



Annual
Congregational
Report

February 2025

From our Pastor...

2024 was an Event-Filled year at Shepherd of the Hills. From January through March, I witnessed congregational life from a distance as I was recovering from one surgery, then having a second surgical round and recovering from that. It was gratifying to know that with the Staff and the lay-leadership the Lord's ministry was ongoing involving Jesus' disciples. I am grateful, too, for the presence of pastors Nathan Anderson and the Pastors Strug for providing worship-leadership and preaching until I was able to resume that part of the pastoral work here. I am grateful as well to the Liturgist, the Altar Guild and the musicians who welcomed my colleagues who joined them in providing for Shepherds' worship.

Words fail to adequately express Rebecca's and my thankfulness for the kindness and affection Shepherd of the Hills showed us at the time of Christopher's death. Along with us, our surviving children—Daniel and Elisabeth knew that your prayers included them though you have never met them. All of us were blessed.

Aside from the above, I want to mention the activities that made for a fuller Congregational life here. Heather prepared for and led our youth to this year's ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. The youth and parents assisted in the relocation of the "Youth Room" from the lower-level to Room 5 and the Office space used by the Samaritan Counseling group after they terminated their service to the surrounding community. Additional events were planned and carried forward by the Fellowship Committee, Christian Ed. Committee and the many people who assisted in setting up and participating in the events.

As we moved through the Liturgical Year, our Lenten Season was brought to a beautiful conclusion with the Good Friday Cantata presented by Randy Casey and the Choir under the direction of Steve Szalaj.

Additionally, this past year saw important work done in our parking lots including replacement of the wiring that runs beneath the surface of the parking lot following a transformer failure that resulted in repairs to our building's electrical system including the building alarm system. Cristy Karaba and Bob Preston faithfully managed the ongoing well-being of our facilities; and together they took care of the contracting for services and the carrying forward of the contractual agreements that were set forth. Shepherd of the Hills owes a debt of gratitude to both Bob and Cristy for their years of faithful service in caring for the wellbeing of all who are a part of our congregational community. They have seen our fellowship through both good and difficult circumstances. Now they have chosen to retire from their ministries in these areas as they continue to be members in good standing of this family of faith. We owe them thanks, as well, for their financial leadership and direction. Bob has served as the treasurer for more than a decade and Cristy has been the financial director alongside him during the same. Before taking leave of these assignments, they helped supervise the training of a new financial director (Ms. Willetta Wheeler) and Jay Quinlan who has assumed responsibility for overseeing the building and managing the responsibilities associated with the various contractual matters that arise in providing the management of the physical plant we call our congregational home.

These things and many more, along with the people mentioned, and the countless hours of service provided by others of our siblings, particularly the crews that provide for the sharing of meals together, especially my early-Sunday-morning-companions arriving at the church shortly after I arrive. Much gratitude to you.

Likewise, thanks to disciples who have welcomed Becky and me to be counted among the fellowship here.

Last and by far not the least, I give thanks to God for the Call Committee that, along with the Staff of the Northern Illinois Synod continue to discern where the Spirit is leading.

In conclusion, I remind us that the Head of the Church, Christ Jesus Our Lord, has already selected the person to serve as the next Lead Pastor. The Spirit will indeed bring you and that person together at the right time. To all of you and because of who you are, beloved children of God, I say Thank You and many blessings besides.

Blessings,
Pr. Rob

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

January 27 & 28, 2024

Opening – Council President Carol Janssen called the meeting to order at 5:43 pm on Saturday, January 27, 2024, during the 5:00 pm service. The meeting was reopened at 9:19 am on Sunday, January 28, 2024, during the 8:30 am worship service, and again opened at 10:09 am during the 10:00 am service.

Minutes – The minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting were presented in the report. The President asked that they be moved and seconded for approval. The details are:

	SATURDAY 5:00 PM	SUNDAY 8:30 AM	SUNDAY 10:00 AM
MOVED	Greg Tabert	Jackie Huddleston	Dave Olson
SECONDED	Cristy Karaba	Kathy Chamberlain	Lorie Englert

There was no discussion and the motion passed at each service.

Minutes – The minutes of the 2023 special congregational election to ratify the call committee nominees were presented in the annual report. The President asked that they be moved and seconded for approval. The details are:

	SATURDAY 5:00 PM	SUNDAY 8:30 AM	SUNDAY 10:00 AM
MOVED	Greg Tabert	Janet Heard	Sara MacMeekan
SECONDED	Lee Hartwig	Judy Byer	Kathy Marinangel

Treasurer's Report – President Carol Janssen presented the 2023 Financial Review and the 2024 Budget.

