



Annual Report 2025-2026

Submitted to the Congregation for Annual Meeting on June 14, 2026

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 Munro



Good Soil Lutheran Ministries

2025-2026 Annual Report

Table of Contents

Purpose Statement, Guiding Principles, Priorities	3
Annual Congregation Meeting Agenda	4
Minutes from December 2025 Congregational Meeting	5
President’s Report – Sarah Sburlea.....	6
Pastor’s Report – Pastor Marissa.....	7
Communications and Community Life Coordinator’s Report – Cara Rovella.....	9
Worship and Music Coordinator’s Report – Brynna Bailer Munro.....	11
Reconciliation in Christ (RIC) Team – Anne Paine.....	13
Generosity Team – Lisa Sierk.....	14
Sunday School – Sarah Sburlea.....	15
Livestream Team – Jessica Berkshire.....	16
Gather Together (20's/30's) – Emma Sleva.....	17
Prayer Team – George Andrews.....	18
Card Ministry – Sharon Hollowell.....	19
Property Committee – Larry Jacobson.....	20
Nominating Committee – Ellen Young.....	21
Service Outreach Team – Sharon Regan.....	22
Home Communion Team – Anne Paine.....	23
Altar Care and Liturgical Arts Team – Bill Wahl.....	24
Call Committee – JoAnne Wancata	25
Hospitality Team – Chris Jacobson.....	27
Renewal Planning Team – Bill Fink.....	28
Treasurer’s Report – Evan Paine.....	30
Membership Update – Pastor Marissa.....	31



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

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.



Annual Congregation Meeting
June 14, 2026
Agenda

I. Opening Prayer

II. Determination of Quorum and Call to Order

III. Approval of Agenda

IV. Approval of Minutes from December 2025 Congregation Meeting

V. Constitution Updates

VI. Presentation of Annual Report and Celebration of 2025-2026 Ministry

VII. Nominating Committee

- a. Nominations: Kirsten Reading, Matthew Badgett, Nancie Smith & Kathy Aloï
- b. Open Nominations for Congregation Council from the floor
- c. Election of Congregation Council for 2026-2028 Term

VIII. Closing Remarks, Updates and Closing Prayer



Minutes from Congregation Meeting

December 7, 2025

Sarah Sburlea called the meeting to order. Quorum was established.

Pastor Jim Kulma opened the meeting with prayer.

Agenda Approval: Ursula Hamrik made the motion, Linda Beebe seconded. Approved.

Approval of Minutes from the June meeting: Kathy Aloï made the motion, Kim Wylie seconded. Approved.

Approval of the 2026 Ministry Funding Plan: David Paine made the motion, William Eversole seconded. Approved.

Nominating Committee: The following slate of names were put forward for consideration: Jim Kulma, Ellen Young, Sarah Sburlea, Evan Paine. Joanne Wancata made the motion to approve, Sharon Regan seconded. Approved.

The congregation was reminded of upcoming events.

Kaitlyn Regan made the motion to adjourn. Jason Cox seconded. Approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Krankowski



President's Report 2026

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 2025–2026 Annual Report, highlighting the dedication, creativity, and faithful service of your Congregation Council over the past year. Together, we've continued to refine our vision for the future while strengthening the connections within our congregation and with the wider community.

Good Soil's youth remain active, vibrant, and growing, and it has been especially wonderful to see so many children participating in Sunday worship each week. The prayer ground is often full, and our Sunday school classes continue to grow, reflecting the energy, joy, and strong sense of community among our youngest members.

Our relationship with Bethesda on the Bay has continued to deepen and flourish over the past year. Our joint partnership remains a true blessing, as we share resources, ministry, and vision. A significant part of this collaboration is our work to find a shared rostered minister, focused on faith formation and discipleship—an exciting and impactful step forward in nurturing spiritual growth across both congregations. We have also continued to come together for meaningful services throughout the year, strengthening both our worship life and our shared sense of community.

We remain committed to our long-standing ministry partners, including Meals on Wheels, the Barbershoppers, multiple AA groups and the West Side Hungarian congregation. Our church continues to serve as a welcoming space for community organizations carrying out important work and service.

We are incredibly grateful for each of our staff members and leaders who faithfully support the life of our church. We give special thanks to Pastor Jim Kulma for his dedication, leadership, and steady support during Pastor Marissa's maternity leave. His presence and hard work were instrumental in ensuring continuity in worship and ministry during that time. We are also thankful for the continued service of our staff team, whose commitment strengthens our mission each day.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Sburlea



Back-to-School Blessing, August 2025



Pastor's Report 2026

Submitted by
The Rev. Marissa Harrison

Like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house vibrant with life, in which you serve as a holy priesthood offering Christ-inspired lives up to God.

- 1 Peter 2 (NRSVUE/MSG Translation)

Grace and peace be with you!

It continues to be a joy, privilege, and meaningful calling to walk with you all as pastor at the “spiritual house” of Good Soil. And, as 1 Peter 2 describes, it is certainly vibrant with life! The reports throughout these pages are a testament to what the Holy Spirit is doing and continues to do in and among us in the midst of this faith community.

Last year, we celebrated becoming an RIC ([Reconciling in Christ](#)) congregation. About 12% of congregations in the ELCA are RIC—designated safe and affirming churches for LGBTQ+ people and people of color. 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 have welcomed several new faces and families to Good Soil who were searching for affirming communities, or chose Good Soil as their new home because this is such a central value of this congregation.

