

# 2023

## Annual Report



**CHRISTLUTHERAN**  
providence | concord | online

January 28, 2024

2024 Continuing Council Members



Janet Wilson



Cassie Thompson



Eric Runge



Greg Twait



Jessica Shurley



David Brown



Melissa Lanoue



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## 2024 Congregational Meeting Agenda

- ◆ Call to Order Eric Runge
- ◆ Opening Prayer Pastor Adrienne Martin
- ◆ Approval of 2023 Congregational Meeting Minutes Eric Runge
- ◆ Recognition of Outgoing Council Members Pastor Scott Suskovic



Mark Ficken



Eric Trosch



Luann Martinson

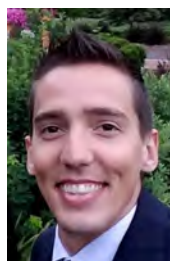


Chad Mohn

- ◆ Council Elections Eric Runge
- ◆ President's Report Eric Runge
- ◆ 2023 Treasurer's Report David Brown
- ◆ 2024 Budget Presentation David Brown
- ◆ Benevolence Amy Daniels
- ◆ Endowment Tom Brydon
- ◆ Family Ministries Pastor Adrienne Martin
- ◆ Pastors' Report
  - Christ Providence Scott Suskovic
  - Christ Online Alexis Williams
  - Christ Concord Pastor Ryan Ritzmann
- ◆ New Business Eric Runge
  - Southland Report: Jessica Shurley
- ◆ Motion to Adjourn Eric Runge
- ◆ Closing Prayer Pastor Ryan Ritzmann

# Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes

## January 29, 2023



Thomas Sallach  
Secretary

### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 P.M. by Amy Kochan, Council President

### 2022 Minutes Approval

After review and without any questions or changes, a motion was received to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### New Council Nominations

The following were recommended by Church Council to fill positions vacated by Margaret White, Dean Emmans, Thomas Sallach and Amy Kochan: Melissa Lanoue, Reneau Van Landingham, Janet Wilson and Cassie Thompson

Ballots were distributed and collected and counted

### President's Report

Amy Kochan

In addition to her written report, Amy reflected on her time on Council and as President, having taken the role while COVID was still raging. Her main point of emphasis was the praise of all of our staff. In particular, Pastor Scott, as he helped guide the church through the pandemic, a number of changes with Pastors, etc.

### Financial Review

David Brown

The presented slides noted 2021, but the data was for 2022

- 2022 budget of \$3,147,992
- 2022 actual of

\$3,400,176

- \$252,184 carry over

We work off of a break even budget

### Highlights:

- Utility costs were higher
- Majority of ministries were less than the budgeted amounts, most notably personnel due to vacant positions

No questions

### Benevolence

Amy Daniels

McPie celebrated its 15 year anniversary in 2022 and family nights has returned after COVID.

Congregation has been very generous, as always.

Benevolence also includes other things outside of the budget like Crop Walk and other fundraisers.

Community Crisis Outreach (Charlotte community outreach) makes up about 1% of the church's giving.

Amy determines how things will be allocated

She highlighted a family that requires \$1,000 a month for insulin

We see examples where kids are doing well and struggle with moving forward given family circumstances

We have been able to help with those with transportation issues

No questions from the congregation.

### Endowment Report

Tom Briden

The two funds are held with Raymond James

Endowment 1 is for Benevolence

Endowment 2 is for the general fund (at discretion of Church Council)

Lost ~\$190K this year between the two funds given the tough market

We are up ~6% from inception

Hosted two events in 2022

Recognition dinner in April with 57 attendees

Legacy planning luncheon in November that had 15 attendees with many doing follow ups

### Plans for 2023

Enhancing communications to raise awareness

Working to obtain some Best Practices from peer churches

Rae Eagle and Pam Wingard are joining the committee

### Christ Providence Report

Pastor Scott

Overall our church has done better in many cases than other churches across the country, where most are reporting attendances around 50-60% of pre-COVID numbers, whereas CLC is near 70%.

With Serving we were able to get face-to-face with others. McPie, mission trips, 8 days of service are all great, successful examples.



## Meeting minutes cont.

### With Learning:

The hallway between services is crowded again from Sunday school where we've even been moving back into some CLCC space.

We relaunched Small Groups with great success.

Sunday and Mid-week adult classes are ramping back up.

### In terms of Giving:

Even with attendance lagging, giving and generosity have remained strong.

We carry forward a \$291K surplus partly due to great giving and also from personnel savings:

- Gretchen Suskovic retired after 20 years
- Laurie Carter retired after 22 years
- Pastor Melody left after 6 years
- Pastor Tenny has moved on to a new role outside of CLC
- Mark Glaeser retired after 32 years

### Christ Online Report

Alexis Williams

Blair Barber and Emily Porter are our chat team that interact with folks online.

### Attendance numbers:

We are tracking concurrent live views on YouTube and views of more than one minute on FaceBook

We are tracking views for Sunday-Wednesday ~425 per week

### Survey results:

Being out of town and simple convenience are the main reasons people are worshipping online.

As of this morning, 10 of 70 responses are from people that are a plane ride away, so always worship online.

Alexis emphasized a need to keep engaging these folks and make them feel a part of our church

2 new members will join the chat team through the new member class.

### Christ Concord Report

Pastor Scott Susovic

Trying to revitalize a stagnant congregation is the toughest ministry as you work to deal with or overcome population dynamics, culture, etc.

In early 2022 council spent a lot of time discerning things.

We had tasks forces that provided various recommendations.

Tenny's departure helped to force some changes.

Thrive currently is using the space during the week and is also present on Sundays.

We have a Chaplain (Marco) there working primarily on Sundays.

Started up The Gathering in partnership with Thrive for families to be able to attend church in a "no shush" environment.

### Thrive Update

Laura Scott shared a video showing the progress and impact of the ministry.

There are currently 3 Thrive campuses: Christ Concord, Christ Providence and Rock Hill.

Reaching the community through things like VBS and The Gathering.

### Quick Stats:

- 60 students
- 30 employees
- 5 years going

### Christ South Report

Finance and Personnel committees, and church council proposed shutting down worship at Christ South.

### Background:

Started out 6 years ago and had committed to review after 3 years, then COVID hit.

Before COVID worship was really ramping up to 130 or so attending each week.

Per our Bishop, 80-85% of mission starts are shutting down because of COVID.

Volunteerism and giving have been waning.

About 47 were in attendance at Christmas with ~50 average so far this month.

Council had set a goal to achieve regular attendance of 100 or more before feeling comfortable moving forward with the \$6MM building project; a goal that does not feel attainable too soon.

Ryan spoke with the congregation last Sunday. Some confusion, certainly.

It was decided during the discussion that February

12, 2023 will be the last day of worship at Christ South.

We will continue engaging those that are part of the congregation in South Charlotte.

When we say that worship will end, we will continue on with the ministry. But there should be no false hope or promises of resuming on any type of schedule.

South had a recent chili cook off on the land, South Sisters and SouthMen are still meeting.

Pastor Scott spoke with some of the large donors to the Capital Campaign. Several questions arose:

*What will happen with Pastor Ryan?* He will transition to Providence and partner with Scott.

*What does this mean for the land?* We are not making any decisions at the moment and don't plan to sell. Consideration is under way on ways to use it for the church and the community.

*What about Christ Concord?* Even with similar attendance, it is a very different picture. We own the land and have a building, Thrive is expanding, and we've reduced expenses.

*What of the money gifted towards the building project?* Our plan is for Council to give options for re-designating. We currently have about \$1.7MM in the fund, and there are costs of about \$30-35K per year to maintain the land.





## Meeting minutes cont.

Pastor Scott provided a motion that read:

“In gratitude for the bold and faithful vision of Christ South, we now move to cease worship at that campus, giving thanks for the many who served so faithfully these past six years.”

