

2023 Annual Report

Bethel Lutheran Church Believe, Belong, Become

2023: A Year of Mission and Ministry

Bethel Lutheran Church was laser-focused on its mission in 2023. Our ministries worked to engage the curious, encourage the convinced and empower the committed to be fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the year, God gave us challenges and opportunities, abundant blessings, and answers to prayer. New disciples joined our congregation, broke bread with us and took their place at tables where plans were made, joys were shared and problems were solved. Singers and instrumentalists enriched our worship services; longtime volunteers and new ones shared their talents as ushers, greeters, readers, and prayer-writers.

We shared our treasure with 30 missions across town and around the world, and we shared our building with 30-plus families through Legacy Christian School. Volunteers in the Bethel Food and Baby Pantry met a demand unlike our beloved congregation has ever seen.

An eight-person Call Committee was formed and continues to meet for Bible study, to discuss next steps, and pray fervently for God's guidance in the process of bringing a senior pastor to lead our family of believers. Members rely heavily on the belief that they are working on God's timeline for this important decision to be made.

Our gifts to God made programs and ministries possible. God's gift to us of astute, careful financial planners and budget-watchers has guided our spending and investments. The farm property has become a place for outdoor fellowship, critical systems in the building's infrastructure have been maintained, a park-like setting near the columbarium adds a place for reflection and quiet, and the property around the campus has never looked more inviting.

Bethel was blessed in 2023 to have a staff, a Council and a cadre of ministry leaders and teams that worked hard together to accomplish the congregation's mission. There were times when the team faced debate and doubt but each challenge was faced head-on. We turned to God, and he did not turn his back on us. There is work left to do, just as there was work done well. What follows are summaries of the accomplishments and the path that lies ahead of us.

2023 General Fund Annual Report

Income/Contributions	Actual 2023	Budget 2023	Difference
Total Contributions Receipts	628,308	751,456	(123,148)
Interest Income	127	0	127
Other Income	34,528	37,602	(3,074)
Total Income	662,963	789,058	(126,095)
(Red Indicates Over Budget)			
Expenses			
Youth Expenses	370	2,530	(2,160)
Christian Education Expenses	3,212	11,300	(8,088)
Council Admin Expenses	15,324	13,195	2,129
Missions	30,000	30,000	0
Mortgage Expenses (prin+int)	174,664	163,320	11,344
Office & Supplies Expenses	32,188	35,940	(3,752)
Pastoral Expenses	1,466	5,600	(4,134)
Salary & Benefits Expenses	283,052	323,725	(40,673)
Property Expenses	42,943	44,970	(2,027)
Utilities Expenses	58,327	67,280	(8,953)
Worship & Music Expenses	12,644	9,995	2,649
Total Expenses	654,190	707,855	(53,665)
Excess Income/Expenses	8,773	81,203	(72,430)
Fund Balances	12/31/2022	12/31/2023	
General	96,578	105,468	
Building	114,256	120,741	
Youth	21,120	25,709	
Pantry	12,013	6,666	
Designated	147,710	133,045	
Missions	89,498	90,965	
Preschool	19,394	0	
Columbarium	25,473	27,646	
Total All Funds	526,042	510,240	

Pastor Dave's Year in Review

"We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose for them." Romans 8:28

These two years (mid-2023 through mid-2024) have been all about moving forward in further ministry here at Bethel. In other words, an *awesome* time!

✝ At this time (June) last year . . .

- + We confirmed 5 young people and honored 6 high school graduates.
- + The annual Rummage Sale successfully encouraged unity and fellowship among all volunteers and those who came to shop.
- + A Summer Camp was held with youth from St. John's in Lake County.
- + Reading Buddies brought blessings to a lot of children at Washington Woods Elementary School in Westfield.
- + A Backpack Drive blessed many children with supplies for school in the Fall.

✝ In July of 2023 . . .

- + The Farmhouse was paid off and then blessed for ministry (Marilyn's Place, Employment counseling, etc.).

✝ In August of 2023 . . .

- + A Back to School Bash was held.
- + Life-to-Life Discipleship experience began.
- + And Legacy Preschool began its first year of ministry in our education wing.

✝ In September of 2023 . . .

- + Fish Fry was an awesome success!
- + Operation Christmas Child Kicked off.
- + A 4 Session Discovery Class was held for 9 new disciples.
- + And a Special Prayer Vigil was held for 4 weekends.