Fiscal year 2023 Financial Review - Although Fiscal year 2023 resulted in a loss, it was not as large as expected. The actual loss was \$24,039 versus the \$32,492 budgeted for the year. We have monitored expenses closely, renegotiated contracts and contested charges, when necessary, as we will continue to do in 2024. This is the first year since 2020 we have not received government PPP or ERC funds. In total, approximately \$222,500 has been received over three years. These funds have positively affected our bottom line, and even allowed us to transfer some of the money to the Reserve Fund. The Before & After School Program saw another good year. Their income was up \$25,000 over 2022. Bright Beginnings Preschool Program also continues to grow and contributed \$9,539 towards our overall income. We thank our church members for their continued support and generosity, offering not only financial gifts but their time and talent as well.

2024 Proposed Budget - Our 2024 proposed budget was developed using the first 10 months of revenue and expense in 2023 and projecting the final two months based on previous years' experience and current conditions. From there, we examine what increases we may expect as well as economic predictions. For example, minimum wage increased in 2024 to \$14.00/hour and will be raised again in 2025 to \$15.00/hour. The budget reflects congregational offerings, and revenues generated by our Before & After and Preschool programs, as well as the expenses associated with each. Taking all these factors into consideration, we are proposing a budget deficit of \$55,067. We will strive to reduce this deficit, via both increased revenue and reducing costs where we can. Be assured that our staff continuously monitors expenses and does an excellent job of avoiding all non-essential purchases. Again, we thank the congregation for their continued support of our church. We would not be able to provide the ministries we offer without you. Finally, I would

Minutes of the Annual Meeting ~ Continued

January 27 & 28, 2024

like to take this opportunity to thank our Treasurer, Bob Preston, and our Finance Director, Cristy Karaba, for all their hard work in the budget formation process. This was not an easy task. Both Cristy and I welcome the opportunity to meet with any of our congregation to answer any questions you might have.

The President then asked that the 2023 Financial Report be moved and seconded for approval. The details are:

	SATURDAY 5:00 PM	SUNDAY 8:30 AM	SUNDAY 10:00 AM
MOVED	Susan Schultz	Jim Heard	Mark Ponga
SECONDED	Lois Randall	Sue Murphy	Donna Quinlan

There was no discussion and the motion passed at each service.

The President then asked that the 2024 Budget be moved and seconded for approval. The details are:

	SATURDAY 5:00 PM	SUNDAY 8:30 AM	SUNDAY 10:00 AM
MOVED	Greg Tabert	Judy Byer	Jay Nalley
SECONDED	Barb Gaskell	Jim Heard	Stephen Karaba

There were a few questions asked during the discussion. The first question asked if there was a chance not to have a deficit of \$55,000. Kristy Karaba answered the question indicating we will look to do a 2024 Stewardship campaign to increase contributions. We have had an increase in revenue with B&A expansion this past year and expect to see that continue. The congregation was also asked to volunteer and help in any way if they can. We will look to announce where talents are needed. Please consider helping in one of the three council committees currently focused on Worship, Membership, and Christian Education. Another question was asked how long we can run a deficient until we are insolvent. Cristy answered the question indicating we have a good and healthy reserve, but it will not last forever.

After the discussion, the motion passed at each service.

Council Nominees – The President presented the following nominee for a 3-year term on the church council; Jason Vanick. There were no nominees from the floor. The President then asked that the council nominees be moved and seconded for approval. The details are:

	SATURDAY 5:00 PM	SUNDAY 8:30 PM	SUNDAY 10:00 AM
MOVED	Susan Schultz	Kathy Chamberlain	Lorie Englert
SECONDED	Jay Quinlan	Gail Anderson	Cristy Karaba

There was no discussion and the motion passed at each service.

Endowment Committee nominees - The President asked that it be moved and seconded for approval that the Council appoint the following nominees to the Endowment Committee; Carol Janssen, Bob Preston, Kathy Marinangel, Jim Heard, Pam Umbarger, and Lorie Englert. There were no nominees from the floor. The details are:

	SATURDAY 5:00 PM	SUNDAY 8:30 PM	SUNDAY 10:00 AM
MOVED	Greg Tabert	Jackie Huddleston	Barb Nalley
SECONDED	Lois Randall	Sue Murphy	Lois Randall

There was no discussion and the motion passed at each service.

