



# CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH

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7308 South 42nd Street, Bellevue, NE 68147

ALL ARE WELCOME

## Annual Meeting of the Congregation Sunday January 26, 2025

Call to Order

Prayer

Distribution of Materials

Approval of the Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Congregation (p2)

Action on the Proposed Agenda (p1)

Ministry Reports

Pastor (p3)

Council (p5)

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Consideration of the Mission Plan (p7)

Reports of Boards and Organizations of the Congregation

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Unfinished Business

New Business (p9)

Elections

Nominating Committee (p9)

Floor Nominations

Voting

Adjournment

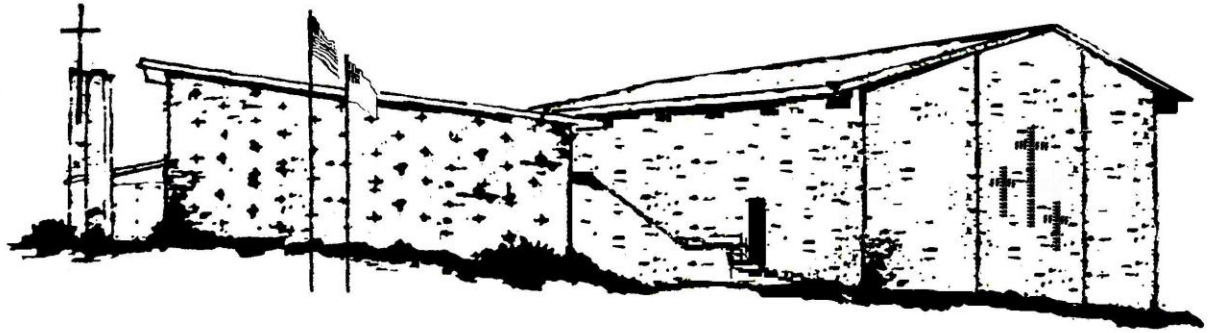
Prayer for the Meal and Benediction

**2024 Annual Meeting Minutes**  
**Christ the King Lutheran Church**  
**January 28, 2024**

- Council President, Nick Christy, called the meeting to order at 11:05 AM and confirmed a quorum of CTK members present to conduct business.
- Pastor Bryan opened the meeting with a short prayer
- Nick asked for approval of the minutes from last year, Paul Dawkins proposed and Deb Marx seconded. Nick then recommended everyone can read the ministry reports on their own, and if anyone wanted to add to their report, they were welcome. The agenda was approved. Cindy Johnson moved that the ministry reports be accepted en bloc. Sheli Rice seconded, and the motion was approved.
- Laurel spoke on the Treasurer's Report. We have had many increases. The cost of cleaning had to increase in the budget. Our insurance will be discontinued, and our new policy will most likely double. We will use our contingency fund as needed this year, but we cannot depend on it for next year. Ann Hunter asked about our hall rental fee. Pastor answered that we set a reasonable fee. We just raised the cost by \$5 in July. Another concern she had was regarding our lighting system in the sanctuary. Pastor explained how he was able to fix some broken wires in the dimmer knob, but that our 50 year old system could be a possible future costly issue for the church. For now, it is working. Our budget plan was approved.
- For the Mission Endowment Fund Beth Christy added that some extra unused dollars were put into our capital fund. If needed that money could be redeemed for the committee.
- For the Women of the ELCA there was nothing to add. A motion was made and passed to accept the Women of the ELCA and the Mission Endowment Fund reports.
- For Old Business there was nothing to add.
- For New Business Pastor spoke on the two issues that we might amend in our Constitution later this year. One is to allow for new technologies such as live streaming and electronic voting. The second issue is in the structure of our council. We might alter our Constitution to allow the council to be elected and the have the President and Secretary appointed by the council. This would eliminate the need for officers to be elected every year for a one year term.
- Lastly, Pastor Bryan proposed a motion to accept the slate of candidates on the 2024 ballot. Trent Daniels seconded, and the vote passed.
- Nick adjourned the meeting at 11:30 AM, and Pastor offered a closing prayer

Respectfully submitted,  
Debbie Cline, Secretary

## MINISTRY REPORTS



### ***Pastor – Pastor Bryan Rice***

Generally speaking, I take the opportunity in my annual report to talk about what we have accomplished in the past year and discuss goals for the coming year. We look back a year and we look ahead a year. This past summer as I was preparing the program calendar I was prompted to do a little digging in the archives; to look a little farther back, and consequently to look farther into the future.

