



ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Hope Lutheran Church

8070 Rowan Road
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
724-776-3141
www.hlc.church

Christ is alive, and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
all earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

2024 IN PICTURES



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Hope Members,

We continued to focus on our mission (knowing God, inspiring people, transforming lives) and vision (growing community through service, learning and worship) at Hope Lutheran Church in 2024, and we were blessed with another year where we could expand our impact in our community.

I continue to be impressed and proud as I reflect on all that our congregation does within our community. This report captures only a portion of all that Hope does. If you are looking for ways to get more involved, or if you have any questions about programs at Hope, I encourage you to contact one of the committee chairs, a council member, or staff member to ask questions and to learn more.

Hope continued to grow in 2024, and people continue to return to in-person worship. There are many Sundays when the parking lot is tight, and the pews are full. Sunday School attendance continues to grow, and the Confirmation class is active with many kids. Our stewardship appeal was a success, as we received pledge commitments from over 60% of the congregation and displayed nearly one hundred hands across the church showing many of the ways our congregation is engaged with service. Pledging and giving continues to remain strong, and Council and the Congregation approved a budget of \$1.041M, which is the highest ever for Hope. We thank you all for your continued support!

Moving into 2025 there are still opportunities (and challenges) that await our congregation. The Call Committee continues to make progress in our search for our next Associate Pastor. We have a new Youth and Family Ministry Coordinator that will be responsible for growing aspects of both our youth and our family programs. And a growing congregation like Hope will continue to look for opportunities to grow our community, mission, and our ministry in 2025 and beyond.

I want to thank the Pastors and staff for an amazing year. Pastor Ron and the staff have done an excellent job carrying forward without a full-time Associate Pastor. A big thank you to Pastor Bob who has done a wonderful job moving into the role of interim Associate Pastor. The staff has done an amazing job in growing our music (and a trip to Carnegie Hall in NYC!), growing our Christian Education Program, growing our communications and digital media presence, and the office staff has excelled at keeping Hope moving forward. We are blessed to have Pastor Ron, who continues to grow our congregation, allowing us to do more mission work each year.

2024 was a year of growth for Hope, and it was driven by you, members of our congregation, as well as our incredible Pastors and staff. I am honored to have served as Council President for the past two years and am thankful to be a part of such a vibrant, resilient, and vital congregation. Elizabeth Bauer will be taking over as President in 2025 and I look forward to working with her.

In His Service,

Todd Kane - President, Church Council 2023-2024



FROM THE PASTORS


Dear Hope Family,

As I reflect on the past year and look ahead, one word stands out: blessed. We are truly blessed by God's grace, blessed by the love we share as a church family, and blessed with the opportunity to serve God's kingdom. Throughout this past year, we have seen God's hand at work in our ministries, our community, and our daily lives. As we look ahead, we can rejoice in the many ways God continues to pour out blessings upon us, not just for our own sake, but so that we can be a blessing to others.

Looking through the reports submitted, attending committee meetings, serving alongside many of you in ministry, I am so proud to be called here as your pastor and servant in Christ. The good work that we do for the sake of others amazes me. This year, we have been blessed to be a blessing, serving our community through acts of love, generosity, and compassion. Whether feeding the hungry, comforting the grieving, showing hospitality to everyone who walks through our doors, or extending kindness to those in need, we have sought to live out Jesus' words proclaimed at our baptisms: 'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven' (Matt 5:16). Through our social outreach programs such as Gods Work, our Hands, Summer Lunches, Hosanna Projects, Food Bank collections, and so much more we have been vessels of God's love, reflecting God's grace to those around us. As Proverbs 11:25 reminds us, 'A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.' In giving ourselves, we, too, have been renewed and strengthened and reminded that every blessing we share multiplies in the lives of others.

As we move forward, I would invite each of you to take part in the joy of serving and being a blessing to others. God calls us to share God's love in both big and small ways, reminding us in 1 Peter 4:10, 'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace.' Volunteer in our ministries, reach out to those in need, offer a kind word, or simply be present for someone who is hurting. There are countless opportunities to make a difference—through prayer, acts of kindness, and sharing the hope we have in Christ.

Again, thank you for allowing me to be your called pastor! It is, as I said, a blessing to be a part of this community of faith we call HOPE!

Pastor Ronald A. Brown 



FROM THE PASTORS


Dear Hope Church Family,

One of my favorite books of the bible is Ezekiel. It begins with the prophet/priest sent to his minister to his own people with the words, "...go to the house of Israel and speak my very words to them. For you are not sent to a people of obscure speech and difficult language..." (Ez 3.4-5) Ezekiel goes and shares God's Word of law and good news to the Israelites in Babylonian exile. Like the prophet, I am here among my own people, since Hope has been Carol's and my church home after "retirement."

I was asked to serve Hope beginning in the middle of February 2024 as part time Interim Associate Pastor. To assist Pastor Brown primarily by doing visitation, other pastoral care as needed, and to preach a few weeks a month. Over the past year I did over 90 visits to those homebound or in the hospital. I also took on leading our weekly Wednesday morning adult bible study. I have begun teaching an evening seasonal study this Epiphany. I do enjoy the opportunities to get to know everyone better, preach, lead worship and teach; and am glad to be of assistance in this time of transition.

