



Church of the Cross

2024 Annual Report



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ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

January 26, 2025

Rev. Julie Peterson, Moderator

Declaration of a Quorum

Adoption of the Agenda

Opening Prayer

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Charlie Keppel.....	1st year
Sue Liautaud	1st year as At-large member
Jeff Peterson	1st year as At-large member

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New Business

Adjournment

Prayer

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

Annual Congregational Meeting, Sunday, January 28, 2024

Moderator Rev. Julie Peterson called the meeting to order at 11:15 am and opened with prayer. A quorum was declared.

Minutes of the Called Congregational Meetings held January 29, 2023, and December 10, 2023, were received.

The following reports were presented as printed at this meeting.

Congregational Reports:

- Pastor's report by The Reverend Julie Peterson
- Clerk of Session report by Pat Groenewold
- Deacon report by Nancy Keppel
- Nominating Team Report by Sue Liautaud

Karen Franz, Adelaide Grant-Acquah, and Jane Lesch were nominated to serve as the members-at-large on the Nominating Team in 2024. A nomination was made from the floor, but the person nominated declined for this year and the nomination was withdrawn. The nominees recommended by the nominating committee were approved unanimously.

Ministry Team Reports:

- Stewardship Team report by Jim Letterer
- Worship Team report by Stu Truelsen
- Micah 6:8 Team report by Ken Groenewold
- Lilies of the Field Community Closet Team by Jane Lesch
- Community for Conscious Contact by Jim Buchholz
- Adult Learning Team by Stu Rutter

A motion prevailed to record formal appreciation for the outstanding work of those who initiated and continue to execute the *Lilies of the Field* Community Closet ministry of COTC.

Corporation Reports:

- Corporate Operations Team report by Jim Letterer
- Property Team reports by Jim Vakoc and Charlie Keppel
- Financial report by Ken Groenewold

A detailed review of the church's financial reports for 2023 and the 2024 budget was shared with the congregation, including the continuing need for transfers from our investments to cover the shortfall between contributions and the expenses associated with COTC's ministry and programs. The floor was then opened for questions.

Rev. Julie Peterson recused herself from the discussion of the recommended changes to her Terms of Call and Clerk Pat Groenewold moderated that portion of the meeting.

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the Terms of Call of the Rev. Julie Peterson for 2024 as presented.

NEW BUSINESS: Pastor Julie provided information to the congregation concerning her sabbatical this summer and arrangements that are in place to provide pastoral care and pulpit supply and administrative support during her absence.

There being no other business to come to this meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Groenewold
Clerk of Session

Called Congregational Meeting, Sunday, November 17, 2024

A Congregational Meeting of Church of the Cross for the purpose of electing officers was held in the sanctuary following the Sunday morning worship service. Moderator Rev. Julie Peterson called the meeting to order with prayer at 11:00 am.

A quorum was declared.

Jane Lesch, reporting on behalf of the chairperson of the Nominating Team, Susan Liautaud, thanked the 2024 Nominating Team members for their excellent work this year and placed in nomination the following slate of candidates proposed by the nominating committee:

For the office of Elder:

Kathie Darman	3-year term	Class of 2027
Ken Groenewold	3-year term	Class of 2027
John Harmon	3-year term	Class of 2027
Jim Letterer	3-year term	Class of 2027

For the office of Deacon:

Karen Franz	3-year term	Class of 2027
Nancy Keppel	3-year term	Class of 2027
Sue Letterer	3-year term	Class of 2027
Judie Truelsen	3-year term	Class of 2027

The moderator invited nominations from the floor. There were no additional nominations put forward. Nominations were closed and the above candidates were unanimously approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Groenewold
Clerk of Session

Pastor's Report

When I look back at our 2024 calendar, I continue to be amazed at how many opportunities we had to serve our Lord. There are many wonderful, sacred, holy, and practical things and moments of 2024 which are said in the pages of this Annual Report. I will leave these to the various Teams to share with you. What I wish to say is THANK YOU. You all work so diligently to make COTC a sacred, safe haven for ministry as we serve our community. And many of you fill multiple roles to make this happen. You shine the Light of Christ into the world, and I am honored to serve at your side. As I write this, *“my heart bursts its banks”* (Psalm 45:1) for the joy we have here at COTC.

