seconded
 - b. Motion carries
3. Motion to approve the minutes from June 9 congregation meeting
 - a. Moved by Bill Wahl, seconded by Mandy Forshey
 - b. Motion carries
4. Business items
 - a. 2025 Ministry and Funding Plan and Capital Projects – open for questions and discussion
 - i. Motion by Dave Paine, second by Michael Miterholzer
 - ii. Motion carries
 - b. Election of nominating committee – council advances four for consideration: Abby Alusheff, Joe Lanter, Jennifer Krankowski, and Pastor Marissa
 - i. Motion by Chris Jacobson, second by Bill Fink
 - ii. Motion carries
 - c. Sabbatical planning and introduction of congregational activities survey
 - d. Holiday worship schedule
5. Sending
 - a. Bethesda on the Bay (Bay Village) live nativity, December 15 5:00-7:00
 - b. Children's Pageant, December 22nd at 9:30 am during regular worship
 - c. Longest night, December 21st, Bay Methodist at 7:00pm
 - d. Candle Light Christmas Eve, 6:30pm December 24th
6. Motion to adjourn
 - a. Motion by Beau Reddington, second by Jessica Berkshire
 - b. Motion carries



President's Report

*Submitted by
Sarah Sburlea*

My Dear Brothers and Sisters of Good Soil,

On behalf of myself and the entire Good Soil Council, I am proud to present the 2024–2025 Annual Report, highlighting the dedication, creativity, and passionate service of your Congregation Council over the past year. Together, we've made significant progress in refining our vision for the future while strengthening the connections within our congregation and with the wider community.

Good Soil's youth are active, vibrant, and growing, and their presence is felt each week during Sunday worship. The playground is often times full, as are our Sunday school classes. Our congregation continues to grow—praise God!

Our relationship with Bethesda on the Bay has strengthened over the past year. Together, we are in the process of calling a shared rostered minister focused on faith formation and discipleship—an exciting step forward in our shared ministry. We've also been blessed to come together for meaningful services such as Thanksgiving, Longest Night, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. This partnership has truly been a gift, allowing us to combine our resources, talents, and passions to deepen our ministries and broaden our impact within the community.

This past year, we launched a new initiative—the Service Outreach Team—under the leadership of Sharon Regan. This dedicated team has helped us focus our outreach efforts more intentionally, identifying Trials for Hope and Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries (LMM) as key partners in our mission. At the same time, we continue to actively support our long-standing ministry partners, including Meals on Wheels, Suburban Co-op Nursery School, the West Side Hungarian Lutherans, barbershoppers, and various AA groups. In addition, our church remains a welcoming space for several community organizations who use our facilities to carry out their vital work and service.

Over the past year, we've been exploring becoming an RIC (Reconciling in Christ) congregation; engaging in deep reflection, honest conversations, and meaningful learning about what it means to fully welcome and affirm LGBTQIA+ individuals. Through listening sessions, educational opportunities, and prayerful discernment, we've grown in our understanding of God's call to radical hospitality and justice. This process has challenged us, inspired us, and brought us closer as a faith community committed to embodying Christ's inclusive love.

We are incredibly grateful for each of our staff members, especially as our team continues to grow. Joe Dudas remains a steady hand in overseeing the maintenance of our facilities, and we give thanks for the dedicated service of Gary Smith, who played an integral role this past year and will be deeply missed. We are currently in the process of searching for a new Sexton to fill that important position. In other transitions, Cara Rovella, formerly our church administrator, has embraced a new role as Communications and Community Life Coordinator, and we warmly welcomed Sean Kennedy as our new church administrator in November. Brynna Bailer Mango continues to bless us with her leadership as our Worship and Music Coordinator. Thanks be to God for the many ways He works through our dedicated staff, guiding and strengthening our ministry each day.

I am deeply grateful for the faithful service of all our Council members, as well as the dozens of volunteers who support our worship in so many vital ways—from altar care and ushering to financial stewardship and beyond. Your contributions are immeasurable, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah Sburlea



Good Soil and Bethesda on the Bay's leaders learn about the call process, 4/1/25



Pastor's Report

Submitted by

The Rev. Marissa Harrison

As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. – Colossians 2:6-7

Grace and peace be with you!

Good Soil continues to be a vibrant, growing faith community rooted in Christ, built up in him in faith, and abounding in thanksgiving, as the scripture above from Colossians describes. As I wrote in our Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Grant application, “Our congregation has grown in active participation, generosity, and community partnerships. The momentum is palpable.” This is thanks to the Holy Spirit and all of you—thank you for your presence and ministry!