A second was received and we then moved into a time for questions and comments:

- Walt Roth: Garden Ministry Generated about 1,500 pounds of vegetables last year. With a partner providing another 2,000 pounds we were able to give almost 3,500 pounds for those in need. Would like to see some action on the land like a road, parking, more utilities. Need to give a reason for people to come back to the property. Picnic shelter, festival space, hiking paths. Water feature. Ice rink.

- Steve Conway, a member of the CLC Personnel Committee and Christ South. Understands the business side of the decision. Wanted to also bring up what we do with the people. This all came on very quickly and would love to make a plea to continue. Would have loved additional options. Very sad to see this point come.

- Ashley Cooke, musician from Christ South. Has been setting up and breaking down for many years. Questioned the investment of the church and does not believe that

many of the South members will move to Providence.

- Reneaut Van Landingham has been an active member at Christ South and is set to join Church Council. It's heart breaking and again emphasized the people. He spoke about the need to be 100% committed to the mission and for the campus to understand the budget needs.

- Gregg Heuther. Struggled with the decision of what to do with CS and pointed out that he was the one who initially proposed the idea to end worship given the financial reality facing the church. This is a moment in time in our church's life. Many recommendations between all of the committees and council were reviewed.

- A newer member in attendance shared a testimony of a failed venture in school and mentioned John 12:24. Sometimes we have given it everything we had and it's not the right time.

- Another previous pastor in attendance (John). Has worked on new ventures, a few have failed. Focused on ceasing worship, not ending the ministry.

- Another in attendance mentions that in his business we “Plan, Do, Check and Adjust”. The plan was good. We are in the phase of adjusting. Would love to bring in the members of South and encourage moving forward in a different way.

- One final question was received on the plans for the CS land? Pastor Scott mentioned that we don't want to commit to shutting down forever, nor to provide false hope. We need to figure it out with others in the church.

The count for those in favor of the motion was 134. 33 were against. The motion carried.

Scott offered a prayer.

### 2023 Budget Proposal

\$3,121,917, planned for a balanced budget

About 72% is based on planned contributions

Missions down 16% after making a temporary change to 10% for the Benevolence budget.

Property expense is up due to rising costs.

5% increase in pay for staff

A motion was received to approve the 2023 budget as presented. The motion was seconded.

### Comments/Questions

Ed Schweitzer - asked about a revised budget to include the closing of south? It was clarified that those changes were already reflected in the proposed budget.

Another in attendance was disappointed in the decrease to Benevolence, would like for it to go back up. Pastor Scott confirmed that this is meant to be a temporary change.



None opposed the final vote on the budget and the motion passed unanimously.

New Council was approved and our new Council members were recognized.

Closing prayer provided by Pastor Ryan Ritzmann

Motion to adjourn was received and seconded. 2:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Sallach  
Council Secretary

## 2024 Christ Lutheran Church Council Nominees



**Chad Melton**

Chad is a longtime member of Christ Lutheran where he and his wife Allison have raised their family.

Chad works for Bank of America and lives in Weddington, NC with his wife Allison, two sons Will and Owen, and daughter Jordan. He has volunteered throughout his years as a member in various activities. Outside of church and work, he enjoys coaching middle school football programs in Weddington.



**Molly Zmuda**

Molly is a native of Charlotte and lifelong Lutheran. She attended UNC Chapel Hill for her BS in Business

Administration and Master of Healthcare Administration.

Molly and her husband, Joe, are parents to Ben (10) and Mary Blair (nearly 8). On weekends, you can find Molly and Joe on the soccer fields, basketball courts, in piano lessons, at dance classes or chasing their three-year old beagle, Gracie, with their beloved children who challenge and impress them, daily.

A working mother passionate about public health, Molly subsequently joined a national healthcare performance improvement company, Vizient, Inc. (based in Dallas with offices in Charlotte) where, over the past ten years, she has held national roles in corporate strategy, spend management, service delivery, program development and, now, product strategy.

Molly treasures Christ Lutheran. She attends Traditional worship, served on Kenny Champagne's internship committee and remains passionate about family ministries, which enable busy, young families to reconnect to their faith and strengthen their faith communities during a critical season of life.



**Lauren Ratcliffe**

Lauren is a life long member of Christ Lutheran. From Sunday school to Wednesdays Together, youth group, the Xperience and Spirit Song, she's been actively involved in a variety of ways. Outside of the church, Lauren is a storyteller at heart, and has worked as a journalist and content marketer for nearly a decade, telling interesting and powerful stories of people and businesses. Currently she works as a manager of marketing communications for Husqvarna. In her role, she has done everything from the creation of emails, advertisements and trade shows to managing social media. She loves working with her colleagues to tell impactful stories that connect the brand to its customers.

Lauren loves music, and has been involved with music ministry at Christ Lutheran since childhood. To her, music and lyrics often help her →

# 2024 Christ Lutheran Church Council Nominees

connect with the Lord and express the prayers and desires of her heart to him in authentic ways. Making music at Christ Lutheran is one of her favorite things, and she hopes the congregation is able to experience the fullness of worship through the music ministry team.

Lauren looks forward to serving the congregation on council.



**Holly Cannon**

Holly has been a member of Christ Lutheran since 1989 when she moved to Charlotte from the Midwest. Growing up in the congregation, she was confirmed and married in the church.

Holly and her husband, Jim, have been married for 18 years and have three children: Claire (14), Lauren (11), and Charlie (6). Holly enjoys being active in the church through teaching Sunday School and serving on a variety of committees.

Outside of CLC, Holly enjoys being with her family and jumps at any opportunity to spend time with her children by volunteering at their school and supporting them in their activities.

Holly's career has been in marketing and event planning.



**David Herran**

David was born and raised in Charlotte. He

grew up attending Providence United Methodist Church. He married his high school sweetheart, Lisa, in 2001, and joined Christ Lutheran in 2005. They have two daughters, Angelina and Kaelyn who both grew up attending Christ Lutheran Childrens Center. Angelina is a freshman at Virginia Tech. Kaelyn is a junior at Myer Park High School. Lisa is a nurse practitioner with Atrium Health.

David graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in Electrical Engineering and received a Master of Business Administration from the McColl School of Business at Queen's University. David is the president and chief commercial officer at Charlotte based Aiwayz Solutions.

David served as a caregiver in the Stephen Ministry program at Christ Lutheran.





## 2023 Financial Report & 2024 Budget



David Brown  
Council Treasurer



*2023 was a strong year for Christ Lutheran. Members continued to contribute generously, and our church staff did an excellent job of controlling expenses. Revenue and expenses both increased compared to 2022, and we ended the year in a surplus position as compared to previous years.*

### 2023 OPERATING FUND PERFORMANCE

Revenue increased slightly from the previous year. In 2023, total revenues were \$3,448,513, or \$32,949 higher than 2022. 2023 revenues came in \$326,597 over budget.

Our 2023 budget anticipated we would be breakeven for the year. Our expenses for the year, including mortgage principal payments, totaled \$3,092,981 and were \$28,936 under budget which means we had a surplus of \$355,532 for the year.

A few key expense items in 2023 were as follows: 1) Benevolence paid from the Operating Fund totaled \$304,441, 2) Property Expenses totaled \$340,079, 3) Debt Service on the Worship Center mortgage was \$295,210, and 4) a capital improvement project of replacing carpet and tile in the Worship Center, totaled \$82,700.

The Finance Committee researched the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) after Council became aware of other religious organizations qualifying for the credit due to either lost revenue or significant operational change due to COVID-19 mandates. After review and discussion by Council, it was decided not to move forward with filing for the credit at this time. Soon after the IRS placed a hold on processing any more claims, due to many fraudulent claims received.

Funds from the "Good Soil Campaign" and proceeds

from sale of land adjacent to Church office were moved into investment accounts, earning ~5% annually. The total amount invested is \$2,659,979, which includes reserves for Maintenance, the Columbarium and other operating needs.