We pray that the Holy Spirit leads a pastor to the full time Associate call, however, until that time I am willing to continue to assist as I am able.

Respectfully submitted,



Pastor Bob Zimmerman



Hope Lutheran Church
Annual Finance Report - 2024

	2024		2023	2022
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Actual
General and Youth Funds:				
Income				
Congregational Giving	\$ 957,017	\$ 918,794	\$ 904,598	\$ 863,268
Designated Giving-Gifts and Operations	\$ 33,727	\$ 14,041	\$ 18,681	\$ 41,681
Other (Interest, Grants, VBS, misc.)	\$ 34,740	\$ 30,234	\$ 16,540	\$ 15,811
Youth Donations and Fundraising	\$ 16,163	\$ 8,500	\$ 8,110	\$ 8,246
Total Income	\$ 1,041,647	\$ 971,569	\$ 947,928	\$ 929,006
Expenses				
Benevolence	\$ 29,259	\$ 25,065	\$ 29,245	\$ 17,590
Pastoral Staff Expenses	\$ 207,282	\$ 257,510	\$ 235,806	\$ 239,064
<i>Operating Expenses</i>				
Non-pastoral Staff & Taxes	\$ 286,034	\$ 303,956	\$ 255,109	\$ 234,013
Office (Supplies, Equipment, Software, Postage)	\$ 26,815	\$ 32,942	\$ 27,067	\$ 24,363
Church Exp. (Flowers, Candles, Coffee)	\$ 6,845	\$ 4,633	\$ 4,872	\$ 5,482
Music Expenses	\$ 2,477	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,844	\$ 2,401
Christian Education/Adult Ed/Bible School	\$ 8,316	\$ 15,417	\$ 8,172	\$ 8,296
Small Group and Social Ministries	\$ 1,580	\$ 3,500	\$ 1,387	\$ 1,174
Fellowship/Hospitality	\$ 6,601	\$ 5,985	\$ 4,929	\$ 3,881
Evangelism & Outreach	\$ 1,551	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,442	\$ 1,110
Worship	\$ 5,184	\$ 6,500	\$ 4,858	\$ 5,845
Stewardship & Finance and Consulting Fees	\$ 16,771	\$ 12,072	\$ 11,591	\$ 10,194
Public Relations & Advertising	\$ 4,262	\$ 8,570	\$ 5,510	\$ 4,548
Training & Seminars and Synod Assembly	\$ 1,443	\$ 4,690	\$ 1,759	\$ 489
<i>Sub-total Operating Expenses</i>	<i>\$ 367,879</i>	<i>\$ 405,765</i>	<i>\$ 330,540</i>	<i>\$ 301,795</i>
<i>Property & Bldg Maintenance</i>				
Utilities	\$ 29,896	\$ 40,671	\$ 34,294	\$ 32,661
Insurance	\$ 10,170	\$ 9,693	\$ 8,190	\$ 7,211
Property Expenses	\$ 75,058	\$ 62,770	\$ 44,997	\$ 48,378
Monthly Mortgage Payments	\$ 145,302	\$ 145,302	\$ 145,302	\$ 145,302
Furnishing/Computer Expense	\$ 5,177	\$ 5,750	\$ 2,825	\$ 1,582
<i>Sub-Total Property Expense</i>	<i>\$ 265,602</i>	<i>\$ 264,186</i>	<i>\$ 235,607</i>	<i>\$ 235,134</i>
Payments made from Gifted Funds	\$ 30,391	\$ 13,500	\$ 17,005	\$ 62,221
Youth Expenses	\$ 26,945	\$ 26,545	\$ 20,087	\$ 11,919
Total Expenses	\$ 927,357	\$ 992,571	\$ 868,290	\$ 867,722
Net Income (Loss) General/Youth Funds	\$ 114,290	\$ (21,002)	\$ 79,638	\$ 61,284
Building Fund:				
Income: Donations/Grants/Fundraising/Interest	\$ 142,433	\$ 106,987	\$ 107,790	\$ 130,462
Columbarium Fund:				
Income: Sales	\$ 6,708	\$ 8,000	\$ 5,013	\$ 6,300
Expenses: Maint. & Landscaping	\$ -	\$ (2,000)	\$ (20)	\$ -
Net Income (Loss) Columbarium Fund	\$ 6,708	\$ 6,000	\$ 4,993	\$ 6,300
TOTAL--GENERAL, YOUTH, BLDG. & COLUMBARIUM				
Income	\$ 1,190,787	\$ 1,086,556	\$ 1,060,731	\$ 1,065,769
Expenses	\$ 927,357	\$ 994,571	\$ 868,310	\$ 867,723
INCOME/(LOSS) ALL FUNDS BEFORE DEPRECIATION	\$ 263,431	\$ 91,985	\$ 192,421	\$ 198,046
Depreciation Expense	\$ (186,065)	\$ -	\$ (186,065)	\$ (186,065)
NET (LOSS) ALL FUNDS AFTER DEPRECIATION	\$ 77,365	\$ 91,985	\$ 6,356	\$ 11,981

CASH BALANCES AT YEAR-END

	2024	2023	2022
General Operating Funds	\$ 490,277	\$ 376,588	\$ 269,696
Designated - Youth, Memorials, Operations, etc.	\$ 172,721	\$ 154,077	\$ 173,484
Capital Appeals Building Fund	\$ 383,207	\$ 240,774	\$ 133,011
Total Cash Balance	\$ 1,046,206	\$ 771,438	\$ 576,191

MORTGAGE - PRINCIPAL BALANCE AT YEAR-END

	2023	2022	2021
Principal Balance	\$ 1,481,923	\$ 1,567,823	\$ 1,650,627

INVESTMENT FUND

Hope's Investment in Ministry Fund has doubled in size during its second year of operation, thanks to generous donations from members of the congregation.