Another exciting development has been the progress in calling a shared Minister of Christian Formation (ELCA pastor or deacon) with our siblings in Christ at Bethesda on the Bay Lutheran.

This Rostered Minister will work in partnership with the lead pastors, staff, and congregations to deepen and grow ministry, especially within the area of Christian Formation. Worship, Sunday School, confirmation, Bible studies, small groups, communion classes, service and learning opportunities, and spiritual practices are all examples of how we are “formed” in the Christian faith and life. The Deacon or Pastor will be a full partner in this new collaboration—leading in the areas of Christian Formation while also sharing in the full range of pastoral duties, based on their unique gifts and talents, as appropriate. We thank the joint call committee for their countless hours of work, preparation, and prayer that have fueled this process. Please continue to pray for them, for our congregational partnership, and for the person whom God will call to this position.

Additional highlights from this past year:

1) Good Soil was selected as a recipient of a national Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Grant! Read the press release [here](#). My sabbatical will take place in Summer of 2027. See the Renewal Planning Team report for more info.

2) Good Soil received national recognition when we were featured as a part of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton’s final Synod Assembly churchwide video address entitled, “[Our Journey of Faith Together](#).” We were blessed with Bishop Eaton’s preaching and worship leadership with us as a part of that filming weekend.

In terms of the pastoral office, from June 2, 2025 through May 31, 2026, I've presided over 4 baptisms, 3 confirmations, 2 funerals/graveside services, and 2 pet blessings. For continuing education, I attended a 1-day course, "Boosting Productivity: Time Management Tactics for Working Smarter" through the Institute for Management Studies. I continue to offer pastoral care and visits with members who are homebound, hospitalized, in rehab, or in hospice, and I share my gifts with the wider church by serving on the synod's consultation committee.



Confirmation class of 2025,
Reformation Sunday 10/5/25

I also want to thank the congregation for the special time that Trey, Miles and I had together as a family during parental leave. Thank you to Pastor Jim for serving as the Pastor of Presence, to Good Soil's staff, council leadership, and volunteers for all you did to keep ministry rolling, and to our faith community as a whole for the prayers, support, and gift of parental leave at the beginning of our son's life. We are so glad to be church family with you, and it was a blessing to celebrate Miles' baptism with you all too!

Grateful to be on this journey of faith with you all as we "offer Christ-inspired lives up to God."

In Christ's love,
+ Pastor Marissa



Baptism of Miles Carlyle Harrison,
4/19/26



Communications & Community Life Coordinator Report 2026

*Submitted by
Cara Rovella*

As the Communications and Community Life Coordinator, I develop visual and practical aspects of worship and culture at Good Soil to help create a welcoming, accessible environment.

-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 also handle tech support when it comes to the usage of social media, especially in regards to the comments section on our Facebook livestreams. I also help to maintain a digital archive of photos taken at events at and around Good Soil.

-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, ensuring 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. For those special occasions, I develop and maintain a running order list as submitted through physical forms stuffed in the bulletins and online forms. I also maintain the flower order sign up list. This year, I also handled the transition to a new florist, Cottage of Flowers, as our former florist, Al Wilhelmy, closed permanently.

-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. Additionally, I reach out to other worship servants when there are changes in the service and liturgical music.

-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.

I am grateful for the continued opportunity to use my skills to help support ministry at Good Soil!

Cara Rovella



Display board outside of the sanctuary doors showcasing favorite hymns, from 2026 Lenten Sermon Series "Why We Do What We Do in Worship?"



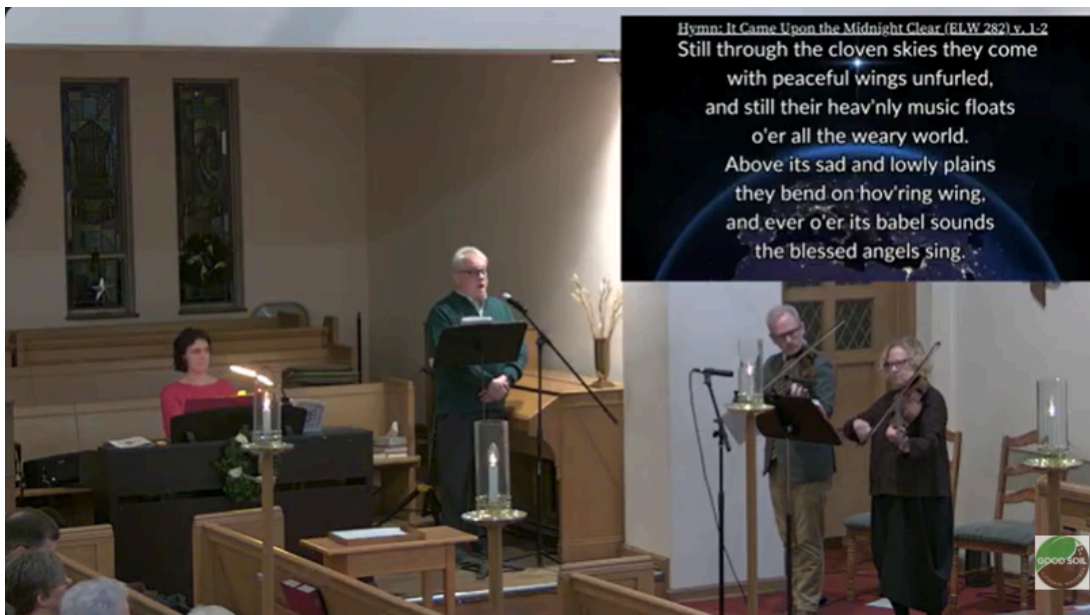
Worship and Music Coordinator's Report 2026

*Submitted by
Brynna Bailer Munro*

It has been a great year for music at Good Soil! Since I began as your Music & Worship Coordinator, I have worked closely with Pastor Marissa to select hymns and liturgical music for each service. Moving into 2026, I am taking on the entirety of the selection process, which helps streamline the administrative side of things. While I mainly select music based on the liturgical season and past practice, I am always open to suggestions. I hope you'll notice that the favorite hymns you submitted in March will be featured throughout the year as well.

