



Halfway Creek  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Annual Report  
2024

# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

All around us, we see signs of God’s love and goodness. A person who has stepped away from church for many years steps back into a congregation, feeling the call of the Holy Spirit. Young adults feeling isolated in a digital-first world start gathering in person in a small group, enjoying the warmth of a hug and a new friend asking about their week. A mother plants a garden, and it yields fruits and vegetables, giving her nutritious food for her kids and extra produce to sell at the local market. Everywhere we look, we see signs of Christ’s love. In Psalm 93, we read: “More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore” (4-5).

God’s love is a majestic thing, and it moves us to share it in word and deed. The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together to share God’s love with people in our neighborhoods, across our country and around the world.

I am so grateful for you, dear church. Your generosity to each of these three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has bolstered the church’s ability to share the message of God’s love to people who are longing for it. Through your

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“More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord! Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.”

—Psalm 93:4-5

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financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices, you’ve helped carry this message of God’s majestic love. Thank you, dear church. As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to stand steadfast in God’s promises, sure of God’s love and goodness.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

## OPENING LITURGY

Confident in God's generosity and gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us praise God and give thanks ...

God, we praise you and give you thanks.

**You are good, and your mercy endures forever.**

You gave us a garden with good food to eat.

**We praise you for food that nourishes us.**

You rescued your people from slavery.

**We praise you for freedom.**

You gave us prophets to correct, rebuke and encourage us.

**We bless you for your justice and mercy.**

You gave us your Son, Jesus, to love, redeem and save us.

**We praise you for his death and resurrection.**

You gave us your Holy Spirit to be our Advocate and Comforter.

**We bless you for the gifts of every tribe and nation.**

Strengthen your church with every spiritual gift

**and commission us again to be your servant people.**

Multiply in us the fruit of the spirit:

**love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.**

Send us in your love and mercy,

**that the world may know you and praise you.**

### Now Thank We All Our God



1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices,  
2 Oh, may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,  
3 All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given.



who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;  
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,  
the Son, and Spirit blest, who reign in highest heaven.



who, from our mothers' arms, has blest us on our way  
and keep us all in grace, and guide us when perplexed,  
the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;



with countless gifts of love, and still is ours to-day.  
and free us from all harm in this world and the next.  
for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

*Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 840*

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586-1649; tr. Cathering Winkworth, 1827-1878

Music: NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT, Johann Crüger, 1598-1662

Let us pray.

Gracious God, you are the giver of every good gift. Bless us with all that we need for ministry in your name, that we might be a blessing to others. In the name of the one who broke bread and fed the multitudes, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Our Staff 2024



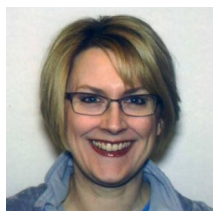
Chris  
Sesvold,  
Pastor  
(Jan.-Aug.)



Shari Ireland,  
Administrative  
Assistant



Rich Pedretti,  
Custodian



Lynn Wegner,  
Director of  
Music  
Ministries



Jodi Anderson,  
Bookkeeper

## Our Ministry





## Highlights from 2024 at HCLC

- Jan:** Welcomed at worship: Bishop Felix Malpica, Deacon Stephanie from Sugar Creek Bible Camp
- Feb:** Annual Meeting  
2nd annual Super Bowl Pizza fundraiser a huge success supporting the Youth Gathering trip  
Announced the Windows and Building Repairs project
- Mar:** New parking lot lights installed  
Quilters finished 30 quilts  
Donated over 500 homemade cookies to LuMin Campus Ministry for “Cookies on Campus”  
Welcomed 3 youth to Communion at the Lord’s Table
- Apr:** Windows and Repairs project fully funded and Krause Konstruction completed the work  
Cleaned out kitchen and storage areas and hosted a Rummage Sale and Bake Sale  
Confirmed 6 youth
- May:** Honored 5 high school graduating seniors at worship
- Jun:** Sent 3 delegates to Synod Assembly  
Completed landscaping and added new wood chips  
First of three Summer outdoor worship services
- Jul:** Had send-off for ELCA Youth Gathering participants  
Volunteered at Holmen’s Hope Summer Lunch program
- Aug:** Congregational Meeting  
Pastor Chris’ last worship service
- Sep:** God’s work. Our hands. Sunday at Holmen bandshell.  
Collected school supplies and wrote cards to teachers
- Oct:** Participated in 50th Anniversary of World Hunger program by hosting a food drive  
Hosted a Scrapbook/Craft Event and overfilled the grocery cart with food for the HLC food pantry  
Celebrated our 168th Anniversary  
Donated over 500 homemade cookies to LuMin Campus Ministry for “Cookies on Campus”  
Hosted annual Trunk or Treat with over 28 trunks and more than 150 visitors
- Nov:** Collaborated with Holmen FAA and collected food and money for WAFER  
Received a generous donation of \$42,000 from the Huston’s for debt reduction.
- Dec:** Received generous anonymous donations to reduce mortgage, pay back Thrivent funds, and pay back dedicated funds  
Participated in Jinglefest Holmen Home for the Holidays with a decorated tree in the park  
Multi-generational Christmas Program  
Celebrated the birth of our Savior at two worship services with 185 in attendance