At year end, we had \$262,421 in our checking account and \$51,425 in our brokerage account to meet our operating needs. The balance on the Worship Center mortgage and the south land was \$3,569,449 compared to \$3,746,859 at year end 2022.

### 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET:

Like last year's budget, the projected revenue for the 2024 budget is expected to meet projected expenses. The overall budget is up by \$241,783 as we plan for an increase in both overall revenue and expenses.

2024 budgeted revenue is \$3,363,700. This is \$84,813 lower than the actual revenue received in 2023. About \$2,126,705 or 63% of the revenue budget, is supported by pledge cards received from the congregation. In 2023, \$2,188,875 or 70% of our revenue budget was supported by pledge cards.

Budgeted expenses for 2024 are also \$3,363,700. This is higher than the 2023 expense budget and 2023's actual costs, which reflects our best estimates for programming, payroll, and property expenses.

Benevolence expenditures are budgeted to be \$314,839, or 11% of our member contributions. In

2023, actual benevolence expenditures were \$304,441, which was 10% of the actual member contributions received.

Property expenses are projected to be \$334,534 which is higher than the budgeted property expenses for 2023 costs due to expected increases in utility and maintenance costs. We expect property expenses to continue to be a growing expense item in future years as the Worship Center ages and we will need to continue to plan to allocate budgeted funds to meet these needs.

A major planned expense in 2024 will be replacement of the Sanctuary sound board. Several quotes were gathered from 3 reputable companies and the approximate \$100,000 project will be paid for out of general maintenance restricted account.

Christ Lutheran Church is positioned to continue to have a solid financial future as we return to normalcy. Contributions have remained positive, despite the past years of continued disruption and uncertainty. Due to our financial position in 2023, we can carry a surplus into the 2024 year to help us meet our operating expenses. The financial result of the past year serves as an example of God's abundant blessings. As always, we are thankful to the faithfulness of the congregation in giving generously.

Peace,

David Brown  
Council Treasurer

# 2023 Operating Fund Performance & Proposed 2024 Budget

Categories	2024 Budget	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	% Change 24 Budget 2023 Actual	% Change 2024 vs 2023 Budget
<b><u>REVENUES</u></b>					
Contributions	\$3,217,700	\$3,087,917	\$3,335,450	-4%	4%
Other income	146,000	34,000	113,063	29%	329%
	<b>\$3,363,700</b>	<b>\$3,121,917</b>	<b>\$3,448,513</b>	-2%	8%
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>					
Total Missions	\$314,845	\$279,791	\$304,441	3%	13%
Congregational Care	2,500	2,000	1,925	30%	25%
Worship and Music	36,300	34,300	31,176	16%	6%
Media and Technology	15,500	16,800	16,161	-4%	-8%
Evangelism	26,000	30,500	27,965	-7%	-15%
Christ Concord	35,350	35,100	34,839	1%	1%
Christ South	28,500	51,494	29,547	-4%	-45%
Fellowship	17,000	11,600	17,945	-5%	47%
Adult Ministry	3,800	3,050	3,388	12%	25%
Family Ministry	55,500	53,350	50,265	10%	4%
Property Expense	334,534	321,250	340,079	-2%	4%
Administrative Expense	106,100	100,600	106,682	-1%	5%
Debt Service	295,210	295,319	295,210	0%	0%
Misc. Expense	17,905	17,025	18,015	-1%	5%
Pastors Payroll	557,534	514,694	528,199	6%	8%
Lay Staff Payroll	392,931	560,562	543,778	-28%	-30%
Support Staff Payroll	1,016,518	693,705	649,237	57%	47%
Ancillary Personnel	8,200	14,500	8,361	-2%	-43%
Other Payroll	99,473	86,277	85,771	16%	15%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3,363,700</b>	<b>\$3,121,917</b>	<b>\$3,092,982</b>	9%	8%
Net Difference	\$0	\$0	<b>\$355,531</b>		

Notes:

2024 Budget Income assumes carryover usage of \$355,531  
 2023 Actual Income includes \$291,050 carry over from 2022  
 Have added personnel committee recommendation of 4% COLA



# Council President's Report



Eric Runge  
Council President

*We have amazing facilities and now we have a full staff. I encourage you to seek out those who are currently "unchurched" and invite them to one of our Christ Lutheran campuses or ministries.*



Christ Lutheran Members,  
Thanks be to God for all that he has done and for us and our congregation. 2023 brought much change to our church, and as a church council, we are excited for what lies ahead in 2024.

I am happy to report for the first time in many years, Christ Lutheran Church is "almost" at full staff. Church council and our personnel committee have for years sought recruitment of both a Family Ministry Pastor and a fulltime Youth Ministry Director. As you can imagine, these positions require unique skill sets and are not easily filled. With Pastor Adrienne Martin, Tyler Weller and Natalya Legvold joining the Christ Lutheran Family, our Family Ministries (and in particular our Youth Programs) will grow and expand under their leadership.

For Christ Concord, we are thrilled that Lay Minister Willie Pinson chose ministry instead of enjoying a much-deserved retirement from his work in education. I personally miss seeing him sing with Spirit Song Choir at Christ Providence, but I know that his faith and his service to God will benefit our church and congregants in Concord. Please pray for Lay Minister Willie and maybe find a time to visit our Concord campus on a Sunday. I promise Lay Minister Wille will welcome you.

As a church, we have always been willing to take risks in pursuit of our mission as we prayerfully explore opportunities to advance the word of God. Unfortunately, not all of our mission efforts will endure. For instance, Christ Lutheran Church is no longer partnering with Thrive. Thrive is a wonderful ministry. The church council applauds Thrive's teachers, administrators, and their board for their commitment and dedication to the children and family they serve. However, the economic hardships facing this ministry were too much, so Thrive and Christ Lutheran mutually agreed to part ways.

Our Christ South campus closed in early 2023 and our congregation still feels the impact from this closure. This past year church council and supportive members spent considerable time exploring lessons learned from this closure including how to better communicate in advance matters related to the Christ South campus. We will use this feedback in future ministry decisions, and we hope Christ South members who left will considering rejoining our congregation because we miss them.

I do not have enough space to welcome and thank all our new CLC teammates but wish to include how

proud we are of our Music Ministry, Online Ministry, Benevolence programs like McPie and Freedom School, as well as all the others who make our church and ministries run smoothly.

2024 now brings great opportunity. My in-laws' Lutheran church in Bethlehem, NC, has a sign over the exit that reads, "Servant's Entrance." This sign reflects their commitment that the church's mission does not end when we leave Sunday service, but that the real work begins outside the church walls. With this in mind, I ask that we as a congregation commit to using 2024 to welcome those in our community. We have amazing facilities and now we have a full staff. I encourage you to seek out those who are currently "unchurched" and invite them to one of our Christ Lutheran campuses or ministries (i.e. Youth Programs). If you need help connecting to those who may need an additional nudge, please feel free to reach out to me. I will be creating a council subcommittee that can help connect and attract those seeking a church

home.



## Pastor Scott's Reflections on 2023



Scott Suskovic  
Senior Pastor

*As I completed 25 years at Christ Lutheran in 2023, I am still as committed to the ministry and vision of this dynamic congregation as the day I arrived. My word for 2024 is Anticipation!*

Last year I spoke about a 20% downturn of the market. This year it was up 24%. Last year I mentioned rising interest rates, gas prices and inflation. This year we have seen either a leveling off or in the case of gas and inflation, a lowering of those amounts. Covid was officially declared “over,” but the long term affects in terms of education, mental illness, worship patterns and ongoing physical ailments remain.

Perhaps one of the largest impacts of 2023 was the war in Israel. On October 7, Hamas terrorists breached the walls of Gaza and went on a rampage, killing about 1200 Israelis, many after torture and rape. The stories that have emerged have been unspeakably horrendous. In retaliation, Israel launched an all out war in Gaza against Hamas. Three months into this war, it is reported that almost 23,000 have died in Gaza as a result of these attacks. The world is torn, wanting to support Israel in its retaliation, but longing for the violence to end.