We have continued with weekly cantors, which has helped in creating a strong routine of robust weekly music support. We have had the best roster of cantors this year including Erik Bogen, Kaitlyn Regan, Brenna Connor, Pastor Paula Maeder Connor, Beau Reddington, and more.

We also were blessed to hear special music from many of our congregants this year. Deb Yandala (viola), Matt Bishop (violin), Pastor Jim Kulma (guitar), Erik Bogen (guitar), Evan Paine (trumpet), and several who volunteered in our choral anthems. One highlight of the year was during the Season of Creation, when Good Soil joined together with Bethesda on the Bay singers to sing "This is My Father's World" out in the beauty of nature. Thank you to everyone who offered your gifts and talents, it has been such a joy hearing you!



Special music for Christmas Eve Worship, 12/24/25

I'd like to give a special thanks to a few people who assisted in more than ten services over this past year. William Eversole not only signed up to cantor many Sundays to begin with, including more demanding holiday services, but also subbed last-minute on several occasions. Dave Paine, too, cantored a significant amount, arranged the trombone music that uplifted our Easter service, and has gone above and beyond to keep our choir loft a safe and accessible area. Jim Kulma is such a delight to have "tag along" on guitar, play and sing an offertory, or accompany our services whenever he drops in, including services while he subbed for Pastor Marissa's maternity leave.

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, there are many options. You could cantor (alone or as a duo), play any instrument (alone or with piano, doesn't need to be a hymn!), sing in one of our choral ensembles, the possibilities are endless. If you have interest and/or questions, 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 Munro



Above: Joint choir for Season of Creation outdoor joint worship with Bethesda, 9/21/25



Right: Mother and son duo, Matt Bishop and Deb Yandala, play special music for Season of Creation outdoor joint worship with Bethesda, 9/21/25



RIC Team Report 2026

Submitted by

Anne Paine

The RIC team includes George Andrews, William Eversole, Mandy Forshey, Matthew Molnar, Anne Paine, Kaitlyn Regan, David Sierk, and Pastor Marissa. The team presented the new welcome statement at the 2024-25 annual meeting, and it was voted on and approved. At the same time, the congregation approved Good Soil becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

The team hosted a reception after worship on June 29, 2025, to celebrate the affirmative vote.

Some members participated in the Cleveland Pride Parade in June 2025.

The Reconciling in Christ (RIC) committee has been somewhat inactive in 2026, lacking a chairperson.

Church signage facing Hilliard Blvd. was updated on both sides with metal RIC logos and a banner indicating our membership in RIC was purchased to display in the sanctuary to signify our welcome of all people.

The team approved partnering with Peace Lutheran to be a small business sponsor for the 2026 Pride Parade, giving us a small ad presence in the parade's official program. The team agreed that the ad would promote affirming congregations for both East and West Siders.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Paine, on behalf of the RIC Team

Good Soil and Peace Lutheran,
Cleveland Heights march together in
the Cleveland Pride Parade, 6/7/25





Generosity Team Report 2026

Submitted by

Lisa Sierk

Fall 2025 Generosity Emphasis: "Growing in Grace and Generosity."

The theme this past year centered on Growing in Grace and Generosity, based on the scripture 1 Corinthians 3:6-8: "Paul planted, Apollos watered, God gave the growth . . . working together, you are God's field" which was proposed to engage the congregation to grow in different ways of support.

The campaign emphasizes that "growing in generosity" can take many forms, including maintaining giving during life transitions or doubling an offering for a specific month.

We received 36 submitted pledge cards for the pledges totaling \$82,398. Also, there remain additional members and supporters who share their gifts without making a statement of intent.

The Generosity Team is exploring new ways to honor those who make planned estate gifts and is working with Thrivent Financial to provide education on overall legacy giving. Thrivent representatives visited on Sunday, November 2nd to share a short presentation and provided three handouts: Giving Options, Tax Impacts of the Big Beautiful Bill, and Qualified Charitable Contributions.

Giving and generosity fuel our mission and ministries for all that is outlined in this annual report. The spirit of generosity continues to grow here at Good Soil and we thank God for you.