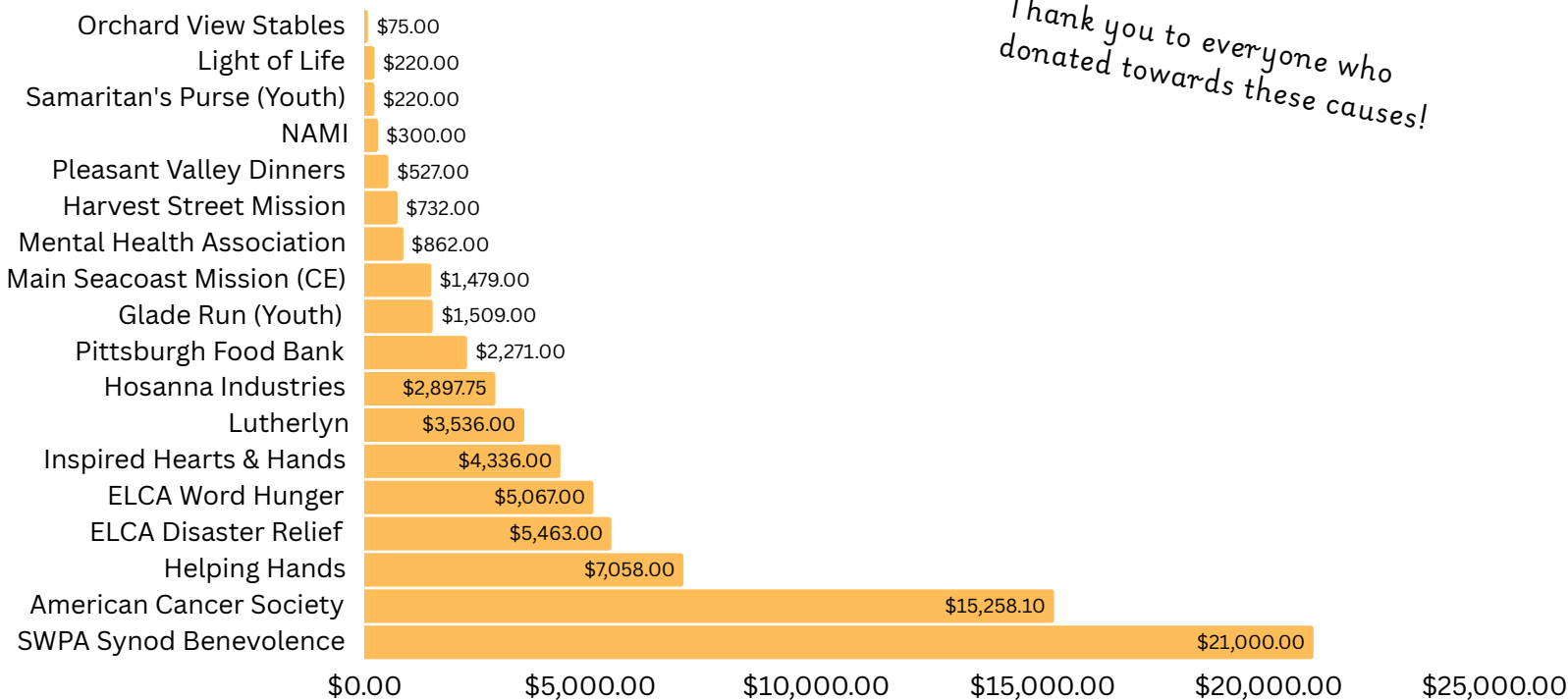
To increase the return on the investments, the Fund has been invested in a mix of equity and fixed income investments, with a medium-risk portfolio. The Fund will begin distributing donations to support various missions once the accumulated investment income reaches a meaningful level.

Hope's Investment in Ministry Committee is very grateful for the congregation's support of this Fund as a way to extend our ability to fulfill our mission and to help others in need.

Investment in Ministry Fund:

	2024	2023
Balance as of January 1	\$ 92,682	\$ -
Income:		
Donations/Grants	\$ 109,724	\$ 92,682
Investment income	\$ 1,589	
Transfer from gifted funds	\$ 3,200	
Total income	<u>\$ 114,513</u>	<u>\$ 92,682</u>
Expenses: professional fees	<u>\$ (106)</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Net Income (Loss)	\$ 114,407	\$ 92,682
Balance as of December 31	\$ 207,090	\$ 92,682