This passage from Ephesians 3:17-19 lifts up a prayer asking for God's grace and gifts to be bestowed on the people of Ephesus.

“I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, God may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through the Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I believe this prayer has also been prayed for Church of the Cross as well, not just by me, but I'm guessing many others as well. As the song by David Crowder says, “That's why when mountains move, I say, ‘Looks like somebody prayed.’” While you may struggle to believe COTC has moved mountains this year, I'm here to say, you have! Just look at the other reports. Clearly, God has blessed this community, for as I see your labor of love for our Lord, I see you ARE *“rooted and grounded in love”* and DO *“know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge”* and continue to BE *“filled with all the fullness of God.”* The Holy One gifts us in this way so we can be faithful and strengthened to continue our ministries, even as we look forward to what God has planned for us in the new year. Are we perfect? No. But *“God lives in us, and God's love is perfected in us.”* (1 John 4:12).

You moved mountains this year especially as you all took the reins during my Sabbatical and medical leave. Your compassion and care for my wellbeing enabled me to be refreshed, ‘re-storied,’ and healed in ways I wasn't even aware I needed. As I've shared before, “Sabbath,” writes John Koessler in *The Radical Pursuit of Rest*, “affords a rest by which we are not so much restored as re-storied.” A weekly Sabbath is something God asks all of us (not just pastors) so we can be ‘re-storied’ by God's hand for the growth of God's Kingdom come. Embracing a weekly Sabbath day takes intentionality and, as I learned, is our ongoing labor of love for the Holy One—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. My 2024 Star Word, ‘perspective,’ helped to guide me in this labor of love all year, not just when on sabbatical. God is doing this work in and through us each and every day. Maybe your 2024 Star Word provided some insights for you as God continues to re-story us all as we intentionally carve out our Sabbath days.

This year you rose to the challenge and moved mountains with faithfulness and dedication. So, let us sing with Psalmist for your having accomplished so much through the power of the Holy Spirit this year.

“Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.” (Psalm 126:2)

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Julie

Report of Clerk of Session

The Church of the Cross Session is the governing body of the congregation and functions in compliance with the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church, USA and COTC's bylaws in all its actions. The bylaws provide for nine Elders to be elected by the congregation. Elders are normally elected to three-year terms and may not serve more than two consecutive terms (6 years) but may be re-elected after at least one year has passed.

The nine Elders serving in 2024 were:

<u>Class of 2024</u>	<u>Class of 2025</u>	<u>Class of 2026</u>
Ken Groenewold	Stu Rutter	James Buchholz
Charlie Keppel	Stu Truelsen	Laura De La Cruz
Sue Liautaud	Cheryl Wilkins	
Cathy Walker		

Rev. Julie Peterson served as the moderator of Session and Pat Groenewold was the Clerk. During Rev. Peterson's sabbatical, Rev. Judy Hockenberry moderated Session meetings,

The Session had 11 regular stated meetings and 2 special called meetings during the year and participated in a joint meeting with the Deacons. Meetings were held in person and/or virtually via Zoom

In 2024 the following teams supported the work of the Session:

Adult Learning Team – Stu Rutter	Nominating Team – Sue Liautaud
Corporate Operations Team – Jim Letterer	Property Team Inside – Jim Vakoc
Evangelism Team – Jim Letterer	Property Team Outside – Charlie Keppel
Lilies of the Field Clothes Closet – Jane Lesch	Stewardship Team – Jim Letterer
Micah 6:8 Team – Ken Groenewold	Worship Team – Stu Truelsen

The Session was also supported by the Treasurer, Ken Groenewold and Office Manager, Vanessa Brand.

The pastor or her designee celebrated the Lord's Supper in worship 17 times during the year.

The Lord's Supper was celebrated with members not able to attend worship 9 times during the year. The pastor was assisted by a currently serving Deacon or Elder each time.

The wedding of Church of the Cross member, Erica De La Cruz to Jake Geary, was celebrated on June 1, 2024 at Bluestem Farms & Events, with Rev. Peterson officiating.