I realized that in October of 2024 I would reach 16 years of ministry here at Christ the King. I came to learn that Pastor Al, the longest serving pastor at Christ the King, served our congregation for 825 Sundays. I did the math and realized that I would accomplish that feat on August 11, 2024. It was “Back to Church Sunday” (Rally Day), and I didn’t really know what I would do with that information, I let the day be the day it was scheduled to be and let it pass quietly with personal recognition of the occasion and a prayer of thanksgiving.

Wading through the archives, I considered each of our Pastors and what they either did or tried to accomplish and thought about my place among them. Ultimately the question to ask is what is the “state of the congregation”? Some pastors actually call their annual report that and they list statistics for numerical and financial growth and try to address the less concrete issues of spiritual health. Statistics don’t excite me terribly.

As an archery coach, I tell my teams not to worry about the score. “The score takes care of itself” I tell them. Concentrate on what you are doing. Be precise and consistent in everything you do. Change only one thing at a time. Focus on your grouping (how close your arrows are together). Do that, and “the score takes care of itself.” I know that, though while numerically it is possible, if you hit the target every time, statistically you will not score below 150. Red or better at both 10m and 15m and you’ll score at least 225. Yellow at 10m and red at 15m you’ll score at least 250. To get to 275 (only 3% of archers accomplish this) it has to be all yellow. So, I know the statistics, but it doesn’t help to spend too much time thinking about the numbers.

What are the statistics... what is the state of the church in the US today? According to the Barna Group, as churches closed their buildings due to Covid-19, about half of practicing Christians dropped out of church. Church attendance is now about 70 percent of what it was in 2019. More than half of churches saw a significant decline in giving from 2019 to 2023. The Barna Group recently stated that one in five churches faces shutting down in the next eighteen months. It is clear that the Covid crunch was not just an episode in American religious life, but rather the presenting symptom of a church crisis that has been building for decades.

The number of Lutheran seminary graduates today who have an MDiv degree is less than 25% of the number of graduates in 1988 (the beginning of the ELCA). And the number of vacant congregations without a pastor has increased dramatically. The shortage of viable seminary graduates and currently serving pastors available for call has not yet plateaued. Instead, this shortage is only growing more

severe and will last at least until the last serving Boomer pastors retire (in about 8 years). Further, the pandemic has accelerated the rate at which pastors are leaving full-time ministry. This is due in part to a significant number of pastors who had to deal with pandemic-related congregational conflict. Simply put there are more congregations than there are pastors any fix to address this reality is going to come with a fair amount of discomfort if not pain.

Lastly, church finances are not what they used to be. For as long as I have been in ministry “nickels and noses” was the measurement that determined your health. Are your budget and attendance numbers growing? If not, then you sat quietly in shame as other pastors talked about their latest building projects to address all of the people who were coming for this church program or that church program and how it is getting harder to find their fifth staff person.

The drive to get bigger sometimes seemed like a matter of survival. But it's not. Here are two current realities that push back against the perception that growth equals financial stability. In 2018, 92 percent of large program congregations had debt compared with only 11 percent of typical (now <65 in Sunday attendance) to smaller congregations.

Most of our traditional church structures are becoming far less affordable (utilities, insurance, maintenance). Not only will getting bigger not fix a church's financial problems, it may make them worse. What of those 30-year mortgages? Sure they are still at pre-Covid rates, but supported by fewer people. The buildings were built for programming that is now understaffed due to staff that is either cut or not replaced.