We represent many different branches and journeys of faith, and we’ve also evolved through different seasons as a congregation. Since 2020, Good Soil has had 21 deaths and 29 transfers out, but we’ve celebrated 15 baptisms and welcomed 85 new members. Although the church started as a merger between two legacy congregations, we’ve welcomed many new faces and our current membership breakdown is: 22% Legacy Faith Lutheran, 22% Legacy Our Savior’s Lutheran, 14% Legacy Trinity Lutheran, and 42% New to GSLM people.

Council has engaged in intentional discussions about the dynamics involved when a church transitions from pastoral-size to programmatic-size. To meet the needs of our growing congregation, the council has created new staffing positions and contractor partnerships (bookkeeper, etc.). We’re grateful for the ministry of Sean Kennedy, Good Soil’s new Church Administrator, who started in Nov 2024 and for the ministry of Cara Rovella who stepped into a new role as Good Soil’s Communications and Community Life Coordinator. We give thanks for the life and service of Gary Smith, our Sexton, who passed unexpectedly in March of 2025. We continue to

give thanks to God for the ministry of Brynna Bailer Mango, Good Soil's Worship and Music Coordinator, and Joe Dudas, Good Soil's maintenance contractor.

Additionally, Good Soil is deepening our partnership with Bethesda on the Bay Lutheran and pursuing calling a shared Minister of Christian Formation—a pastor or deacon who will focus on youth and family, faith formation, and discipleship ministries. The joint call committee will be blessed at both churches during worship in June. This year we've shared confirmation, 5 joint worship services, and other opportunities as they've arisen (Lenten studies, Bethesda's live nativity, etc.). Joe Dudas also works at both churches.

At Good Soil's annual congregation meeting on 6/8, we will vote to become an RIC ([Reconciling in Christ](#)) congregation. About 12% of congregations in the ELCA are RIC—a designated safe and affirming church for LGBTQ+ people and people of color. We've been engaging this process as a congregation since November of 2023 with a variety of learning opportunities, bible studies, workshops, speakers, and discussions. This initiative supports our ministry priority "Creating a culture of invitation and enthusiastic welcome, especially for those for whom the church has not always been a welcoming place," and it blossomed out of the congregation's focus groups during our Dandelion Project Strategic planning process from 2022-2023.

We've also spent time this year engaging another ministry priority, "Provide opportunities to build and deepen supportive and authentic relationships within the congregation" through various events, especially with our mid-week Lenten gatherings, "Scriptures and Stories." Though my sabbatical will be postponed to Summer 2027 (due to our pregnancy), many of those congregational renewal activities can begin this summer and in the coming months to further build and deepen the sense of community here. I look forward to sharing those experiences together!

In terms of the pastoral office: from June 1, 2024 through June 1, 2025, I've presided over 4 baptisms, 4 funerals/graveside services, 5 pet blessings/memorial services, and 1 wedding. I've taught confirmation and helped lead confirmation events in partnership with Bethesda on the Bay and other nearby Lutheran congregations. I also help lead and facilitate the Gather Together (20's/30's) faith group, and I 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. In the wider community this year, I offered the invocation/opening address for Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry's 55th anniversary event, Rocky River's 9/11 observance event, and Meals on Wheels annual volunteer appreciation luncheon. For continuing education, I attended the ELCA's Executive Skills for Pastors training in Carefree, AZ through the Thriving Leadership Formation institute. I also attended a 1-day course on congregational family systems theory through Healthy Congregations, Inc.

I'm grateful to walk alongside this special community of faith as your pastor. And Trey and I look forward to growing in faith as a family with all of you once baby Harrison arrives. Thank you for your faithfulness and partnership in the gospel, rooted and built up in Jesus, and "growing together in Christ to love and serve."

+ Pastor Marissa

Joint confirmation class on the way to confirmation camp,
3/21/25





Communications and Community Life Coordinator's Report

*Submitted by
Cara Rovella*

In November 2024, I transitioned from my position as Good Soil's office administrator into the brand new role of Communications and Community Life Coordinator. As the CCLC, I develop visual and practical aspects of worship and culture at Good Soil to help create a welcoming, accessible environment. Since it may be a bit unclear what exactly this role entails, below is an overview of my responsibilities!