Your 2025-2026 Generosity Team

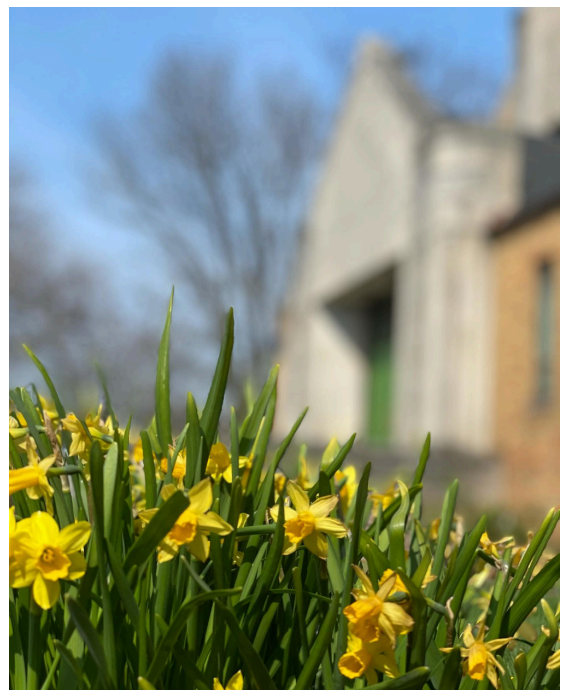
Dave Connor

Pr. Marissa Harrison

Lisa Sierk

Michael Wancata

Kim Wylie



Spring daffodils in front of Good Soil



Sunday School Report 2026

*Submitted by
Sarah Sburlea*

The Fall 2025 – Spring 2026 school year was a meaningful season of learning and growth for both our Sunday School program and the children we serve. We were especially grateful to welcome several new families and friends into our community throughout the year, enriching our program and deepening connections.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to exploring thoughtful and engaging ways to nurture our children's faith. We warmly invite your ideas and input as we continue to grow. We also welcome others to join the team (and the fun!). Please feel free to share suggestions with Chris Jacobson, Louise DeBell, Mandy Forshey, Sarah Sburlea, or JoAnne Wancata. We are also excited about the potential of a shared faith formation staff partnership and the opportunities it may bring to expand and enrich our children's learning experiences.

Opportunities During Worship: The Playground

The Playground offers a meaningful, hands-on worship experience designed especially for children. Located within the sanctuary, it provides a welcoming space where children can engage in worship in ways that are natural to them. The materials and setup encourage relationship-building within our church family while helping children learn about God's love. Older children are invited to participate in familiar elements of the service, such as the Lord's Prayer and hymns, alongside their families. Chris Jacobson faithfully maintains the Playground and prepares weekly materials, including Bible story coloring pages that align with the readings and sermon.

Learn and Grow Time (for our youngest learners)

Children in Elementary school and younger are invited to leave the sanctuary following the Children's Sermon for 15–20 minutes of age-appropriate activities before returning for a final prayer. During this time, children engage in crafts, simple Bible stories, songs, games, and coloring activities. They return to the sanctuary during the Passing of the Peace or Offering. We are grateful to Louise DeBell, Mandy Forshey, Sarah Sburlea, and Stormy Younger, who rotate as weekly leaders. As we conclude Spring 2026, we are reflecting on what we've learned and considering thoughtful adjustments for Fall 2026.

Children's Bulletins

Children's bulletins are available on the Welcome Table for both readers and pre-readers to use during worship or at home. These resources provide additional stories and activities designed to engage children more deeply and support their understanding of the service.

Children help with the Return of the Alleluia
Easter Sunday, 4/5/26





Livestream Report 2026

Submitted by
Jessica Berkshire

Hard to believe it's been 5 years since we installed our new setup. Time flies when you're having fun! A quick reminder of how far we've come:

•Since 2021, we've added two cameras, all new speakers with a new amplifier and audio mixer, two new microphones, a computer, two monitors, a video mixer, keypad and joystick to control the cameras, a portable cart to hold it all, not to mention all the software it takes to run our livestream each morning. Plus, new personal hearing devices for attendees.

•This past year, we added a second lavalier microphone (a small clip-on mic for hands free use, just like the one Pastor uses every Sunday). This allows for two worship leaders to be mic'd up while keeping their hands free. We continue to tweak and update our software as new versions come out, helping us improve quality and keep things running reliably week to week.

•Reminder – we have hearing devices available for use when attending the service in person. If you have issues hearing the service clearly in person, feel free to grab a hearing device from an usher on your way in.

•CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS! With the addition of the adorable Miles to our congregation (who, as it turns out, requires Trey's attention on Sundays!), Trey's had to step back a bit. We'd love to fill that gap and build a little extra cushion in the rotation. The setup can look a little intimidating at first, but it's very learnable—we'll walk you through it, and you'll get the hang of it quicker than you think. We promise! Reach out to the church admin Sean if interested (admin@goodsoillutheran.org)



Thanks to everyone who's helped build and support this over the past five years—it's made a real difference in helping our community stay connected.

Here's to another great year ahead!

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



Gather Together (20's/30's) Report 2026

Submitted by

Emma Sleva

Gather Together, Good Soil/Bethany Lutheran English Church's faith formation group for young adults, is excited to announce its official affiliation with the ELCA's nationwide Gather Network.

The Gather Network is a ministry of ELCA Young Adults that connects young adults in cities or regions throughout the ELCA. These ministries create space for young adults to join in fellowship, worship, community, and discussion. Gather invites the group to ask challenging questions of ourselves, our faith, and our world. We hope to create these communities for young adults across race, disability, faith background, gender, sexuality, and perspective to feel welcome to meet, to be, to gather. For more information, see <https://www.gathernetwork.org/>.

Gather Together is participating in mentorship opportunities with network members across the country to discuss means of expanding its footprint and exploring new modes of engagement. Plans are under way for programming in the months to come – including a community devotional on the book of Luke created by *A Sanctified Art: Everything In Between: Meeting God in the Midst of Extremes*.