Minutes of the Annual Meeting ~ Continued

January 27 & 28, 2024

Synod Assembly Delegates – The President asked that it be moved and seconded that the Council appoint delegates to the Northern Illinois Synod in June 2024 at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL. The details are:

	SATURDAY 5:00 PM	SUNDAY 8:30 PM	SUNDAY 10:00 AM
MOVED	Cristy Karaba	Martha Finkbeiner	Kathy Marinangel
SECONDED	Lena Janssen	Sue Murphy	Dave Olson

There was no discussion and the motion passed at each service.

Old Business – There was no old business to discuss.

New Business – 8:30 am Service – A member asked who handles the building cost and maintenance issues. The president responded Bob and Kristy oversee the building and ensures things are taken care of. Carol Janssen continued to state the reserve fund was donated by a member and those funds can be used to assist with maintenance costs. The endowment fund: however, cannot be used by the church to cover costs or deficits from the church. 10:00 am Service – Brian Anderson brought up a concern indicating the current music hymns selections are difficult to sing and suggested we sing more familiar hymns. The president indicated the worship committee will take the suggestion under advisement. In addition, a hymnal campaign will be coming as part of the Lenten offering to purchase more of the red books. This will provide the opportunity for members to use the books and see the musical notes while singing and learning the newer hymns. Carol Harrington asked if the council has considered hiring a new youth minister. The president indicated the council has considered this in the past and unfortunately the budget does not allow room for this expense at this time. Furthermore, we are looking for a new Pastor and hopefully they will align nicely with youth ministry. Kathy Marinangel suggested the council look at the budget in the future to determine if some things we have covered under the children’s programs can be paid for by the endowment committee. There are funds in the endowment allocated towards children’s programs. Another suggestion was made to do more fundraising and get more contributions to offset the funding of the Youth Group Trips. Carol Janssen explained that the endowment fund offsets those costs but perhaps that is something we can consider, expanding offerings in other ways.

Suspension/Adjournment – The President asked that the meeting be suspended until the proper time at the next worship service. The details are:

	SATURDAY 5:00 PM	SUNDAY 8:30 PM
MOVED	Greg Tabert	Kathy Chamberlain
SECONDED	Lee Hartwig	Martha Finkbeiner

At the 10:00 am service the President asked it to be moved and seconded that the meeting be Adjourned. It was moved by Jackie Huddleston and seconded by Carol Janssen. The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christina Johnson
Council Secretary

2024 Statement of Receipts and Expenses

SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS

Offerings, Building, Other	\$338,011
Space Usage	\$41,649
Memorials	\$1,665
Preschool/Before & After School Care	\$325,491

TOTAL RECEIPTS **\$706,816**

SUMMARY OF EXPENSES

Missions (Worldwide & Local)	\$37,487
Worship	\$10,943
Parish Education	\$8,242
Stewardship	\$2,165
Evangelism	\$903
Parish Ministries	\$284,235
Office & Administration	\$16,379
Other Expense	\$19,714
Preschool/Before & After School Care	\$222,125
Church Home:	
Utilities	\$30,220
Maintenance & Custodial	\$70,017
Equipment & Insurance	\$33,326

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$735,755**

2024 SUMMARY

TOTAL RECEIPTS **\$706,816**

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$735,755**

NET GAIN (LOSS) **-\$28,939**

2024 Balance Sheet

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

General Checking Account	\$70,800.69
Office Checking	\$797.40
<u>SUBTOTAL CHECKING ACCOUNTS</u>	<u>\$71,598.09</u>

RESERVE ACCOUNTS

Reserve Accounts	\$635,454.89
------------------	--------------

BUILDING ASSETS

Church Land	\$401,451.55
Church Building & Grounds	\$3,939,793.00
Church Contents	\$722,829.97
Church Vehicle	\$16,900.00