The war in Ukraine continues to labor onward as well, with devastating effects on that country through so much loss of life. Putin of Russia

seems more determined than ever to continue and Zelensky of Ukraine rallies the world's support.

For Christ Lutheran, this has been an enormous year of change. We are seeing growth in all aspects. Christmas Eve worship was up about 20%. Youth group has grown 50%. And our giving by year end was at 110% of budget. God is good!

At our annual meeting in January of 2023, we made the difficult decision to close Christ South. It was a painful decision that was not unanimous, especially by those who worshipped on that campus. But I believe it was the right choice. The expenses far outweighed the income, attendance was not growing, a division had arisen and we had launched a capital campaign to build a \$6 MM worship center. The conversation at the annual meeting was tense and difficult to hear. Feelings were hurt. Disappointments were shared. But looking back after a year, I still believe it was the right decision.

Another change we saw this year was within the staff. As is the case with a large staff of 55, changes will inevitably happen each year.

After the departure of Deacon Kenny Chamgne, We extended a call to Pastor Adrienne Martin to oversee Family Ministries. She has brought a renewed sense of direction, vision and unity.

After ten years of faithful service, we said goodbye to Gregg Huether as the director of property and finance and welcomed Tony Hyde into that position who brings 35 years of experience in property management.

Bolstering the work at Christ Concord, is Willie Pinson as our minister. He has taken on that position with great fervor and quickly connected himself with the good people at Concord. Emily Porter is adding her gifts as Director of Music.

We celebrated the years of service at the front desk by Connie Kramer who moved to the Charleston area to be closer to family and welcomed Samatha Walker to be a welcoming face of the church.

On the tech team, we found Shelby John, a skilled person with great tech abilities to help Bill Porter and Thomas Cole. And in the Youth Ministry Department, we hired Tyler Weller and invited back on staff Natalya Legvold to team-lead this ministry.

Church Council has also been busy with their “Big Rocks” to tackle in 2023. Each month we reviewed these items working toward completion:

#### 1. **Good Soil Campaign**

**Contributions:** With the closing of Christ South, we offered donors several options regarding their contributions to this capital campaign. Some applied their gifts to their 2023 giving while other kept their monies in the fund to see new vision is next.

#### 2. **Southland Task Force:**

After a pause, we want to return to dreaming boldly and faithfully as to the best usage of our Southland. We put together a task force to explore options. One bubbled up to the surface. More on that in 2024.

**3. Thrive Day School:** The council worked with the board of Thrive to provide some financial assistance and guidance. In the end, Thrive chose to leave Christ Providence and Christ Concord to pursue other options.

**4. Land Trust for Affordable Housing:** Affordable housing has become a critical issue for Charlotte. And with our work with the McClintock Community, it is real and personal. As we explored options, we realized that this is bigger than Christ Lutheran and that we will continue to partner with other agencies to help as we can.

**5. Evangelism Strategy:** This is a Big Rock that will never go away. We want everyone to

identify that one person in their life that they can invite, converse and encourage in matters of faith. Many have reported success in working with their “one.”

**6. CLCC expansion into kindergarten:** This was the first Big Rock to be completed. This expansion is not possible with our current set up and the additional requirements to open a kindergarten

**7. South Community:** With the closing of Christ South, we made an intentional effort to reach out to provide encouragement, pastoral support and invitation to those from Christ South to get connected at Christ Providence. While we had several families who made the move, not all made the transition.

**8. Music & the Community:** This was a great success. We opened our doors to several community musical groups plus hosted a large concert by Christian singing artist, Tasha Layton.

**9. Lessons Learned from Christ South:** We spent intentional time looking at what lessons we learned from the beginning, the middle and the closing of Christ South.

Important lessons were learned about single focus leadership, communication, and ongoing support.

**10. Strategy for Capital Improvements:** The

carpeting and HVAC are ten years old. Walls need to be painted. There is a fountain that doesn't work. We prioritized our facilities needs, provided the funding and started the work beginning with recarpeting the downstairs of the Ministry Center and Worship Center.

**11. Christ Concord Success:** What does success look like at Concord? With the onboarding of Willie Pinson, we put together a strategy, provided funding and set out goals for review by the summer of 2024.

As I completed 25 years at Christ Lutheran in 2023, I am still as committed to the ministry and vision of this dynamic congregation. My word for 2024 is Anticipation! With great anticipation, I look forward to working with this dynamic staff to dream big. With great anticipation, I wonder what God will have us do with Southland for lasting impact. With great anticipation, I expect worship attendance and class participation to continue to grow. With great anticipation, I am excited to explore what it means to be a grandpa with the birth of Natalie Grace on December 12, 2023.

*Anticipation.* That's my word. It means waiting with expectation for the power and presence of God to surprise us. . .again.



Scott Suskovic, Senior Pastor



# Christ Lutheran Membership 2013-2023

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Membership 1/1	2728	2837	2832	2876	2920	3072	3006	3007	2925	2988	2932
Child Baptism	49	42	44	31	42	45	40	32	33	47	35
Adult Baptism	4	1	2	5	2	2	4	1	0	1	3
Affirmation	42	64	23	32	64	36	39	30	4	11	8
Lutheran Transfer	39	28	42	64	108	45	58	12	9	45	24
Non-Lutheran Transfer	26	23	30	23	22	13	30	23	14	9	23
Statistical Change	8	0	0	1	5	0	11	25	3	0	0
<b>Total Received</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>93</b>
Death	15	22	13	19	9	8	15	20	14	18	21
Transfer	44	68	22	21	45	24	38	31	16	38	33
Statistical Change	0	73	62	72	75	175	128	154	8	28	68
<b>Total Removed</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>112</b>
Membership 12/31	2837	2832	2876	2920	3072	3006	3007	2925	2988	2932	2913
<b>Avg. Worship Attendance</b>	<b>1188</b>	<b>1141</b>	<b>1058</b>	<b>1032</b>	<b>1067</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>1034</b>	<b>1034*</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>716</b>

\* used 2019 numbers due to Covid

## Endowment Committee

### ENDOWMENT I – BENEVOLENCE & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Tom Brydon, Chair

	2022	2023
Balances (as of 12/31/23):	715,700	\$784,500
Funds used for in 2023:	McClintock Program, Crisis Assistance Ministries, A Roof Above	

Difference in Balance: \$68,800
Contributions: \$1,500
Rate of Return on Investments: 14.11%
Funds Provided for 2024: \$31,424

**Committee**  
Wayne Clark  
Bob Fraas  
Glenda Jones, Sec.  
Tal Owen  
Bruce Voelker  
Pastor Scott Suskovic

### ENDOWMENT II – SPECIAL PROJECTS & ONE-TIME NEEDS

	2022	2023
Balances (as of 12/31/23):	\$345,500	\$506,770
Funds used for in 2023:	unexpected maintenance of equipment and facilities	

Difference in balance: \$161,270
Contributions: \$137,950
Rate of Return on Investments: 14.14%
Funds Provided for 2024: \$16,656

### Activities during 2023:

- ☐ Conducted survey of similar Lutheran churches and used to identified opportunities for improvement. We will focus on communication and positioning of the endowment. Other churches use funds for: endowments: education, community activis investment in future clergy, facility maintenance/improvement
- ☐ Enhanced communication including adding Webpage for Endowment on Christ Lutheran site
- ☐ Conducted 2<sup>nd</sup> Legacy Planning Luncheon

# Fellowship

Life is meant to be enjoyed. It is a gift, and sometimes we Christians can get so serious about our faith we forget this truth. At Christ Lutheran, we have not forgotten that life is a gift to be enjoyed.

This past year we have continued celebrating the reformation of the Church at our Oktoberfest attended by 300+! We had a wonderful band, Das Umpa. We had beer specially reserved for us from Divine Barrel, and, of course, we had amazing food made by Chef Mike and Alica.