✝ In October of 2023 . . .

- + A New Disciple Reception was held.
- + Our 25th (Sanctuary) Anniversary Service & Luncheon were held.
- + A well-attended and much-enjoyed 80+ Luncheon was held.
- + A Call Committee convened to begin working to call an additional Pastor to our staff.
- + The annual Trunk or Treat was held.

✝ In November of 2023 . . .

- + We blessed the operation Christmas Child Boxes.
- + We had a Congregation/Budget Meeting.
- + We enjoyed a Thanksgiving Eve Service with Pie Night.

- + We “Hung the Greens,”
- + We began Advent Midweek Devotions.

† In December 2023 . . .

- + We continued Advent Midweek Devotions.
- + We participated in Wreaths Across America.
- + We held 3 Christmas Eve Worship Services
- + We held 1 worship Service for New Year’s Eve.

† In January 2024 . . .

- + We lifted our Pastor Doug up in prayer as he had a procedure done for his heart to function better.
- + We began a “Read through the Bible in a Year” program.
- + We planned the first of hopefully many Movie/Fellowship Nights.
- + Everyone who wrote a devotion for the Annual Advent Devotional was praised for their work.
- + We also began a unique Intergenerational Study of the series “Chosen.”

† In February of 2024 . . .

- + We enjoyed a delicious Shrove Tuesday meal together, then . . .
- + We began a unique series of Lenten Worship Services.
- + We laughed during a Comedy Night with a Mardi Gras theme.

† In March of 2024 . . .

- + We continued with Sunday & Midweek Lenten services.
- + A First Communion Class was held with 4 students.
- + A “Stuff the Truck” event was held.
- + Palm Sunday, Holy week, & Easter services were held with awesome attendance!

† In April of 2024 . . .

- + 4 Discovery sessions were held for 5 prospective disciples.
- + A unique series of services “of Easter” were held until Pentecost.
- + “Bethel Bingo” fellowship was a fun time had by all!

U In May of 2024 . . .

- + Our Fellowship Hall served as a Polling Place.
- + We received 5 disciples, having completed the Discovery sessions.
- + We enjoyed a “Bethel Art Event.”
- + We blessed the “Reading Buddies” donations.
- + We had a 6 month church activity/ministry planning session.
- + We observed an Armed Forces/Race Day Weekend.

U In June of 2024 . . .

- + A Confirmation Camp for next year’s confirmands was held with St. John’s Lake Township.
- + Our Annual Rummage Sale was another success.

- + A concert was held at the Farmhouse.
- + The Backpack Drive ends with blessing of packs.

My friends, I need to tell you that I consider it an honor and a real blessing to be allowed to serve you as your Interim Lead Pastor. And I hope and pray that I haven't let any of you down in some way. Pastor Doug has been a great partner in ministry, and we work well together.

So, like Saint Paul would say, forgetting about what lies behind, let's focus our attention on the prize – the blessings that our Lord has in store for us as we all work together sharing the Word of God with one another and with those around us.

That's the sum total of my report!

In HIS love,
Pastor Dave Hill

Office Administration Report

The office focused on administrative duties and making sure the Pastors and all ministry areas are being helped when needed. A good amount of time is spent each week helping with bulletins for healing services, funerals, advent or Lenten services, along with different ministries to help them with their creating and printing needs.

The Weekly News is running smoothly and the Tuesday "turn-in day" for all information that week has been going well. I added a new section called the "Weekly Spotlight" to the news, where we highlight different volunteers each week to help people feel a sense of belonging and value.

We have our weekly staff meeting every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m., where we discuss the week's needs and goals and how to get it all done to the Glory of God! I send out a summary report to the council each week as a new effort to keep us all on the same page.

We have a Monthly Volunteer Staff Lunch every 3rd Tuesday, that now includes the council when they can attend. This lunch used to be for office volunteers, but we have opened it up to all volunteers that we encounter each week at Bethel. I feel adding the Council to this lunch will help in getting to know each other and fellowship.

I help to keep our events posted on Facebook and boosting certain events and services as decided upon. I work with the Bethel Calendar and keep it up to date with all the events going on at Bethel! We are happy that this has been picking up and meeting and fellowship opportunities at Bethel have been on the rise!

