

For surely I know  
the plans I have  
for you, declares  
the Lord...

*Jeremiah 29:11*

**Triumphant Lutheran  
2023-2024 Narrative Budget**



## **Table of Contents**

<b>President's Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Discerning God's Call by Pastor Aaron .....</b>	<b>2-3</b>
<b>Proposed 2024 Budget .....</b>	<b>4-5</b>
<b>2023 Council Members .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Worship and Music .....</b>	<b>7-9</b>
<b>Discipleship .....</b>	<b>10-12</b>
<b>Servant Outreach .....</b>	<b>13-15</b>
<b>Ministry Support.....</b>	<b>16-17</b>
<b>Early Childhood Programs.....</b>	<b>18-19</b>
<b>Congregational Life .....</b>	<b>20-22</b>
<b>Stewardship .....</b>	<b>23-24</b>
<b>Property and Resources .....</b>	<b>25-26</b>
<b>Evangelism .....</b>	<b>27-28</b>
<b>Thanks and a Prayer .....</b>	<b>29</b>

**We Grow in Christ to Serve Others.**

**[www.triumphantlutheran.org](http://www.triumphantlutheran.org)**

---

## Congregation of Triumphant Lutheran Church,

Our narrative budget is a compilation of our church results for the year. Each Ministry Team has provided information about how the activities throughout the year are following “We grow in Christ to serve others.” Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped with these ministries. Our ministries team success is possible because of you.

The other important purpose of the narrative budget is to provide you with an opportunity to understand our financial picture. Another effort this year includes an update to the Constitution and By-laws for Triumphant Lutheran to incorporate updates made over several years to the Southwestern Texas Synod model constitution.

I invite you to review the Ministry Team articles, proposed 2024 budget, and updates to the constitution and by-laws prior our Congregational meeting. The advance review will provide you with what to expect during the meeting.

Thank you,

*Barb Wade*

Council President



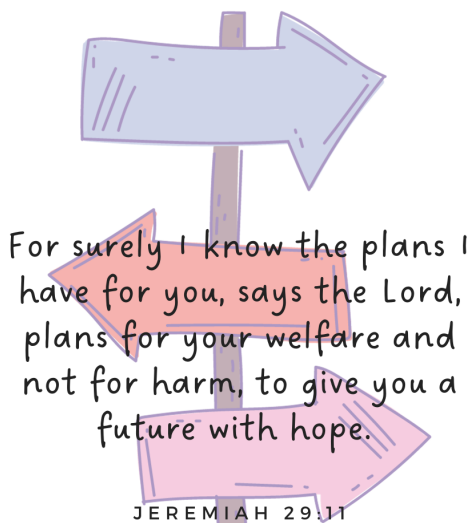
---

## Discerning God's Call

**“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” Jeremiah 29:11**

Dear People of God,

As I write this, we're in a time of discernment as a congregation. That shouldn't be surprising, since reflection and planning is a constant in our lives both together and as individuals. Any time we look back at what we have learned and



use that to guide our path forward, it's discernment. Making a grocery shopping list is discernment. Deciding when to put our Christmas decorations up is discernment. Actually, this document you're reading is all about discernment! There are stories and experiences of this past year and the hopeful plan of how the next year will go. We're always discerning!

As we've looked back on this year, one of the more significant events was saying goodbye to Deacon Chris St.Clair, who served TLC for 13 years as youth minister and then deacon. It is one of many

changes that our congregation has gone through over the last several years. For example, since the COVID-19 outbreak, we have lived as a church that worships both in-person and online. We live in an area that continues to see rapid growth, and with it comes change in how communities care, gather, and live together. So how do we move forward?

For our congregation, our discernment is focused on seeking and understanding the will of God. It's about looking back (the past), around (the present), and ahead (the future). It requires us to take time and reflect, learning from where we have seen Jesus' life-giving and transformative work in our history. From there, we look around us, seeing what is going on in the world around us and how God may be inviting us to be a part of it. And lastly, we look to the future,

---

dreaming with faith and hope for the future God is calling us to. There will be surveys to fill out, focus groups to wonder in, and stories to share.

The verse from Jeremiah always strikes me when we talk about discernment. Jeremiah is writing to the people after the Exile, a time where the city of Jerusalem has been destroyed and the people have been taken to Babylon. Their world is in upheaval and everything seems to be at an end; what hope do they have in the future? And God responds with certainty: ***“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”*** When it feels like all is changing, our God has promised to hold on to us, to be there for us, and to guide us toward a life-giving future with hope.

In October 2024, Triumphant Lutheran Church will celebrate 45 years as a congregation. It seems like the perfect point to take a moment and dream together of where God is leading us for the next 5, 25, and 45 years! Whether in this next year or in the next decade, we can be sure that there will be new things that arise, opportunities to follow, and challenges to face. And yet, as we discern where God is leading, we can also be certain that our God goes with us with plans for new life, for a future with hope.