Last summer, Gather Together held a thoughtful small group discussion on Tyler Staton's *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer* at The Centering Space in Lakewood. The group meditated on the role prayer plays in everyday life and concluded with a powerful outdoor taize ceremony.

As Gather Together looks to incorporate additional members from the surrounding faith community, it is contemplating new activities such as volunteering with local nonprofits, writing/crafting workshops, film screenings, game nights, and local overnight retreats.

To learn more about Gather Together, please visit <https://sites.google.com/view/gathertogethercle/home>.





Prayer Team Report 2026

*Submitted by
George Andrews*

“With prayer, all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26. This promise shapes the ministry of the Good Soil Prayer Team.

Now in its third year, this group of about 15 members offers intentional, thoughtful prayer for those in need—within our congregation and beyond. Each short prayer request is lifted up by name, but also with care for the deeper needs behind the name. In doing so, the team lives out the spirit of the beloved hymn that encourages us to bring every burden, every joy, and every sorrow to the Lord in prayer. Their ministry strengthens and deepens the weekly prayer list of only names shared in worship and in the bulletin, creating a steady rhythm of intercession throughout the week and month.

Prayer updates are emailed at the beginning of each month, with additional messages sent as urgent needs arise. Members pray individually at their own pace, on their own schedule wherever they choose. Participation is always open; anyone may join or step away from the email list at any time. Jesus prayed for others with purpose and compassion, and when we follow His example, we become true ambassadors of His love.

If you would like to join the Prayer Team, please contact **Pastor Marissa** at pastormarissa@goodsoillutheran.org or **George Andrews** at george_n_andrews@yahoo.com, who coordinates the team email list and sends updates.



Good Soil congregation prays together during
Easter Sunday worship, 4/5/26



Card Ministry Report 2026

Submitted by
Sharon Hollowell

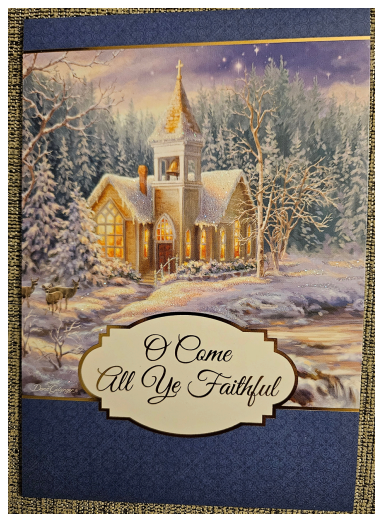
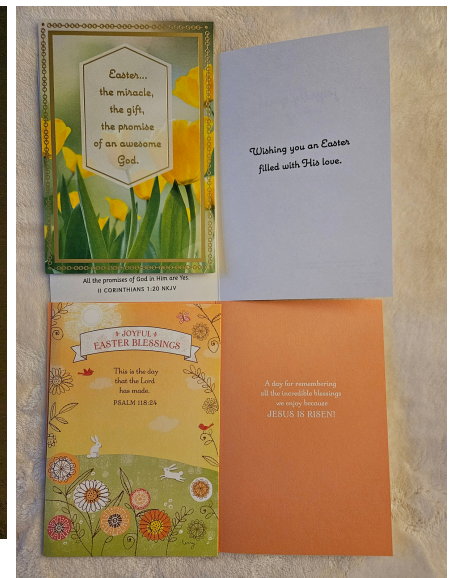
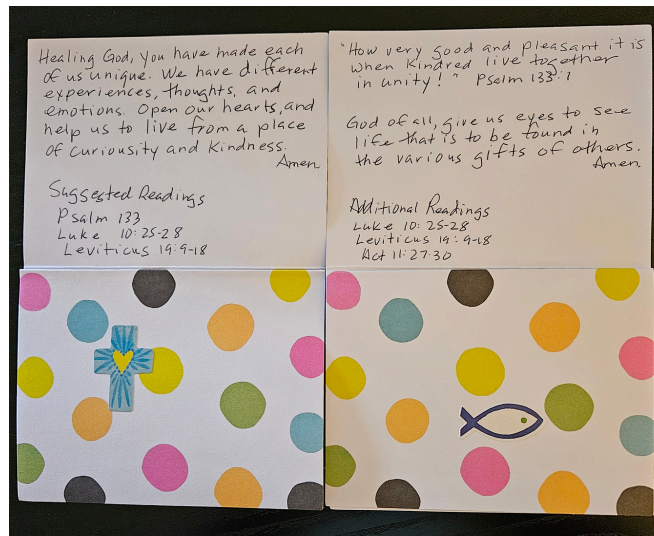
Card Ministry

Good Soil's Card Ministry serves as a tangible expression of God's love and care. This ministry acts as a "snail mail" ministry with Scripture, positive messages, and prayer. Our cards are sent to say "thinking of you" not only on Sunday in worship but every day. Good Soil's Card Ministry is not limited to homebound members, and it's a feel-good way to be involved in a church activity without a time commitment. All you need to get started is a church directory. I enjoy picking out the cards and Scripture messages that I send to 12-15 members 4-6 times a year. Talk to me if you would like to help with Good Soil's Card Ministry.

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing,"

1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV

Submitted by Sharon Hollowell





Property Committee Report 2026

Submitted by
Larry Jacobson

July 2025 – June 2026

The property committee is involved with various matters involving the church building and grounds.