- I prepare worship materials, both digital and physical, such as the bulletin, children's bulletin, worship slides, announcement slides, the leader guides used both by Pastor Marissa and readers during worship, and more as the need arises.
- I manage Good Soil's online presence, running social media pages, editing YouTube videos, and assembling and sending the Seeds e-news.
- I design promotional materials, such as fliers and leaflets, to help spread the word about events at Good Soil. I also develop polls and surveys as needed.
- I organize and maintain the bulletin boards. For example, I revamped the primary bulletin board by the lounge, as pictured below. I also ensure that all postings are current and relevant.
- I order the flowers that adorn the sanctuary both on a weekly basis and for special occasions, such as Christmas and Easter. I also maintain the flower order sign up list.
- I update Good Soil's membership book as needed, and I process visitor connection cards so that all guests at Good Soil feel welcomed. I also maintain a list of birthdays, baptism anniversaries, and wedding anniversaries.
- I send both quarterly and weekly mailings to Good Soil's homebound members.
- I connect with the weekly online usher to ensure that they have the announcements and sermon reflection question. I also reach out to the supply pastor when Pr. Marissa will be absent to make sure they have the information they need in regards to the bulletin.
- I help tidy the sanctuary, especially in preparation for large events, such as Easter worship.
- I help keep the prayer list up to date, and connect with the prayer team to add or remove names. I also refresh the paper prayer list on the podium every week.

If you have any questions, or if you aren't sure I'm the right person to talk to about something, feel free to reach out! My email is cclc@goodsoillutheran.org.

It has been so wonderful to learn about and expand upon this new role, and I am grateful for the continued opportunity to use my skills to help support ministry at Good Soil!

Cara Rovella



Good Soil's hallway bulletin board has 3 sections: ELCA, Community, and Good Soil. Announcements and flyers are posted and monitored by the CCLC.



Worship and Music Coordinator's Report

*Submitted by
Brynna Bailer Mango*

It was a big year for Music & Worship at Good Soil! The skills and willingness that Good Soil congregants bring is such a testament to your faith and generosity. As Music & 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.

One significant development this year was instating weekly cantors, whereas we had previously featured them as occasional support. Not only did we increase the frequency, but our cantors also took on more of a leadership role; singing not only the psalm and communion hymns as normal, but also now leading all the hymns and liturgical music as well. This has helped immensely in creating a strong routine of robust weekly music support. We have had the best roster of cantors this year including Kaitlyn Regan, Brenna Connor, Paula Maeder Connor, Beau Reddington, , Jim Kulma, Erik Bogen, Dave Paine, William Eversole, and more.

We also were blessed to hear so much special music from many of our congregants this year. Deb Yandala (viola), Matt Bishop (violin), Jim Kulma (guitar), Evan Paine (trumpet), Joe Lanter (guitar), Nancy Welliver (recorder), members representing Good Soil in Bethesda on the Bay's special Thanksgiving choir, and many who volunteered in our choral anthems. Thank you to everyone who offered your gifts and talents, it was such a joy hearing you!

Last but not least, I want to highlight an especially big, hearty shout-out/thank-you to three all-star musicians that we are immensely lucky to have in our congregation. Erik Bogen, William Eversole, and Dave Paine each served as cantor for *more than ten* services, performed on trumpet/trombone/guitar/ukulele for *more than five services*, wrote custom arrangements, and sang in our choral ensembles this past year alone. On several occasions, they stepped in last-minute, either filling in a cantoring gap or even serving as accompanist on a Sunday when I couldn't be there. These musicians volunteer significant time and energy, and are deserving of all the gratitude in the world. They always bring an enthusiastic good spirit and make my job such an easy delight. Thank you, guys!!

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 in the coming year. 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!

Brynna Bailer Mango, 2025



Matt Bishop, Deb Yandala, Dave Paine, and William Eversole accompany outdoor worship during Season of Creation, 9/1/24



RIC Team Report

*Submitted by
Kirsten Reading*

The Reconciling in Christ (RIC) committee has been diligently serving our congregation, fostering inclusivity and education within our community as we work toward becoming RIC certified. The RIC team includes Kathy Aloj, George Andrews, William Eversole, Mandy Forshey, Matthew Molnar, Anne Paine, Kirsten Reading and Pastor Marissa.

This year's activities included

- Cottage Meetings and one-on-one conversations to discuss welcome and gather feedback from congregation members (June-August).
- Presentation on How to be a Welcoming Congregation (August).
- Family forum – a conversation on talking with our kids or grandkids about LGBTQ / race / disenfranchised questions (February). This was requested during one-on-one conversations.
- Informational bulletin board on what RIC is and is not (February).