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**Halfway Creek Lutheran Church  
Annual Meeting Agenda—February 2, 2025 – 11:00 AM**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Adoption of Agenda
- III. Opening Liturgy
- IV. Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes from 2/4/2024
- V. Approval of Congregational Meeting Minutes 8/4/2024
- VI. 2024 Ministry Review
  - A. Report from the Synod
  - B. President's Report and Highlights of 2024
  - C. 2024 Reports
    - 1) Property
    - 2) Other
  - D. 2024 Financials
- VII. 2025 Ministry Plan
  - A. Synod Authorized Ministry (SAM)
  - B. Proposed Budget
  - C. Election of Vision Board Representatives
  - D. Election of Synod Assembly Representatives
- VIII. Adjournment
- IX. Closing Prayer

**Trunk or Treat Highlights**



Halfway Creek Lutheran Church  
Annual Meeting Minutes, February 4, 2024 at 11:00am

- I. Call to order @11:03 by VB President Gaye Johnson. Quorum established with 37 HCLC members signed in.
- II. Motion made by Joe Feltes to adopt budget as published, Kathy Hagel second. Motion passed.
- III. Opening Liturgy led by Pastor Chris.
- IV. Motion to approve minutes of February 5, 2023 annual meeting made by Patti Happel, John Daily second. Motion passed.
- V. 2023 Ministry Review
  - A. Reviewed video by Bishop Malpica from La Crosse Area Synod.
  - B. Property - Review of needed building repairs and loan held by Merchants Bank by Kari Washburn and review of current parsonage income and expenses by Andrea Baxter.
- VI. 2023 Expense Report reviewed.
- VII. Options discussed to close gap between income and expenses both short term and long term. Included:
  - A. Capital campaign to pay off mortgage and repair needs.
  - B. Dedicated funds and memorials to begin repair work.
  - C. Patti Happel introduced and answered questions about a shared ministry model.
    1. Next step: Kathy Hagel made a motion to explore a shared ministry model for HCLC. Joe Feltes second. Motion passed.
- VIII. 2024 Ministry Plan
  - A. After discussion on the four proposed budgets, Kathy Hagel made the motion to move forward with Option 1 [no salary increases for staff and keeping Pastor at the 6 year synod salary guidelines (he is in his 7th year)]. Second by Carrie Payne. Motion passed.
  - B. New Vision Board members elected by paper ballot include: Carrie Payne, Nicole Stumlin, Bette Pedretti and Nancy Holley. Leroy Holley received a write in vote.
  - C. Thank you to outgoing VB members: Gaye Johnson, Mike Martin and Diane Jostad.
  - D. Anyone interested in attending synod assembly in June, please let a member of the VB know.
- IX. Motion made by Bill Achterkirch to adjourn, second by Darlene Feltes. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:20.
- X. Closed with the Lords' Prayer.

Submitted by Amy Noel, Vision Board Secretary



**Halfway Creek Lutheran Church Congregational Meeting  
August 4, 2024**

**NOTE: MINUTES REVIEWED BY VISION BOARD ON AUGUST 8, 2024, WILL BE APPROVED  
AT THE NEXT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

Call to order at 10:19AM by VB President Patti Happel. Forty-seven members present.

Opening prayer led by Pastor Chris Sesvold.

Letters from VB and Pastor Chris dated July 31, 2024 were available for review if not already received in the mail.

**Patti reviewed the information in the VB letter, a timeline of communication to the congregation and activity since the annual meeting.**

- October - Letter to congregation and informational sessions
- February - Annual meeting and approval of “bare bones” budget (no staff salary increases and holding Pastor to six year compensation level)
- Work of a committee to explore options for different ministry models.
- Regular financial information through bulletin, weekly ENews, newsletter and conversation.

**Financial questions discussed at the meeting.**

- Remaining Thrivent balance <\$7500
- Current monthly mortgage payment of \$2581. Current interest rate of 4.09%. End of July mortgage balance of \$292,622. Our loan is up for renewal in March 2026.
- On average thru July our total monthly offering compared to expenditures is -\$6125. This does not include rental income.
- Cost of supply pastor: \$175-\$200 per service plus mileage. (Refer to Synod guidelines.)
- Cost of closing includes: Lawyer fees, plan to sell property (realtor, survey and well sharing, etc.). At this time, we do not have the finances to pursue this.

**Ideas generated in discussion:**

- When youth were out in the neighborhood fundraising, they found that many people were not aware of HCLC and our ministry. Could we go into all the local neighborhoods with a different message (how we are part of the community, historical story to tell, etc.)
- Members were willing to connect with our “inactive” members.
- Community event (some fundraising) that allow us to be more visible. Already planning “Trunk and Treat”.

**Priorities:**

- Sunday School and Confirmation programming
- Worship planning between supply and lay led
- Planning around ideas generated today
- Supporting daily activities of the church & congregational needs (urgent pastoral care, etc.)