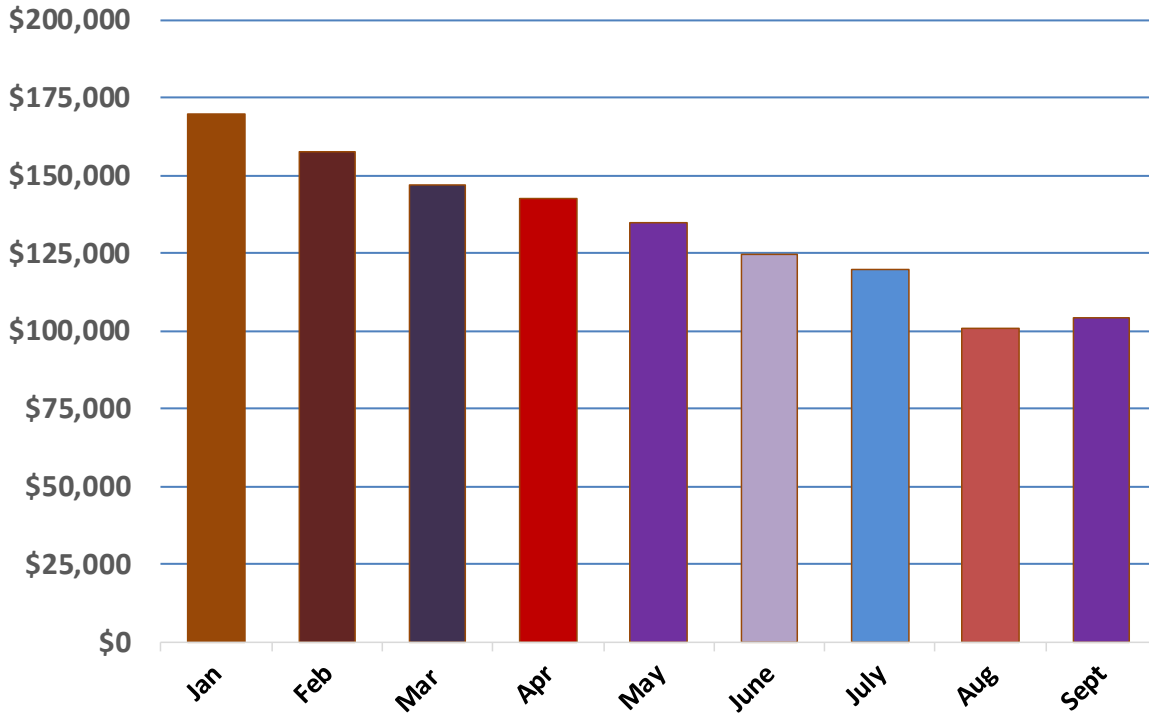
Peace,

*Pastor Aaron Richter*

# Proposed 2024 Budget

<b>INCOME 2024</b>		
<b>EVENTS</b>	0% Chg from 2023	\$2,696
<b>INTEREST</b>		\$5,000
<b>PRESCHOOL</b>	19.8% Chg from 2023	\$250,595
<b>MDO</b>	-100.0% Chg from 2023	\$0
<b>WEEKLY OFFERINGS</b>	-2.9% Chg from 2023	\$392,802
<b>LEADERSHIP RESERVE Re-INPUT</b>		\$0
<b>BUILDING FUND</b>	0% Chg from 2023	\$91,104
<b>MEMORIAL (BF:1,000, Other: 600)</b>	0% Chg from 2023	\$1,600
<b>BUILDING USE</b>	0% Chg from 2023	\$1,200
General Income Total		\$653,893
Building Fund Income Total		\$91,104
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>\$744,997</b>
<b>EXPENSES 2024</b>		
<b>SERVANT OUTREACH</b>	0% Chg from 2023	\$28,000
<b>TOT OTHER CORE MINISTRIES</b>	-14% Chg from 2023	\$44,650
EVANGELISM		\$1,200
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE		\$7,250
WORSHIP & MUSIC		\$10,800
DISCIPLESHIP		\$24,400
STEWARDSHIP		\$1,000
<b>TOT SUPPORT MINISTRIES</b>	5.2% Chg from 2023	\$140,246
PROPERTY/BUILDING		\$89,690
ADMIN & FINANCE (Ministry Support)		\$45,456
COUNCIL		\$5,100
<b>PRESCHOOL</b>	23.7% Chg from 2023	\$195,748
<b>MDO</b>	-100.0% Chg from 2023	\$0
<b>PAYROLL</b>	-19.5% Chg from 2023	\$311,381
General Expenses Total		\$720,025
DEBT SERVICE - Building Fund		\$91,104
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$811,129</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$811,129</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>\$744,997</b>
<b>BREAKEVEN COMPUTATION</b>		<b>-\$66,132</b>

# 2023 'RESERVES' STATUS



**Leadership Reserve.** Established about 14 years ago when income could be seen to likely go down for a while. Provides buffer to maintain current ministries and staff levels while we grow sufficiently in both attendance and giving to support these areas. This is the primary reserve we have been using to cover our deficit budget since

**G.O. 3 Mo Emergency Reserve.** Always maintain a running 3 month operating reserve in the event of emergency(ies); i.e., large storm damage, fire, sustained rates of down total income, etc.

**Capital Reserves.** A set aside continually banked for future facility and equipment upgrades, and to replace old or dead equipment (e.g., HVAC) beyond normal budgeted requirements. No input at present.

**Building Fund Reserve.** Maintain a 5 month reserve to ensure on-time monthly mortgage payment.

**Mildred Morgan Fund.\*\*** Continuing Ed for Sr Pastor and Deacon, or o/w as directed by the Sr Pastor.

**CCRF.** A Texas state fund temporarily assisting to rebuild of ECP Facilities after COVID. All funds have been received and the PreSchool is spending the reserves on various projects with the PreSchool.