I enjoy creating slides for the weekend services and helping with the script proofing, as well as creating sign-up sheets and ads each week. I spend a lot of time helping the volunteers with their promoting, creating and printing needs and it is always something I enjoy doing! Let me know how we can help you advertise your event or get volunteers to sign up.

One fun thing we did in the office was update the “Coffee Bar”. I added a backsplash and some fun decorations along with all your coffee, tea, and hot chocolate needs to help give a more inviting feeling to the office for our volunteers and those visiting Bethel.



Our team of Volunteers has been focusing on ministry areas



and various volunteer opportunities. We haven't had a big need for office volunteers lately, but I continue to ask for help when needed and we always have great help thanks to our dedicated people of Bethel! Please let me know how the office can help support your ministry area.

Our A/V team is continuing to focus on growth and training. We have had some people join our team of already fantastic people, so things are looking up. We still have a need for more volunteers in the AV Booth for weekend services to help the current volunteers to get some needed time off each month. I would ideally like a rotating monthly shift with the option to have someone else cover their shift if they cannot attend. If you are interested in joining the team, please stop by the A/V booth or call me in the office. We'll get you plugged in!



I feel very blessed to be a part of Bethel Lutheran Church office team and to know all the people who belong here. I am thankful that God brought me here and I am happy to continue to serve God and all the people of Bethel. Thank you for the opportunity.

Holly Eldredge, Office Manager

Call Committee

Council voted and the congregation agreed to form a Call Committee that started in 2023 to actively identify and invite a called senior pastor to add to our staff and accommodate the expected needs in our congregation as we go into the future.

Council developed and presented, and the congregation approved, a budget that shows the pathway to fiscal responsibility while enabling Bethel to call an additional full-time pastor. We are excited about the year to come and we are blessed with a dedicated group of people with a Passion for Bethel to lead us forward.

Members of the Call Committee meet regularly for bible study, to discuss next steps, and pray fervently for God's guidance in the process of bringing a senior pastor to lead our family of believers. Members rely heavily on the belief that they are working on God's timeline for this important decision to be made.

Kristen Wells leads the committee. Members represent a cross-section of the Bethel congregation. They are Tanya Clary, Mark Heckman, Tom Hooper, Steve Horton, Tom McGrail, Susan Tobison and Jamie Wilkinson.

Jim Herr

Care Ministry

Bethel's Care Ministry is made up of several small groups that are involved in a variety of different activities to offer physical and emotional support to Bethel members as well as friends and family of our Bethel congregation. Below are the small groups within the Care ministry:

CARE TEAM: This ministry reaches out in multiple ways to care for the congregation. Coordinated by Pastor Doug, Kim Radant and Jill Duncan, this group meets weekly to discuss and pray for health and/or emotional issues of our church members and their families/friends.

They make phone calls and send cards of prayer, encouragement or sympathy to Bethel members and/or the extended family of members at the request of a congregant. Phyllis and Gayle Anderson send 100+/- of cards out each year to those on our prayer chain. Jane Nee sends cards and "grief books" to those who recently lost a loved one.

In May 2023, the Care Team hosted a CPR class to anyone interested. Through an anonymous donor, another AED was purchased for Bethel. We now have 2 working units, one by the kitchen and the other by the elevator in the education wing. In October, they hosted their annual 80s+ Luncheon providing dinner and a program for 32 members over 80 years of age and their families.

CIRCLE OF SISTERS: Coordinated by Suzy Patterson. Circle of Sisters makes banners for baptisms and other special occasions. They also make and send sympathy and encouragement cards to members. Circle of Sisters held its annual craft sale in November 2022. The sale raised \$635.50 – \$317.75 for Water Missions and \$317.75 to Circle of Sisters to replenish their supplies for cards, baptismal banners and other crafts.

CREATIVE SPIRITS: Suzy Patterson and Cathy Crosley coordinate this group of crafters. They crochet and knit lap blankets, cancer caps, baby blankets and hats, and prayer shawls for those in need. Prayer shawls are available to any Bethel worshipper who is in need of the reassurance of

prayer. Their big focus in 2023 was crocheting edges on about 600 fleece baby blankets for newborns at Riverview Hospital.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTRY: The Eucharistic Ministry is coordinated by Ellen Gill. In May, a training program was given by Ellen and Pastor Doug. We now have 15 trained volunteers available to take communion to and pray with members who are shut-in or unable to attend services. Currently there are 7 clients utilizing this wonderful service.