**We will need everyone’s help whether it is in time, talent or finance.**

**Whatever you can give to help us to move forward.**

**Pastor Chris addressed those present:**

- Grateful for my time here, I still feel the life within this congregation.
- Keep telling your story of faith.
- Advice: Go down a path of “holy closure”. If you need to close in the future, create your legacy.

Closed with prayer. Meeting adjourned at 11:14.

## **Vision Board President's Message**

Dearest Halfway Creek family,

As we prepare for our annual membership meeting, I can't help but look back on this past year. It has definitely been a bit of an emotional rollercoaster ride, hasn't it?

Taking a look at our financial sustainability made it necessary to think "outside the box" for ways to keep our doors open. We began by looking at the option of a part-time pastor. Initially, it appeared that might work, but we soon found out that our financial situation was much more dire than we had originally thought. We then had to consider the more drastic approach of trying to function without a called pastor, and what that might look like. Unfortunately, this is becoming more common than not within all churches. So, we will continue to persevere and work together with intention, to maintain our wonderful congregational family.

I am increasingly impressed by our congregational family!! Not only were we faced with a difficult decision, but here we are on the other side of that. As I look around, I see happy, smiling faces in our pews. I see a wonderful group of people who have let their faith be the guide, and I see strong resilience. So many have stepped in to help wherever and whenever it is needed. Please continue to pray for guidance and intention as we continue our journey.

We have been utilizing an amazing group of supply pastors, and we are so appreciative for them all. Our amazing staff have stepped up to take on extra responsibilities.....I don't know where we would be without them, so "Thank You" from the bottom of my heart!! I am continuing on the journey of SAM Ministry. I was just recently approved for this role.....we will update as soon as we have a clearer picture of what that may look like for us. And, last but not least, a huge debt of gratitude goes out to our Vision Board!! There has been a lot of responsibility placed on this group and, although not easy at times, they have embraced the need, and prayerfully made decisions that are hoped to be in the best interest of all.

Very generous donations have been made (some you are aware of, and some that prefer to stay anonymous) to help decrease our mortgage debt, and replenish our dedicated funds.....We appreciate them more than they will ever know!! As grateful as we are for these donations, we still need to take a long, hard look at our own sustainability. We are trying to put together a committee to detail what our legacy can look like, as we move forward. If you have an interest in helping with this task, please reach out to Vision Board.

WE ARE BRINGING BACK POTLUCK following the meeting!! It is something that I have missed, and it's a wonderful time for fellowship!! We have a signup, so please check that out.

One final "thank you" goes out to Kari Washburn, as she steps down from our Vision Board. Your time and talents have been an asset to the board, and you will be deeply missed.

Blessings to all ~

Patti Happel

HCLC Vision Board Co-President

## **2024 Vision Board Members**

Patti Happel, Kari Washburn, Amy Noel, Andrea Baxter, Carrie Payne, Nancy Holley, Bette Pedretti, Nicole Stumlin

## Worship Attendance

In person worship attendance is the average weekly attendance based on the number of weeks services were held. The average weekly in-person attendance for 2024 was 48.

\*\*\*This number reflects in-person services June 13, 2021, to December 19, 2021, and a parking lot service April 5, 2021.

\*\* This number reflects 10 services before they ended in March 2020 due to COVID-19.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
In Person	84	84	69	67**	37**	37	51	48
Online					35	18	22	13

The online worship attendance was determined by the number of views the weekly video had for the seven days after posting and then multiplying that by 2 (the approximate number of people watching from the same household). The average weekly online attendance was then calculated. In 2024, only 39 of the 48 services held at HCLC were livestreamed and viewable .

## Membership Statistics 2024

	Baptized	Confirmed
<b>Membership December 31, 2023</b>	476	385
<b>Members Received in 2024</b>		
By Baptism	3	
By Transfer	9	6
By Affirmation (Youth Confirmed)		6
<b>Total Received</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Members Removed in 2024</b>		
By Death	2	2
By Transfer	0	0
By Member's Request		
By Inactivity		
<b>Total Removed</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Membership December 31, 2024</b>	486	395

### Members Received by Baptism

Ryder Sherry  
Melody Bartnik  
Adalynn Loken

### New Members Received

Cody, Debra, Esther, & Calvin Smith

Tyler, Christine, & River Sherry

Wayne & Jeanne Atchley

### Confirmation, April 28, 2024

Ema Nedoba, Olivia Nedoba,  
Jillian Eide, Anna Holley,  
Rubianne Kinsman, Coleton Lee

## Music & Liturgy Team

During 2024, we tried some new things in worship and revived some things that have been successful in the past. Here are some of the highlights:

- In January, our confirmation students planned and led a worship service.
- We held a Sugar Creek Sunday in January.
- Our Lenten series was *24 Hours That Changed the World* by Adam Hamilton.
- The Sunday School and Worship Team sang at our Easter Service.
- In April, we confirmed six youth.
- In June, we welcomed Nancy Solberg who shared about the synod delegation to Peru and her Medical Equipment Lending Program.
- Our summer schedule returned to one service on Sunday morning and a monthly Wednesday evening service.
- We joined the other Holmen area churches for God's Work Our Hands Sunday in September.
- After a year-long sabbatical, worship team returned to singing once or twice a month as their schedule permits.
- The decision was made to offer one worship service at 10 am on Sunday mornings beginning Fall 2024.
- We have been blessed with very good supply pastors. Many worshippers have expressed that they enjoy hearing sermons from a variety of pastors.
- Our fall schedule included special services such as Blessing of the Hunters and Blessing of the Quilts.
- We had a multi-generational Christmas program that included a skit by adults and youth, songs by the Sunday School, and special music by our youth.
- We had a Blue Christmas service again in Advent.
- Our Christmas Eve attendance was slightly up from 2023 and we saw many new faces and the return of some families we have not seen in a long time!
- We have had youth (from elementary through high school age youth) share their musical talents with us this year.
- We have had youth participating in a variety of worship leader roles this year including: communion assistants, readers, acolytes, and power point techs.

Thank you to all who help to make our worship services joyful and uplifting!

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynn Wegner

## Stewardship Team

### Loose Offerings Make a Difference

Each Sunday, we ask you to put your change (and bills/checks) in the cake pan and to "Make some NOISE!" Over the past year, you have "Reached Out to Share Christ With All" and have made a difference within our church, our community and throughout the world. Let us show you how.....

**Within the church:** We started our loose offering campaign by collecting for the Quilting Ministry We supported youth programming and our youth going to the national gathering in New Orleans over the summer.

**Within our local community:** We have supported a variety of causes. This includes Holmen's Hope (and volunteered at the summer lunch program), Holmen School District lunch program, Lutheran Social Services and the Wafer Food Pantry. We also regularly donate food to local pantries.

**Within the world:** We contributed toward hurricanes disaster kits (that the youth put together at the national gathering). In October, Kathleen Jensen spoke to us about her “Little Heart Project” and awareness of mental illness. In December you contributed over \$542 to ELCA Good Gifts program.

**All of this generosity represents over \$4000! THANK YOU!!**

As we begin 2025, the Vision Board would like to hear from you if there is an organization that you volunteer for or a cause that is important to you, that we should consider for our “NOISY” loose offering. In January, we collected for Karuna House, an organization that supports our homeless community. We are currently “making noise” for the HCLC Quilting Ministry. In March, we want to support the Coulee Region Immigration Task force.

## **Property Team**

It was an amazing year for our church. We were able to accomplish so many repairs that needed attention. The biggest one being the repairs to our main structure. The window cracks were repaired, brick and mortar work repaired and the main building waterproofed. The office extension was power washed and given a fresh coat of paint. It was an expensive undertaking on our part, but the giving from our members made it all possible. My heartfelt thanks to all who gave their time and money to finish the job in 3 months.

The lights in the parking lot were upgraded with new fixtures and LED lighting. This was made possible by a donation from a family in our congregation. The lot is much safer in the evening. Thank you.

Bette and Rich Pedretti started a project that involved clearing all closets and storage space and kitchen of items that were no longer needed. All the areas were cleaned and reorganized. What items that were still useful were sold at our rummage sale. Another big thanks to all who helped.

The church grounds teams were also busy this year. Archie along with his group of hard-working ladies handled our garden this year. It's a hard job but they are a dedicated group. What vegetables the deer didn't eat were given to the food bank. This same group tackled the job of refurbishing our mulch around the building. Thanks to Archie for the use of his dump truck.

Mowing was made easier for me this year thanks to a donation of 2 mowers, one being a new John Deere. That made it possible for Rich to assist me with the mowing. What took me 5hrs. now takes 2 1/2hrs. I want to thank the congregation again for supplying gas money for mowing and for the donation of the mowers. It was a huge gift to the church. Many thanks to Rich for keeping the grass trimmed and looking nice.

Thanks to Rich and Bette for their tireless help in keeping the church grounds clear of weeds. Thanks to our group of ladies for also helping. Our Church grounds never looked so nice. Thank you!

A few projects to address this year: replace the back door on the east side of the church, paint the railings on the ramp, and have the highway dept fix the culvert on the entrance to the lot.

## **Parsonage**

Some work was done at the Parsonage this year. I repaired the leaking shower faucet, repaired the exhaust fan in the lower bathroom. I had to replace the dishwasher and the kitchen stove. I was able to do the work myself. Soon the sliding glass door in the main bedroom needs to be replaced. The Tennent who lives there goes on the roof and cleans the gutters for me, so I don't have to.

**Faithfully Yours,  
Mike Martin**

## Education Team

Sunday school started the 2024 school year with 6 kids registered and we offered 2 classes a month, the first and second Sundays. The kids sang songs for the Christmas program and did a great job.

Confirmation offered more flexible options for this 2024-25 school year with Sunday and Wednesday classes offered. On Sundays the confirmation students join the Sunday School on the first two Sundays of the month. Confirmation classes also meet on the 3rd and 4th Wednesdays of each month. Ten students are enrolled and they are learning the Old Testament along with participating in service projects.