- Cle Pride parade (June).
- Updating our Welcome Statement to meet RIC guidelines. The team requested feedback from Council and a cross-section of members on a first draft. The second version was unanimously approved by Council and will be included in the RIC vote today.

Proposed Welcome Statement:

Reflecting the abundant welcome of the Kingdom of God as revealed by Jesus, Good Soil Lutheran Ministries welcomes all who seek God's love and grace. We affirm and celebrate the diversity of humanity in all its races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, social and economic circumstances, abilities, and disabilities. Together, we commit ourselves to racial equity and to justice for all, because in God's kingdom, we are all beloved children of God.

As we continue this journey together, the RIC committee remains dedicated to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our congregation. We will vote to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation today.

Respectfully submitted,
Kirsten Reading, on behalf of the RIC Team, 2025



Good Soil marching in the Cleveland Pride Parade, June 2024



Generosity Team Report

Submitted by
Dave Connor

As we gather our weekly tithes and offerings, we often sing, "THANKFUL HEARTS AND VOICES RAISE." We used that refrain to set the emphasis for this year's generosity campaign. Our members and supporters rallied to this invitation with a strong response. Here are the key results:

- 52 members* made statements of intent (pledges), including 8 who did so for the first time.
- 27 of those who made pledges grew their level of giving from the previous year.
- 30 givers set up their gifts via automatic or electronic means, exceeding a goal of 25.
- Total giving set by intention was just over \$144,000.

**A number of additional members and supporters do share their gifts without making a statement of intent.*

Your faithful giving is the largest financial source for all the ministries outlined in this annual report. The spirit of generosity continues to grow here at Good Soil; we thank God for that growth and for the growth in mission and ministry it brings.

Your 2024-2025 Generosity Team

Dave Connor
Anne Paine

Pr. Marissa Harrison
Lisa Sierk

Michael Wancata



Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise logo designed by Good Soil member Adam Pate for the 2024 Fall generosity emphasis



Sunday School Report

Submitted by
JoAnne Wancata

The Fall 2024 – Spring 2025 schoolyear continued to be a time of learning and growing for the Sunday School program as well as for the children. We also grew in size, welcoming several new friends over the course of the year.

Looking forward, we're continuing to explore the best ways to engage our children. Your ideas and input are welcome! Please feel free to share your ideas with Chris Jacobson, Louise DeBell, Mandy Forshey, Sarah Sburlea, or JoAnne Wancata.

We're also looking forward to the potential faith formation staff partnership and what it will bring to our children's learning and growing opportunities. In the meantime, we made some adjustments for the 2024/2025 school year.

OPPORTUNITIES DURING WORSHIP:

The Playground is a "grounding" learning experience!

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 for our youngest learners

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

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

Louise DeBell, Mandy Forshey, Sarah Sburlea, and JoAnne Wancata rotate as the weekly leaders. As we close out Spring 2025, we're discussing what we've learned over the past two years and possible adjustments we can make for Fall 2025.

Children's Bulletins for readers and pre-readers to use during worship (or at home)

The children's bulletins available on the Welcome Table as you enter the building provide additional stories and activities to engage children in worship and increase their understanding.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOLLOWING WORSHIP:

With input from parents and our 2023/2024 teachers, we paused the "traditional" weekly after-worship Sunday School class model for the 2024/2025 school year.

We've talked with other NEO ELCA churches and found several have also paused regular weekly in-classroom Sunday School. They, as does Good Soil, use periodic special events, holidays, and the Children's Sermon, as well as Confirmation study, to provide additional opportunities to learn.



Good Soil Sunday School kids proclaim the Good News in the 2024 Christmas Pageant



Livestream and YouTube Channel Report

*Submitted by
Trey Harrison*

Other than a pesky software update that threw us for a loop one Sunday morning, the Livestream Team has been running smoothly. Here are a few updates from this past year:

- We are more and more consistent with our abilities to incorporate “non-standard” worship content and maintain high production quality. Videos during worship and additional instruments such as guitars, brass, and strings come together well both in-person and online.
- Audio in the nursery during worship was not available for some time, but it has been added back after our audio improvements over the last year! Now parents (and kids!) can hear the service in the nursery during worship.
- We currently have a full team to support the livestream throughout the program year. However, if you are interested in joining to help things run smoothly on our festival Sundays that can be a little more involved, talk to Trey on a Sunday morning or email him at TreyHarrison33@gmail.com.
- Reminder that we have hearing assist devices available for anyone that may need them. Some of the earbuds have started to wear out from use, so we purchased a few more to have on-hand. If you have any trouble, let one of us know, and we’ll get you a pair of the earbuds to keep as your own.