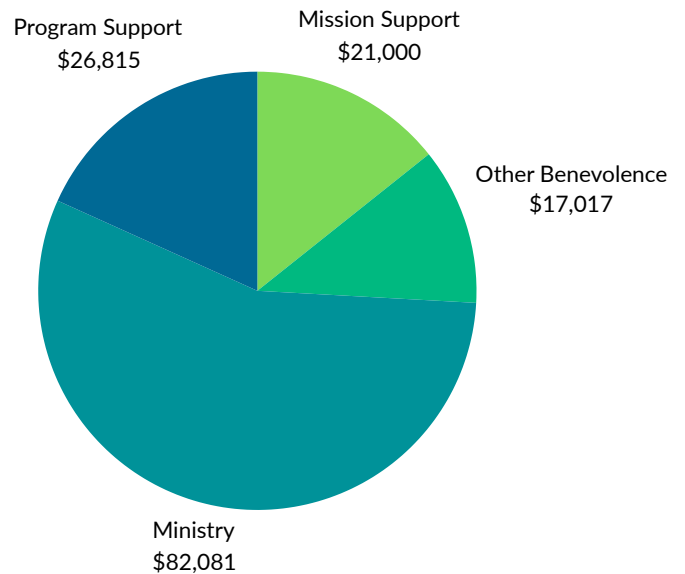
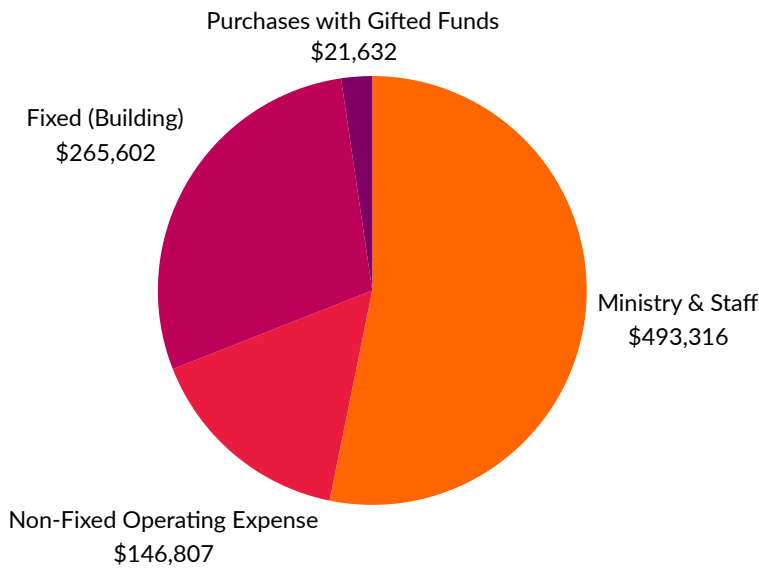
RADICAL GENEROSITY



EXPENSE REPORT

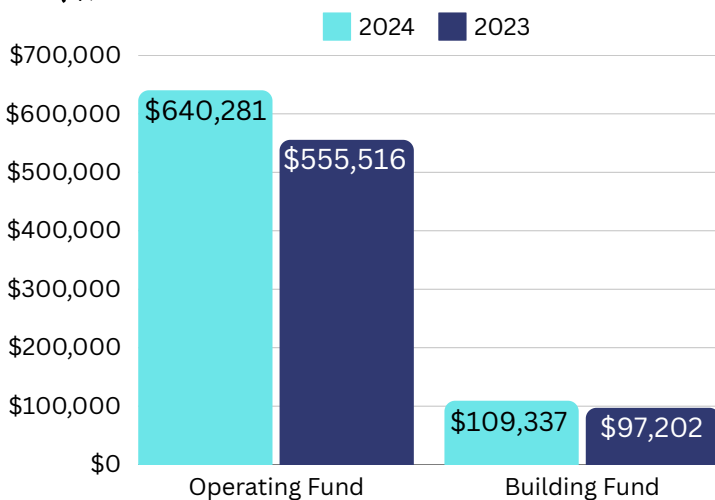
Total 2024 Expenses:
\$927,357

Breakdown of Non-Fixed
Operating Expenses: \$146,913



Stewardship & Finance Updates

Thank You for Pledging!



- Pledges provided for our Annual Appeal increased again over the prior year
- Total numbers of pledges were 210 versus 201 last year
- Total dollars pledged was \$803,000 versus \$759,000 last year
- \$685,000 was pledged to the Operating Budget, \$112,000 to the Building Fund and \$6,000 to the Long-Term Ministry Fund
- We feel that pledges provided indicate giving in 2025 should be sufficient to cover our budgetary needs when including unpledged giving
- As we look into 2026, we will be running our Pledge Appeal in the fall with more of a focus on raising funds to reduce our mortgage debt
- Other initiatives in 2025 include the highlighting of Gracious Givers at Hope, and how people give of their time and talents to the ministries at Hope
- We are blessed to have a community of believers at Hope that continue to increase in the giving of Time, Talent and Treasures

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Worship Highlights

- The weekly and special services are continuing to be live streamed.
- The white paraments have been replaced:
 - New white antependium and Christmas Eve seasons ambo paraments were donated by an anonymous giver(s).
 - New white Festival Sundays ambo parament and burse and veil were designed, constructed and donated by Mary Best.
- Participation in the Adult Choir continues to increase
- Hope's worship attendance is nearing pre-pandemic numbers.
- Lay participation increased with approximately 40 members serving on the altar guild, and as assisting ministers and lectors.
- Plans are in the works to replace the currently non-functioning baptismal font.
- If you have questions or comments concerning the service you attend, please direct them to David Best, 724-752-1816, 724-747-8598 (cell) or dbester4@zoominternet.net

2024 Confirmation Class



Hope's Milestones

- Baptisms performed: 16
- Funerals performed: 10
- Weddings performed: 4
- Confirmed Youth: 10
- First Communion: 25
- New Members: 66
- Sunday School Participants: 141

2024 First Communion



SOCIAL OUTREACH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Social Outreach Committee meets every other month on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. We are always looking for more folks to join to extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to those in need; in our local communities and around the world! Contact a Social Outreach member or chair Angie Wentz for more information.