Carrie Payne

### Confirmation Class 2024

On April 28, 2024 we celebrated Confirmation. Ema Nedoba, Olivia Nedoba, Jillian Eide, Anna Holley, Rubianne Kinsman, and Coleton Lee were confirmed in the faith. They read their faith statements at two worship services and shared their experiences. Their mentor was Kristie Tweed.



### Confirmation Highlights



February —Making communion bread with Bette.



February—Pizza fundraiser



May 8th—end of year party and outdoor games.

## Youth Gathering

The 2024 Youth Gathering, held in New Orleans, Louisiana in July, was the largest gathering we have as ELCA. 16,000 Lutherans filled the Smoothie King Stadium each night for worship, and took to the streets each day to engage in a variety of experiences.

From Halfway Creek, we were represented by five amazing youth, two fantastic chaperones, and a pastor. Every day was amazing from the interactive learning experiences put on by ELCA ministries such as World Hunger and Global Refuge (and many more), to the service projects on accompaniment day where we helped at local elementary schools. We took 20,000-30,000 steps and had our faith kindled by learning, service, music, and speakers for 5 straight days.

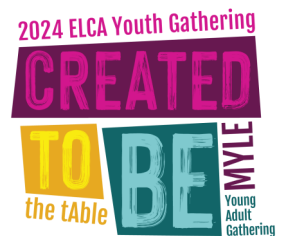
Participants learned that they are: Created to Be: brave, authentic, free, disruptive disciples. You are created to be loved. Go share the good news! -Pastor Chris



Gracie, Tonya, Anna, Olivia, Jodi, Ema, Jillian and Pastor Chris attended the 2024 Youth Gathering. Thanks to everyone who helped fundraise and support us throughout the year! From purchasing pizzas, candles, brats, meat, baked goods, chicken-Q and more, we appreciated the support, prayers and



encouragement!



Next Youth Gathering  
June 28-July 2, 2027,  
Minneapolis, MN.



## 2024 Youth Financial Report

Halfway Creek Lutheran Church General Youth Account  
Park Bank Checking

**Beginning Balance January 1, 2024** **\$10,194.49**

### Income/Deposits

Youth Donations	\$ 320.00
Aluminum Can's	\$ 650.00
Scrip card Raiseright rewards	\$ 26.57
Noisy Offering Youth Trip	\$1,537.63
Falls Meat Fundraiser	\$3,681.35
Pizza Sale Fundraiser	\$2,226.00
Bake Sale Fundraiser	\$ 752.50
Chicken-Q Fundraiser	\$5,383.57
Candy Bouquets & Mugs	\$ 130.00
Brat Barn Fundraiser	\$ 642.74
Lent Meals	\$ 397.00
Rummage Sale	\$ 172.00
Hotel for Luci from Journey	\$ 653.91

**Total Deposits** **\$16,573.27**

**Sub Total** **\$26,767.76**

### Expenses/Withdrawals

ELCA Youth Gathering	\$1,649.74
ELCA Youth Travel (Amtrak, Uber & Food)	\$3,994.85
ELCA Gathering Registration & Hotel	\$7,031.28
Falls Meat Fundraiser	\$2,387.50
Pizza Fundraiser to Journey	\$ 639.00
Chicken-Q to Journey	\$3,157.50
Brat Barn/Festival Foods	\$ 25.00
Youth Trip Swamp Tour	\$ 560.96
Youth Trip Creole Queen	\$ 400.00
Youth Gathering T-Shirts	\$ 170.00

**Total Expenses** **\$20,015.83**

**Checking Ending Balance December 31, 2024** **\$ 6,751.93**

Submitted by: Rhonda Britton, Youth Treasurer



## HCLC Ministries

### Quilters' Group

This year we made and donated 30 quilts to the Salvation Army, Red Cross, Catholic Charities and one quilt was given to an unsheltered man sitting on the curb. Our quilting sessions are on Tuesdays during February and March. Thank you to those who put together the quilt tops and those who help assemble the quilts!



### Befrienders

The Befrienders are a group of individuals that are an extension of the Lord's Table by providing Communion to individuals that are not able to physically be present in worship. We currently have four routes of 1 to 4 people that we visit in their current home. Three of our routes take us to long term care facilities. Each route is visited by a Befriender Team of 2 each month. Sometimes a physical visit just doesn't work, but even a call can make a difference for someone. Each visit includes a Bible reading, a prayer, communion and the Lord's Prayer. Of course, visits always

include some socializing and giving updates on the church.

This is a very important ministry for some of our congregational members, especially when there isn't a current pastor to visit them. If you know of someone who would benefit from this ministry or you want to get involved as a Befriender, please leave a message in the church office.

Befrienders: Sonja Nelson, Pat Martin, Susan Jostad, Donna Anderson, Marjorie Lee, Barb Hale, Ruth Jostad and Amy Noel. Bette Pedretti fills in as needed.

### Gardening

Our faithful gardeners are: Nancy Holley, Alice Miller, Diane Jostad, and Susan Jostad along with Archie and plants from Bill!