There were no baptisms this past year. There were no funerals or memorial services for members. Rev. Peterson, did however, conduct a Memorial Service for one of our founding members, Donald Anderson, who was not a current member of Church of the Cross.

MEMBERSHIP TABULATION FOR 2024

Membership reported at the beginning of the year	61
Membership gains during the year	0
<i>Received by Profession/Reaffirmation of Faith or Certificate of Transfer</i>	
Membership loses during the year	0
<i>Transfer</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Removal from the rolls</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Death</i>	<i>0</i>
Membership at the end of the year	61

Respectfully submitted, Pat Groenewold, Clerk of Session

Deacons Report

Our Deacons board consisted of 8 members: Susan Buchholz, Nancy Keppel, Sue Letterer, Chris Lorentz, Ann Moorman, Glenna Morgan, Jeff Peterson, and Laurie Ulrich. Our Session representative was Cathy Walker.

The Deacons' board met via Zoom, in person, and in hybrid meetings during 2024 as well as using email to communicate financial requests. Many decisions need to be made quickly, and email is a big help.

“Soup-er Bowl” Sunday took place and \$937.83 was collected for the Schaumburg Food Pantry. Vanessa purchased food items from Amazon and had it delivered to the pantry for those in need. Easter flowers were sold in the Narthex before and after the service and provided beauty to our sanctuary for our Easter service. **Proceeds from the 2023 Christmas Poinsettias and the 2024 Easter Flowers allowed the Deacons to purchase 13 - \$50 Walmart Gift Cards (\$650).** They were shared with several Veterans through Joe Palmer of ‘We Who Serve.’

In April, we also gave 40 - \$40 Gift Cards (\$1600) to families of Lakeview School so they could celebrate Easter with a nice meal. **Candy was provided to members of the congregation and visitors on Mother’s and Father’s Day. Birthday Cards were mailed monthly** to recognize the special day in the life of our congregants. **The Deacons also spearhead the food donations to the Schaumburg Food Pantry** which are collected monthly in the Narthex. We celebrated a month of donations and Glenna and Hank Morgan faithfully delivered them.

The Deacon and Session members continued to call and tend to their flocks as well. We continued the Community Garden planting which started in 2021. Many volunteers donated seeds and plants to supply neighbors and the Schaumburg Food Pantry with fresh vegetables all summer long. Vanessa organized a watering system for the garden this year and many volunteers weeded and harvested the bounty of their work. Many thanks to Charlie Keppel, Judie Truelsen, and Vanessa Brand for their steadfast care for the garden.

The Deacons are thoughtful in being good stewards of the funds provided to us to support our work. The deep generosity of our congregation allowed us to support to the following:

- **Direct assistance requests – individual requests totaled \$2811.80**
- **Sisseton art supplies and other expenses \$1022.34.**

Our relationship continues with Lakeview School and its Social Worker, Jessica Cychosz. We were able to make an impact on the lives of many children and families in our community through this relationship. We also verbalized that we felt confident our donations were being distributed fairly and used wisely with Ms. Cychosz as our liaison to the school.

- **March-April 2024 – a call went out for donations for Aldi’s cards to provide food during the Easter season. We were able to provide 40 cards at \$40 each = \$1600**
- **August/September 2024 – a call went out for donations for clothing for the students as they felt they have enough coats.** The school then determined a shortage of clothing was more pressing than coats or school supplies. **Vanessa purchased clothing items from Lakeview’s Amazon Wish List for a total of \$1511.97.** We also had the social workers come to the Lilies Clothes Closet.
- **December 2024 – a call went out for donations for Aldi’s cards to provide food during the Christmas season. We were able to provide 59 cards at \$45 each = \$2,655.** Even though we have not had an opportunity to directly interact with the children of families of Lakeview School, it seems we have taken them into our hearts.

We celebrated again with our community when we participated in the National Night Out event on Tuesday, August 6th. Covid hit several of our members and our Deacons and church members really stepped up to the plate. The event is held in conjunction with the Hoffman Estates Police and Fire departments, and other community businesses. We filled our parking lot with friends and neighbors and celebrated being together once again out in the great outdoors. Hot dogs and chips, cookies and soft drinks were served and enjoyed by all. It felt great to connect with our neighbors. **At the end of November 2024, we once again put up the Christmas tree in the lounge with names of children from Shelter Inc. We provided gifts for 15 needy children** who might not get any other gifts for Christmas. Many of them are in group homes. COTC was complimented on their continued generosity to this program. They really appreciate knowing they can count on us to support them.