But the best part is spending time together. Meeting people that we have worshiped with for years but never had the chance to sit down and talk with. Welcoming People that have just

started coming; helping them find new ways to connect. Sometimes when we think of fellowship we think of covered dishes and Jello molds, but really, fellowship, as Jesus taught it, is developing relationships among the people of God.

2023 also brought us Contemporary Christian artist, Tasha Layton, in concert with 300+ in attendance. We opened our doors to our Charlotte community and they came! Along with Tasha, and our brothers and sisters in Christ from other denominations, we praised our Lord and made some amazing memories.

It is events like these that we are so blessed to be able to do. I hope you see

that it is important that we use our facilities to create fellowship among ourselves reaching out to our community. These facilities that we have built are a blessing from faithful offerings.

We enjoyed another outing to a Knights' baseball game last summer and celebrated another annual fellowship event, *Fellowship at the Pit*. We continue to enjoy *Third Thursday* events monthly for adults thanks to the efforts and passion of Alicia Wallace.

I would be remiss in not sharing a shout-out to Mary Parker who is instrumental in coordinating our fellowship events.



Ryan Ritzmann  
Pastor





## Christ Concord: Pastor Ryan Ritzmann

An unexpected joy for me was that I found myself at Christ Concord, more often in 2023; worshiping and at mid-week Bible study. We have seen a resurgence in worship attendance this year. We reached out to families in the community, young adults exploring faith, and those who found themselves in child care during the week.

Many fun treasured events returned last year including Water Day. If you have not slid 30 yards on your stomach down the hill at Christ Concord, can you even say you've lived? Well, I have lived! On Water day, we rented bounce houses and had a delicious potluck.

Many hands helped orchestrate things inside and out, as we welcomed many familiar and new families. There was a feast any Southerner would be proud of. We had barbeque, banana pudding and sweet tea, just to name a few. Oh! I know Jesus was proud of that spread, and He gave us perfect weather.

We added another bible study on Sunday after worship, and Wednesday at 10 am is a fine time to get into the Word, if you're retired. Sunday afternoon works better for those who don't have that luxury. We were able to also reach out to young adults who are

exploring their faith. They are such an underserved population.

It's fun to see how the Lord is working at Christ Concord. I am excited to see what He will do next.

I will miss the kind folks at Concord, but leave them in the capable hands of Lay Minister, Willie Pinson who has already begun envisioning exciting things at Concord. Check it out!

Ryan Ritzmann  
Pastor



Ryan Ritzmann  
Pastor

## Christ Concord: Minister Willie Pinson

For most of 2023, Thrive School for Children with Disabilities occupied a significant portion of the facilities at Christ Concord.

Parents of Thrive School were very supportive of Thrive and participated in church services.

I retired from Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools in July 2023. On August 1, I accepted an offer for Minister at Christ Concord to provide leadership for Thrive and Christ Concord. We were poised for growth. However, when I arrived September 4, I was met with many changes.

Through a mutual decision between the church and Thrive, Thrive left Christ

Concord, taking with them families who used their services. This changed the ministry dynamics significantly. Furthermore, as I met with church members, there was much healing needed over past decisions and multiple changes. I spent much time being present for listening, transparency and leadership.

With Thrive's departure, Council and I spent considerable time with Thrive families to see if we could provide programs and services that would meet their unique needs. They were desperate for ministries to help their children.

Plans were made, finances secured, but in the end, unfortunately, we lacked the leadership for this kind of specialized ministry, thus losing many of those families that needed to go elsewhere.

To expand the ministries and revitalize this campus, we hosted Bible studies, community events, and a Women's Prayer luncheon. These each continued to see growth, though it continued to be a struggle.

To add to these issues, we lost several key staff people. Our family ministry director, Jackie Maire, moved on to another church. Bobby Costea, our tech lead, sought opportunities to



Willie Pinson  
Minister  
Christ Concord







further his call in the ministry as a Navy Chaplain. And our music director, needed to spend more time with her children and relocated to South Carolina.

After securing new people to fill these positions, the Discernment Team met to discuss the future in terms of rebranding, outreach and evangelism. We decided that worship should have a blend of traditional and

contemporary elements.

We strategized better ways of reaching our community. We looked to the future and made a commitment to MOVE FORWARD with prayer and determination.

At the close of 2023, I believe we now have everything in place and are in the process of seeing what this new year will bring. I continue to work with the Synod on a lengthy process that

would give me credentials to do this work more thoroughly.

There are many obstacles yet to overcome in terms of the Synod, the community and the future of Christ Concord. We ask for your continual support, love and prayers.

Willie Pinson  
Minister  
Christ Concord

## Christ South

The mission of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ hasn't changed in over two thousand years. It has always been the same: *Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.* (Matthew 28). We at Christ Lutheran have been doing our part to rise to that challenge. We set out to plant a campus south of Charlotte, near the state line. We poured our time, energy and souls into the endeavor and gathered people of Christ together to reach out and share the good news. Because of the work done through our Christ South campus, souls were saved. People came to a new relationship with our Lord. Families started or restarted their faith

journeys. Children found a place to call home.

Ultimately as our point of mission for the Body of Christ, Christ South has ended and we had our final communion as a community. We said our final prayers. We lifted up one last song. For that we grieve for what might have been. But, we should hold our heads up high. We have joined a long line of faithful men and women in Christ who have spread the Gospel. We joined in the race and ran it to win. And God did win. We can only see that our designs for a new campus and new building haven't manifested. What we can't see are all the dominoes that have fallen; the lives that were

changed that then went on to change more lives.

The praises to our Lord have ended at Christ South but the Hymn of Praise for our Lord never ends. We all, no matter how long we live, will have our entrance and our exit. All we get in the meantime is to be as faithful and committed as possible. Yes, it would have been a beautiful feather in our cap to have whatever might have been. But, we do not do it for our glory, rather, we work for the glory of God as good and faithful servants. In that mission we have run the good race.

Ryan Ritzmann  
Pastor



Ryan Ritzmann  
Pastor

## Family Ministry



Adrienne Martin  
Pastor, Family  
Ministry

*The seamless collaboration of the Family Ministry Team and all of the ministries of the church is a quality that has not ceased to amaze me.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It has been a privilege to join in the strong and vibrant ministry of Christ Lutheran! It is a joy and honor to serve with you, and it is a blessing to witness and work in the growth of God’s kingdom in the family of God! I am excited to serve as Pastor for Family Ministry. It is wonderful how integrated Family Ministry is in all that we do.

When I started in August, the Family Ministry Team was already hard at work preparing for a new year of ministry and programming. They were preparing for Kick-Off Sunday, Sunday School, Children’s Chapel, Confirmation, and Youth Group. I thank Deacon, now Pastor Kenny Champagne for the time he took to help familiarize me with the ministry here.

The beginning of the school year got off to a great start with a lot of energy. The team is well organized and strives to make things both engaging for kids and easy on parents. I know a lot of work and preparation went into the strong programming we have enjoyed this year, particularly in the area of Youth Ministry. I am grateful for Tyler Weller and Natalya Legvold for joining our

staff as Youth Director and Youth Ministry Advisor. They have invested a lot of effort developing relationships and programs.

Kristen Rank is our Elementary School Director; Kate Harrison the Preschool Director; Tyler Weller and Natalya Legvold are Youth leaders; Marsha Voorhies is the Nursery Director, and Jane Satterfield is our Family Ministry Administrator. The Family Ministry Coordinator at Concord, Jackie Maire, also served on our team. With the addition of Willie Pinson as Lay Minister at Concord, Jackie’s position shifted to coming under that campus. We continue to share our resources with Concord as needed.