The garden flourished again this year with 9 trips to the Salvation Army to deliver bags of produce. Radishes, onions, beets, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, cabbage and 3 green beans (yes, the deer helped themselves this year!)



Our gardeners worked hard each week weeding the garden and also tidied up around the property! A huge thank you to Archie for all the prep and weeding he did. Another huge thank you to Bill for providing all the plants! Thank you to all the gardeners! What a great ministry we have at HCLC!

### Outreach

Throughout the year at HCLC we collected food donations on a regular basis and utilized these

donations to help supplement our local food pantries. We also participated in some focused food drives: In May we collected food items for the Holmen's Hope Backpack program. In October, we celebrated the 50th year anniversary of World Hunger by challenging HCLC to collect a total of 208 food items. The October donations went to our local food pantries at Holmen Lutheran and St Elizabeth's. In November, as a joint collection with a Holmen FFA student project, donations were made to Wafer Food Pantry in La Crosse. Thank you for supporting this important ministry.

Gods Work, Our Hands in September, gave us the opportunity to donate school supplies for our 4 local elementary schools, a joint effort along with Holmen Lutheran and Journey Lutheran. There was a wonderful response to this ministry as well. The school district truly was appreciative of our gifts.



We participated with the Holmen Lutheran Church Service Ministry Team in the Caring Tree Ministry again this year. A total of 316 gifts were given to 158 children from the Holmen School District. Thanks to all who gave generously.

Ornaments were sold to support the ELCA Good Gifts program that helps in many underdeveloped countries to provide a start to a sustainable lifestyle/income for those in need.

Thank you for participating in ALL these outreach ministries. It was a great year!

### LuMin Campus Ministry “Cookies on Campus”

Each month during the school year, LuMin La Crosse Campus Ministry sets up a “Cookies on Campus” table by the Clock Tower at UW-L. Area churches provide the homemade cookies which are a huge hit with the college students! This year HCLC volunteered to provide cookies for two weeks. In March, we donated over 400 cookies and in November we delivered over 500 cookies. From what we were told, the cookies were



enjoyed and disappeared quickly!!

Thanks to our HCLC bakers who made so many cookies for the students to enjoy this past year!

### Fellowship—Coffee & Treats

At HCLC we extend our worship time together by gathering for fellowship and enjoying coffee and treats! Each week members volunteer to make coffee, provide treats and even healthy snacks! What a great way to make memories, stay connected and welcome visitors and new members! Thank you to everyone who provides treats and spends time making coffee, setting up and then cleaning up the area afterwards.



## **Technology Team**

The main goal of this group is to assist and support Halfway Creek in utilizing technology in a manner that supports the vision of "reaching out to share Christ with all."

The technology team consists of the following members, and anybody is welcome to join.

Aaron Balow, Wayne Atchley, Shari Ireland

### **Website**

Our website: [www.halfwaycreek.org](http://www.halfwaycreek.org) is hosted and donated through DreamHost. The technology team ensures the web software is current and functional.

### **Endpoint Management**

Keeping our endpoints (laptops, pc's, etc.) up-to-date ensures they are secure and working properly. This includes Windows Patches, Anti-Virus software, and hardware drivers.

### **Microsoft Office 365**

Halfway Creek Lutheran Church utilizes Microsoft Office 365 which has been provided via donation from Microsoft. This system provides business productivity applications such as email, online file storage, online Office suite and collaboration tools.

### **Goals**

Look for ways to improve the congregation's utilization of its existing technology. Seek ways to reduce costs and minimize expenses through technology solutions. Update endpoints with latest software, such as new Operating Systems. Keeping our systems updated will ensure the latest tools are available to Halfway Creek.

### **Technology Updates**

After a late October power disruption, we discovered that the wi-fi network was no longer working throughout the building. Wayne Atchley volunteered to look into the issue and ended

up replacing the wi-fi network in December. The guest network wi-fi password is on display in the office and gathering space.

SIM Sound was scheduled to investigate our late fall livestream and sound issues. We discovered that the video capture card was failing. Aaron Balow replaced the card in December and the livestream has worked well since!

SIM Sound proposed an update to our soundboard and microphones in the sanctuary. The technology team and music team will be reviewing the proposal and make recommendations for updates/improvements in 2025.

## **Financial Report**

The finances for 2024 turned out to be as difficult as in 2022 and 2023. Throughout the year, HCLC borrowed from the dedicated fund and Thrivent Fund to cover general budget expenses.

Despite the struggle with funds in the general checking account, the congregation raised over \$37,000 to fund the Windows and Building Repairs project in the spring. Krause Konstruktion completed the work in April.

As summer ended, the difficult decision was made to end the contract with Pastor Chris and Halfway Creek Lutheran Church. This would allow HCLC to cut down on monthly expenses since no pastoral salary or benefits would be part of the monthly expenses.

During the fall, HCLC was able to cover monthly expenses with the offerings given by members. No funds were needed to transfer into the general fund from the dedicated fund or Thrivent Fund.

Halfway Creek received three very generous donations in the later part of the year. A total of \$92,288.83 of these donations were used

to pay the principal of the building mortgage. A donation of \$50,000 was directly paid to the Thrivent Funds. The third donation of \$6,745.07 was received to pay down the funds borrowed from the dedicated funds. This left the remaining balance owed to the dedicated funds at \$6,813.29.