Lawn Care: The company which has handled the mowing of the church lawn for several years re-organized recently. As a result, a new firm, Eclipse Outside Maintenance is handling the mowing and related work during 2026.

Snow Removal: The above re-organization also affected snow removal. Although the company name changed to Paramount Excavating, the ownership remains the same as prior years and will handle this for the winter of 2026-27.

Flower Planting: The committee has been very involved in planting and maintaining flowers on the church grounds. Spring bulbs and Summer annuals have provided color readily visible from the street. As of this writing, a Spring work day is planned for May 16. The committee is grateful when congregation members not on the committee assist on such work days.

Capital Projects: The committee prepares an annual list for the church council to consider for potential improvement projects in the budgeting process.

West Cry Room: Work has continued on the restoration of this room, now likely to become a future office. Thanks to Stan Zeager for coordinating and conducting much of the work.

Back Lot: The committee has been asked by church council to develop ideas for the church's back lot. This planning will begin soon.

Members of the committee are: Linda Beebe, Paula Maeder Connor, Barbara Demko-Werner, Bill Fink, Sharon Hollowell, Steve Regan, Bill Wahl, Stan Zeager, and Larry Jacobson.

Respectfully submitted, Larry Jacobson





Nominating Committee Report 2026

Submitted by

Ellen Young

On behalf of the Nominating Committee (Pastor Marissa, Jim Kulma, Ellen Young, Sarah Sburlea, Evan Paine), we present the Congregation Council-approved slate of candidates to serve the 2026-2028 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 2026-2028 term:

Matthew Badgett,
Kristen Reading
Nancie Smith

Floor nominations also may be made and considered during the Congregational meeting on June 14th, 2026.

The following currently serving members will remain on Council until their second term ends in 2027:

Jennifer Krankowski
Bill Wahl

The following currently serving members will remain on Council until their first term ends in 2027:

Kim Wylie

The following currently serving members will remain on Council once elected. They are open to serving an additional 2-year term, ending in 2028:

Kathy Aloï

Council members whose second term is ending in 2026, we thank them for their service:

Bill Fink
Evan Paine
Sarah Sburlea
Beau Reddington
Ellen Young

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen Young



Service Outreach Team Report 2026

Submitted by
Sharon Regan

Service Outreach Team: George Andrews, 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.

August 2025 on the ELCA's "God's Work Our Hands" Sunday, members of Good Soil assembled blessing bags for members to distribute in the community to those in need. In September, 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. February was another designated donation event to benefit Trials for Hope. In June another Sunday is designated to replenish the supply of blessing bags.

The team is currently exploring options of service for God's Work Our Hands and plans to participate in the LMM annual Team Up to Clean Up event.

Respectfully submitted by Sharon Regan



Above: George Andrews & Maureen Murman with Blessing Bags

Top Right: George, Pastor Marissa, and Deb Yandala at the LMM Team Up to Clean-Up event

Bottom Right: Stuffing Blessing Bags (L to R: Stan, Jennifer Krankowski, Aaron Krankowski, Jane Dugan)



Home Communion Report 2026

*Submitted by
Anne Paine*

Home Communion Ministry

Good Soil started a home communion ministry in Fall 2025 to bring communion once a month to members who are homebound or who live in nursing facilities. Team members include Bill Fink, Sharon Hollowell, Michael Mitterholzer, Anne Paine, Beau Reddington/Kaitlyn Regan, and Dee Willis/Erik Bogen. Team members who are available to sub are Chris Jacobson and JoAnne Wancata.

The church owned four communion kits, and another four were purchased to ensure enough kits are available for visits.

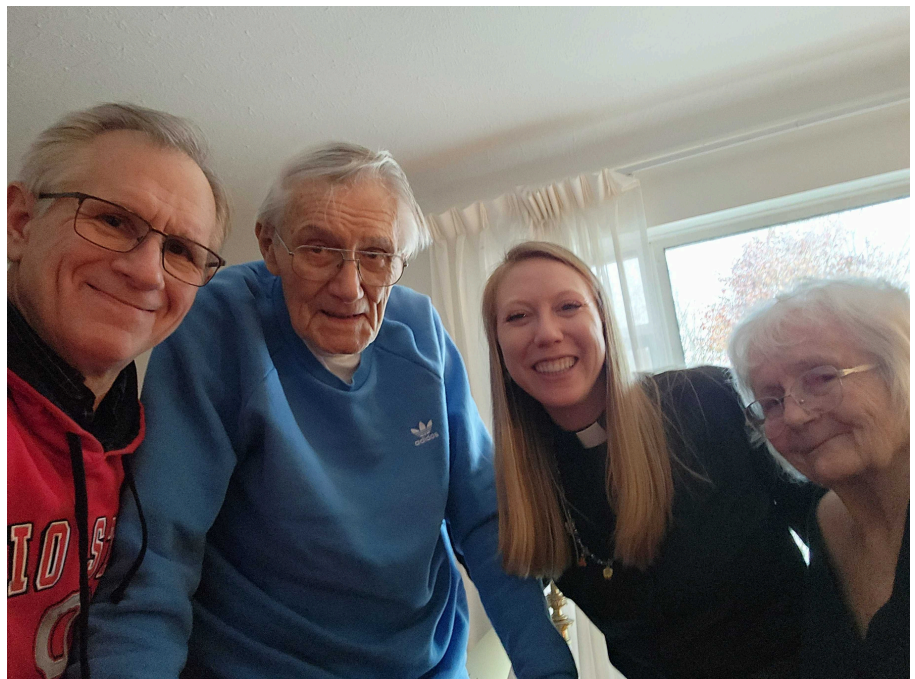
After an initial training by Pastor Marissa, the team members made their first visits in September 2025. Visits take place on the first Sunday of each month, or as close as possible to that Sunday.