In our team meetings, I am grateful for the thoughtfulness, giftedness, and thoroughness that goes into everything we do. As each member has their area of specialty, there are many ways our ministry areas overlap and we find opportunities for collaboration. Kristen heads up several ministries including Sunday School, First Communion, and Vacation Bible School. One of her passions is service and she organizes service projects for families during the year such as Promising Pages, Trinity Place Nursing Home,

and Loaves and Fishes. She and Kate work closely together to plan Christ Kids and its virtual counterpart Christ Kids TV; and they plan weekly Chapel for our Children’s Center. Kate also schedules the nursery and teaches Sunday School.

Marsha provides faithful and excellent care to our littlest ones, at the church and on Tuesday evenings at McClintock. Her warmth and welcome provide a wonderful environment for nursery care.

This year we installed new doors and refreshed the nursery complete with a new mural! I hope you will stop by to check it out!

Jane, gifted in many ways, helps all of us with our administrative needs. She works with families planning a baptism, and keeps things moving on Sunday mornings among all of our ministries!

This year has been called “The Great Experiment” because the practice time for Xperience, our high school touring choir, changed from Wednesdays to Sundays. As a result, our youth ministry programming has responded and together, we have developed a schedule that strives to meet various needs. Tyler and Natalya have worked closely with





Xperience Director Bill Porter and leaders Mark Johanson and Shelby Johns in ministering to our high schoolers. Xperience is an important ministry here and the group gave a festive and uplifting Christmas concert. They will go on tour again this summer!

Part of the Great Experiment included changes to other parts of youth ministry. Content and timing for Confirmation as well as the corresponding Stepping Stones were modified. Small group leaders for confirmation have been a huge blessing! They are dedicated in their roles as leaders and are inspiring mentors for our youth. As for youth group, there has been a lot going on! Tyler has many skills to contribute to the ministry and is working hard to earn his Certificate for Youth and Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. Under Tyler and Natalya's leadership, both middle and high school met every week on

Sunday evenings. We have modified our schedule for the spring to work with the demands families experience.

Our council contact, Melissa Lanoue, has been a huge blessing to our Team. She has met with us the Wednesday after every council meeting to share pertinent information. We appreciate her support and involvement so much!

As we stand on strong traditions, we move forward with excitement. Our ministry made an impact: in 2023, Vacation Bible School served 135 campers at no cost. 35 children were baptized, and 21 children received their First Communion. 21 rising ninth graders were confirmed in August. We celebrated 25 graduating high school seniors on Quillow Sunday. Our Stepping Stones ministry highlights important moments throughout a youth's journey.

We are also looking forward. In several

meetings, the parents of our youth shared their hopes and dreams for future programming and ministry ideas. It gave us a great start in discerning where God might be calling us. We have dedicated families who are passionate about growing in their faith in God and growing together.

The seamless collaboration of the Family Ministry Team and all of the ministries of the church is a quality that has not ceased to amaze me. I deeply appreciate the work of the team in the details and programming, I also appreciate the care and relationships that have been cultivated. I see many strong connections because of the time that has been spent together and the shared investment we have in growing together. With our staff and volunteers, we minister together, and we are grateful for everyone who lends a hand to this ministry!

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Adrienne Martin



## How CHRIST LUTHERAN COMPARES TO THE ELCA

2023	ELCA	Christ Lutheran
Average # Baptized Members	375	2682
Confirmed Members	295	2198
Average Worship	70	716
Average Online Attendance		398
Members to Worship Ratio	19%	27%
Avg. Gift per Adult Baptized Member	\$595	\$971.55

# Benevolence and Outreach



Amy Daniels,  
Director of Outreach

*Ten percent or more of our annual church budget has supported these ministries each year for over a decade now.*

Our congregation is very generous to our NC Synod of the ELCA, our McClintock neighbors, and several key community agencies. Ten percent or more of our annual church budget has supported these ministries each year for over a decade now. In addition, our Endowment Committee and Cornerstone Gifts distributions and Thrivent Choice Dollars add to what is available for disbursement. Thrivent Action Teams, McPIE donations, Freedom School fundraising efforts, McPIE General Fund donations, Alternative Gifts Market, CROP Walk, the Feed a Family Fund, grocery and clothing donations, all increase the level of our generosity as well. We also helped our members plan and execute close to 60 Thrivent Action teams which provided over \$15,000 in funds for those projects.

In order of descending amounts, Benevolence distributed \$346,500:

- ◆ NC Synod of ELCA \$100,000
- ◆ McClintock Partners In Education \$82,500
- ◆ A Roof Above \$35,000
- ◆ Crisis Assistance Ministries \$35,000
- ◆ Charlotte Community Outreach \$18,000
- ◆ Novus Way \$10,000
- ◆ Hunger Fight \$10,000
- ◆ Faith Ministries \$7,000
- ◆ Christmas Family Sponsorships \$6,000

- ◆ Lutheran Services Carolinas \$5,000
- ◆ CROP Walk Administration \$5,000
- ◆ Lifeline (NC Synod Debt Reduction) \$5,000
- ◆ Habitat Charlotte \$5,000
- ◆ NC Synod Lifeline \$5,000
- ◆ Charlotte Rescue Mission \$5,000
- ◆ Youth Scholarship Fund \$5,000
- ◆ Cooperative Christian Ministries (Cabarrus County) \$2,000
- ◆ Agape/Kure Beach \$2,000
- ◆ Kairos Prison Ministries \$2,000
- ◆ CWS Solidarity Fund \$1,000
- ◆ Mitey Riders \$1,000

Our Outreach Ministries and the projects of many groups extend the work of this congregation far beyond this giving.

We accept and direct donations of clothing for Crisis Assistance Free Store year round. Our gardeners grow and donate over a ton of food. Feed a Family and food donations support our grocery giveaways each week. We support Room in the Inn and the Soup Kitchen. Christ Concord collects and donates food for Cooperative Christian Ministries. McPIE was very active (see separate

report). We support many families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Our Afghan Refugee Team supports our family and has now entered the humanitarian parole process to help family members join them here. We host almost monthly Blood Drives (7 drives in 2023). We remain one of CROP Hunger Walk's largest fundraisers. Our Quilter's Group supports Lutheran World Relief with hundreds of quilts. The Alternative Gift Market raised almost ten thousand dollars for various ministries and agencies. Many small groups and classes supported these and other ministries as part of their work together. We started a new ministry to provide a meal at Charlotte Rescue Mission each month. 8 Days of Service was a great success: We hosted Hunger Fight and 17,472 meals were packaged by close to 200 volunteers and we distributed boxes to local schools, Cooperative Christian Ministry of Cabarrus County, and Second Harvest Food Bank. Over 20 other projects were also completed. Our hope is that our financial giving supports the places where our hearts and hands and feet are also giving through volunteer efforts and our prayers.

May God continue to work in and through us in 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Daniels,  
Director of Outreach

## 2023 Benevolence Committee

Thom Uhlir  
Gwen Glaeser  
Dennis Getter  
LuAnne Martinson  
Amy Daniels, Staff Liaison

## Outreach Staff

Amy Daniels,  
Director of Outreach  
  
Angela Davis,  
Outreach Associate  
  
Sharhonda Morgan,  
McPIE Community Liaison  
  
Dee Dee Petronis  
McPIE Programs Assistant  
  
Lisa Heirigs,  
McPIE Programs Assistant



# Benevolence and Outreach (cont.)





# McClintock Partners in Education (McPIE)



**McClintock Partners In Education (McPIE)**  
*Creating Future Stories...  
 Building Community...  
 Supporting Families...  
 Inspiring Volunteers...*

*So that all McClintock students succeed.*

## McClintock Partners In Education Board of Directors

- Officers:**  
 Amy Daniels, President  
 Linda Cagley, Vice President for Funding and Partnerships  
 Cindy Covill, Vice President of Programming  
 Dee Dee Petronis, Treasurer  
 April Storey, PTO President

## School Representatives

- Mark McHugh, Principal  
 Shannon Administrator and McPIE Liaison  
 Jennifer Parker, CMS Partnerships Representative

## At Large Representatives

- Lawrence Cruciana  
 Jane Fisher  
 Kelli Cook, Parent  
 Tahira McCoy, Parent

McPIE was back to business in 2023!