Please let us know if you have trouble hearing the service or have ideas about how worship on Sunday mornings could be improved with technology. When we’re back in the corner behind our monitors, we don’t experience worship quite the same way everyone else in the pews does. And that goes for online, as well! We hope to use our gifts and tech to help people feel God’s presence during worship.

Looking forward to the next year!

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



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

*Submitted by
Mary Washburn*

Gather Together formed in 2023 to provide a place of community for 20s and 30s young adults at Bethany English Lutheran Church but also neighboring ELCA congregations, including Good Soil. Gather Together's objective is provide a complementary space for younger adults in our congregations for fellowship and faith formation.

In our second year as an affinity group (2024), we held a Lenten Vespers Evening Prayer service, led a spiritual hike, hosted a discussion group at The Centering Space in Lakewood, provided a one-day retreat at HopeWood Shores, and gathered for a "Friendsgiving" dinner church. Each of our events is structured to allow time for fellowship, study of the Bible or other Christian writings, and moments of reflection. We continue to explore ways to add elements of giving or volunteerism to our gatherings. So far in 2025, we've hosted a pre-Lenten prayer service and planned a book discussion on the book, *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer*.

A typical Gather Together meeting will bring together 10-12 individuals, and in total we have had more than 25 different people take part in at least one event. We have been fortunate to have the support and participation of Pastor Laura Kuntz, from Bethany, and Pastor Marissa Harrison of Good Soil. These fellow younger adults who have been able to add theological heft and communion to many of our events. While Mary Washburn continues as coordinator for each of these events, in fact every meeting is planned in collaboration with a handful of interested members. We encourage shared leadership to share the workload and welcome new ideas.

For the current year, we also worked with Deacon Jenny Frantz from the NEO Synod office to apply for and receive grant funding to support our events. Having both the support from the Synod office to pursue and manage this funding source has enabled us to extend events like our one-day retreat to participants free of charge.

Looking ahead, we look to host similar gatherings every 6-12 weeks and are exploring hosting new formats and collaborative events with other committees. Anyone interested in taking part or helping in any way (big or small) is encouraged to reach out to Mary Washburn, mhestilow@gmail.com.

Mary Washburn
Bethany English Lutheran Church



Gather Together sharing communion at Friendsgiving Dinner Church, 11/16/24



Gather Together retreat at HopeWood Shores, 10/12/24



Prayer Team Report

*Submitted by
George Andrews*

"With prayer, all things are possible." Matthew 19:26. It is this belief that guides the GoodSoil Prayer Team.

Now in its second year, its members, approximately 20 people, donate their individual time and compassion to lift up others in need both in the congregation and beyond through requested prayers. They intentionally ask for or give thanks for God's healing, peace, comfort, joy, love, etc. for others (or themselves) by not only name, but going deeper with the specific need. This is in tandem with Pastor's and the congregation's weekly prayer list of names in the bulletin and during worship. Emailed prayers are typically sent out to the team the beginning of each month and as urgent or updated needs arise. Anyone can join (or leave) the prayer team email list at any time. If Jesus prayed for others, why not us? It shows that we are true ambassadors of Jesus spreading his love.