The problem isn't inflation, lack of generosity, or even a lack of spiritual hunger. It's an adherence to models of congregational success that were based upon a different reality. Our commitment to the church's mission must be bigger than our adherence to measuring congregational health and vitality by the metrics of 20 years ago.

So, the state of the church? It's in crisis. In a big way.

What about our congregation? Yes, we too have seen a decline in worship attendance. Our worship numbers are in keeping with the statistical decline. Christ the King has a called pastor, and speaking frankly, we have a healthy relationship. 1 in 5 congregations in Nebraska do not have a called pastor. Financially, we pay our bills. In large part that is feasible only because of our Hall revenue. Most churches don't have that as a possibility.

So by comparison we are doing well. Just like Phyllis Carlson is healthy for a 94 year old woman. She isn't as spry as she was 60 years ago, but compared to others her age, she is healthy. Especially considering the reality that many who were born the year she was are no longer living. She agreed to me mentioning her.

So those are the statistics. But should we be happy with the health of our congregation even though the Church in America is in major decline. Are we only concerned about our own congregation, or are we going to take into consideration the whole Church and work together for the cause of Christ? So if we are going to take the archery analogy and let the score take care of itself and simply concentrate on tightening our grouping, I believe we should be looking to address the larger issues of the church in America in 2025.

I have very much enjoyed the recent partnership with San Andreas. It has grown over the past year to more than just sending money or supplies they need to do ministry, to members of our congregation actively participate in ministry. I have a colleague with whom I pray and share visions and receive feedback. In some ways it's like being on staff once a week. And, I believe we were led into this partnership by God. One Wednesday, we were unloading boxes from the truck and Ender asked, “Is there a quota of service that each congregation is supposed to be doing. And that's what this is? We're filling our quota?” Pastor Omar chuckled. “No,” I said. “There's no quota, but if you're not doing service are you really the church we're called to be?” We aren't checking boxes. We are doing

ministry together. Churches don't need to be "competing" or duplicating efforts, we need to be working together. As Paul said to the Philippians, "Not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others" (Philippians 2:4).

As for the shortage of leaders in the church, you may have been present at one of the services when Matt Wiegand gave the message. Matt has a desire to share the Gospel. Too few people go into ministry because too many congregation do not look to raise the next generation of church leaders. Charlotte Palm has been teaching the main story for Sunday school and will also be featured giving the message in 2025. She and Ender will make their debuts during Lent. As a congregation it is our calling to provide opportunities for leadership and encourage our young people to explore their callings. This doesn't mean that all or any of them will ultimately pursue ordained ministry, but I know the church needs leaders and I believe that it is their generation that will ultimately save the church. If we are concerned for the church beyond our own lifetimes we need to actively nurture the leaders of tomorrow.

We must continue to be good stewards. We must continue to faithfully support the ministry we do here. I give thanks daily for the ministry of Dick Lindauer and now Laurel Weigand. Managing the congregation's finances and doing so with the heart of a disciple is a ministry that is often under appreciated. I am thankful for the hours Judy Taylor gives to managing Hall rentals. Without that income our financial conversations would be very different.

I am incredibly thankful. I am thankful for all of you. I am thankful for the many ways you are faithful to the mission of the church. Thank you for your partnership. The crisis that faces the church needs disciples like you and congregations like ours. May we be faithful, may we rise to the challenges of our time, and may God receive the glory.

### ***Council – Nick Christy, President***

As we have completed another year of success, challenges, growth and change, I would like to say thank you to everyone. It is truly special to be a member of a congregation that continues to develop in the spirit of Lutheran faith year after year! We have been very fortunate in our participation and found many ways to apply the talents that we have available. 2024 was a successful year.