Family Night was back, for a full semester, in full person, with excitement starting to build. Summer was full of literacy and fun science, and as always, we continued to support McClintock staff and families!

Fall Family Night took-off and the school building was buzzing as programming ramped up!

## Spring 2023 Family Night

Registration night in January gave students and families an opportunity to meet club leaders and choose an activity that met their interests. We had our usual offerings of middle school clubs – Sketch Squad, Woodworking, Top Scot Chef, Men About Progress, Sports Drills, and Ten80 Racing, but also added a few new clubs this year! We were excited to gain new volunteers with Hands 2 Heart, Zombie Robotics, Get Creative, Football, and the return of Computer Building! We averaged over 65 middle school students each week in our evening clubs and another 10 during the afternoon, almost at pre-COVID numbers.

Younger siblings also had fun! Marsha, Rick, and Debbie continue to dedicate their Tuesday evenings to our littlest

participants. They have fun “playing” during club time and also do fun activities like making treats, slime, cute gifts for the holidays, and art projects. Our 3rd -5th grade students were treated to Coding during the Fall and Art this Spring! This was a nice change-up to what we typically had to offer this age group!

Adult participants had 3 class options during Spring 2023. ESL which was heavily appreciated by many parents as McClintock’s Hispanic demographic is nearing 45%. Getting Ahead and Women’s Journey are Pathways Out of Poverty classes where parents bonded over similar situations and helped each other create a road to stability. This also gave parents opportunities to be loved on and supported by their leaders!

Our Meals team is always ready to serve dinner with a smile! Whether it is fried chicken, lasagna, tacos, pulled chicken, salad, or the beloved desserts, students and families are always happy to receive a warm meal for dinner! Spring 2023, we served 1824 meals. An average of 152 meals per week!

Our team of School Store volunteers ensures each student is prepared for school with essential items like notebooks, ear buds,

pens, sticky notes and color markers. The store items are free for students. Eric, Barb, and Janice were there almost weekly to help with this effort!

Overall, our McPIE team is happy with how Spring programming went. Rebuilding takes time and patience. However, armed with an army of dedicated volunteers, this big feat was made small. We continued brainstorming ideas of ways to improve for the Fall semester and knew we could only continue to grow!

## Summer – Science Camp, Freedom School, and more

Over 250 students enjoyed a fun, safe, educational summer, as we swung back into regularly scheduled programming - Thank YOU!!! 70+ Scholars spent six weeks at Christ Providence developing a true love of reading and discovering “Something Inside So Strong.” While focusing on literacy, Freedom School Scholars read books that empowered them to make a difference in themselves, their families, their communities and their world. Daily reading was just a part of Freedom School. Scholars participated in many different activities around the city to gain new experiences and insight into the world around them. Pool days at Ray’s





## McPIE (cont.)

Splash Planet and Cordelia Pool, trips to Discovery Place, bowling, library visits, and Sky Zone, and days at the Daniels' Lake Wylie home provided Scholars with an all-around, enriching summer!

Over at McClintock, 150 future inventors and scientists learned science in a FUN way with hands-on STEAM activities. Whether it was biomimicry and genetics in MimicBot, physics and design in Catching Air, engineering and the science of sound in Invention Celebration! Or marketing, business, and green energy in Pop-Up Venture, students left camp with an interest in science and science related careers!

Donated recyclables were transformed into animatronic robots, skateparks, musical instruments, creative businesses, and other cool inventions! After learning concepts in the classroom, Friday field trips allowed students to see science come to life and see careers in action! Trips to Discovery Place and UNCC were a highlight of camp for our Sixth Grade Trailblazers!

This summer, our older science camp returned with rising 7th and 8th graders – Career Track Explorers.

This age-group of students had not participated in Science Camp since pre-COVID. It was awesome to see these students excited for camp and their modules.

Ten80 Racing explores all aspects of the science of racing. From team identity and marketing, to drag, downforce and friction, students learned so much. Where can you find science and math in art? smART students discovered how they are all related with tessellations and fractals. Science: It's What's for Dinner served up science concepts through solar ovens, water filtration systems, and chemical reactions. Water Wizards was a cool break in the day as students learned about chemical, physical, and biological aspects of water. Friday field trips included Discovery Place and STEAM at Charlotte Motor Speedway!

McPIE was also awarded scholarships to send students to Charlotte Latin sports camps, Lutheridge, Lutherock and Camp Agape. Students enjoyed learning new sports and spending time outdoors while exploring nature.

### Family Support – weekly grocery bags

One of the ways we support McClintock families is by supplying needed food items for some of our most at-risk families. Grocery bags continued to be distributed weekly at McClintock Middle School to a group of families who have been identified by school counselors as most in need. Bags are filled with canned meat, vegetables,

rice/beans, spaghetti, cereal, breakfast bars, and cleaning/hygiene supplies. Bags are even tailored to specific dietary restrictions, religious needs, etc. Funds for food purchases are thanks to individual donors to the Feed A Family fund, Thrivent Action Teams, and a small amount of grant funds. The Garden Ministry grew and donated thousands of pounds of fresh vegetables that were very well received and appreciated by our families. In all, over the course of 2023, McPIE averaged a weekly distribution of 31 bags of food.

### Teacher & staff support – heat & eat meals, teacher partners, tutors, staff luncheons

What started during the COVID pandemic, weekly Heat & Eat meals distributed on Thankful Thursday's at the school continue to be most appreciated and a big hit! Each meal was enough to feed 2 people. This was a win for teachers who needed to free up time to focus on teacher grading and planning at home instead of cooking dinner. Teachers wear so many hats during their workday, that much of their work is taken home to their own families. Thankful Thursday meals were a way to "give back a little time" to those whose plates were already full. Weekly during the Spring, then monthly during the Fall, 120 containers, containing 2 meals each totalled 6,000 meals for teachers and staff during 2023!

Other teacher support included Teacher Partners (support individual teachers the full school year through prayer, small gifts, and encouragement via email or



## McPIE (cont.)

cards), Teacher Appreciation Luncheons (provided on early release days in addition to beginning and end of semesters), and Tutors (support individual students and specific teachers). These avenues of support are volunteer driven – thank you to all who support teachers!!

### Fall 2023 Family Night – the energy was contagious!

Fall of 2023 saw a major upswing in clubs, volunteers, and participants! Registration kicked-off in September and clubs and classes met through mid-December. The energy and excitement in the building was contagious. Families loved the support and students loved the engagement. Volunteers were thrilled to connect to students and families after the positive feedback from the Spring.

Classes and clubs met for 9 weeks. Middle School students had some of the same clubs from Spring (Woodworking, Top Scot Chef, Sports Drills) but several more were added. Chess was led by a McClintock teacher. Game Code met at Christ Lutheran where students learned about coding and programming with Raspberry Pi's. In Hands 2 Heart, students learn life skills. Art returned with a new leader, another

McClintock teacher! Zombie Robotics was new for middle school students. Students built and programmed robots to follow a path and commands. Ten80 Racing is comprised of a group of students who are on the McClintock competition team where they design, build, and market their racing team. Soccer was a new afternoon club led by a McClintock teacher and had a large following of students!

Adults participated in 5 classes: Bible Study – led by our own CLC Pastors where participants studied Genesis. Getting Ahead – a pathways out of poverty class, Women's Journey – women empowering one another, ESL – learning English language skills, and Parent U returned. Parents heard from different speakers from our community on various topics.

Our amazing Meals Team served 238 meals, averaging 231 meals per week. The group of dedicated check-in ladies greeted students and families with a smile each week and the School Store team was busy distributing needed school supplies. Transportation returned with safe drivers to get students in Trailblazers, Tennis, and Game Code to their club destinations and drove a few participants home.

