



Lake
Nokomis
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

Annual Report
2023

Order of Worship & Annual Meeting

February 4, 2024

GATHERING of WORSHIP

Call to Worship & Notice of meeting properly called

Quorum - 20% of active members

Prayer of Confession

Milestones

Scripture: Ephesians 3:14-21

REFLECTING ON 2023

Group Conversation

- *Spring Leaves: Where did I see God? (What did I love?)*
- *Autumn Leaves: What was difficult?*
- *Hands: Thoughts about my involvement in the life and ministry of the congregation at this time? (What do I want to keep doing? Stop doing? Try doing?)*
- *Hearts: What spirit do I bring into this next year? (Hopes? Excitement? Worry? Ideas? Goals? Fears?)*
- *Flowers: Whom do I want to thank?*

Treasurer Report

Questions and Comments about 2024 Budget

ANNUAL BUSINESS

Nominating Committee:

Dismissal of 2023 Nominating Committee with thanks:

Nomination of 2024 Nominating Committee

Approval of minutes for 2023 congregational meetings

Consideration of 2024 Terms of Call for Pastor – Head of Staff

Moderated by Chair of Personnel, Sue Goodspeed, limited to discussions of compensation and a vote.

CLOSING

Song: *Blest Be the Tie that Binds*

Closing Prayer & Benediction

Closing Song 2023 New Logo

BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS

By John Fawcett, Tune DENNIS

1 Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds
is like to that above.

2 Before our Father's throne
we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
our comforts and our cares.

3 We share our mutual woes,
our mutual burdens bear,
and often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear.

4 When we are called to part,
it gives us inward pain;
but we shall still be joined in heart,
and hope to meet again.

5 This glorious hope revives
our courage by the way;
while each in expectation lives and waits to
see the day.

6 From sorrow, toil, and pain,
and sin, we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign
through all eternity

NEW LOGO!

Here's what we love about our new logo:

The cross is in the space in between, just like the presence of Christ and the faith that holds us. As we like to say, "We meet Jesus who is with and for us, when we are with and for each other." It's also a picture of "assuming the stance of least resistance" - living with openness, and cultivating openness to God and one another. There is no boundary around the outside, and no lines dividing in between - the shapes and colors are different and the image is formed by all of them pulled together. It's a visual representation of "whenever we gather together, God meets us". There is a feel of stained glass - broken and beautiful, with light shining through, and the shapes feel organic and natural, not rigid or perfect. It nods to the Celtic cross on our building, and in our previous logo, without being a replica. We come as different people to create a beautifully colorful community, and encounter God in the energy in between. This logo depicts that.



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2023 (Formal) Leadership of LNPC

Pastor: Rev. Kara Root, Parish Associate: Rev. Lisa Larges, Session: Rachel Farris (Clerk), Jason DeBoer-Moran, Brian Rainey, Sue Goodspeed, Susan Hensel, Amy Leafblad (December!)