The balance due on the mortgage at the beginning of 2024 was \$311,614.89. The remaining balance as of 12-31-2024 was \$183,791.68.

Thank you to the congregation and friends of Halfway Creek Lutheran Church for your donations this year. These donations totaled just over \$159,000.00. Despite the ups and downs of 2024, we were able to pay down the mortgage, restore funds to the Thrivent Funds, and put money back into the dedicated funds.

Carrie Payne, Treasurer  
Jodi Anderson, Bookkeeper

Halfway Creek Lutheran Church Financial Report	
Balances as of 12-31-2024	
General Checking Account	\$16,036.69
Dedicated Funds	\$14,348.62
Thrivent Funds	\$59,958.16
Merchants Bank Mortgage	\$183,791.88

	Total Offering	Rent Income	Expenditures	Difference
January-24	\$10,466.00	\$2,050.00	\$17,745.16	-\$5,229.16
February-24	\$15,122.75	\$2,050.00	\$19,806.04	-\$2,633.29
March-24	\$16,901.55	\$2,050.00	\$19,390.50	-\$438.95
April-24	\$11,949.00	\$2,050.00	\$17,451.95	-\$3,452.95
May-24	\$11,480.00	\$2,050.00	\$20,764.22	-\$7,234.22
June-24	\$11,109.00	\$2,050.00	\$19,921.05	-\$6,762.05
July-24	\$13,292.00	\$2,150.00	\$18,118.25	-\$2,676.25
August-24	\$11,847.00	\$2,150.00	\$20,309.72	-\$6,312.72
September-24	\$12,034.00	\$2,150.00	\$18,417.91	-\$4,233.91
October-24	\$12,713.93	\$2,150.00	\$13,864.42	\$999.51
November-24	\$10,327.81	\$2,150.00	\$11,042.43	\$1,435.38
December-24	\$21,612.10	\$2,150.00	\$10,959.76	\$10,652.34
	\$158,855.14	\$25,200.00	\$207,791.41	-\$25,886.27

\*Amount owed to Dedicated Funds - \$6,813.29

## Our Ministry



## 2024-2025 Financials & Budgets

Halfway Creek Lutheran			
	2024	2024	2025
ACCOUNT	Proposed Budget	Actual	Proposed Budget
<b>REVENUE</b>			
<b>General Fund Income</b>			
Debt Reduction Offering			
Envelope Giving	208,641.28	155,915.29	156,000.00
Loose Offerings		3,649.85	3,650.00
Missions			
<b>SubTotal General Fund</b>	<b>208,641.28</b>	<b>159,565.14</b>	<b>159,650.00</b>
<b>Other Revenue</b>			
Building Use		700.00	500.00
Fundraiser		2,016.00	2,000.00
Other Income		628.21	
Thrivent Choice		1,231.00	1,000.00
Wedding Fee Revenue			
<b>SubTotal Other Revenue</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>4,575.21</b>	<b>3,500.00</b>
Cemetery Income			
Insurance			
Lawnmowing Reimbursement		2,637.43	2,700.00
<b>SubTotal Cemetery Income</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,637.43</b>	<b>2,700.00</b>
Rental Income			
Jazzercise		3,100.00	3,600.00
Parsonage Rent		22,200.00	22,200.00
<b>Subtotal Rental Income</b>		<b>25,300.00</b>	<b>25,800.00</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>208,641.28</b>	<b>192,077.78</b>	<b>191,650.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
<b>Christian Education</b>			
Adult Education	100.00	0.00	100.00
Bibles	200.00	0.00	100.00
Confirmation	400.00	81.30	300.00
Sunday School Curriculum	400.00	0.00	100.00
Sunday School Supplies	300.00	0.00	100.00
Vacation Bible School	100.00	0.00	100.00
Youth	100.00	70.00	100.00
<b>SubTotal Christian Education</b>	<b>1,600.00</b>	<b>151.30</b>	<b>900.00</b>
<b>Church Property</b>			
Church Property Maintenance	6,000.00	4,822.18	6,000.00
Custodian Supplies	700.00	585.68	700.00
Electricity	4,000.00	3,519.09	4,000.00
Heating	3,600.00	2,470.72	3,200.00
Insurance	6,600.00	7,291.25	7,500.00
Mortgage Payment	31,000.00	30,976.32	31,000.00
Snow Removal	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Stormwater Run Off Fee	700.00	398.20	500.00
<b>SubTotal Church Property</b>	<b>53,600.00</b>	<b>50,063.44</b>	<b>53,900.00</b>