SUBTOTAL BUILDING ASSETS **\$5,080,974.52**

ENDOWMENT FUND ASSETS

Endowment Fund	\$975,139.36
----------------	--------------

ACH/CC TRANSIT ACCOUNT

ACH/CC Transit Account	\$95.00
------------------------	---------

TOTAL ASSETS **\$6,763,261.86**

LIABILITIES

FUND BALANCE

Fund Balance	\$6,763,261.86
--------------	----------------

TOTAL FUND BALANCE **\$6,763,261.86**

TOTAL LIAB. & FUND BALANCE **\$6,763,261.86**

2025 Proposed Budget

RECEIPTS	2025 BUDGET
Envelopes, Loose & Sunday School	\$271,150
Special Gifts	\$6,000
Building Fund	\$10,600
Other Income: Memorials, Space Use, Misc. Programs, Interest	\$74,050
WELCA/Thank Offerings	\$3,000
Preschool	\$119,975
Before & After School Care	\$240,550
TOTAL INCOME	\$725,325
DISBURSEMENTS	2025 BUDGET
Ministry Support Staff	
Church Staff Salaries	\$263,041
Parish Housing	\$0
Staff Pension & Health Welfare	\$11,840
Staff Car Allowance/Phone	\$10,000
Staff Payroll Taxes	\$15,000
Subtotal	\$299,881
Office Expense	
Computer/Technology	\$7,650
Stationery/Supply	\$2,500
Postage	\$2,500
Staff Training & Miscellaneous	\$1,250
Subtotal	\$13,900
Evangelism Expense	
Evangelism, Stephen Ministry, Marketing, Fellowship	\$3,800
Stewardship	
Offering Envelopes & Publications	\$2,400
Worship	
Music Program	\$4,100
Certificate & Altar Supply	\$1,000
Nursery	\$4,400
Subtotal	\$9,500

2025 Proposed Budget ~ Continued

Parish Education	2025 BUDGET - Contd.
Pastor's Continuing Education	\$1,500
Sunday School, Confirmation & High School	\$1,945
Youth Ministry & Retreats	\$2,325
Vacation Bible School	\$5,200
Adult Education & Library	\$800
Subtotal	\$11,770
Benevolence	
ELCA Benevolence	\$20,000
Weekend Meal Ministry	\$1,500
Local Assistance (SOTH Food Pantry)	\$12,800
Children's Christmas Program/Splash	\$2,300
Missions	\$1,900
Subtotal	\$38,500
Other Expenses	
WELCA	\$5,000
Other Expenses: Coffee, Flowers, Refreshments, Kitchen...	\$7,235
Subtotal	\$12,235
Church Building/Property	
Utilities	\$33,500
Janitorial	\$45,500
Building & Property	\$9,200
Service Contracts & Equipment Leases	\$25,300
Insurance	\$23,700
Subtotal	\$137,200
Preschool Expense	\$88,342
Before & After School Care Expense	\$144,545
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$762,073
2025 INCOME/EXPENSE	-\$36,748

Endowment Fund Report

The Endowment Fund was established in February of 1987 by generous members of our congregation. The proceeds from the Fund are only to be used for special ministries such as scholarships to Lutheran colleges and seminaries, Bible Camp scholarships, leadership training for our youth, assistance to area families in need, as well as many outreach ministries including world disasters and missions.

The Endowment Fund is restricted and may not be used for the general expenses of the church which are covered by the annual church budget. It is specifically to be used to provide “extras” which could not be accomplished without its support.

It is hoped that individuals or families might consider a gift to the Endowment Fund through a memorial, charitable remainder annuity trust, stock certificates, a donation of property, or remembering the Endowment Fund in a will.

The Endowment Fund provides an opportunity for people to continue supporting the ongoing ministry of the Lord even after their death. Members of the Endowment Fund Committee stand ready to visit with anyone who might be interested in contributing to this important ministry.

The committee meets quarterly to review investments and the budget and to discuss ways to share with others how they may also make gifts to this special fund. The committee makes recommendations to the Church Council which in turn gives final approval to the programs.

The committee members are: Kathy Marinangel, Lorie Englert, Jim Heard, Pam Umbarger, Council President, Church Treasurer and Pastor Rob Kinnear.

If you would like more information about the Endowment Fund and its ministry, you may contact any member of the committee or the church office.

The following programs were provided by the Endowment Fund during 2024

Caring Fund/Benevolence	\$19,500
Youth Retreats & Activities	\$17,000
Spark, Splash, Bibles, Books	\$250
Outreach Events	<u>\$6,250</u>
Total	\$43,000

Reserve Fund Report

The Reserve Fund serves as the Church’s emergency fund and savings account. Wilbert Hecht funded this account with a generous bequest in 2015. His wish was that it would allow SOTH to keep our building updated and in good repair, making it a pleasant place to worship and share fellowship. We are very fortunate to have received this gift. The Church has also added money to the Reserve Fund as it was able. In the past, funded work has included: New HVAC, kitchen remodel, COVID upgrades and mitigation measures, parking lot repairs, education wing refurbishment, recording and broadcasting equipment for worship, computer network infrastructure upgrades, plumbing upgrades and painting the exterior of the building. In 2024 repairs to the Sanctuary lighting were made.