The Deacons sold several varieties of Poinsettias in Nov/Dec to beautify the sanctuary during the Christmas season. The net proceeds from the sale of the flowers will be combined with the Easter flower sale profits in 2025 to benefit the Veterans. Thanks to Sue Letterer for taking such good care of them, so we could all enjoy them for several weeks in the sanctuary, and then delivering ones designated to go to Encore (formerly Friendship Village) on Christmas Day. **Our Homebound members miss out on participating in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the comradery of being with friends.** The Deacons tried to accompany Pastor Julie or Pastor Judy once a month to deliver home communion to those who are confined to their homes due to poor health, or any combination of factors. Fortunately, through livestreaming services on Sunday mornings, as well as through phone calls and written notes we can all stay connected in these still crazy times of Covid and RSV and hip and knee replacements, etc. However, it is simple to conclude that in-person visits are invaluable and cherished by those who are confined to their homes.

The Deacons give our heartfelt thanks to Jeff Peterson and our Session representative Cathy Walker for all of their hard work and dedication to the Deacons. We will miss you as you leave the board. We welcome back Judie Truelsen and Karen Franz in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Keppel, Moderator

Nominating Team Report

Members: Sue Liautaud, Jeff Peterson, Karen Franz, Jane Lesch, Adelaide Grant-Acquah

The purpose of the Nominating Team is to present candidates for the offices of Ruling Elders, Deacons, and the three At-Large members of the Nominating Team to the Congregation for their election to these offices. The Nominating Team also oversees the completion of the annual Financial Review and the associated written procedures for the Review.

The following candidates were presented to the congregation and were elected on November 17th to begin serving in 2025:

Elders:	Kathie Darman	Class of 2027
	John Harmon	Class of 2027
	Jim Letterer	Class of 2027
	Ken Groenewold	Class of 2027

Deacons:	Karen Franz	Class of 2027
	Judie Truelsen	Class of 2027
	Nancy Keppel	Class of 2027
	Sue Letterer	Class of 2027

The following are the 2025 Nominees to be At-Large members of the Nominating Team:

Charlie Keppel 1st year
Jeff Peterson 1st year as At-large member
Sue Liautaud 1st year as At-large member

The 2024 Financial Review Team for COTC's 2023 financial results was led by John Baker, Stu Rutter, Dave Lesch, and Terry Maulding, and assisted by Vanessa Brand. The review was completed and accepted by the Session in September. There were no significant findings.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sue Liautaud, Elder and Moderator of the Nominating Team

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

Stewardship Team Report

Theme: GROWING IN GRACE AND GRATITUDE

Total Pledges	2023 *(note)	2024 *(note)	Change
Number of pledges	30	30	0 %
Total money pledged	\$188,088	\$194,130	+3.2 %
Average pledge	\$6,270	\$6,471	+3.2 %

*Note: 2024 comparison to 2023: 7 pledges same as 2023; 7 pledges decreased from 2023; 16 pledges increased from 2023

Your Stewardship Team, Jim Letterer-Chair, Terry Maulding, and James Buchholz

Worship Team Report

The Worship Team works closely with Pastor Julie on Sunday worship and special services like Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday. We set up communion, change banners, decorate the sanctuary, recruit worship leaders like our two newest worship leaders—Kathie Darman and Laurie Ulrich—and plan music.

One highlight of 2024 was Pastor Julie's sabbatical which lasted 10 weeks over the summer. I put this in the highlight category not that we were glad she was gone. Quite the opposite, we were uncertain about how worship would be without her leading us. But Pastor Julie had everything figured out and left worship in the capable hands of Rev. Judy Hockenberry. Her husband Rev. Ken Hockenberry also filled in a few Sundays so Judy could help with newborn twin grandchildren in Nashville. They also filled in for a few weeks while Julie recovered from hip surgery. Pastor Julie's well-earned sabbatical followed seven years in the pulpit at Church of the Cross.