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





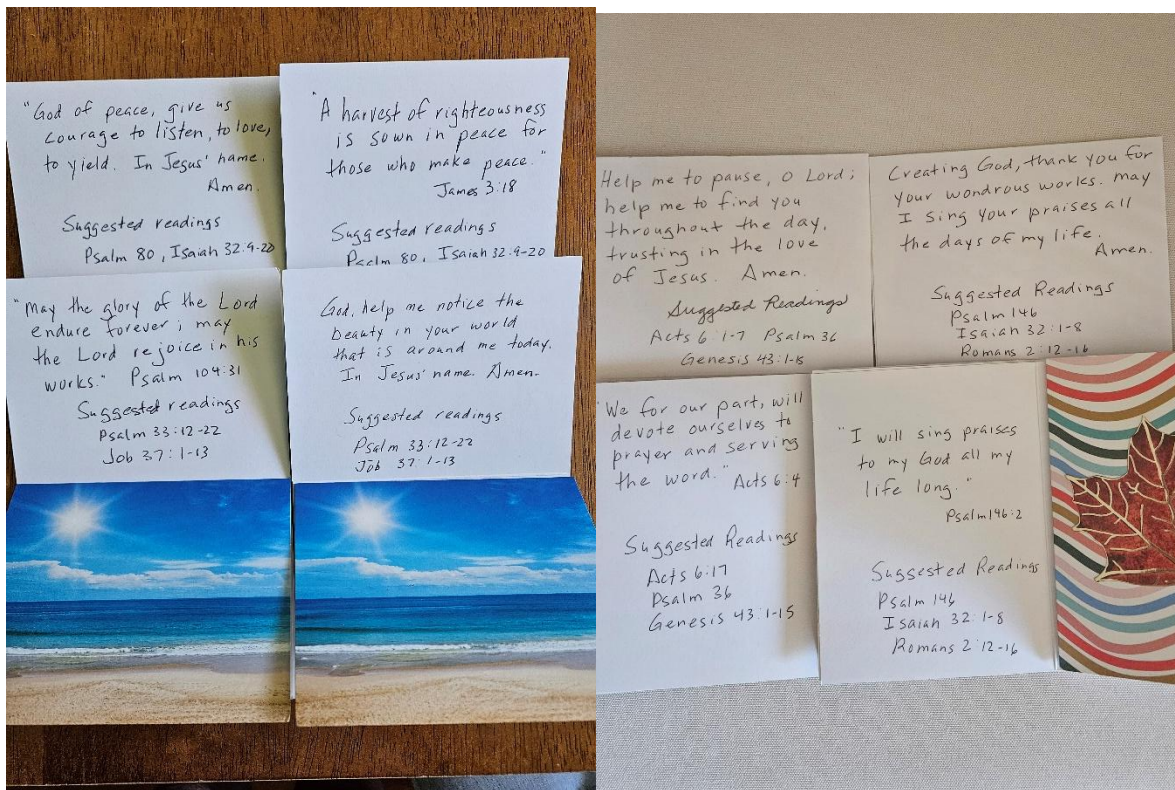
Card Ministry Report

Submitted by
Sharon Hollowell

This past year the Card Ministry Team has sent over 100 cards to our homebound and other members of the congregation during times of need or celebration. Many of the cards have written verses when they do not, I enjoy picking out bible verses inspired by Pastor Marissa's sermon or by a devotion I have recently read. Our hope is these cards bring comfort or joy to those who receive them.

Peace,

Sharon Hollowell





Property Committee Report

*Submitted by
Larry Jacobson*

July 2024 – June 2025

During July 2024, the repaving of the church parking lot was accomplished over a four day- period. After receiving proposals from nine Cleveland area firms, Cunningham Paving was selected for the project. The top 1 ½ inches of existing pavement was removed and replaced with 2 ½ inches of new asphalt pavement, while retaining the underlying pavement base. Striping was accomplished on the last day of the project.

The parking lot was completely closed during the work and Meals on Wheels developed a plan where their drivers received the meals for delivery at a protected curbside location on Hilliard Boulevard. Those needing to be in the church building during the four days parked at the Unitarian Church.

As of this writing, plans are underway for a spring planting of flowers on the church property. Included in this work is a planned reconfiguration of the planting area around the church sign.

Other actions by the committee include:

- Assisting church council in establishing priorities for capital projects for 2025 and beyond
- 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, Steve Regan, Bill Wahl, Stan Zeager, and Larry Jacobson.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Jacobson





New Parking Lot, 2024



Nominating Committee Report

*Submitted by
Jennifer Krankowski*

On behalf of the Nominating Committee (Joe Lanter, Pastor Marissa, Stan Zeager, and myself), we present the Congregation Council-approved slate of candidates to serve the 2025-2027 term.

For consideration and election by the Congregation of Good Soil Lutheran Ministries, the following individual has been nominated for the Congregation Council for the 2025-2027 term:

Kim Wylie

Floor nominations also may be made and considered during the Congregational meeting on June 8th, 2025.

The following currently serving members will remain on Council until their second term ends in 2026:

Bill Fink
Sarah Sburlea
Ellen Young

The following currently serving members will remain on Council until their first term ends in 2026. They will be eligible to renew for an additional 2-year term at that time:

Kathy Aloï
Evan Paine
Beau Reddington

The following currently serving members will remain on Council once elected. They are open to serving an additional 2-year term, ending in 2027:

Jennifer Krankowski
Bill Wahl

Council members whose term is ending in 2025 who have elected to roll off council:

Abby Alusheff

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Krankowski



Service Outreach Team Report

*Submitted by
Sharon Regan*

The service outreach team was created in June of 2024. Members include: George Anderson, Louise Debell, Maureen Murman, Martha Panek, Sharon Regan, and Emma Sleva.