Chaplain Linda Weidenbach attended a team meeting November 9 to give team members the opportunity to ask any questions and for the team to discuss logistics of meetings.

Each team member visits the same person each month, allowing for the development of a meaningful bond. At present, the team visits six members of our congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne C. Paine



Home Communion Minister Bill Fink
with Pastor Marissa and Bill's
parents, Ed and Verna Fink



Altar Care and Liturgical Arts Report 2026

Submitted by

Bill Wahl

Altar Care and Liturgical Arts teams

The Altar Care team prepares the altar before each service for the proclamation of God's word and administering of the sacraments. They change the paraments according to the season and work alongside with the liturgical Arts team to create an atmosphere of praise. After service, the team member working that day ensures that all communion items are cleaned and stored properly and that any remaining communion elements are disposed of properly. The team also ensures that altar linens remain clean and unstained.

In the past year, Anne Paine put together a manual for altar set-up for the various liturgical seasons and for special events, such as baptisms. The manual has made this service accessible to all.

Altar care and Liturgical arts team members include Paula Maeder Connor, Mandy Forshey, Sharon Hollowell, Anne C. Paine, and Darlene Wahl.

Although the team's work is "behind the scenes," worship would not take place without their efforts. Anyone who would like information about joining the team or the work involved is invited to speak with any team member.

Respectfully submitted, Bill Wahl

Left: Season of Creation, 2025

Right: Season of Easter





Call Committee Report 2026

*Submitted by
JoAnne Wancata*

Minister of Christian Formation

Last year, Good Soil's Church Council voted to form a joint Call Committee with the congregation of Bethesda on the Bay in Bay Village to call a rostered candidate to fill the newly envisioned role of Minister of Christian Formation.

What is Christian Formation?

Sunday School, Confirmation, Bible Studies, Small Group ministry, Service and Learning opportunities, Acolyte and Communion Instruction Classes, and Worship, are all examples of how we are "formed" in the Christian faith and life.

How did this come about?

Both churches had recently participated in the Dandelion Project where each created a new Purpose Statement and a list of Guiding Principles that are very similar to each other. Both congregations have also observed: 1) Changing worship and learning practices for families due to busy schedules and competing activities on Sundays. 2) Children needing a better background and understanding of faith and of their own place as members of the faith family. 3) Adults of all ages and life stages requesting opportunities to nurture and grow their faith with bible studies, classes, forums and outreach.

The decisions of our respective Church Councils to move forward and call a joint Minister of Christian Formation were supported by the Dandelion Project initiatives; the fairly recent Calls for Pastors Angela and Marissa; and additional focus groups and visioning initiatives both congregations have undertaken.

This "joint" call is an exciting new option for shared ministry. Because it combines the unique aspects of each congregation with our shared vision for the Minister of Christian Formation, it has required additional reflection and discussion by the Committee over the past year – and new, unique questions for the Synod Office which is charting new waters as it supports our work.

The Role: Minister of Christian Formation

This person will be a Rostered Leader (a Deacon or Associate Pastor), hold a Masters of Divinity (or equivalent requirement of Rostered Clergy) and be ordained in the ELCA. The Minister of Christian Formation will partner with both congregations in a new vision and mission for sharing Faith Formation. Specific areas of focus include Congregational Life & Worship; Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministries and Outreach. In addition, as a member of a new collaborative ministry team, they will share pastoral duties as appropriate. Examples include, preaching, teaching, visitation, and pastoral care.

Committee Activity

In June 2025, a Call Committee consisting of members of both congregations was installed during services at both churches. Chris Webner (Bethesda) and JoAnne Wancata (Good Soil) are co-leaders.

Good Soil Members Amelia Forshey, Evan Paine, and Emma Sleva are serving on the Committee.

Pastor Mitch Phillips is our assigned Synod Coordinator for this Call.

In July 2025 we began meeting in person both as a full committee and also within our congregational sub-teams once or twice a month (with somewhat of a break for the holidays). We also connected between meetings via shared email rounds of review and discussion.

Chris and JoAnne also met frequently with each other and sometimes included Pastor Mitch and/or our church pastors to discuss progress and options, and to prepare and plan.

Ministry Site Profile

The most important task for our Call Committee has been to create and complete a comprehensive Ministry Site Profile (MSP) - the document describing a congregation's unique programs, personality, culture and needs. The Synod Office posts the MSP on its website to advertise our open position to potential candidates.

Good Soil and Bethesda on the Bay each created its own MSP to assist potential candidates in their review of this unique opportunity to support two congregations in a common vision. We also collaborated on specific content about the position that is identical in both MSPs. We shared drafts of the congregation MSP documents with each other and both Pastors for review and suggested edits. All committee members from each church are familiar with the documents representing both churches.