What would worship be at Church of the Cross without music and our marvelous choir under the leadership of Marie Rutter? The choir is accompanied by Dr. Robert Kania who gives us a concert-worthy performance every Sunday on the baby grand piano or organ. Most of the attendees at worship stay seated after the benediction to hear him play the postlude. Our choir also performed at the annual Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. Pastor Julie participated in the service. On the fourth Sunday of Advent the choir performed a new cantata, “Darkness into Light,” by Mary McDonald.

The church bulletin is printed in English and Spanish, and thanks to Cheryl Wilkins and José Suarez the scriptures are read aloud in both languages. The A-V team also deserves a shout out. Led by John Baker, the team of Jim Moorman, Mike Lorentz, and Stu Truelsen streamed our worship services on Facebook, until we got bumped by Facebook for reasons which aren’t exactly clear. We then moved to Instagram, but we expect to be back on Facebook and are exploring streaming also on YouTube.

The Advent Season theme was “How Does a Weary World Rejoice?” Our Advent study and sermons revolved around the theme. It couldn’t have been more fitting with wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, gun violence, fierce political division and a spike in homelessness. Pastor Julie helped us understand that we cannot move from weariness to joy without Jesus Christ, the Light of a darkening world. We also held a Blue Christmas service on Dec. 11, for those suffering fatigue, grief and loneliness. The sanctuary was once again beautifully decorated for Christmas with our Chrismon tree and poinsettias arranged by the Deacons.

As we close the year 2024, worship attendance has picked up. There are new faces in the pews. We are truly blessed to be worshipping God in this faith community at Church of the Cross.

Yours in Christ,
Stu Truelsen, Worship Team chair

Members: Laura De La Cruz, Jane Lesch, Mike Lorentz, Marie Rutter, Judie Truelsen

Micah 6:8 Team Report

We see social justice as love applied to systems, policies, cultures and individuals. Our primary desire is to focus on racial justice, to be open and affirming to LGBTQ+ persons, and to support immigrants and refugees.

We discontinued efforts to have an outside organization teach ESL (English as a Second Language) classes in our building. We may revisit this in 2025. Conscious Contact meetings for the 12-step community were concluded due to a lack of community volunteers. We discussed what it would take to declare ourselves a “safe” church for the LBGTQ community.

The Micah team seeks out and evaluates opportunities for the church as a whole to serve others. When we find an opportunity, we make recommendations (such as the clothes closet) to the Session which then decides which opportunities to accept. We communicate with the Village of Hoffman Estates, Partners for Our Community, the Kenneth Young Center, other churches and non-profit organizations to seek new opportunities and to communicate what is being done at COTC

Respectfully submitted,
Ken Groenewold

Lilies of the Field Community Clothes Closet

Coordinators: Jane Lesch, Judie Truelsen, Laura De La Cruz, and Cathy Walker

Volunteers: District 211 Adult Transition Program attendees, John and Marilyn Baker, Susan Buchholz, Kathie Darman, Laura De La Cruz, Karen Franz, Jen Fuscone, Ken and Pat Groenewold, Dave Lesch, Sue Liautaud, Chris Lorentz, Elizabeth Martinez, Fay Michaelis, Ann Moorman, Julie Peterson, Celica Rodriguez, Marie Rutter, Judie Truelsen, Laurie Ulrich, Cathy Walker, Dave Wilson, and many more!

The Lilies of the Field Community Clothes Closet opened on November 8, 2022. Since that day the closet has provided over 50,000 items to about 400 families in our neighborhood who need clothing and small household items. The Lilies Clothes Closet provides gently used and some new clothing to our patrons free of charge. The closet relies on donations of gently used clothing and monetary donations from our congregation and our community. The closet received a \$4,000 grant from the Presbytery for the closet's needs in 2024 as well as a \$2,000 grant from the Rotary Club of Schaumburg/Hoffman Estates. There will always be a monetary need as we purchase new underwear and socks for our patrons and supplies for the closet.