The mission statement of the team is to engage and provide members of Good Soil hands on outreach events and opportunities to live out the call to do God's Work with Our Hands.

Our goal for this year (June 2024-June 2025) was to provide one service event per quarter that Good Soil members could participate in. The team exceeded that goal and involved Good Soil members in 7 events that ranged from a single day event to a month-long themed project. Events are described in the following paragraphs.

August 2024 members of Good Soil assembled comfort care bags for Trials for Hope. Members also attended the Team Up to Clean Up event at Lutheran Metro Ministries Lakeside Ave. location. In December the annual Trials for Hope Giving Tree (a previously established donation-oriented event) was organized and a variety of donations were collected and delivered to Trials for Hope. Jonathan was present on our final donation Sunday and received the donations with immense gratitude. One of our team members also mailed out Christmas cards to recipients of meals on behalf of Meals on Wheels.

February was designated as Love In Action and a month-long donation event was held to benefit Trials for Hope. In April comfort bags were assembled and delivered to Trials for Hope.

A Good Gifts event was organized for Good Soil members to contribute to the ELCA global barnyard initiative. This event is a four-week (May-June) collection of donations and the congregation will vote on which animals from the global barnyard will be purchased.

At the close of this year end cycle a service opportunity at LMM will take place and members of Good Soil have the opportunity to serve at the location cleaning and painting their dock which serves as a covered outdoor area for their residents.

Respectfully submitted by Sharon Regan



Good Soil packs comfort bags for Trials for Hope on God's Work Our Hands Sunday, 9/8/24. L to R: Jennifer Krankowski, Luca Sburlea, Sammie Forshey, Amela Forshey, Scott Krankowski, and Mandy Forshey.



Good Soil serves at Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry's Men's shelter, 9/14/24. L to R: Pastor Marissa, Matthew Molnar, Steve and Sharon Regan, and George Andrews.



Renewal Planning Team Report

*Submitted by
Bill Fink*

Greetings from the Renewal Planning Team!

As many of you are aware Council has decided now is the time to plan for a sabbatical for Pastor Marissa in conjunction with time for renewal and intentional Congregation activities to foster community, rest and spiritual growth.

Your council fully supports this along with the Northeast Ohio Synod. The timing of the sabbatical is part of the terms of Good Soil's call to Pastor in her letter of call from 2020.

We have applied for a grant through the Lilly Foundation to help subsidize the costs involved. This is a very competitive grant with many Churches applying. We pray we will be one of the recipients of the grant, however in the event we are not we plan to proceed with the sabbatical and renewal (it is that important). Modifications to the details and priorities of the sabbatical would be decided upon at that time.

We were planning for the sabbatical during summer of 2026. In light of Pastor Marissa's pregnancy, the council has decided to postpone the sabbatical one year to summer 2027 instead. Read below for the Renewal Leave/Sabbatical FAQ:

Q: How long will Pastor Marissa be gone?

A: Four months (16 weeks) during summer 2027.

Q: How will worship happen while Pastor Marissa is away?

A: We will have a rotation of supply pastors to lead worship, and we will aim to feature different preaching voices throughout those four months.

Q: How will the business of the church be handled? (council, supervision of staff, interfacing with rental partners/tenants, etc.)

A: Staff members will continue in their normal duties. Pastor Jim Kulma will serve as a "pastor of presence" – filling in for the duties of the office of pastor and partnering with council for leadership decisions. We'll also need additional volunteers to assist with office duties and other needs as they come up.

Q: How does this align with what is done elsewhere?

A: Sabbaticals are a common practice across the church for the health of congregations and their pastors. Sabbaticals are included in the synod's guidelines for compensation. They are an opportunity for growth (and rest) for both the pastor and congregation so they can continue to strengthen their ministry together moving into the future. The council has been in unanimous support of a sabbatical for Pastor Marissa since discussions began in Spring of 2024.

Q: How can I learn more?

A: Two opportunities for learning:

- 1) Read the book *Planning Sabbaticals* by Robert Saler along with the Renewal Team
- 2) Pastor Mitch Phillips, Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership for the Northeastern Ohio Synod, offered an information session on sabbaticals after worship on Sunday, May 4th, 2025. You can also contact him with follow-up questions at mphillips@neos-elca.org

Q: How can I get involved?