- Hope Food Pantry: Collecting non-perishable food items to aid Hope members and visitors - led by Angela Romza
- Community Food Banks: Gleaners Food Bank, Family Matters, Southwest Butler Food Bank - led by Peggy Mays with Barb Pezze taking over in 2025
- Helping Hands: collecting gift cards and funds for families in need - led by Angie Wentz
- Card Ministry: providing cards to our Hope families including check in's with our shut-in families, celebrating those who have 50+ anniversaries, 80+ birthdays, cards of encouragement and congratulations to all Hope members - led by Carol Flinn
- Blood Drive: In 2024 collected 20 unites of blood benefiting 60 lives - led by Carol Flinn
- Pleasant Valley Men's Shelter: meals served every other month to men in the shelter - led by Alicia & Jason Demchak
- VOICE: collected articles based on needs for families that are victims of violence - led by Patti Black
- Quilting Hope: handmade large lap size quilt and donated to Hosanna Industries - led by Peggy Kratz & Patty Black
- Angel Tree: Glade Run Foundation accepted 97 gifts donated by our congregation - Patti Black
- Hosanna Industries: In September, 12 volunteers built a wheelchair ramp and water mitigation concrete work in Butler, PA - led by Jeff McGill, with Elizabeth Deal taking over in 2025
- Repurpose: help a thrift store with donations of homeware and clothing, supports "Living in Liberty" - led by Peggy Kratz
- Hope Relay for Life Team: raised \$20,321 for the American Cancer Society - led by Karen Johanknecht,
- The 16th Annual Tournament of Hope: raised \$15,259 in the fight against cancer - led by Karen Johnaknecht
- Harvest Street Mission: served 145+ meals to people in Pittsburgh - led by Karen Johanknecht
- Summer Lunch Program: serve lunch to students on subsidized lunch during the school year - led by Angie Wentz
- Play It Forward: collect slightly used toys to donate to children at Christmas - led by Alex & Rita Kastner

Special thanks to Peggy Mays and Jeff McGill for their many years of service with their Social Outreach ministries!



GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS

God's Work, Our Hands are services projects that are provided for Hope attendees on the second Sunday of each month in the Community Hall. These projects serve those in need in a variety of ways and with various projects.

Thank you to Karen Johanknecht for leading all of these projects in 2024!

- Inspired Hearts & Hands - Food & Clothing Donations; Backpacks donated; volunteers packed boxed food for 900+ families in need
- St. Killian's Quilting Ministry benefiting veterans, the sick & hospitalized - Hundreds of quilt squares were colored and used for quilt-making
- Beverly's Birthdays - 17 bags of snack donations were donated
- Lasagna Love - 40 lasagnas were made and donated to those in need
- Animal Friends - Cat & dog food plus many toys were delivered
- Socks for Veterans - socks were donated to veterans & their families
- Camp Lutherlyn - 8 volunteers helped with the camp's spring clean-up
- Glade Run Lutheran Services & Inspired Hearts & Hands - Bags of School Supplies & Backpacks donated to each organization.
- Cards of Thanks & Special Treats for Hope's Staff, Sunday School, Teachers & Safety Team volunteers as Random Acts of Kindness
- Cards & special treats were gifted to Hope's shut-ins
- North Country Trail Clean-Up helped at Moraine State Park
- Light of Life Rescue Mission - 300 sandwiches, 150 bagged lunches and 150 cards of encouragement
- Mental Health Association - 40 decorative craft gifts and valentine desserts
- The Lighthouse Foundation & Jewish Family Community Services - donated hygiene items to each organization
- Fleece Blanket Tying - over 55 blankets donated to Butler Children & Youth Services & hospitalized Children



BEHIND THE SCENES

Property Team

- Completed a partial parking lot repave and paint
- Cleaned out and organized the garage
- Successful Spring and Fall work days
- No major upcoming projects scheduled, just keeping up with reoccurring maintenance, facility usage needs, and Cranberry Township code compliance items.
- Thanks to all that participated in our work days!



Safety Team

- Installed a new camera in the volunteer office
- Updated our AED machine and completed training
- Complete new office entrance door bell
- Safety Team members ensured a smooth and successful presidential voting experience
- Worked with the police in active shooter training drills at our facility
- Upcoming projects include looking into outside cameras for better car visibility, replacing the computer and continuing training scenarios.