**Other Specified Reserves.** \*\* Ladies Bible Study, Young Family Ministry, Creative Blessings, WC & Liability Ins, Meditation Gardens, Memorial Fund, Backpacks, Local Outreach, Youth Holding Accts, MDO Reserve, Preschool

## Reserve Status

	<b>Dec-20</b>	<b>Dec-21</b>	<b>Dec-22</b>	<b>Sep-23</b>
Leadership Reserve	66,264	56,264	35,398	0
3 Mo Emergency Op Res	132,137	132,137	132,137	122,365
Capital Reserve	94,979	47,915	47,915	54,400
Building Fund Reserve	37,960	37,960	37,960	37,960
Ordained Cont Ed	30,742	39,938	4,721	4,720
CCRF	0	0	101,463	128,062
Other Specified Reserves	120,481	134,007	152,505	169,199
	<b>482,563</b>	<b>448,221</b>	<b>512,098</b>	<b>516,706</b>

---



## **2023 Council Members**

**President**

**Barbara Wade**

**Vice President**

**Jackie Mitchell**

**Treasurer**

**Gordon Hengst**

**Secretary**

**Nancy Patchin**

**Financial Secretary**

**John Schultz**

**Worship and Music**

**Ryan Anderson**

**Discipleship**

**Kirsten Sweet**

**Servant Outreach**

**Courtney Walker**

**Ministry Support**

**Nancy Molter**

**Early Childhood Programs**

**Jennifer Feutz**

**Congregational Life**

**Becky Sonnen**

**Stewardship**

**Ron Glazener**

**Property and Resources**

**Charles Beierle**

**Evangelism**

**Mark Hansen**



---

## Worship and Music

I realized very quickly after becoming involved with Worship and Music on council the enormous and impressive efforts that so many church members put towards keeping worship services running smoothly and consistently. In so many cases, these efforts are unseen, in the background, but all are so very vital to our Worship and Music life as a congregation.

There are ten programs under this ministry: Acolytes, Altar Guild, Ushers, Greeters, Readers, Assistant Ministers, Music, Sound and Live-Stream Team, Drama Programs, and the Puppet Ministry. There are opportunities spanning many gifts and abilities for members to share their talents with the congregation.

**Acolytes** are a fantastic opportunity for children from second grade and up to first learn to serve and be involved in worship, and serves as a stepping stone to further service opportunities. They learn responsibility, grow their confidence, and experience firsthand the various parts of worship and their meaning and importance.



The **Altar Guild** is one of those behind the scenes, often unsung, ministries that are a crucial part of worship running as smoothly as it does. They prepare the sanctuary for services and sacraments, including ensuring that communion is ready each Sunday, as well as changing out paraments for each church season, and myriad other responsibilities throughout the church year.

**Ushers** and **Greeters** are among the first people congregants and visitors interact with when they come through our doors. I can speak firsthand to what a welcoming church we are, and that environment begins with the wonderful work of the Ushers and Greeters.

**Readers** and **Assistant Ministers** serve an important role in the church, sharing the word of God, and serving alongside the Pastor. Our tradition values the service of lay people alongside the pastor, as we believe God's message of

---

## Worship & Music, continued

love comes to us not just in the words and actions of the pastors and priests, but through all people of God.



**Music** has been a valued part of the worship experience for centuries, and though the type of music has shifted and morphed through the ages, the idea has remained the same - joining our voices and instruments together to glorify and worship the Lord. Here at TLC, we do this through the gifts of our **Choir, Praise Band, Cantata, and guest performers**. Our musical talents span instruments and ages, and our ministries are always open to inviting more gifts to join the chorus.

Our **Sound and Live-Stream Team, or SALT Team**, has become more and more important to our ministry since COVID, and many people now experience worship through our online streams on Facebook or YouTube - from those out of town, those unable to leave their residence, to potential visitors seeking to get a sense of our worship and community ahead of time.

Finally our **Drama Team** and our **Puppet Ministry** bring fresh, creative additions to worship. The drama team includes the Children's Christmas program, which is returning in its traditional form this year, and the Living Last Supper every two years. The Puppet Ministry is a great intergenerational ministry for all ages to both enjoy and enjoy performing.

The Worship and Music budget covers items necessary to continue worships week to week, as well as special events such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals. This includes musical scores, piano tuning, and other music needs. The elements necessary for sacraments. Flowers, both weekly and Poinsettias



---

and Easter Lilies. Sound, Light and Live Stream equipment and any upgrades needed for those systems. And needs that arise for special worship services, such as the river baptism service that took place earlier this year in New Braunfels.

As I've previously mentioned, worship really does take an enormous team of talented individuals coming together and making their gifts available week by week. Their service is both a gift to God and a gift to the entire congregation. Thank you to everyone who makes this ministry possible. And of course,



if any of these teams interest you, we can always use more hands, ideas, and talents to help us to Grow in Christ and Serve Others.

**Worship and Music Team: Lead**—Ryan Anderson; Pastor Aaron Richter; **Altar Guild**—Helen Bauer; **Music**—Carol Snyder, Feliziti Landin; **Greeters** – D.K. Guebard; **Ushers**—Ken Smith; **Assistant Ministers/Readers**—Lori O’Berg, Mary Feuge, Lois Glazener; **Sound and Livestream Team**—Gordon Hengst, Jerry Guebard, Christie Brinkman, and all who work with our sound and screens; **Puppet Ministry**—Gloria Kreuzler; **Acolytes**—Ken Smith **Drama Team**—Ken Smith.

---

## Discipleship

2023 has been an eventful year for Discipleship Ministry. The most impactful event was Deacon Chris' call to South Carolina to serve at Joy Lutheran Church. He and his family moved in July. We wish him all the best but miss him, his family, and his dedicated service to our youth here at Triumphant.



Wednesday Nite Live (WNL) continues to be the primary faith formation time for youth. The Elementary-aged group meets on the playground and has expanded to roughly 20 youth who really enjoy being outside, playing games and learning the weekly Bible stories. The other small groups have maintained their focus on relationships and content. The high school group still struggles to gain any momentum after spending the COVID years apart and recent graduations of several very active senior high youth who have moved on to college.

Creative Blessings continues to meet during WNL in the Library. Also, Rose-Marie Smith is leading a study of the book "The Gift of Empathy" during WNL. These opportunities provide the opportunity for adults to build relationships.