Director of Music and Worship Arts: Erin DeBoer-Moran



Interim Treasurer: Sue Goodspeed (Jan-Aug), Treasurer: Jim Kendzel

Operations Manager: Krysta Niznick



Personnel Team: Terry Gilberstadt, Amy Leafblad & Sue Goodspeed

2023 Recap

- Epiphany – with star words
- [Prayer Partners](#) – kids assigned to adults to be prayed for
- Annual Congregational Meeting & Potluck (with [video recap of 2022](#))
- Swedish Death Cleaning continues!
- Church stuff give-aways, winter & summer
- [Church Chat](#) continues (begun the previous Fall)
- Holiday undecorating day
- [Brunch with Brittany](#) begins and continues monthly.
- Reflecting together on [resonance](#) throughout the year
 - Resonance grant allocated to: retreat fund (\$4k), updating indoor/outdoor gathering spaces (\$2k), accessibility bathrooms (\$1k), connecting with far-away members (\$2k), dinner party (\$1k).
- Ash Wednesday Service
- Session retreat – discerned the season of LNPC life right now is: **way-finding**
 - How is God speaking? “stance of least resistance” Stress, exhaustion, unknown is reflected in community life. Easier to be countercultural/ resistant in a group than individually. We’re in a period of resurrection (like gardens) – open the doors wide and let the sun in, observing the growth, (fertilizing, feeding). Easy to show up (can’t plan what will happen). Entry point = low stress, reduce barriers. Role/commitment is to people and care. God meets us in the easy places (our hards are someone else’s easy). Leaders’ job right now is to be attentive and responsive.
- [Dinner Party](#) begins – spiritual direction support group for parents plus Sunday school for kids, plus shared meal
- [Hospitality Teams](#) begin to settle into rhythm
- Monthly [Connections](#) gatherings continue (women of LNPC)
- Lent - with guides: Lazarus, Mary, Martha, Nikodemus, and the Samaritan Woman at the well, and prayer aid - olive wood crosses from Bethlehem
- Palm Sunday Service
- Good Friday Tenebrae service
- Easter – with butterfly glasses, and butterfly paper mâché made by kids and hung in sanctuary & flowering of the cross
- April Waffle Worship – theme: What is worship & why do we do it?
- Stories of Jesus worship series - Spring 2023 through Summer 2024
- May [Congregational Meeting](#)
 - We are in a season of RECOMBOBULATION. Hospitality Teams revampedVoted to postpone Kara’s sabbatical from 2023 to 2025 (to coincide with Andy’s sabbatical and both kids being out of the house, and Kara’s desire to be present for the recombobulation period).
- Spring [Sabbath Retreat](#) – theme: blessing (with blessing scavenger hunt)
- Pentecost – Lessons & Carols of Pentecost and Jimmy John’s picnic
- Jen M. continues regular nursery cleanings
- Confirmation retreat at St. John’s talking big questions of faith

- Announcements shift from emails to “Notes from LNPC Life” on website
- [Summer 2023 Music Playlist](#)
- Eva Webb’s funeral
- Mike and Catie’s Wedding
- Welcoming new members – Barb B. & Jim K. (and Avery & Renee!)
- July Waffle Worship, Potluck Patio Brunch, theme: Listening, Sharing & Praying for Each Other
- [Sabbath Music Playlist](#)
- Blessing & Commissioning of College Student: Owen R.
- Rally Sunday – with back-to-school penguin blessing, mandala-making, and picnic
- [New church logo](#)
- Update to [LNPC Giving Practice](#)
- Welcoming back Pat Koehler
- [Building Care team](#) begins weekly gatherings to work on maintenance projects
- Swedish Death Cleaning gives way to painting project to turn offices into gathering spaces
- [All-Church Book Read, When Church Stops Working](#)
- Hosting Presbytery Book Event with presentation from Andy Root and dinner from Heather’s
- Berlin Bonhoeffer Learning-Travel trip [planned for summer 2024](#)
- Fall Confirmation Day Retreat at ARC – faith statements
- [Shape & Structure of Church Class](#) & Luncheon
- Interim Treasurer Sue G. hands over reins to Treasurer Jim K.
- [Sue Hensel's Open House](#)
- All-church “[Coffees with Kara](#)” begin again
- Baby Imogen is born – mealtrain is shared
- October Waffle Worship, theme - Paying Attention: Noticing and Receiving Experiences of Resonance, with guest Susie Pratt from resonance grant
- Fall [Sabbath Retreat](#) – theme: Gratitude, (with memorial service for Fortune-Meyers unborn babies)
- Gene Larges’ funeral
- Advent – theme: [Lullabies](#)
- Scott Hansen Celebration of Life
- [Lullaby Music Playlist](#)
- Expanding [Holy Listening Groups](#)
- Bathroom renovations!
- Christmas Eve Lessons & Lullabies Service
- December Waffle Worship, theme: Incarnation, God with Us!

Where did we see God at work in 2023?

Rachel Farris (Clerk of Session)

This year I have really felt hospitality coming alive at LNPC: at the packed “stories of resonance” waffle worship, at shared meals on retreats and at Dinner Party, on Christmas Eve, and at the presbytery event in October when we broke out the tablecloths and the real dishes! Speaking of dishes, I loved our patio worship services over the summer, including the brunch potluck when the only paper plates that could be found were extremely small. As a mom, knowing my child is being held in love by her prayer partner and having the opportunity each month to gather for “holy listening” (and occasional crying) with other women in the same stage of life has reminded me so strongly that we belong to God and to each other.

I think we have also literally seen God at work in where and how we gather. It has been amazing to see the building shaking off layers of accumulated detritus through the dedicated efforts of the Swedish Death Cleaning Team and the Tuesday building team. Our hospitality teams are a well-oiled machine—and when they aren’t, folks pull together and something beautiful happens in worship anyway. Using Zoom and setting up in hybrid arrangements has become second nature (thank you, Erik and other tech troubleshooters!)—a real point of connection rather than something that separates or interrupts us. This feels like a legit miracle. Also, if you thought there was a lot of talk about the bathrooms during worship, there was probably 10x more at session! But all that conversation was a deliberative and meaningful process that led to an important pivot towards accessibility and welcome (big thanks to Sue G. for facilitating with the builders). It’s so good to be church together!