Each year, the dedication of our Family Night team of volunteers gets better and better. McPIE is blessed to have such a strong group of folks who believe in our mission and the students and families of McClintock Middle School.

### Future – 2024

Spring 2024 Family Night is already in the works. Registration begins Jan 30 and classes/clubs meet through April 30. It takes a group of dedicated volunteers to make this happen each week. From serving meals, distributing school supplies, checking-in and greeting families, to leading clubs, each volunteer is important to this program. Interested in joining our team? Contact Christ Lutheran's Outreach office to get started!

Summer programming is currently being discussed. McClintock Middle School will host Science Camp for a group of budding scientists and inventors. Christ Providence will host up to 90 Freedom School Scholars. Stay tuned throughout the Spring to hear about the ways you can continue to support our summer mission.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Daniels and the McPIE Team



## Worship/Music/Technology

In 2023, the Music/Worship/Tech team of Christ Lutheran continued to exemplify excellence in worship leadership, and serving the Kingdom. Our dedication to worship excellence, our focus of quality music-making, worship technology in not only the production of worship but also the pre- and post- production phases, and the combination of all three areas supported a strong and vibrant ministry that worked to include all of God's children in worship, ministry, and mission.

At Christ Lutheran, worship continues to be the most important thing the Church exists to do, Word and Sacrament continues to be rightly preached and administered, and our worship continues to return to God all praise and glory, with untiring thanks for His divine providence.

The worship technology area of our team was blessed with the hiring of an additional full-time staff member, Shelby Johns, who came to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience in the area of production. Shelby serves in the tech booth on Sunday mornings, assists with the technology aspects of the Xperience high school ministry, and works behind the scenes on a number of technology-related tasks that must be completed on a weekly basis. We are grateful to

have her as a new staff member!

The Christ Choir and SpiritSong choral ensembles continued to provide musical leadership at both the Traditional and Contemporary services on a weekly basis. Over 60 individuals dedicate their time for weekly rehearsals and Sunday worship services in these ministry areas, as a singer, instrumentalist, tech personnel, or volunteer. It takes a lot of effort to make worship happen, and I am grateful for these individuals who make worship look and sound beautiful each and every week. I am also grateful for my collaboration with my associate, Eric Hauck, who strives for excellence as a co-leader in these ensembles, as well as his leadership of Luther Ringers, and all the other tasks that he performs on our team. Also serving to make worship beautiful is Craig Cole, who oversees the execution of worship slides, facilitating worship participation by all who gather in our sanctuary and who worship online.

In the spring, a large church conference was held at Christ Lutheran with assistance from a number of volunteers and staff. The CFX (Church Facilities Expo) Essentials conference used our facility and furthered the mission of the larger Church with focus on excellence in worship and church facility management.

With the conclusion of our church's contract with Pro Fire Media, worship videos began to be created "in-house" by our own worship media personnel. These videos saw increased levels of relevance to Christ Lutheran and they utilized the skills of Olivia Gerik, our talented media director, who also oversees each Sunday's video livestream of our worship services.

The Xperience high school worship ministry saw growth in numbers in the spring of 2023 over the previous year. 15 high schoolers participated in this ministry program which culminated in a successful and memorable tour all the way to Chicago, with stops along the way. The program grew even more in the Fall, despite several high schoolers aging out, to 19 high schoolers participating in the Christmas show. Bill Porter, our technical director, also directs the Xperience ministry and did an excellent job of growing and leading the program in addition to the many other tasks he performs both during and in preparation for worship.

Our summer theater camp for elementary schoolers, SpotLight, took place in June with 19 children participating in a fun production of Disney's Aladdin Jr. CJ Michael and Jessica Lequire directed the production and did an excellent job.

Wednesdays Together programming offered a



Mark Johanson  
Minister of Music &  
Worship

## Worship/Music/Technology (cont.)

variety of music options for children beginning with age 2 and continuing through high school. Attendance was consistent and healthy in our children's choirs, Faith and Grace Choir, along with Preschool Music led by Laura Tenzer, Faith Jam, Middle School Choir as well as a newly-formed High School group. These children and youth presented music regularly in worship throughout the year. Dennis Contreras was highly instrumental in the success of several of these programs as he interfaces with a number

of different age groups on Wednesday nights, in addition to many of his other behind-the-scenes responsibilities.

The main speakers in the sanctuary underwent a major modification, being lowered to a more appropriate level to create an even, clear spread of sound throughout the sanctuary, eliminating "dead zones" and facilitating a better quality of sound throughout the sanctuary.

I continue to be amazed at the blessings which God gives to us as a church as

we amplify God's Word—literally and figuratively—so that it reaches the eyes and ears of those who need to receive it. It is my prayer that our work blesses the lives of those who gather for worship, who participate in ministry, and who then, in turn, go out into the world to tell the Good News of Jesus.

Respectfully submitted in service to God and His Kingdom,

-Mark Johanson, Minister of Music & Worship





## Adult Education

One of the pillars of our Mission statement, is to EQUIP people with the Word of God. In 2023, we saw the number of adults grow significantly as we continue to emerge from Covid. Both Sunday mornings and Wednesdays Together offered a variety of opportunities for adults to grow in their faith.

**Sunday School:** We had six different classes available:

**Studies of Scriptures**, led by John Sensenbrenner, studies the lectionary reading each week.

**The Crew**, led by David Deeds, studies different subjects within the New Testament.

**Faith in Action**, led by Jewel Barber and Joyce Brigman, is a women's study using the Augsburg Bible Study Series for conversation, fellowship and learning.

**Faith, Fellowship—The Bible and Beyond**, led by John Stensrud and Milt Milton, Miriam Morrison and Barbara Burton, alternate between topical to Bible studies for in depth reflection.

**Emerge**, led by Rob and Kristen Stark, explores the specific interests and needs for young families.

**CLC Book Club**, led by Dan Hansen and Carl Edgren, is a lively book study with engaging topics and in-depth conversation.

At **Wednesdays Together**, we typically had five classes from which to choose:

**GriefShare**, led by Chris and Kimberly Mengel, is offered twice a year to those experiencing the loss of loved ones.

**Women Making Connections**, led by Lara Barnett and Brook Schell,

is a biblically centered, lively and engaging study and conversations for women.

**Pastor Scott's Bible Study**, will pick different biblical texts to go into greater depth for learning and conversation.

**Pastor Adrienne's Study**, sometimes highlights the sermon topics and at other times thematic interests.

**Life in Christ with Kids**, led by Pastor Ryan, this class gathers parents of children to speak about parenting skills to raise faithful children.

There are certainly more classes throughout the week, offered by individuals, as well as small groups that meet on their own with their own schedules and topics. We encourage everyone to find a way that best suits their interests and schedules to be further equipped with God's Word.



Scott Suskovic  
Senior Pastor

## Christ Online

Another year has come and gone in online ministry, and I'm going to say that for 2023, status quo was NOT a bad thing as we were technically the largest campus of Christ Lutheran. Christ Online averaged 398 "devices" on Sundays, with more on bad-weather weekends and maybe a few less on gorgeous southern Sundays. Blair Barbour and I shared online chat duties, and we've gotten in a good

routine and pace. We have our regular attendees and those who pop in and out if they're home sick or travelling. We're looking to continue to grow our reach through plans to revamp our Social Media presence in the coming year and add a Bible Study opportunity for those who consider themselves Christ Online members. If you have a knack for communicating and you'd like to join us,

we could always use help on Sunday mornings. Just reach out to me at [awilliams@christelca.org](mailto:awilliams@christelca.org)

I'm looking forward to another year online with you all!

Alexis Williams  
Online Minister



Alexis Williams,  
Christ Online  
Minister



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providence | concord | online

4519 Providence Road • Charlotte, North Carolina 28226  
(704)366-1595 • [christelca.org](http://christelca.org)