Columbarium Updates

- To date, 28 niches have been sold along with 4 plaques
- In 2024, 5 niches and 2 memorial plaques were sold
- After Rome shared liability, \$5,325 in sales were collected
- Plans to set a memorial bench are in progress with a delivery date of early spring 2025
- Niches and plaques are still available for purchase! Contact Brittany in the office for more information

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Dear HLC Family,

As we reflect on another year of God's blessings here at Hope, we are filled with gratitude for the incredible ways He has worked in our Christian Education ministry. It has been an honor for me to step into the role of Christian Education Coordinator, and I am truly thankful for the support of our dedicated committee members, Sunday School teachers, nursery workers, and of course, our families. Together, we have been able to cultivate an environment where all generations can grow in faith and knowledge of the Lord.

One of the highlights of this year has been the launch of our "Closer" programs. Once a month, students in grades K-6 gather for a special 20-minute worship experience in the sanctuary. Led by Mr. Chase, the children learn songs like "Lord I Lift Your Name on High" and "House of the Lord," growing closer to God and to each other. A beautiful part of this time is how our older students buddy up with younger ones, building relationships across age groups as they worship together. This summer, our VBS program, "Scuba: Diving into Friendship with God," was a huge success, and we're already excited about next year's theme, "True North." Thanks to our amazing volunteers, who bring the themes to life through fun activities, memorable songs, and creative set designs, our children are able to create lasting memories and build deeper connections with Christ.

Looking ahead, we are excited to continue supporting the growth of our children and families through these programs, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who volunteers their time and energy to make all of this possible.

Thank you for your continued support, and may God bless each of you as we move forward into another year of ministry together.

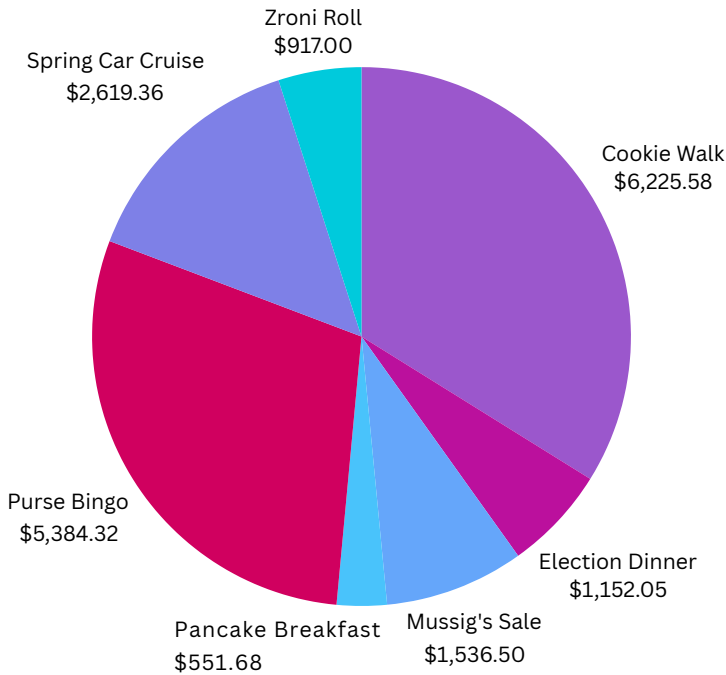
Many blessings,



Lauren Upchurch
Christian Education Coordinator



YOUTH/CE HIGHLIGHTS



Top Service Projects of 2024:

- Harvest Street Mission
- Play it Forward Fundraiser - led by Alex Kastner
- Mission Trip to the Carolinas with Praying Pelican
- Mission Trip to Connellsville, PA



Kids Programs & Events 2024:

- Trunk or Tr'Easter
- Car Cruise
- VBS
- Trunk or Treat
- Tiny Tots
- Yeck's Farm Outing
- Cookie Walk
- Family Christmas Program



Thank you for supporting our mission trips!

MUSIC MINISTRY

David's Psalm of Thanksgiving (1 Chronicles 16:7-36)

"Sing to the Lord, all the Earth. Tell of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; He is to be revered above all gods."

In this "hidden" Psalm, located outside of the canon of Psalms, the new King of Israel, David, is at work to organize Israel and bring their focus to God. He brings the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem after it has traveled from city to city, he feeds the people with celebration bread, meat, and cakes made of raisins, and then he does something very interesting—being a man of song, David appoints specific Levites to make music, holy music, to usher in the Ark and help lead the celebration of God. With cymbals, trumpets, voices, and poetry — all were a part of this artful celebration of the most Holy God.

This context is familiar to me as Hope's Music Minister and it reminds me of the work that we do, together, at Hope—the intentional organizing of ourselves in worship and focusing ourselves towards God. The celebration meals that we share as we humbly accept God's grace. And of course, the music. The Holy music. The music that is offered with beggar's hearts for the sake of God.

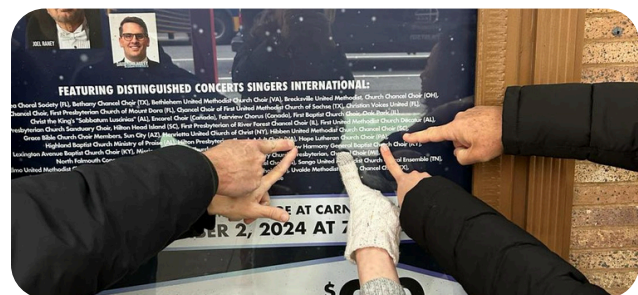
This is the work that we do together as we faithfully sing hymns that carry the Gospel message and uplift us for our week to come. This is the work that we do when we sing as a choir, offering something special to hearts opened to receive by the Spirit. This is the work that we do as we play our instruments and reflect and reveal the tonal beauty of God's ordained creation both through our Joyful Noise Band and through our Praise Band. This is the work we do when our smallest children lift their voices in song at VBS, Children's Choir, Youth Weekend, or our Christmas Children's Program. This is the work that we were able to offer this year in New York City as we cried out with a loud shout "Christ is the Lord" through song! This is the GOOD work that we do, an outpouring of our praise and thanksgiving for God saving us, day in and day out—moment to moment.