FUNERAL DINNERS: Rise Helgemo coordinates dinners or some type of food event (depending on what the family wants) for family and friends following a funeral or Celebration of Life. There are about 15-20 volunteers who help provide the food as well as set up and take down tables and chairs for the event.

HEALING SERVICES: Coordinated by our Care Pastor, Doug. Healing Services focus on those with physical and/or emotional hurts and needs. It is open to any worshipper and/or visitor and are typically held the first Wednesday of the month in the sanctuary. This service has been gaining in popularity over the last couple of years.

PRAYER CHAIN: Jill Dietz, Gary Tobison and Kristen Wells have formed a prayer chain committee that shares the responsibility of keeping the congregation aware of prayer needs. They compile prayer requests and email them to the prayer warriors. Prayers are submitted by email, through the Bethel web page, prayer cards in the pews or by calling the office. Anyone can become a prayer warrior by contacting the office and asking to have their name added to the prayer chain list.

SONSHINE CLUB: This group provides meals to Bethel members who are going through life events such as birth, loss, surgery and chemo. Typically, the request for a meal is made to a pastor who then forwards the information. After gathering the logistical information, a schedule is set up on TakeThemAMeal.com with an email link to the members who have volunteered to help make or purchase and deliver meals. Support for the ministry isn't limited to cooks. Gift cards for Door Dash or restaurants that deliver are also welcome.

SHEPHERDING MINISTRY: We would like to resurrect this ministry in 2024. The idea of the ministry is to help new disciples acclimate into the congregation. A Shepherd would be assigned a new member that attends the same worship service and commits to shepherd the new member for three months. The Shepherd would look for and greet their new member at church services, sitting with or near them as often as possible. They would introduce them to other members of Bethel, encourage their participation in church activities and invite the new member to join them at church functions. If the new member is absent a few Sundays, the Shepherd would call them to see if everyone is okay. If you would be interested in being a Shepherd and/or leading this team...please contact one of the pastors.

The Care team would like to thank the many volunteers who make this ministry successful!

Jill Duncan

Christian Education

Bethel's Christian Education program is designed to provide everyone – from small children through the oldest adults – with the basic tenets of a Christian life and knowledge of the Lutheran church's beliefs and theology.

Loss of Bethel families proved challenging in 2023 to offer a robust menu of options for Christian Ed. The Sunday school year began with about 12 students and ended with about four, plus a dozen adults who participated in an innovative intergenerational weekly discussion based on the movie, "The Chosen."

Additionally, Pastor Dave confirmed four children and a group of students celebrated their first communion on Maundy Thursday. The Sausage and Scriptures bible study for men on Saturday mornings had a year of growth, and the Women on Wednesdays study continued. Work and planning also continues to create a Confirmation class and a Sunday school program in 2024.

The annual Easter Egg hunt was open to the public and provided a bounce house, the signature hunt, and a light lunch. Attendance was good; children and adults alike enjoyed the spring event.

We saw Legacy Christian School come into our fold and utilize our classrooms for preschool starting in fall 2023 and have seen many fruits of having more activity and energy in Bethel. They had decent enrolment in their first year and look to see good growth in numbers as we go into August of 2024. This has helped offset some costs of increased janitorial services and daily building upkeep.

Gary Helgemo

Communications Ministry

The Communications Ministry partners with all Bethel ministries to help the congregation be a dynamic, life-changing church of fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ. The ministry used a variety of channels to reach members and guests and keep them aware of parish news, worship opportunities and special events, both in print and electronically.

Founding editor Gay Hanson produced a special edition of FootPrints for the 25th Anniversary Celebration. The quarterly magazine never disappointed in its wide selection of news, notes and features about the congregation. Regrettably, there was not enthusiastic response to help her produce the publication, so the Lent/Easter issue in 2023 marked the last one, at least until it can be revived with a new staff.

The greeter ministry returned on Sunday mornings, something that had been a pandemic-time loss. Twenty-one people have offered to welcome worshippers.

Throughout the year, the communications ministry worked with the office staff to produce weekly engagement cards, special mailings when needed, and information about council meetings, including making minutes public each month and having announcement slides highlight the council's actions.

Evangelism and Fellowship

The Evangelism and Fellowship ministries combined forces in 2023 to reach out to first-time worship guests and increase activity among all members and friends.