PARISH REPORTS

Council Summary

We are blessed to have a wonderful congregation at Shepherd of the Hills church. This year we are celebrating our 60th anniversary and our church has a long history to be proud of. We began building our church on November 1, 1964, and officially held our first worship service on June 13, 1965. During our history, we have seen many changes, but one thing that has remained the same is the love, passion, and dedication the “disciples” of this church exhibits. Thanks to all of you who have stepped in to help and serve in so many ways. I am grateful for your commitment, your faithfulness, your generosity, and your joy in serving! It shows! As the song lyrics say, “And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love!”, our actions are speaking loudly in this church and in our community.

This past year has been busy, and I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish, and I am happy to share some of our highlights. The council reviewed accommodations for the hearing impaired to make the worship experience more enjoyable. We updated our employee handbook to reflect our communication policy and to include the paid leave for all workers act. We have continued to make improvements on our building and have reviewed our building security policy. We introduced monthly council updates to the congregation and added a council update section to the monthly scroll. We implemented a youth protection program where all volunteers, council and staff that work with children get a background check and complete training. In the past year we welcomed 2 new members to our church and have welcomed a growing number of visitors to our church. We welcomed Willetta Wheeler as our new Finance Director and she has been a wonderful addition to our staff. We continued to rent space to several outside groups, we renegotiated our agreement with Head Start, who is our primary renter. Lastly, we introduced a new an exciting worship service called “Worship at Full Volume”. This service is currently being revamped and will return in March 2025 and I am excited for the future of this new worship service.

This year our youth were able to attend the Youth Gathering in New Orleans. We are also exploring different bible study opportunities for young adults. Our commitment to an active Youth & Family ministry gives us opportunities to show God’s love to the younger generations, so that they may grow up knowing God’s peace, love and acceptance in their lives.

My personal thanks to our council members – Jason Vanick, Vice President, Jackie Huddleston, Secretary, Bob Preston, Treasurer, Carol Janssen, Barb Nalley, Paul Morgan, Jay Quinlan, and Jake Stemmen, and Pastor Rob Kinnear. Thank you for inspiring and supporting me in leading this congregation and more importantly for sharing your time, talent, and commitment to make this past year a successful one.

We are still embarking on a new phase of life at Shepherd of the Hills by searching for a new Senior Pastor of this church. I am confident that we will find the right Senior Pastor of this church and that they will lead us into the future, and it will be a successful one. Please continue to keep the call committee and council in your prayers as we continue this process.

Christina Johnson, Council President

Treasurer's Report

Fiscal year 2024 ended with a loss of \$29,143. Obviously, we are not please with these results, however, when compared to our projected budget loss of \$55,067, we fared much better than in previous years. We continued to closely monitor, negotiate and contest any and all charges we find that are erroneous or not adjusted properly by our vendors. Our hourly employees, whose per hour rate was under \$15 as mandated by the state, has been adjusted to the \$15 per hour rate and is reflected in the 2025 proposed budget.

The 2025 proposed budget was completed and approved by the church council and has been on display for the past 30 days. This budget includes proposed revenue and expenses for our Before and After program as well as our Preschool program. This year’s budget is projecting a loss of \$36,748. Again, we are not pleased with these numbers, however, we have seen signs of an uptick in attendance which will have a positive effect on this budgeted loss. The Before and After and Preschool numbers continue to be consistent compared to previous years. This consistency has given us a solid base, which will allow us to develop programs that will increase membership and attendance in our church. As always, we on the council are extremely appreciative of our congregations support, generosity and giving of your time and talents.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the congregation for your continued support over the years and for allowing me to be your treasurer. I will be moving on and am looking forward to what the Lord has planned for me. Thank you.