Some of our successes:

- Continued collaboration with San Andreas
- The clean-up of the summer storm debris
- Increased pledging commitments
- Active use of our hall and rentals
- Sunday School and Confirmation involvement
  - With our current age distribution we are grateful for the older youth who continue to participate either in assisting Caroline Rice with the engaging lessons she prepares for our pre-Confirmation children or as participants in the Confirmation discussions making the experience better for everyone. Thank you to Caroline for her careful planning and for the caring adults who bring our youngest members.
- Participation of decorations and deep cleaning
- More youth participation in worship assistant
  - a big thank you to all who helped with our church services this past year. Thank you to Mindy and Crystal for planning the hymns and providing the music. Thank you to Lauren for the themed decorations throughout the seasons. Thank you to all who have helped by being assisting ministers. Lastly, thank you to those who shared their talents during service.
- Expanding on musical offerings from our members
- The amendments to our constitution

Although there is much to add to the list, these are a few things that illustrate the health and spirit of our members. I'm blessed to be a part of Christ the King and look forward to continuing to serve. This has been my spiritual home for 20 years now and I am grateful!

**Treasurer – Laurel Wiegand**

Congratulations to the congregation of Christ the King for weathering the financial storm of 2024! The tough economics of the past couple years have caught up with us, and everyone stepped up to help. We utilized the cushion built up from previous years to offset our expenses for the beginning of the year and by the end of 2024 we were in the black again! Finance invested some of the cushion in CDs to generate a small amount of return. We also transferred some money into a high yield savings account which brought in some interest for us as well. Increases in utilities, insurance, general costs are still creeping up, but pledges this year look to cover the bills. Christ the King remains in good financial standing with all bills paid, no debt, and a cushion of investments.

Thank-you for everyone who closed out 2024 with a gift to the capital fund! We have over \$11,000 in the fund as of 31 Dec 2024. As I have mentioned our roof deductible is \$35,000 so we are already one third of the way to my goal for 2029. There is over \$4000 pledged to the capital fund for 2025, thank-you! So, by the end of 2025 we maybe half way there. Of course, the capital fund is not just for the roof but any physical repair or replacement to the building. By maintaining a sizable amount in the capital fund, the unanticipated replacement of the fellowship hall AC this summer was quickly taken care of.

I also want to thank everyone who stepped up to help with the cleaning of the church this year. By taking care of the church we can anticipate when we will need to fix or replace things which means fewer surprises. We keep the fellowship hall in good condition which our community likes to rent, generating much needed income as well as keeping good neighbors.

I think 2025 will be a good year for Christ the King as we are able to look ahead with financial security.

<b>Budget 2025</b>	Budget items
	<b>Operating Income/Expenses</b>
31000	Hall rental income
4000	Loose income
153,340	Envelope income
<b>\$188,340.00</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>Expenses</b>
143270	Payroll/benefits
13695	Utilities
15,500	Insurance
11550	Other
2640	Synod
<b>\$186,655.00</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>\$1,685.00</b>	<b>Overall</b>

**CONSIDERATION OF THE MISSION PLAN**

Be it resolved that the Congregation of Christ the King Lutheran Church approve the recommendation of the Council and adopt the Mission Plan for calendar year 2025 in the amount of \$186,655.

\*This is a Council resolution approved to be forwarded to the congregation at the December Council Meeting and therefore does not require a motion or second.

## **REPORTS OF BOARDS AND ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CONGREGATION**

### ***Women of the ELCA – Mardelle E. Gocek, Coordinator – CTKLC Women of the ELCA***

The women of the ELCA Bible Study group met each month except for May for fellowship and Bible study. In August we held our annual picnic at the church because of hot weather. In December our annual Christmas potluck luncheon was held in the Fellowship Hall. We continue to use the Bible study in *Gather* magazine.

The Nebraska Synod Women of the ELCA offered one “Saved to Serve” event at Dana Village in Blair. Metro East Spring Gathering was held April 27 at Luther Memorial in Omaha. Autumn Renewal was held at St. Paul Lutheran in Grand Island on October 12.