Meals and special events were highlights of those activities. We saw great attendance at the Advent midweek meals and are getting good attendance at our Lenten midweeks, as well. The Men's Sausage and Scripture group hosted a meal at Bethel that was greatly attended during the craft fair.

We hosted a Movie Night and planned events in 2024 around Bingo (April), crafts (May), a concert at the Farmhouse (June), and a congregation Picnic and Fun Day (July).

We are blessed with a great committee of dedicated volunteers that make all of this go!

Jim Herr and Steve Middleton

Missions

Bethel continues to support 30 missions through prayer, funding, and time. Our missions are on a local, national, and global level, as well as support of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC).

Locally, Bethel's missions include collecting backpacks and school supplies, giving blood, providing a food and baby pantry, hosting an annual Fish Fry, and supporting NALC Disaster Response. At Christmas, Bethel provided gifts from the Angel tree for those living in group homes. We also are partnered with Wreaths Across America.

At the national level, Bethel has supported start-up churches through prayer and funding. We also have partners we have supported for several years, including Ministeria Su Luz in Miami, Florida; Living Faith Lutheran in Wabash; and Servants of Christ NALC in Robins, Iowa.

Globally, Bethel has a mission partner in Senbete, Ethiopia; along with its synod, the North Central Ethiopia Synod. (NCES). Operation Christmas Child sends gifts and Jesus' love to children all over the world who do not receive Christmas gifts. The East European Mission Network (EEMN) is an international relational network. They help people and churches in former communist nations. Bethel helps fund clean water in places around the world through Water Mission.

Randy Baskerville

Property

The Property Ministry covers everything from snow removal, mowing, gardening and playground upkeep, to elevators, well pumps, septic system, geothermal system, janitorial services, and so

many more things. There is always something to do, and the ministry can always use volunteers to step up and see a task through.

The outside property is the first impression we can leave for our potential new Bethel members and the community at large. We have been blessed over the last 10 years with volunteers, donations and passion towards improving our property.

After the purchase of the 2.8 acres east of the church, including the house, barn and outbuildings, much work went into cleaning and fixing up the house, clearing the grounds and removing excess plant material and removing needless and dangerous fencing. This work continues today, with additional energy being put into reinvigorating our annual corn planting program. Tomato planting was added in 2023, and there are numerous ways to build on this to provide more grown food for the congregation and those in need that we serve through our pantry.

Giving space in the farmhouse to Marilyn's Place, a non-food pantry, created symmetry with our own Food and Baby Pantry. Many clients utilize both worthy programs. Marilyn's Place is making good use of the farm house, with more options in the future.

We continue to work with a local farmer to plant the 22 acres of land that surrounds our developed 13 acres. Long term, this land still serves as a wonderful way to control the look of our entire campus.

Our first year partnering with the Legacy Christian School preschool was a good one, and we expect that to grow significantly for the 2024-25 school year. They have been good stewards of our property and a welcome addition.

Donations are ALWAYS helpful, time, talent and treasures, all work to make the property better. In the recent past, the cost of mulching, for example, costs around \$2,500 for the entire property; one person has donated those funds. That isn't the norm and won't be available in 2024, so any help in that regard would be appreciated. It is not completely budgeted.

Last year was a relatively quiet year for Building Fund expenditures but several are in place for 2024, one of which wasn't planned.

1. We replaced a heating unit in the Education upstairs at a cost of \$13,000.
2. We will paint the trim around the whole building and paint the steeple. It was cleaned when the new roof was put on a few years back but needs to be painted.
4. We will add a handicap ramp at the front entry, to eliminate that high curb for safer passage.
5. The parking lot needs to be sealed and painted and needs to be thoroughly evaluated for more significant structural work.
5. A fire sensor in the sanctuary needs to be replaced. It is on the ceiling, and we will coordinate that work with the replacement of ceiling lights, along with moving, repairing, and cleaning the pews, and the cleaning of the carpet. This will be a large project to coordinate but a worthy one to complete. We hope to have it completed by August 1, 2024.

It is a never-ending battle to keep up a facility with such beautiful acreage and a building that is gracefully maturing and needs some TLC. Your opinions matter and your involvement is welcomed in any way you can give of the three T's.

Jeff Reising

Small Groups

Bethel's Small Groups provide a big opportunity to grow faith through fellowship!

Dinner groups have been assigned for the summer and fall of 2024. Resurrecting this fun fellowship event after several years removed, we had really good participation with over 25 couples signing up. The next signup for Winter/Spring assignments will be in October/November.