Robert Preston, Council Treasurer

Nursery, Sunday School and Confirmation Programs

Christian Education at Shepherd of the Hills had a very strong, successful year. I worked hard on establishing a youth protection program for all volunteers who engage in activities with children. Christian Education is for both children and adults. This past year I am proud of how I have delved into providing education to all ages in our church. During Holy Week, I had more participants in the 3rd annual Watch at the Cross Maundy Thursday event. At this event, each year another educational piece is added. Each participant can read and view Jesus' Walk to the Cross depicted in words and pictures, the liturgical calendar explained, Favorite Bible stories for families to read, and the meaning behind each stained glass window. Pastor Rob took this Stained Glass explanation I wrote and used it this past summer for his sermon series. I wish more people will come in 2025 to experience this Maundy Thursday event as it is an impactful Christian Education event created for all ages.

Other ways that the students and congregational members have been brought together to promote the spirit of Christian Education is when in the Fall the Sunday school and Confirmation students passed out inspirational leaves to the congregation members as they exited the church service. The "Widow's Offering" lesson was about when we give to others, then we also grow in love, spirit and kindness. Our November service project with the froggy kits also got all members cutting out fabric froggy's and several ladies taking those home to sew, then the youth group delivered those to Ronald McDonald house. A true connection was also made during VBS when I also made kits asking the congregation to help decorate the church for Scuba VBS. All these opportunities help us to grow in faith and service together.

In January, 3 first grade and 7 sixth graders received bibles. We had 10 students make their First Communion in April 2024. There were 9 students confirmed in May 2024.

In July, I took 9 high school students and 3 adult chaperones to the Youth Gathering in New Orleans. Our week-long experience together has bonded this group who continue to meet twice a month for youth group and additional outings too. The students made a video of our Christian Educational experience which you can find on the Shepherd of the Hills website and Youtube page.

Our Youth and Confirmation classroom moved upstairs in August 2024. Emily and Charles Sweircz, high school juniors completed their BSA Scout Eagle Project to help renovate this new space.

Our VBS program in June was very well attended again with 192 youth and adults in attendance. Thank you again to all those who helped with the VBS kits which were a big aid in decorating.

Our SKIP (Shepherd's Kids in Praise) is in its second year. My son Quinn and I meet twice a month with the 14 students registered. In this Christian Education VBS style program, we teach bible stories through music, games, coloring, and crafts.

In the Fall of 2024, there are 2 Nursery students, 41 Sunday School students, and 19 confirmation students who are active and registered coming to Sunday school and confirmation classes.

This year I not only continued the 10 interactive stations for the students during the Christmas Extravaganza event, but I also ordered Advent calendars, study guides and made 5 interactive adult stations in Fellowship Hall. Everyone of all ages was able to engage in all 15 interactive stations revolving around Advent. I noticed that adults stayed in Fellowship Hall instead of continuing through to the Back to Bethlehem section thereby this year I created 5 stations for those who didn't want to leave Fellowship Hall. This year's Christian Education stations for adults in Fellowship Hall revolved around the History and meaning behind the Advent Candles and Wreath. I hope that members who participated were able to go home with an appreciation for the Advent season.

My hope is that every student grows in their faith through the Christian education classes we provide, and I believe in learning to serve others the students will learn more about themselves. Learning is lifelong hence it is important for all who want to expand their faith to watch for and engage in the Christian Education activities provided here at Shepherd of the Hills Church.

Heather Castaing

Christian Education Director of Children & Family Ministries

Youth and Family Programs

The Fellowship committee worked hard on making sure that Shepherd of the Hills families were able to enjoy both in church events and community events this past year. Some of our church events we hosted this year include Family BINGO, Chili Cookoff, Maundy Thursday Watch at the Cross, Easter Egg Hunt, Earth Day cleanup, Spaghetti Dinner, Youth Pancake Breakfast, Youth Car Wash, Annual Church Picnic, Trunk 'n' Treat, Bonfires, and BUNCO.

During 2024, our Fellowship committee planned some amazing Community outings for families including: seeing the Chicago Wolves and watching the Chicago Cubs play in Milwaukee. We have truly engaged with our surrounding communities, with Adult Fellowship opportunities to Raymond's Bowl, Ethereal, and Seasonal Craft Nights Out. Other community activities include Fiesta Days Parade, Historical Society Vintage Baseball, Woodstock Waterpark, Pearl Street Market to see McHenry City Band and Brass on Fire, the Annual Co-Ed Golf Outing, Light the Night, McHenry Murder Mystery, and the Carthage Christmas Concert.

I was happy to see such as successful God's Work, Our Hands Ministry Fair this year too. It was nice to see all the faithful who serve as volunteers in different capacities for our church. It kicked off our Rally day for Sunday School and Confirmation classes in fine fashion.