Sue Goodspeed (Elder)

What a family God is creating here! I love that folks pop in, live and love with us, stay – or not. That babies are born, kids grow up, some even go away for a bit. That neither large distances nor short physical time together determine how close we feel. I love especially that Kelly and Linda are part of us – as fully and essentially as anyone, despite distance. I love that Church Chat and Family Dinners give us times for “deep thoughts” shared with freedom and without fear.

I am full of gratitude for the gift of Jim Kendzel’s offer to serve as Treasurer. Being treasurer was a season during which I felt useful, but being able to release responsibility to Jim is a reminder of our commitment to one another: to serve out of joy, and to step away knowing God will tap someone else when the time is right.

Jason DeBoer-Moran (Elder)

I experienced God in the screening of *Hello, I'm a Ghost 2* on the Fall Sabbath retreat. Seeing the kids' humor and how excited they were to participate in this was so awesome. It was truly a hilarious and inspiring moment.

I also experience God in the worship services and the community time before and after services. It has been wonderful to get to know Pat Koehler and welcome him back to the community. His joy in service has been a breath of fresh air to me and it has brought so much excitement (and delicious food) with it.

I noticed God at work in the handing off of the treasurer role from Sue to Jim. It is so wonderful to see the passing of tasks based on joy delivered.

Amy Leafblad (Elder)

For me personally, 2023 was different at church in that I was not on session for most of the whole year, until taking over Andrea's spot in December. That is a different change of pace and of knowing the ins and outs of what's happening at church. I love hearing what's new and what our leadership has been sensing from God.

Although I like the idea of Star words, they hadn't yet been personally meaningful for me until at the Church retreat in November I was reminded of my word "Miracle." When I first picked it something immediately came to mind. It would be a miracle if... and by November that miracle had happened!! It felt like God showing off to me, bringing me joy and working through star words for fun. Having Soren and Svea slowly plod through Confirmation has been an interesting road. For the most part I have stayed a little removed and have been able to be delighted by the things I hear about it. I'm super duper looking forward to being surprised by my kids' faith statements I'll hear in front of session next month. I'm so grateful to Kara and to Erik for their time and energy invested in Maisy, Soren and Svea's faith journeys.

I enjoyed reading Andy's *When Church Stops Working* and attending one of the LNPC's book discussions along with the larger Presbytery one with the lovely dinner. Talking about spiritual things together is always a pleasure.

The November retreat would have been even better if Jim B didn't have to stay home-dumb sickness. Apart from that disappointment, retreats fill up my heart and my soul with extended time to sit and chat and eat and play and do all the things together with friends! I'm so glad we have them. I always sense God at work in deepening our friendships and connections to each other. And I echo Jason that the kids/youth Ghost movie 2 was epic. So was playing a real board game created by one of our own, genius Wendy.

Now this is getting long but I cannot not mention the joy of Jim and I being able to meet up with Kelly Soifer in California for dinner IN PERSON :)

And last but definitely not least in importance in my life and I think in the life of LNPC this year has been the Wednesday evening parent nights now expanded to include all. These holy listening, spiritual direction times are a gem. Nowhere else in my life is there this special space to share whatever and to lovingly receive whatever is needed to be shared. God is in thy midst. Thanks LNPCers for being on this journey of life with me and occasionally with my kiddos :) I think they were less around physically than other years but I know they are cared for even when not present at church, Thanks be to God!

Sue Hensel (Elder)

Where have I seen God? Out my back door, in all the sunrises. My life has been limited this year by injuries, but God keeps breaking in in so many ways. In serving on session the camaraderie and support for one another and the working together for the good of the congregation and one another. Despite all the stresses in each of our individual lives, it is a hopeful and hope-filled experience to serve in this way. God is there in the worship services, the community time, especially with the “cane gang,” of three women supporting each other through orthopedic catastrophes! In all the ways that people in my natal family, chosen family, professionals and church family have stepped forward to help and celebrate with the unplanned for transitions of my past 2 years on Earth! TBTG!