I think this is what David was feeling. This bursting desire to praise God and offer our thanksgiving. David also ends this Psalm with a refrain that we would be wise to remember—"Save us, O God of our salvation." As we look back on all of the wonderful blessings that God has given us, may we look HUMBLY forward, asking God to SAVE US from our folly, from our sin, from our arrogance, and from all that might lead us astray from Him. As I reflect on God's blessings, I am so thankful and ever humbled that He has offered to me the responsibility of leading His people through music and song. This is something that I do not take lightly, and therefore, as I pray for our congregation this year, I ask that you pray for us as a staff as well, that we might lead in the most faithful way—the way of Christ.

As always, I want to take my last moments in this letter to thank our music staff, Ms. Beth Wehr, and Mr. Rob Lynch for their Christian friendship, and their faithful work. We all know how incredibly blessed we are to have these two. They lead us not only with their music, but their character and discipleship- and the latter is priceless. Last but not least, many thanks to our incredible staff who work tirelessly to keep Hope a place of beautiful worship, Emily, Brittany, Lauren, Pastor Bob, and Pastor Ron. All Glory to God, and many blessings this 2025 year!

Chase A. Upchurch

Chase Upchurch
Director of Music Ministry



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

Saturday – December 7, 2024

The congregational meeting was called to order by Board President Todd Kane at 5:53 p.m. Todd explained that the congregation would be voting on the March 2024 congregational meeting minutes, the 2025 budget and the election of Board members.

Todd invited Kurt Johanknecht to provide an update on the Call Committee. Kurt stated there has been no meaningful progress. The Call Committee is checking with the Synod on a monthly basis. There have been some pastors who have reviewed our paperwork, but no one has taken further action. We do not have any information on who has viewed our position due to privacy issues. The expectation from the beginning has been that it will take 18-24 months to find the right person for our congregation and we are currently 6 months into the process. Todd asked the congregation to continue to pray for the Call Committee and the process of finding a new pastor. The first item to approve was the March 2024 congregational meeting minutes. The minutes were included in the Annual Budget & Election Meeting packet.

The second item to vote on was the 2025 budget. Todd invited Mareah Garver to present the budget to the congregation. Mareah explained that there is a 5% increase in the 2025 budget over 2024. The biggest driver of the increase is inflation. The biggest item is pastors' salaries. In order to try to attract a new Associate Pastor, we increased the starting salary. Mareah pointed out that the budget includes the Associate Pastor salary for the whole year which will not be the case since we don't have any current candidates. She also called out the youth position which was split into two part time positions; Lauren in the Christian Education position, and we are in the process of hiring someone for the Youth and Family Ministry position. Mareah then asked for questions and there were none. Mareah stated that she and Carol Zimmerman would be available for questions after the meeting.

The last item to vote on was Board elections. There are four candidates for four open positions on the 2025 Board. Their bios are available in the meeting packet. Todd opened the floor for additional nominations. No additional nominations were presented at the 5:00 PM service.

Todd gave an update on pledge totals. There is still time to fill out a pledge card if you have not done so yet. We are currently 2 pledges and approximately \$2600 away from Stewardship's goal for 2025 pledges.

The floor was opened for questions or comments. No questions or comments were presented.

Todd asked the congregation to vote for the three items. Voting was done via QR code or paper ballots which were collected by the ushers. Voting could also be done online at hlc.church.

The meeting recessed at 6:00 p.m. until the 9:00 a.m. service on December 8.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

Sunday - December 8, 2024, 9:00 AM service

The congregational meeting was resumed and called to order by Todd Kane at 10:03 a.m. Todd explained that the congregation would be voting on the March 2024 congregational meeting minutes, the 2025 budget and the election of Board members.

Todd invited Cory McDowell to provide an update on the Call Committee. Cory stated we have no candidates. They are having monthly discussions with the Synod. Some pastors have looked at our posting but we don't have any other information due to privacy. Cory asked the congregation to keep praying that we'll have another pastor soon. He stated that he and Kurt would be available after the service for any questions.

The first item to approve was the March 2024 congregational meeting minutes. The minutes were included in the Annual Budget & Election Meeting packet.

The second item to vote on was the 2025 budget. Todd invited Mareah Garver to present the budget to the congregation. Mareah explained that there is a 5% increase in the 2025 budget over 2024's budget. The biggest driver of the increase is inflation. The biggest part of the budget is pastors' salaries. In order to try to attract a new Associate Pastor, we increased the starting salary. Mareah pointed out that the budget includes the Associate Pastor salary for the whole year which will not be the case since we don't have any current candidates. She also called out the youth position which was split into two part time positions; Lauren in the Christian Education position and we are in the process of hiring someone for the Youth and Family Ministry position. Mareah then asked for questions. There was one question about the youth budget of \$25,000 and whether this includes fundraising? Carol Zimmerman explained that the youth budget does include fundraising, but the congregation also supports the Youth Program. The majority of their funds come from fundraising. Carol pointed out that the Youth Program item under Income is the expected fundraising total. There were no further questions. It was stated that Mareah and Carol would be available for questions after the meeting.