Our Lutheran World Relief Quilt group was active again under the leadership of Phyllis Carlson. Thank you to Phyllis for your dedication to this project. Thank you to everyone who donated fabric and other items to the quilt project. Thank you to everyone who helped to assemble the quilts. Forty-three quilts were sent to Lutheran World Relief in November. CTKLC also donated thirty school kits to LWR. Thank you to everyone who donated supplies for the school kits. Two quilts were donated to Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries for the quilt Auction at Camp Carol Joy Holling.

We continued to collect cancelled postage stamps, greeting cards, calendars, grocery bags, and bingo prizes for various service organizations.

### ***Mission Endowment Fund – Beth Christy***

The Christ the King Endowment Fund has been in existence since 2002. All of the monies are invested in a mutual fund managed by American Funds headquartered in Indianapolis, IN. The Mission Endowment Fund was established to support scholarships, new ministries, and community projects. The Endowment Fund Board meets quarterly to discuss the status and future plans for this fund. There are five directors on the Board who have been elected by the congregation, and serve terms of five years. The majority of the contributions to this fund have been memorials for friends and loved ones. It is not a requirement that memorials go to this fund and only memorial funds that are designated for the Mission Endowment Fund are deposited in the fund. Donations in celebration of a special event such as a birthday, anniversary, and new grandchild are also great opportunities to make a contribution that has lasting significance. When considering charitable donations in your will, the CTK Endowment Fund would be an appropriate place to continue God's work in the community.

- \$350 went to Assure Women's Canter.
- \$350 went to the Foodbank for the Heartland.
- \$300 went to the Salvation Army Winter Assistance Fund.
- \$500 went to San Andreas Iglesia Luterana
- \$300 went to Humble and Kind.
- \$350 went to Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministries (NeLCM).
- We also allocated \$400.00 to go to Pastor for a year-end bonus in 2024.

## New Business

### Proposed Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions

The new constitution proposed by the Congregation Council primarily seeks to describe our current practice and bring consistency to our bylaws. Our current governing documents describe some practices that we no longer do or that we do differently.

Changes in practice that the proposed constitution would create:

- Increase the amount the council can spend from \$5000 to \$15,000 or the amount of a deductible if an insurance claim..
- Changing a quorum from 20% of the membership to 25 voting members.
- The Council would elect officers annually rather than the congregation.
- Term of service to be set at 3 years.

Resolution:

Therefore be it resolved, that Christ the King Lutheran Church adopt the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions as circulated to act as the sole governing statutes of Christ the King Lutheran Church effective after receipt of the notice by the Synod; replacing all previous provisions, bylaws, continuing resolutions, congregation resolutions and past practices,

And,

Be it further resolved, that upon adoption by this congregation, the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the Nebraska Synod,

And,

Be it further resolved, that the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions be presented without change for ratification at the next annual meeting.

## ELECTIONS

### Nominating Committee

As it assumed that the constitutional provisions regarding the Council pass, it is the recommendation that the current council be affirmed for service under the new provisions and Jocelyn Heldt be reelected to the Endowment Fund Board for a second term. If after nominations from the floor, an uncontested election is held at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation (all candidates are running unopposed), it is the suggestion of the Nominating Committee that the Congregation proceed with a voice vote as allowed by our Rules of Order. (RROR4; 66, 46:3)

### **2024 Church Council**

**Nick Christy, Judy Taylor, Debbie Cline, Angie Wicklander, Trent Daniels, Deb Marx**

### **2024 Endowment Fund Board**

*emboldened positions will have elections this year*

<b>Jocelyn Heldt</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> term ends January 2025</b>
Beth Christy	2 <sup>nd</sup> term ends January 2026
Aaron Schmidt	2 <sup>nd</sup> term ends January 2027
Janiece Huddleson	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends January 2028
Julie Junker	2 <sup>nd</sup> term ends January 2029