A few groups, including Sausage and Scripture and Men's Garage Night, have been meeting routinely but we are anxious to add more. As an example, the Wine & Scripture group will be forming in late summer ready for launch in fall 2024.

A church-wide Progressive Dinner will be planned for the fall to capture as many people as possible after the summer vacation and travel period. This is a great event where select members host a group for appetizers, a rotation to other houses for entrees, and then everyone meets back at church for a dessert. The goal is to build on discipleship and expand our membership interaction through fun, faith, and fellowship.

If you are interested in starting and/or joining a small group, please let me know.

Steve Horton

Stewardship

Overflowing Generosity was the theme for Stewardship in 2023, and it was aptly named. Weekly temple talks in November enlightened and engaged the congregation. Building their thoughts around select scripture readings, presenters addressed "We are Caught and Taught to be Generous Stewards of Our Time, Talent, and Money;" "Contagious Enthusiasm Helps Spread the Gospel Through our Stewardship;" and "Generosity Glorifies God."

The Stewardship Committee gave thanks for the 56 families, couples and individuals that made commitments to support Bethel and its ministries at the conclusion of the campaign. It also gave thanks for the generous donations given to Bethel during the 25th Anniversary celebration. That special offering was directed to paying off the mortgage for the building.

Partnering with the Evangelism Committee and the Women on Wednesdays bible study, the Stewardship Committee created and distributed treat bags to the Legacy Preschool students, the Classic Conversations homeschool students that meet in the building on Mondays, and our own children at Christmastime, for Easter and at the end of the school year. Altogether, nearly 600 bags were given with invitations to join Bethel in worship.

Mary Jo Mikulski

Worship and Music

Bethel's music area was blessed in 2023 with more singers and instrumentalists, enhancing each unique service in a significant way. Additionally, our AV area has grown, so we are able to present a better product during live and online services.

We have identified three distinct service styles (Country Gospel – Saturday 5:45, Traditional – Sunday 8:45 and Praise – Sunday 11:11). This allows musicians to concentrate in the genre they prefer and bring clarity to the congregants attending. We continue to strive to bring ministry as a musical conduit for God's word as we seek to invite others through engagement and participation. Singing is God's most beautiful instrument. May we all make a joyful noise while attending one of these services.

We are seeking all individuals who would like to sing and/or play an instrument either in Country Gospel or solos for either Sunday service. We hired a full-time organist who would like to accompany soloists and eventually grow a choir for 8:45. Bethel is always looking for singers and musicians. If you are interested, please let us know!

Altar Guild, usher teams, readers and the AV area could all use volunteers to assist in the worship services. It is a great way to get involved and serve with really no training needed, just a servant heart.

We continue to do live and recorded music, and worship services are streamed online for those who are unable to attend in person. The staff and Pastors can get the weekly services to the congregation through the internet and the web page. Usually, Sunday Morning Services are recorded for online viewers and posted on Facebook.

Several equipment repairs were completed in 2023. However, this is always ongoing. In-ear monitors were updated, and some equipment was replaced. Some of the wedge monitors that are used by the vocalists were replaced, too.

We are always seeking those who have a joy for the Lord! There is plenty of opportunity to serve in a unique way at Bethel through Worship and Music.

Linc Schneider

Youth Ministry

The Bethel Youth ministry program for middle school and high school students navigated a sea of changes and challenges in 2023. For the first six months, Youth Director Eddie Burks enthusiastically planned and led several fun events for our younger disciples. The council accepted his resignation shortly after the Rummage Sale in June. The loss of this charismatic leader made many families with youth make the decision to be involved in other congregations.

As the Church Council started its new year in July, Sarah Manro volunteered to switch her focus from Fellowship to Youth. With her own children, one middle school age and one high school age, she has started a weekly Midweek Group meeting every Wednesday evening from 7-8:30. There is

room for attendance to grow, and with a few more families with children in these age groups joining the church, we know it will do that.

In February 2024, the Youth Group planned a successful Comedy Night, raising about \$700 for the youth. As a group, they are planning group activities for the rest of this school year and throughout the summer.

Our biggest challenges are not having a full-time Youth Director and having low numbers of youth in the church. We are a small but mighty group and have great hope of growth, but will continue to provide the best church youth experience we can for the youth we do have.

Sarah Manro