A: The Renewal Planning Team is applying for grant funding (please pray!), arranging for pastoral coverage, and brainstorming initial ideas for congregational activities while Pastor Marissa is away. If you would like to see certain events, please reach out to the planning team (below) and get involved. We need people to step up and be a part of planning this meaningful experience for the congregation together (fellowship, opportunities, studies, small groups, meals, opportunities for learning how to rest, etc).

Q: Who do I contact if I have more questions or want to get involved?

A: Please reach out to any members of the Renewal Planning Team:

Bill Fink: (216) 258-2292, bfink06@yahoo.com

Pastor Jim Kulma: (216) 221-7333, jkulma@cox.net

Sharon Regan: (216) 408-0304, regansharon17@gmail.com

Nancie Smith: (330) 715-0795, nanciesmith53@gmail.com

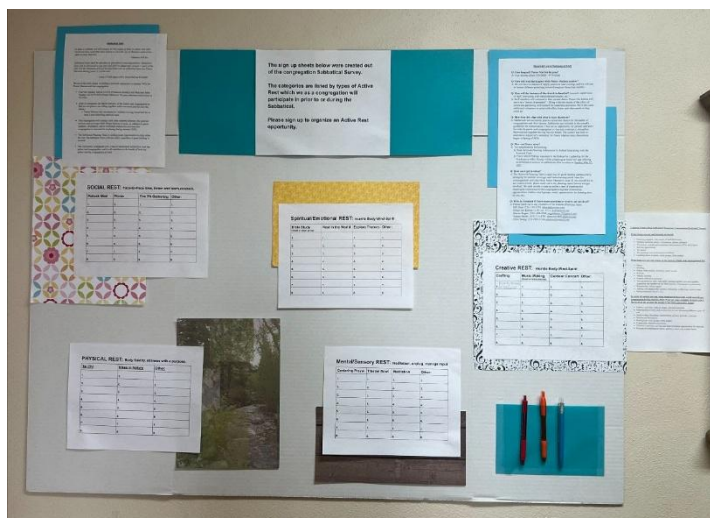
Ellen Young: (216) 965-3114, eebeese@hotmail.com

We appreciate the thoughtful, engaging, and fun responses to Congregational Activities questionnaire that was sent out. If you have not responded or have and would like to contribute additional ideas PLEASE do so! Check the bulletin board in the hallway for some of the activities we are planning.

There is a lot of work to be done. We are confident that this time of rest, renewal and engagement for Good Soil and Pastor Marissa will be instrumental in our growth as a congregation as we seek to spread Gods Gospel in our community.

On behalf of the Renewal Planning Team,

Bill Fink



Congregational Renewal Activities sign-up in Good Soil's hallway



Treasurer's Report

Submitted by
Evan Paine

Please note that the church's fiscal year runs January through December, but our program year runs from July to June.

As we came to the end of 2024 the church's contributions were in line with budget. Other income sources were lower than budget due to lower building rents than budget. In 2024, most of our expenses were in line with expectations. One key exception was the one-time charges for additional accounting services as we transitioned accountants and required extra services to clean up records in Quickbooks. Additionally, the accountants were key parts of the transition from Vanco to Pushpay for our online contributions. These charges have been worthwhile as Pastor, Council, and I have seen improvements in our processes and accuracy of reports.

Through the first few months of 2025 our contributions have remained in line with budget. Our expenses have also been in line with expectations. We have not experienced anything deviating significantly from our plan and we remain in a strong financial position as an excerpt from our balance sheet shows below.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me for more detail.

Good Soil Lutheran Ministries		
Balance Sheet		
Assets		3/31/25
Cash and CDs	\$	562,378
Investments	\$	1,262,634
Deposits and Accounts Receivable	\$	2,191
Total Assets (excluding Property)	\$	1,827,204
Liabilities		
Memorial Fund	\$	11,304
Music Fund	\$	1,738
Dandelion Priority Funds	\$	7,569
Total Liabilities	\$	20,610
General Fund	\$	1,030,324
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	\$	1,050,934



Membership Update

Submitted by
The Rev. 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 end of 2024: 140
Baptized Membership as of 6/2025: 144

*Of those 144 people, 111 are confirmed (voting) members and 33 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.

To view the New Member introduction booklet from December 2024 click [here](#).

To view the New Members introduction booklet from June 2025, click [here](#).



Good Soil celebrating in worship on Easter Sunday, 4/20/25