	2024	2024	2025
<b>ACCOUNT</b>	<b>Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Proposed Budget</b>
<b>Employee Expense</b>			
Administrative Assistant	18,650.00	17,578.27	21,840.00
Bookkeeper	8,300.00	8,205.95	8,865.00
Cemetery Lawncare	2,200.00	4,025.00	4,000.00
Custodian	7,585.00	7,584.96	7,965.00
Employer FICA	3,700.00	3,462.18	4,655.00
Employer Medicare	800.00	809.74	1,100.00
Music Director	18,450.00	18,450.00	19,375.00
Synod Authorized Minister	0.00	0.00	13,000.00
Worker Compensation Insurance	1,300.00	1,076.92	1,500.00
<b>SubTotal Employee Expense</b>	<b>60,985.00</b>	<b>61,193.02</b>	<b>82,300.00</b>
<b>Financial Supplies</b>			
Accounting Services	500.00	495.00	600.00
Offering Envelopes	250.00	181.89	250.00
Stewardship Team	100.00	0.00	100.00
<b>SubTotal Financial Supplies</b>	<b>850.00</b>	<b>676.89</b>	<b>950.00</b>
<b>Lay Activities Expense</b>			
Befrienders	100.00	0.00	100.00
Communications/Technology Team	100.00	0.00	100.00
Conferences/Conventions	100.00	0.00	100.00
Evangelism & Discipleship	100.00	0.00	100.00
Outreach & Fellowship Team	100.00	0.00	100.00
Synod Assembly Representatives	400.00	450.00	400.00
Vision Board	100.00	25.00	100.00
Worship & Liturgy Team	100.00	0.00	100.00
<b>SubTotal Lay Activities Expense</b>	<b>1,100.00</b>	<b>475.00</b>	<b>1,100.00</b>
<b>Ministry Beyond Our Walls</b>			
Mission Support	9,000.00	9,000.00	9,000.00
Synod Assembly Offering	270.00	270.00	300.00
<b>SubTotal Ministry Beyond Our Walls</b>	<b>9,270.00</b>	<b>9,270.00</b>	<b>9,300.00</b>
<b>Office</b>			
Business & Legal Fees (licenses)	100.00	227.98	300.00
Electronic Fees (Vanco & PayPal)	550.00	574.70	650.00
Computer Software	1,000.00	1,067.00	1,200.00
Copy Machine Maintenance Agreement	1,300.00	1,056.72	1,300.00
Office Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00
Postage	1,400.00	1,145.59	1,400.00
Supplies	600.00	614.02	600.00
Telephone & Internet	2,100.00	2,059.62	2,100.00
Website (Domain Name)	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>SubTotal Office</b>	<b>7,050.00</b>	<b>6,745.63</b>	<b>7,550.00</b>
<b>Parsonage Expense</b>			

	2024	2024	2025
<b>ACCOUNT</b>	<b>Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Proposed Budget</b>
Parsonage Electricity	1,150.00	1,545.29	1,500.00
Parsonage Heating	900.00	765.93	1,000.00
Parsonage Maintenance	1,000.00	1,513.26	1,500.00
Property Taxes	4,000.00	2,700.00	4,800.00
<b>SubTotal Parsonage Expense</b>	<b>7,050.00</b>	<b>6,524.48</b>	<b>8,800.00</b>
<b>Pastoral Ministry</b>			
Book Allowance	300.00	25.00	0.00
Conferences & Conventions (required)	1,000.00	225.00	0.00
Continuing Education	800.00	0.00	0.00
Health Insurance	21,241.00	9,856.48	0.00
Housing Allowance	13,680.00	32,029.96	0.00
Mileage Reimbursement	2,500.00	653.67	0.00
Pension	0.00	4,304.16	0.00
Sabbatical Reserve	1,150.00	575.00	0.00
Salary	47,100.00	13,978.40	0.00
Social Security Allowance	5,282.00	4,401.60	0.00
<b>SubTotal Pastoral Ministry</b>	<b>93,053.00</b>	<b>66,049.27</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Synod Authorized Minister Ministry</b>			
Book Allowance	0.00	0.00	300.00
Continuing Education	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Conferences & Conventions	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Mileage Reimbursement	0.00	0.00	500.00
	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,800.00</b>
<b>Worship</b>			
Childrens' Sermons	100.00	0.00	100.00
Copyright & Licenses	1,200.00	1,128.00	1,200.00
Organ Maintenance	300.00	0.00	300.00
Piano Tuning	300.00	160.00	300.00
Sound System Maintenance	500.00	0.00	1,000.00
Special Events	200.00	0.00	200.00
Supplies and Materials	500.00	0.00	500.00
Supply Musician	1,020.00	765.00	1,020.00
Supply Pastor	1,250.00	4,243.40	15,000.00
Worship Supplies	250.00	533.02	500.00
<b>SubTotal Worship</b>	<b>5,620.00</b>	<b>6,829.42</b>	<b>20,120.00</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>240,178.00</b>	<b>207,978.45</b>	<b>187,720.00</b>
<b>Projected Revenue/Income</b>	<b>208,641.28</b>	<b>166,777.78</b>	<b>191,650.00</b>
<b>Projected Expenditures/Expenses</b>	<b>240,178.00</b>	<b>207,978.45</b>	<b>187,720.00</b>
<b>Net Profit (Loss)</b>	<b>-31,536.72</b>	<b>-41,200.67</b>	<b>3,930.00</b>

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at [LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA](https://LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA).