The last item to vote on was Board elections. There are four candidates for four open positions on the 2025 Board. Their bios are available in the meeting packet. Todd thanked Les Aloï and Donna Pfeiffer for their service on the Board. Todd opened the floor for additional nominations. No additional nominations were presented at the 9:00 a.m. service.

Todd gave an update on pledge totals. There is still time to fill out a pledge card if you have not done so yet. We are currently 2 pledges and approximately \$2600 away from Stewardship's goal for 2025 pledges.

The floor was opened for questions or comments. No questions or comments were presented. Todd asked the congregation to vote for the three items. Voting could be done via QR code or paper ballots which were passed out and collected by the ushers. Voting could also be done online at hlc.church.

The meeting recessed at 10:10 a.m. until the 11:00 a.m. service on December 8.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

Sunday – December 8, 2024, 11:00 AM service

The congregational meeting was resumed and called to order by Todd Kane at 12:04 p.m. Todd explained that the congregation would be voting on the March 2024 congregational meeting minutes, the 2025 budget and the election of Board members.

Todd invited Rachel Sager to provide an update on the Call Committee. Rachel stated we have no potential candidates. They are having monthly check-ins with the Synod. There have been a number of interested individuals who have looked at our information, but we don't know how many or why they haven't pursued the position due to privacy issues. We are approximately 6 months through the process which is expected to take 18-24 months. Rachel asked the congregation to pray that the right person comes to us.

The first item to approve was the March 2024 congregational meeting minutes. The minutes were included in the Annual Budget & Election Meeting packet.

The second item to vote on was the 2025 budget. Todd invited Mareah Garver to present the budget to the congregation. Mareah explained that there is a 5% increase in the 2025 budget over the 2024 budget. The biggest driver of the increase is inflation. The biggest item in the budget is pastors' salaries. In order to try to attract a new Associate Pastor, we increased the starting salary. Mareah pointed out that the budget includes the Associate Pastor salary for the whole year which will not be the case since we don't have any current candidates. She also called out the youth position which was split into two part time positions; Lauren in the Christian Education position, and we are in the process of hiring someone for the Youth and Family Ministry position. Mareah then asked for questions and there were none. Mareah stated that she and Carol Zimmerman would be available for questions after the meeting.

The last item to vote on was Board elections. There are four candidates for four open positions on the 2025 Board. Their bios are available in the meeting packet. Todd thanked Les Aloï and Donna Pfeiffer for their service on the Board. Todd opened the floor for additional nominations. No additional nominations were presented at the 11:00 a.m. service.

Todd gave an update on pledge totals. There is still time to fill out a pledge card if you have not done so yet. We are currently 2 pledges and approximately \$2600 away from Stewardship's goal for 2025 pledges.

The floor was opened for questions or comments. No questions or comments were presented. Todd asked the congregation to vote for the three items. Voting could be done via QR code or paper ballots which were passed out and collected by the ushers. Voting could also be done online at hlc.church.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

RESULTS OF VOTING

PAPER BALLOTS AND ELECTRONIC BALLOTS WERE TALLIED FOLLOWING THE MEETING. ALL ITEMS ON THE BALLOT WERE APPROVED.

MARCH 2024 MEETING MINUTES WERE APPROVED WITH 100% OF THE VOTE:

- APPROVE: 175
- NOT APPROVE: 0
- ABSTAIN: 0

2025 BUDGET APPROVAL WAS APPROVED WITH 99.4% OF THE VOTE:

- APPROVE: 173
- NOT APPROVE: 1
- ABSTAIN: 0

2025 BOARD BALLOT – ALL 4 CANDIDATES WERE APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING NUMBER OF VOTES:

JUDY BUCCINI:

- APPROVE: 169
- NOT APPROVE: 0
- ABSTAIN: 0

MICHAEL DERRICO:

- APPROVE: 172
- NOT APPROVE: 0
- ABSTAIN: 0

CHRISS DISHONG:

- APPROVE: 169
- NOT APPROVE: 0
- ABSTAIN: 0

TODD KANE:

- APPROVE: 164
- NOT APPROVE: 0
- ABSTAIN: 0

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
JUDY BUCCINI
HOPE BOARD SECRETARY

THANK YOU TO OUR CHAIR LEADERS AND BOARD MEMBERS!

2024 Committee Chairs

David Best - Worship
Jessica Randall - Youth
Sam Hurst - Christian Education
Angie Wentz - Social Outreach
Jamie Randall - Finance
Tom Majeski - Stewardship
Scott Milk - Property
Darrell Miller - Security
Tim Detisch - Hope Investment in
Ministry Fund



Hope's 2024 Board

Todd Kane - President
Les Aloï - Vice President
Judy Buccini - Secretary
Carol Zimmerman - Treasurer
Elizabeth Bauer
John Blough
Jeff Karcher
Barb Pezze
Donna Pfeiffer
Bryan Sandmann
Jon Vogel

HOPE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Growing Together with Hope

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