Our Children's Chapel and combined Middle School and High School Sunday School classes began in September. These classes are being led by Children and Youth Ministry leaders.



Vacation Bible School week in June was very successful and a lot of fun. The theme was "Hotline Heroes", and we followed the previous year's model, which had worked well, by appointing a VBS leadership team. We focused on welcoming and sitting with the VBS families during the meal. Monetary donations were collected to provide vitamins for Little Sprouts from the nonprofit organization Love Child.

Our Elementary and Confirmation camps were a big success with approximately 20 TLC Youth attending! Pastor Aaron and Deacon Chris joined them. Although it was extremely hot, both adults and youth loved their camp

---

experiences. We are also very proud of four of our TLC Senior High Youth who spent their summer working as camp counselors, lifeguards and camp aides at Camp Chrysalis and Camp Ebert.

The TLC High School Youth took a trip to an unfamiliar locale and culture. They visited a



YouthWorks mission site in Puerto Rico. Ten High School youth and two adult chaperones went on the trip, where they assisted with the Vacation Bible School youth at Iglesia (Discipulos de Cristo) Metropolitana in San Juan, working with mostly non-English speaking youth. They learned many challenges including working with young children, having patience with behavior issues, dealing with language barriers, and teaching crafts. Our high schoolers returned with a new

understanding of giving grace, and the various ways God places you where you are needed. They realized mission work is not about what they expect to get from the experience, but what the people they are working for need from them. They learned this concept more this trip than other previous mission trips. Ultimately, it was obvious the Puerto Rican children made lasting impressions on our high school youth, as did the Arroz con Pollo!

Early in the year, Deason Chris, Pastor Aaron, and Melissa Zipp worked on redoing the Library by adding and removing some of the existing and duplicate resources and modifying the ways that people can access those resources. Equipped with mission and vision statements, the Library is better suited to meet the needs of the congregation.



### **Looking ahead to 2024...**

The ELCA Youth Gathering, ages 14-18, and Young Adult Gathering, ages 18-35, will be held July 16-20, 2024 in New Orleans, LA. The theme is “Created to Be,” centered on Psalm 139:14. The Youth Gathering brings together

---

## Discipleship, continued

thousands of high school age Lutherans from across the country and overseas for faith formation, worship, fellowship, and service. The Gathering is a place to broaden our understanding of God’s love to pay attention to, advocate for and care for our neighbors.



We are currently planning a pilgrimage for adults to the Holy Land in March 2024. Deacon Darcy Mittelstaedt will now lead the trip. Meetings have been held and are continuing for around 30 people who have registered for the trip. We are watching closely as the situation in Israel unfolds, and will make an informed decision regarding moving forward or canceling closer to the date.

In the absence of a Deacon or Youth Director, the Discipleship Team is working to keep all the regularly scheduled youth activities going, including Wednesday Night Live, Childrens Chapel and Sunday School, relying on our Children and Youth volunteers to lead these activities. Many thanks to all who have jumped in to help. Cross Trails Ministry Camps throughout the year will also continue as usual. Unfortunately, we do not currently have enough resources to plan and carry out additional events for our children, youth, and adults in 2024. Pastor Aaron is looking into whether we can find additional resources to apply to this area.

**Discipleship Team: Lead**—Kirsten Sweet; **Members:** Leon Henk, Angela Henk, Brandi Brinkman, Lois Glazener, Aaron Theilengerdes



Advent Retreat

---

## Servant Outreach

Aristotle once said “What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good.” This quote aligns well with Triumphant Lutheran Church’s mission that “We grow in Christ to serve others.” And at its most foundational level, this quote represents the Servant Outreach Ministry. Over the past year, the Servant Outreach team has the great opportunity to coordinate activities which allow our congregation to serve others through the giving of our time, talents, and treasure. As we look at each of these individual service opportunities, we realize the immense good that comes from serving others. The members of our church family have an abundance of amazing gifts and are filled with such generosity. Thank you for always being willing to honor God through your incredible service to others.

Our Lenten Service Project supported the Randolph Area Christian Assistance Program (RACAP) and TruLight 127 Ministries, with a focus on restocking their shelves with needed items. RACAP is a local food pantry and TruLight 127 supports children in the foster care system. In addition, the mid-week service offerings amounted to over \$800, which was donated to ELCA World Hunger, which helps to serve individuals living in hunger or poverty around the world.



There were also eight TLC members who attended a service opportunity at the New Braunfels Food Bank.

In April, we were able to surprise 25 of our young adults with care packages which included many tasty snacks and useful items, reminding them that TLC is continuing to think of and pray for them all.

Beginning in May, the Servant Outreach Team worked with Jennifer Feutz to support Exit 157A. Exit 157A is an organization that collects items to

serve homeless individuals. So far there have been a dozen gently used male or unisex shoes donated and delivered to those in need in downtown San Antonio.

We were excited to begin a new opportunity for the TLC congregation with Compassion International in early June that is being led by Ken Smith. TLC families select a child living in extreme poverty to sponsor and support monthly until the child turns 18 years old. As a result of Compassion Sunday, 9 children located around the world are being sponsored by TLC members.



---

## Servant Outreach, continued

The Servant Outreach Team again worked with Jennifer Feutz during Vacation Bible School and worship services to support children in Roatan, Honduras. Jennifer shared about her mission trip to serve the children through Little Sprouts, a ministry program that feeds children physically and spiritually. Through your donations, our church was able to provide over \$400 towards daily vitamins to these children.



We took the opportunity in July to collect school supplies to donate to Communities in Schools (CIS). CIS is an organization that works directly with students in our local schools to provide mentoring, academic support, and basic needs, and much more. We were able to fill many bags with the school supplies needed to give students a great start to the school year.