I am truly proud of our congregational efforts in servicing our community through Special Olympics volunteerism, our Spring PADS service project, volunteering twice at Feed My Starving Children, and our Frog Kit donations to the Ronald McDonald House. Through service projects we are truly following the directions of Martin Luther, founder of our Lutheran faith.

My hope for 2025 is to continue to do God's Work with the help of others in my committees that can support and guide my endeavors. I pray that each of us continue to work within our church family to build a strong, faithful community for our children to grow up in.

Heather Castaing
Christian Education Director of Children & Family Ministries

1Corinthians 3:9-11

"For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building."

Before and After School / Summer Camp Program

Summer camp was a success this year. Our camp was full of some amazing kids! 79 children participated and we were able to go on four bus field trips and have several on-site programs. Parental feedback was very good and said their kids would be back next summer! Registration is now open for returning students and will open up to the public January 6th 2025. We made a lot of wonderful memories this summer and look forward to making more!

Our B&A program had a great year and we anticipate 2025-2026 to be even better! We are opening up registration for the Fall 2025-2026 year on January 6th . We currently have 28 children enrolled in B&A and plan to continue growing!

Ashley Metcalf
Before & After School Director

Pre-School Program

Bright Beginnings Preschool had a great year! We are fully staffed, and our classrooms are full of happy children learning! We had many family events this year such as our Grandparents Day Program, a field trip to Richardson's Farm, Christmas Programs, our Annual Art Show, Daddy and Me Night, and a Mother's Day Program to name a few.

This school year we added a classroom to our program. Our current enrollment is 50 and all of our programs have waiting lists. Registration for the 2025-2026 School year has opened and is filling up steadily.

Jennifer Walker
Preschool Director

Property - Our Church Home

It is good to see our building full of children and adults busy with church services, Sunday School, Confirmation, fellowship fun, and outside groups! The Education Unit is an especially busy part of the church with Before & After and Bright Beginnings Preschool. Luther Hall continues to host the McHenry Head Start program during the week. Our building is a vital part of not only our church family, but also our community.

It takes many hands to maintain both the interior and exterior of Shepherd of the Hills. Thank you to all our members and friends who have worked hard to keep the landscaping attractive, the plumbing from leaking, the kitchen clean and the grass mowed.

During 2024, we have kept up to date with required building and equipment inspections, licenses and made repairs as necessary. Major projects completed were the addition (through hard work from our congregation) of the new AV Tech area, completion of the repair to our lighting in the sanctuary as well as an improvement to our security and fire alarm systems. Our Youth room was relocated upstairs, Heathers vision created this change as Head Start program expanded to include the youth area downstairs. The youth did an extraordinary job helping to see that project through and it looks great! The building sustained a large power outage and surge this summer when a feed line from ComEd failed and that has since been repaired.

Jay Quinlan
Council Member/Building

Carol Janssen

2024 was my fifth year on the Church Council. I was the council secretary in 2021, and elected to be the council president in 2022 and 2023. I am the mother of two grown daughters, Erika and Lena, and the proud grandmother of Natalia (10) and Henry (5). Lena and Natalia live with me and are also members of the church. Lena was confirmed at Shepherd of the Hills and Erika and John were married here. I retired in 2017 after 40 years in the Information Technology field. Since retirement I have been volunteering at church, and as a naturalist and youth educator at the Volo Bog State Natural Area.

Jackie Huddleston

I have been a member of Shepherd of the Hills for over 25 years. My husband David and I live in McHenry and have four adult children, Courtney, Kristin, Brandon and Alec, along with eight grandchildren. I studied mechanical engineering and work as a Regulatory Compliance Engineer at Andis in Sturtevant, WI. I enjoy traveling, hiking, time with family and friends, attending community festivals & fairs, volunteering throughout our community, participating in and watching most sports and I am an avid Cubs fan. I am blessed to be a part of Shepherd of the Hills. It not only gives me a place to worship, but a feeling of belonging and community where I can continue to grow and serve.

Barb Nalley

Jay & I have been members of SOTH for over 38 years. Our 2 adult children, were baptized, confirmed, attended Sunday school, & youth groups here. We are grandparents to 3 littles, who keep us busy and smiling. I've worked at NW McHenry hospital, as an administrative specialist, for the past 23 yrs.