Currently our hours are:

- Tuesdays: 11 am – 1 pm**
- Thursdays: 4 – 6 pm**
- The second Saturday of the month: 9 – 11 am.**
- The Sunday following the second Sat: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm**

Early in 2024 we added a *Lilies of the Field Community Clothes Closet Bridge Person* as a paid position. Initially we hired 2 candidates to share this position: José Suarez and Jazsmin Lopez. Later in the year, Jazsmin resigned this position, and José took over as the singular Bridge Person whenever the closet is open. Having José at the closet while we are open has made a huge improvement to the services we can offer our patrons. José can have actual conversations with our patrons due to his bilingual abilities, as many of our patrons speak Spanish exclusively. He has expanded his position in that he provides a wealth of social service information to help our patrons with other needs. His can-do attitude and friendliness also make the closet a fun place to be. We received a large donation of small toys for Christmas and José really enjoyed playing “Senór Santa” by giving the toys out to the children.

Also, early in 2024, we began keeping our records electronically. Dave Lesch created our computer program which is updated as improvements are made in its usage.

On November 14, 2024, we celebrated our two-year anniversary with a dinner prepared for us by José and Elizabeth, along with helpers. We invited all our patrons and volunteers and members of the congregation to our party while the clothes closet was open. José and Elizabeth took charge of the preparation of our food, and we had home-made flautas along with Hispanic side dishes and desserts provided by the helpers. Approximately 70 people attended, and everyone went away full and happy.

I would like to thank everyone who has volunteered their time at the closet. I am overwhelmed by the willingness of the whole congregation to pitch in and help with this project. **The only way this project will continue successfully is if we can keep up the support of the congregation and get additional support from our community.** We ask that everyone keep talking about the closet with their friends and relatives, while we continue to encourage donations and encourage volunteering your time with the Clothes Closet.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Lesch, Judie Truelsen, Laura De La Cruz, and Cathy Walker

Adult Learning Report

The church provides several areas of Christian growth including devotions, personal Bible studies as well as Adult Sunday School and Men's Bible Study. This report covers Adult Sunday School and Men's Bible Study for 2024.

Adult Sunday School

Classes meet in the Gathering Room at 11:45 am on most Sundays. Meeting here permits us to include several members on Zoom. Attendance is usually about 10 to 15 people.

We began 2024 by continuing our source of discussion material from *Feasting on the Word* provided by Westminster John Knox Press. Topics included the following –

- Preparing the Way
- Release for Captives
- Who, Me?
- Nurturing Faith
- Order out of Chaos
- Discerning God's Call

On March 10 we began a study of John Pavlovitz' book, *A Bigger Table*. The objective of the book is to help build "Messy, Authentic, and Hopeful Spiritual Community." We had many spirited discussions of some of the topics, which were aided by some disagreements and many learning opportunities!

Beginning September 15, we started our study of Charles A. Riley's book, *Grace and Gratitude*. These studies helped many of us to expand our understanding and knowledge in our search for the truth.

We began an Advent study on November 10, *Calling All Angels*, by Erin Wathen. The main topic of this book is fear. One conclusion that is to be learned from this book is: "Pick up your fears and take them with you". This book is worth a second reading.

Our first study of 2025 will be C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*. With the start of a new study, now would be a good time for you to join us!

Men's Bible Study

Men's Bible Study generally meets on Wednesday nights for one hour beginning at 7:00 pm. Two meetings are scheduled for January through May and September through November. One meeting is scheduled for June through August and December.

The Men's Bible Study completed its study of *Jeremiah* on January 10.

MBS began a study of the *Gospel of Mark* by Amy-Jill Levine on January 24. Excellent discussions from this study by one of our favorite authors.

The *Ezekiel* study, "God's Presence in Performance" by William D. Shiell, began on June 12.

On September 25, MBS began the study of *Short Stories by Jesus*. We are continuing with this study into 2025.

We are looking for new members. If you have any questions or would like the dates of future meetings, please let me know.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stu Rutter

Corporation Team Report

Members: Jim Letterer, President; Jim Vakoc, Vice-President; Ken Groenewold, Treasurer; Pat Groenewold, Secretary; John Harmon, congregation member; Terry Maulding, congregation member; Hank Morgan, congregational member; and Rev. Julie Peterson.