The end of August was focused on “God’s Work, Our Hands,” which is an opportunity every year for ELCA members across the country to engage in service work to make a positive change in their communities, build and deepen relationships, and share God’s love. On Sunday, all ages of the congregation worked together to improve various areas in need at TLC, encourage local nursing home residents, and support individuals internationally. At TLC, the tables and chairs were all thoroughly cleaned, and the confirmation students cleaned out a



flower bed. Children decorated cards with joyful messages for residents at nearby Silver Tree Nursing and Rehabilitation. The choir and puppet ministry performed for the residents as well.

Additionally, we assembled 20 fabric kits and 20 personal hygiene kits for Lutheran World Relief. The fabric kits are used for vocational training programs teaching sewing and for newly trained tailors to launch their sewing business. The personal care kits provide



basic hygiene items to individuals in need.



---

The holiday season will provide us with even more opportunities to help those in need. In October and early November, we are collecting food items for RACAP Thanksgiving Baskets to provide 75 families with a great Thanksgiving meal. In December, we will use our Angel Tree to provide Christmas gifts to children in need in our local community, as well as practical items for those in poverty throughout the world through monetary donations to the ELCA Good Gifts program.

In 2024, we will continue to find ways to use our time, talents, and treasures to serve others. We are so thankful for the amazing generosity of our church family! We look forward to planning and organizing opportunities in 2024 for our congregation to generously share the resources that God has provided with those in need.

**Servant Outreach Team: Lead**—Courtney Walker; **Members:** Amy Coronado, Sarah Richter, Brenda Albrecht, and all of the members of our church family!



Family Retreat

---

## Ministry Support

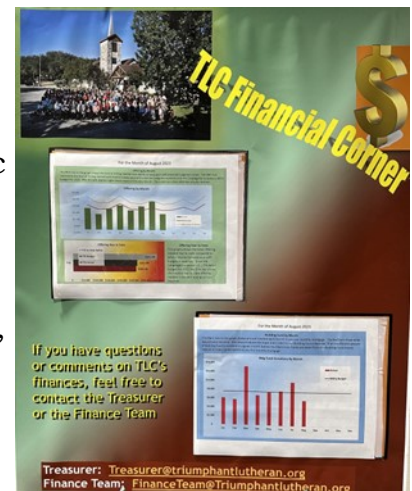
The Ministry Support team is responsible for maintaining the ongoing functions of the church to include finance, staff, and technological support. We are very fortunate to have a competent, caring professional as our Administrator. Sharon Hopkins keeps the staff and ministry team leaders organized and on target with achieving our goals. This is wonderful talent that benefits the entire church membership! This year Colleen Hersey became the Office Assistant. Already, she has proven to be resourceful and learning quickly how best to help the pastor and ministry leaders. She is a talented addition to the entire staff. If you haven't visited the church website recently, [triumphantultheran.org](http://triumphantultheran.org), I highly encourage you to do so. It is full of useful information and a three-month calendar of upcoming events.

As we gained a new staff member, we were sorry to bid farewell to Deacon Chris St.Clair in July. He has been instrumental in developing our youth in their faith as well as supporting several ministry teams in achieving their goals. Because of the gap in this leadership position, the Council is taking the opportunity to discern the needs of the membership and their desires moving forward to shape the future of our community. God bless Pastor Aaron! He has navigated his increased duties with humor, energy, compassion and a steady focus on the needs of the TLC community.



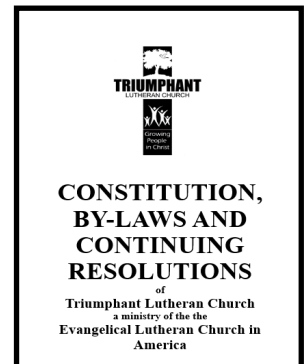
Speaking of talented people, Gordon Hengst manages our Information Technology Team. Our livestream service option, all the computers, internet service and phone providers are monitored by him to ensure the most cost-effective and reliable services. Not only is he very competent in this role, but he is also our Treasurer!

Our Finance team, headed by Jerry Guebard, is striving to meet the many challenges brought on by the pandemic and resulting economy. We are grateful that many new families have joined our church in the past year. We are still behind the pre-pandemic membership numbers, which coupled with increasing costs of good and services, greatly affects our general operating expenses and in turn affects our bottom line. Also of concern is the aging of our systems such as air conditioners and kitchen environment. These are vital to the successful operation



---

of the church. Although our Preschool brings in additional income, along with the generous donations through our “I ♥ TLC” campaign, we primarily depend on the tithes from our membership for our income. Please give prayerful thought and consideration to the budget for the upcoming year and your ability to support the church needs. Together we can maintain our vibrant community.



A new mission for Ministry Support this year is to review and revise the church Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions. The Southwestern Texas Synod made significant changes to the model constitution, so a major revision was done to our document. In addition, two big changes incorporated were to allow the rostered ministers on our staff to have a vote on the congregational council, and to eliminate the Financial Secretary position on the Council. Since our ministers are members of the Council, we felt it was important that they be able to vote! The Financial Secretary reports to the Finance Committee and any information provided is brought forward to the Council by the Secretary. Please review the constitution carefully prior to the vote at the annual meeting.

Our church community is **you!** Thank you for all your past support and your continued support in time, talents, and finances in the coming year.

**Ministry Support Team: Lead**—Nancy Molter; **TLC Office Staff:** Sharon Hopkins, Colleen Hersey, Carol Snyder, Pastor Aaron Richter, **Finance Team: Lead**—Jerry Guebard, **Members:** Pastor Aaron Richter, Dennis Feuge, John Gallo, Doug Hammerstrom, Jim Moreland, John Schultz, Bobbie White, Marilyn Winters, and Gordon Hengst. **IT Lead**—Gordon Hengst, **Members:** Brian Krauss and Jeff Boyes.