I have served on altar guild, communion server, usher, greeter, substitute Sunday School teacher, and a youth group chaperone. Currently, I also lead the Monday Night Zoom prayer meeting & participate on worship committee.

There are so many ways to serve at SOTH. If you need help finding your perfect area, reach out to a council member or the church office. We'd love to have you. Gods work, Our hands.

James (Jay) Quinlan

I have been a member of Shepherd of this Hills for 28 years and a member of Church Council for 2 year (at the end of January) Council has been a rewarding experience and I am very excited for our future. I am also a member of the Membership and Fellowship committees and help with some of the building contracts and systems. Professionally, I am a retired Engineer working in the Telecommunication and Wireless field. My positions were in Corporate Technical Leadership and Technology Development. Personally, I am married to my wife Donna for 39 years (40 in September 2025!), we have one daughter Laney, who was married to her husband Dan, at Shepherd of the Hills on November 4th 2022. My hobbies all seem to involve either music or home projects, often at the same time.

Jason Vanick

I have been a member of Shepherd of the Hills for 13 years. My wife Tiffany Umbarger and I live in Woodstock, and her family has been a member of Shepherd of the Hills for 40+ years. I have been part of the contemporary service and praise band since its inception in 2014 and have been directing the Praise Band since 2021. I started our online worship platform in 2020 during Covid and produced all of the online services and music videos. I enjoy camping, playing music and photography. This is my 2nd year on council and continue to be excited creating new ways to bring in new members to worship our Lord.

Jake Stemmen

My name is Jake Stemmen. I have been a member of Shepherd of the Hills for the past three years where I have had the privilege of serving on the council for the past year. My wife, Kristin, and I live in McHenry with our two dogs. Kristin and I were married in August of 2023 and are excitedly expecting our first child to arrive in May of 2025. For work, I am a Heavy Equipment Operator for Martam Construction. During my free time I enjoy spending my time outdoors with my wife as well as working on cars. I find fulfillment in serving Shepherd of the Hills and I look forward to the opportunity to continue serving the church in the future.

NEW Council Members

Sharon Rinard

I have lived in McHenry for the past 15 years. Before that we lived in Island Lake and Wauconda. I joined Shepherd of the Hills on July 7, 2024. I recently lost my husband Richard Rinard, we were married for 37 years. I am a mother of 2 grown sons Jerry and Michael and 1 grown daughter Michelle, and a very proud grandmother of Harrison (5), Bella (4), Rose (3) and Ritchie (1). I still work full time out of my home working on computer drafting and quality checking other people's work. My hobbies are drawing, puzzles, sewing and someday crocheting & knitting. I enjoy volunteering at church, I help serve the communion. I always try to be helpful when I can. Ever since I started coming to Shepherd of the Hills it has felt like home.

Susan Porter

I have been a member of SOTH since June 2014. I have been a member of the choir before I officially became a member. I have 2 adult children and 2 adult grandchildren. John and Kat my granddaughter have been members of choir. At this time and for several years Kat has been singing with the Praise Band. I am retired many years from Peapod in customer service and in collections. I have been a greeter. I have assisted with the children's choir for several years. I have represented SOTH at the yearly Northern Illinois synod meeting for the past 9 years. I hope to be a member of council to bring a fresh voice and ideas.

Steve Spraker

I have moved to the McHenry area from Kankakee, IL in 2015 and live in Ringwood. I have been a member of Shepherd of the Hills since 2016. I am married to Vicki Spraker and we have 3 Kids - Alex (11), Carly (6), Ryan (4). I am Deputy Fire Chief - McHenry Township Fire Protection District. In my role as Deputy Fire Chief of Administration, I am responsible for managing the budget, 125+ personnel, 5 fire stations, 30+ vehicles, and the firefighters' pension fund. I served on the SOTH 2023 Call Committee.



Our Mission

Shepherd of the Hills will *love* people wherever they are, *live* the grace of God in Jesus Christ and *grow* in faith and service.

Our Vision

Growing disciples of Jesus that will change the world.

Our Values

Belonging, Welcoming, Fellowship, Integrity

Annual Congregational Meeting

Saturday, February 1 and Sunday, February 2, 2025

Agenda

Call to Order

Christina Johnson, President

Minutes of 2024 Annual Meeting

Treasurer's Report

Approval of Annual Budget

Election of Church Council

Election of Endowment Committee

Election of Synod Convention Delegates

Old Business

New Business

Adjournment