Corporate Operations (Corp Ops) meets monthly and as needed for emergencies. This team is responsible for the church's budget and finances; building and grounds; other administrative matters; and personnel matters. Following is a summary of major activities and accomplishments during 2024 in each of these areas:

Budget and Finance

- Monthly review of financial reports, statement of funds, general fund income & expenses, investment balances and making recommendations to Session on financial decisions as required
- Annual update of signing authority on bank and investment accounts
- Summary financial information presented to the congregation periodically
- Transfer cash from investments to general fund with Session approval as needed for operations
- Recommendations to Session for 2025 budget, including salary increases for staff
- Periodically meet and consult with external investment advisor
- Additional financial details provided in the treasurer's report in the Annual Report document

Building and Grounds

- Oversight of regular maintenance and repairs to the building with outstanding support from Jim Vakoc for indoor items and Charlie Keppel for outdoor work
- Management of use of COTC facilities by other organizations, including fee rates, agreements, compliance with insurance and child protections policies, and reviewing new usage request
- Supported various workday projects both in the building and on the exterior
- Additional maintenance / repairs done in 2024 include: more repairs to roof; hot patches to parking lot for 761 sq ft.

Other Administrative Responsibilities

- Review and execute contracts including heating / air-conditioning, insurance, lawn maintenance, snow plowing, and fire safety

Personnel

- Pastor Julie has a number of action items for Corp Ops each month, including a discussion on how wonderful it is to have such a great COTC staff!
- Coordinate annual review for the pastor
- Review and revise job descriptions as needed

A big thank you to Ken, Pat, John, Terry, Hank, Jim V, and Pastor Julie for all their hard work on Corp Ops in 2024!

Jim Letterer
COTC President

Property Team Report

2024 Inside Work – Jim Vakoc

- Adjusted light timers
- Replaced gym lights with high efficiency units
- Readied salt supplies for winter snow.
- Set sanctuary fans for summer/winter.
- Replaced exit & florescent lights.
- Replaced furnace filters.
- Adjusted thermostats per facility use.
- Workday projects, cleaning, etc.

2024 Outside Work & Workday Tasks – Charlie Keppel

Spring Workday:

- Continued our never-ending cold patch of parking lot.
- Put concrete stops in the parking lot back in place.
- Leveled out the lip at the base of the ramp upstairs.
- Cut back the undergrowth and trees along the West property line as well as the lower limbs on the crabapples. This allowed our camera to see if there is illicit activity in and around the courtyard.
- Install brick edging and mulch where Hosta were planted in courtyard and along gym wall.
- Sand and paint handrails for the upper entrance and front bench.
- Transplant Daylilies from East wall to the bed between the church and Higgins Rd.

Summer and Fall Scouting USA Eagle Scout Projects:

- Re-graded the eroded, degraded, swale West of the sanctuary. The crew re-graded the area and installed large stones to eliminate future erosion. They also raised the retaining wall by the lower door to reduce the risk of silt coming into the lower level.
- Crew removed invasive plants in the detention area by the dumpster. They replaced them with native plant material.
- Crew planted native Oaks in the courtyard as well as West and South property lines. The crew also installed mulch around the trees as well as the gardens around the church. There is some left over mulch they left in the upper parking lot. This will be laid down on the path there when weather conditions permit.

Fall Workday:

- Sand and paint the railing and check stability of the railing on the South end of the Gathering Place.
- Cut back vegetation from the chimney
- Create a new life to the lower to the bricks by power washing them
- Paint the wood trim above the front bench
- Window from kitchen to courtyard remove decayed caulk and replace with new caulk
- Create an experimental area by the kitchen window. We installed landscape fabric in the mulch bed to see if it will reduce the soil splashing up on the lower bricks.

Contract work:

- Replaced roof tiles that had blown off and replaced trim that squirrels had chewed on to make nests.
- The paving contractor applied hot patch to the large, degraded areas in our parking lot. We had received a citation from the Village of Hoffman Estates saying these areas were too large for our cold patch. We will still need to cold patch additional, smaller; areas next spring. Long term, 3-5 years, we need to consider grinding and replacement of a section of the parking at a time.