---

## Early Childhood Programs (ECP)

**“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’” Matthew 19:14**



When you think of church and ministry, most of us immediately envision church service on Sunday, and maybe Wednesday Night Live, Ladies’ Bible Study on Thursday, or other ministries featured in our Narrative Budget. If you look beyond the Sanctuary and our meeting rooms during the week, you will see one of the “smallest” ministries on campus...our preschool children.

While small in stature, the ministry is strong with 72 students, 13 staff members, and 2 substitutes. The Triumphant Lutheran Preschool encompasses children

from age 18 months through 5 years. Our current classes are:

Two-year-old classrooms: 18 children

Three-year-old classrooms: 23 children

Four-year-old classrooms: 31 children

Each of these classes are led by qualified teachers who enjoy sharing the love of God with their students. It is our goal through ECP to provide an age-appropriate, Christian-based environment where children grow socially, academically, physically, and emotionally. Our Preschool is led by our energetic and motivated Preschool Director, Karla Hammen.

The ECP has continued to make improvements to the program with funds from the Child Care Relief Funding grant through the Texas Workforce Commission. A new fence was built outside the Preschool Director’s office. During God’s Work Our Hands, the fence was painted to prep it for the final stage. A butterfly mural will be added to the fence to enhance the entrance to the Preschool. The dilapidated storage shed on the playground was replaced. Our Sexton, Frank, built the shelves to accommodate the needs of the shed storage. New Preschool flyers were designed and then



---

distributed on JBSA-Randolph and are available in the Narthex as well. New sinks were added to the 2-year-old rooms to help with sanitation during diaper changes. And two new play theme areas, a music wall and rock run, were created and installed on the playground by Karla.

While new things are happening, we continue to do what ECP does best: love God's littles. Pastor and Karla teach the children in Chapel time. Summer camps and special events like Fall Festival are hosted. The children enjoy their Thanksgiving Feast



and the Christmas Program. Most of the important work is done daily: serving the students and their families by providing a safe and educational environment where God's love can be encountered.

The Preschool can be found on social media through our Facebook page, Triumphant Lutheran Preschool and on Instagram, @TriumphantLutheranPreschool. Our presence on social media is beneficial for advertising, with a bonus of keeping our congregation informed of our ministry.

**Early Childhood Programs: Leads**—Jennifer Feutz & Marilyn Winters;  
**Members:** Preschool Director Karla Hammen, Nancy Hendricks and Pastor Aaron Richter.



---

## Congregational Life

**“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” Matthew 18:10**

Fellowship is the primary focus of The Congregational Life Ministry. Being around other believers provides us with opportunities to grow in our faith. As we gather outside of worship, we discover shared interests, promote the formation of new friendships, lift one another up, share ideas, backgrounds, and faith stories, and enjoy each other’s company.



In 2023, we engaged in many special activities. We started with a lovely New Year’s party with a delicious meal, fun decorations, a photo booth, dancing, and entertainment by TJ Dolotina. We also had our annual Cowboy Breakfast, fun snacks on Fiesta Sunday, an Easter Breakfast by our youth and an Egg Hunt with decorations, prizes, and the Easter bunny, and a Church Picnic, to name a few. We served dinner and snacks at VBS and dinner at each Wednesday

Night Live. Primetimers met each month for a themed lunch, and games or a movie. Our ministry served cake for special events such as Baptismal celebrations, Confirmation, graduation, and to welcome new members. We also assisted with Oktoberfest and provided meals following funerals. We always welcome new ideas and input into ways to create fellowship opportunities.



**“Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:9-10**

There are many opportunities to meet people, forge new friendships, and contribute in some way. We encourage you to consider the following groups in addressing your needs, engaging your interests, matching your skills and passion, and discovering how you can contribute by serving others. Be sure to look at our church calendar on the website and in the eTrumpet each month for upcoming activities and Congregational Life team meetings.

---

### **Primetimers**

If you're 60 years or better, join others for a themed lunch and fellowship on the second Monday of each month from September through May for lunch at noon. We enjoy each other's company, and sometimes play games, watch movies, or have a guest who helps us relive a particular era!



### **Creative Blessings**

This group knits and crochets shawls, hats, and baby items. These lovingly handmade items are blessed through prayer then given to soldiers, chemotherapy patients, and others in need of comfort and an awareness of God's presence in their lives. Beginners are welcome, and there are great teachers who can help you learn to knit or crochet! They meet in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday nights for a meal at 5:45pm, followed by knitting, crocheting, and fellowship in the Library.

### **Quilting Bees**

This group meets to create colorful quillows for the girls at New Life Center, a temporary home for underage girls in difficult family situations. A quillo is a quilt than can be folded and tucked into its own pocket to create a pillow. Quilting supplies, laughter, and fellowship are provided.

### **Art Group**

Our artists meet on Thursdays from 9am to 2pm in the room off of the Sanctuary to work on individual art projects while gathering with great company to promote artistic expression through faith and fellowship. Bring a lunch if you like.



### **Wednesday Night Live (WNL)**

This is an awesome gathering time on Wednesday evenings from September through May. There is a meal in the Fellowship Hall followed by faith formation classes for the youth, Choir practice, Creative Blessings, and focus groups that promote our mission as a congregation.

---

## Congregational Life, continued

### **Prayer Team**

This team meets in the church library to pray for TLC members, their friends, and relatives who are in need of prayer and the power of God's healing love.