The Executive teams from both churches have met together to determine the financial details of the call. And, we've identified and confirmed a slate of References for our congregations and the Call who will take calls from potential candidates. Final drafts of both MSPs were shared in early May 2026 with Pastor Mitch/ the Synod office for final review and approval and posted on the ELCA mobility database website upon approval. (This report was written as these final steps were taking place)

NEXT STEPS –

Exciting times ahead!!

We're eager to see candidates' reactions to this posting and anticipate starting interviews this summer.

The Church Councils of Good Soil and Bethesda on the Bay and Joint Call Committee gather together for an initial meeting about the call process





Hospitality Report 2026

*Submitted by
Chris Jacobson*

Hospitality Committee

If there is food or drink here at Good Soil, the Hospitality Committee usually has a part in it. It might be for planning, coordinating, set up, serving, and/or cleanup. It might be part of these or the whole event.

We help with the Sunday morning coffees, funeral fellowships, and any Good Soil dinners, etc. The members of the committee are Louise Debell, Sharon Hollowell, Chris Jacobson, and JoAnne Wancata. Any questions, please ask us.

Submitted by Chris Jacobson





Renewal Planning Team Report 2026

Submitted by

Bill Fink and Pastor Marissa

Greetings from the Renewal Planning Team!

With joy and excitement, we're delighted to share that Good Soil was selected as a recipient of one of the national Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Grants! This is a very competitive grant with many churches that applied. Read the press release from the Clergy Renewal Program website [here](#). This national grant will provide funds to cover renewal activities for Pastor Marissa and renewal activities for the congregation. It will also cover funding for the Pastor of Presence and supply preachers during that time.

Originally scheduled for Summer 2026, with the birth of Miles Harrison, the Renewal Planning Team and council decided to postpone Pastor Marissa's sabbatical to Summer 2027. This time will be centered around renewal and intentional Congregation activities to foster community, rest, and spiritual growth.

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. We will also have 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. 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. Sabbaticals are included in the synod's guidelines for compensation, and sabbatical leave is in the terms of Good Soil's call to Pastor in her letter of call from 2020. 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: Read the book *Planning Sabbaticals* by Robert Saler along with the Renewal Team. Or, you can reach out to Pastor Mitch Phillips, Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership for the Northeastern Ohio Synod. He offered an information session on sabbaticals after worship on Sunday, May 4th, 2025. You can contact him at mphillips@neos-elca.org.

Q: How can I get involved?

A: 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.). A big thank you to those who have already provided leadership for some of these activities, including knitting group, book studies, and an upcoming church potluck.

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

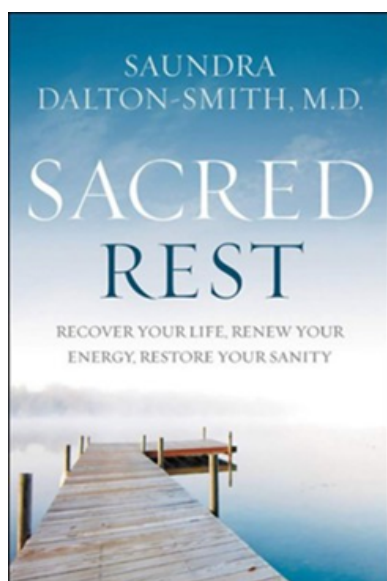
Nancie Smith: (330) 715-0795, nanciesmith53@gmail.com

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

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

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 God's Gospel in our community.

On behalf of the Renewal Planning Team,
Bill Fink (author of 2025 report, with 2026 edits from Pastor Marissa)



One of the opportunities for the congregation during renewal time will be exploring the book, *Sacred Rest* (free copies of the book covered by the grant!)



Treasurer's Report 2026

Submitted by

Evan Paine

This year, several smaller accounts were streamlined into a First Federal money market account for ease of access. The total assets listed below do not include property assets. The Misc. Other Funds include \$60,000 set aside to fund the call of our joint rostered minister with Bethesda on the Bay Lutheran Church.

As we came to the end of 2025 the church's contributions were lower than budget. Other income sources were lower than budget due to lower building rents. In 2025, investment income was also lower than forecast. Most of our expenses were in line with expectations for 2025. As a result of the lower incomes, we finished 2025 with a deficit.

Through the first few months of 2026 our contributions are lower than budget but often churches and non-profits see seasonality with more giving coming later in the last 2-3 months of the year. Our expenses have mainly 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.

Good Soil Lutheran Ministries Balance Sheet

Assets	12/31/25	3/31/26
Cash and Money Market	\$ 499,256	\$ 445,000
Investments	\$ 1,279,299	\$ 1,353,318
Total Assets (ex Propoerty)	\$ 1,778,555	\$ 1,798,318
Liabilities		
Memorial Fund	\$ 10,204	\$ 8,521
Music Fund	\$ 1,738	\$ 1,562
Dandelion Priority Funds	\$ 7,843	\$ 7,238
Misc. Other Funds	\$ 34,211	\$ 63,569
Total Liabilities	\$ 53,996	\$ 80,890
General Fund	\$ 1,030,223	\$ 1,030,223
Total Liabilities and Fund Balanace	\$ 1,084,219	\$ 1,111,113



Membership Update 2026

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 end of 2025: 141
Baptized Membership as of 5/1/2026: 145

*Of those 145 people, 115 are confirmed (voting) members and 30 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. Since 2020, Good Soil has welcomed 95 new members (as of 5/1/2026).



Good Soil celebrating Easter Sunday, 4/5/26



Acolyte Lily Connor lights the candles on Easter Sunday