### **Love in the Mail**

This group of individuals writes cards to express loving thoughts and wishes to members of our congregation on their birthdays, anniversaries, when they are ill, bereaved, need cheering or encouragement, or just have not been seen in a while. Most perform this loving service from home. Occasionally they meet together to enjoy each other's company while writing sweet notes in the cards.



### **Special Sunday, Funeral Meal, and Special Events Teams**

These teams of dedicated members help to coordinate, prepare food, serve, and clean up for special events, such as baptisms, funerals, graduation, and more. These events do not occur each week or month; therefore, so are coordinated as they occur.

### **Sunday Morning Coffee Fellowship**

This team sets up for the after-worship coffee and homemade or bought goodies (provided by volunteers), and cleans up afterwards. Volunteers usually serve once every other month.

**Each of our groups helps promote a sense of togetherness within our congregation.** Through good times and difficult times, Congregational Life coordinates with other TLC ministries to help let others know they are not alone and that God is with us. Please consider checking out one or more of these groups. With the support of all TLC members, through time, skills, and donations, we will continue to thrive.

**Congregational Life Team: Lead**—Becky Sonnen. **Members:** Pastor Aaron Richter, Barbara Wade, Leon Henk, Linda Shultz, Jackie Mitchell, Linda Shuler, D.K. Guebard, Lindy Hammerstrom, Marilyn Winters, Carol Snyder, Nancy Hendricks, Kenny Weber, Michelle Salazar, Angie Henk, and the many people help with weekly and special events and bring refreshments.



---

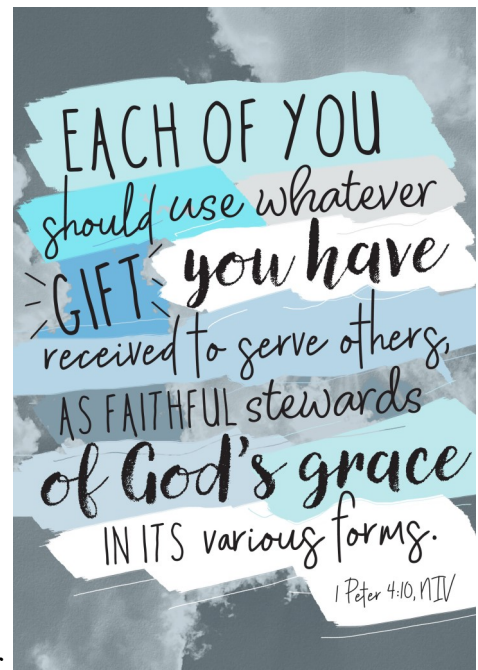
## Stewardship

Many associate stewardship as strictly tithing or contributing financially to help meet the budgetary needs of our church. The reality is that we all have been given the responsibility by God to be a good steward of what he gives us through finances, time, and talents. To only focus on the financial aspects of stewardship would ignore the many wonderful things that our congregation provides for each other, as well as for individuals and organizations outside of our church.

We often take for granted what time, talents, and finances are contributed to our church daily. The assumption that these things are just business as usual overlooks how many times we fail to recognize those who truly live the gospel by expending their time, talents, and finances. The Stewardship committee has compiled a list of the many people who volunteer in TLC ministries and the organizations that TLC supports. We are thankful and grateful for all who contribute to spreading the Gospel.

Thank you with heartfelt gratitude to Pastor Aaron, Office Staff, the Sexton, Preschool Staff, Church Council, Stephen Ministers, Ushers, Greeters, Altar Guild, Acolytes, Assistant Ministers, Readers, Nursery Attendants, Prayer Team, the Praise Band, Choir, musicians, the Sound and Livestream Team, the Prayer Team, Puppet Ministry. Also to all who volunteer with Creative Blessings, Quilting Bees, Men's and Ladies' Bible Study, Primetimers, Love in the Mail, Children's Chapel, Confirmation and Middle Schoolers, High Schoolers, Wednesday Night Live Programs and Dinners, Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, Grounds Clean-Up, drama programs, Sunday Morning Coffee Fellowship, Oktoberfest Team and Volunteers, Special Events Teams, baked goods providers, Meet-Me-at-the-Grill, committee volunteers, gardens and landscaping, Cowboy Sunday and Breakfast, Fiesta Sunday, Easter Breakfast and Egg Hunt, Congregational Picnic, special events decorators, delivery drivers, and provide Altar Flowers, and those who help wherever needed at a moment's notice.

Together we have supported our ELCA missionaries (currently Rev. Carolyn Schneider in Jamaica), RACAP, TruLight127 Ministries, the Angel Tree Project,



---

## Stewardship, continued

ELCA Good Gifts, Communities in Schools, Ronald McDonald House, New Life Children's Ministry, Haven For Hope, San Antonio and New Braunfels Food Banks, Elf Louise, and more!

As you can see, there are a plethora of things to be involved in, making TLC the wonderful congregation that it is. We encourage you, whether you are a long-



time member or new to the congregation, to become a part of one (or more) of these ministries and activities. The Bible encourages us to be good stewards, and as you can see, you can make an impact through serving.

Finally, none of these ministries would be effective without your financial support. Our yearly budget allows us to meet our financial responsibilities in being good stewards. We encourage you to support our

ministries with your generous donations. This can be accomplished through online giving, via envelopes, or legacy giving. We are aware that some may have financial difficulties and feel that they are unable to contribute on a consistent basis. We only ask that you contribute as you can after prayerful contemplation. Our congregation will overcome financial hardships with your faithful support.

Thank you to each of you who have made a commitment to being a part of our congregation. God truly does honor and bless a cheerful giver. Please continue to support Triumphant Lutheran Church with your time, talents, and finances. And may we all be blessed beyond measure.

**Stewardship Team: Lead**—Ron Glazener, **Members:** Pastor Aaron Richter, Dennis Feuge, Jerry Guebard, Bobbie White

---

## Property and Resources

The Property and Resources team's purpose is to maintain a warm, welcoming, and attractive environment for TLC members and guests both indoors and outside. Our objective is to enhance the experience of worship and fellowship so that all may enjoy their time together.

Property and Resources supports the ministries of the church through the care of all things facilities related. Perhaps most importantly, the team's stewardship comes in the form of time spent on property maintenance, preparations for special events and program support.



Property and Resources volunteers help maintain the entire TLC property comprised of fifteen acres, five buildings, a total of thirty-one heating and cooling systems, and the numerous appliances on campus. Our "boots on the ground" Sexton, Frank Fogg, tackles

the regular maintenance and oversees the onsite work of contractors we call in for the larger jobs.

The campus continues to see improvements thanks to numerous contributions and efforts from the congregation and ministries. While the lawn struggled through many months of dry weather, and the associated water restrictions, volunteers planted drought-tolerant and deer-resistant landscaping. Debris was cleared near the new playground equipment to address problems with chiggers. New signs were installed around campus. There is a gaga ball pit going in near the basketball court as part of Andrew Henderson's Eagle Scout project.



Our campus property will continue to need your helping hands and donations in the coming year and beyond. It takes a diligent team of six about four hours to complete the regular landscape maintenance planned every second Saturday of the month. More help is needed -- we have few volunteers able to regularly attend, making the effort harder than it needs to be. Our goal is to make this as much about fellowship as possible and we are more than willing to share knowledge and skills with others who might be interested in learning.

As we move in to 2024 we intend to ask for the congregation's consideration

---

---

## Property and Resources, continued

through a capital campaign aimed at, among other needs, replacing some of our air conditioning units across the campus. These units are no longer functioning properly and require coolant that is no longer manufactured, and hasn't been, since 2020. Replacing these units will cost around \$130,000. Half of that cost is for the units in the Fellowship Hall.

Thanks and blessings to Jackie Mitchell, Barb and Wes Wade, and Frank Fogg and all those who continue to assist in maintaining our beautiful campus.

**Property & Resources Team: Leads**—Charles Beierle and **Sexton**—Frank Fogg. **Members:** Jackie Mitchell, Jerry Guebard, Wes and Barb Wade, John and Nadine Schultz, Maria Dykes, and all who volunteer on property work days.



October 14 Ring of Fire Eclipse

---

## Evangelism

**“I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ.” Philemon 1:6**

The Bible verse above comes from Paul’s letter to Philemon. In the letter, Paul appreciates the growth Philemon has had in his faith in Christ and expresses his



wish for Philemon to respond to that growth by continuing to foster positive relationships with other people. What can we take away from this verse for ourselves? By focusing on one particular word in it: partnership. We have a wonderful partnership with each other as a faithful community here at TLC and we do awesome things inside and outside our church building. We should focus on that as part of

our understanding of evangelism – that we understand and learn and grow in our own faith so that we can partner with Christ, with each other, and with our neighbor—whether that’s on Bat Cave Road, or Wichita, Kansas, or in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia!

Our focus this past year has been about how we can get to know each other better and find ways for people who are coming to our church as first-timers or those who have joined as congregation members can find their niche and place in this greater community. Our hope is for them to integrate so that they can be like Philemon and focus on their growth in their faith and partnership with others. In that vein, several of things we can reflect on from this past year are as follows:

1. **Personal invitation cards and flyers for our fellowship events.** I’ve only

been a member at Triumphant Lutheran for the past few years, but I’ve been impressed with the number of large events that are put on during the year and the focus on asking our neighbors, co-workers, etc., to come to these events.

Statistics show that a Lutheran member, on average, invites someone to church once every 17 years. So, these events provide an excellent way to invite a friend and gather in a low-stakes and enjoyable environment.

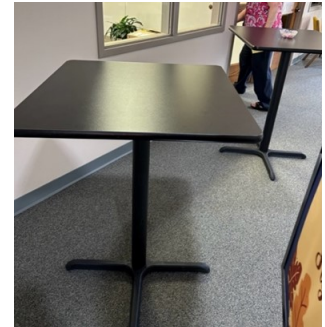


2. **Tables in the Narthex** – Aren’t the Narthex modifications great? We now have a gathering space to catch up with others before, between, and after

---

## Evangelism, continued

services. Share a snack and converse with people you know, and especially people you don't know...introduce yourself and get to know them. We often go straight to people we know because it's comfortable. Take a risk and go visit with someone you don't know!



- 3. Visitors and members integration** – we continue to build upon the work of the previous Evangelism lead and team on ways to be a welcoming community to all who enter our church building. Thanks to all who serve as greeters and ushers and conversation starters with those who are new or look confused as to what to do next! As we are able to welcome new members, our focus continues to be on how they can get involved and share their time and talents with the greater community.



- 4. Fellowship opportunities** – whether it's "Pastor and Pastry" or our "Welcome Cookouts," Pastor Aaron and others do a great job of learning about the people who are here and inviting them to share a little more about themselves. From these gatherings, we hope to continue to strengthen our ties with others.

- 5. Faith stories** – What is your 2-minute elevator pitch about your faith story? How can we learn to share that with others who ask why you go to church or how your faith has shaped you? The Evangelism team is working on resources to make that a less stressful and more exciting venture when talking with others.

**Evangelism Team: Lead**—Mark Hansen; **Members:** Pastor Aaron Richter

---

## Thank you and a prayer...

**Thank you** for taking the time to see how God has been at work at TLC in the last year! As we embark on another year as God's people called to "grow in Christ to serve others," let me share this prayer:

**O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May God bless and keep you,

*Pastor Aaron Richter*