Kelly Soifer

I saw God work in the Dads' Group at the Dinner Party. It's still a work in progress, but I see growth in vulnerability, friendship, warmth, and spirituality. I feel blessed to be part of them, even though I'm not a dad (or a guy!) :)

Kristen Jeide (Incoming Elder)

As I sat down to reflect on this question, these two things have come to mind, that seem to hold and shape all my responses:

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. – Isaiah 43:19

Above all, trust in the slow work of God -Teilhard de Chardin, SJ

From the big picture of LNPC in 2023 ...

I began reflecting by making a list of words that come to mind when I think of LNPC. From that long list, here are some that seem essential to how I experience LNPC as a community of faith seeking together the way of God in Jesus: Grounded, Intentional, Accepting, Honest, Connecting, Playful, Faithful.

I've noticed God at work in:

*Gathering – God seems continually and mysteriously drawing people into the life of LNPC through ways that are not of our own efforts. The people God is gathering and “knitting together” (long-time participants, new or returning ones, and visitors) seem to both receive something life-giving and are bringing life-giving gifts to our life together. (For example, Jim and Barb with Avery and Renee finding a home among us and – who knew? – bringing among their gifts, those needed for a Treasurer! Thank you, Jim!) I’m also noting that our community extends over a wide geographic expanse. (For example, we have Kelly – even leading the Dads’ Group on Dinner Party Nights! - and Linda on the west coast with us regularly. We also have those traveling or living seasonally elsewhere or who have moved to other parts of the metro area. I keep wanting to make a map with pinpoints for all the participants in the life of LNPC! It might be another visual to just behold what God is up to!)

*Transforming – God seems at work creating and forming us in community (not just adding to something static that exists but ever “cooking up something new” in/among/through us that is showing up on the “Kingdom of God Menu”). This seems to be happening as we are open and practicing our belonging to God and one another.

I think about our building ... how “Swedish Death Cleaning” has moved into envisioning spaces in new ways ... and to painting and furniture hunting ... and making new space for God to work in and through our building. (It feels like our building might be a metaphor for our life together as a faith community right now. God is doing something new. We are trusting in the slow work of God – and joining in!). What also comes to my mind is my Mom, in her 90s, continuing to navigate changes in life, saying, with a smile, “Yeah, I keep asking myself, ‘Who am I now?’” Somehow it feels like a good question for us to keep asking as LNPC: Who are we now? (along with “What is God up to?”)

*Listening – I am seeing God at work in our deepening practice of listening to God, to one another, our own inner selves, and the needs of the world around us. This deep listening is intentional and is taking place in our worship together, our times of reflection, our holy listening groups, and many other ways/times we are connecting with one another. (In all these times and spaces, there is also the sense we are being listened to by God.) This deep listening in all

these directions bears fruit of deeper authentic relationship and connection with God, with each other, with how we show up in the world and live daily “the lives we actually have” (Kate Bowler) and the life we actually have as LNPC community. The practice of listening deeply seems to put us in a posture to notice what God is up to.

From my perspective, personally, where I’ve seen God in and through the life of LNPC in 2023:

*Community Connections

1. The fulfillment of a dream (5 years in the making) to walk the Camino de Santiago. Long story, made short: Rachel F. spoke to me after worship one Sunday over a year ago, recalling that I had said something when I first came to LNPC about wanting to walk the Camino. She mentioned her parents were getting a group together to go in September 2023 and that maybe there was something there for me. I met her dear parents, was welcomed into the group going to Spain to walk the last 100 kilometers of the Camino, and was able to fulfill this dream and do the walk, arriving in Santiago on my birthday! God was at work in so many ways – through Rachel’s remembering, caring and kindness and bringing this possibility to me; in her parents’ generous hospitality; in God’s encouragement and companioning along the Camino – and in the 5 years leading up to it – including leading me to LNPC. (A story in itself.)
2. Showing up and caring for one another in prayer, providing meals, moving pews and preparing space for funerals, reaching out – and multiple other things! There is a sense of all being in this together as a community and each one welcomed and needed.
3. Listening Groups/Dinner Party – I have felt God’s presence in the deep sharing, in the gifts offered in facilitating this time and in making dinner and “setting the table” for connection and belonging to God and each other. (I have been grateful to be able to bring what I know and love from my spiritual direction formation to this and to see God’s presence and love at work in our lives and our life together.)
4. Worship – I experience God’s loving mercy and goodness, healing and hope through the worship life at LNPC. The grounding in scripture and the honest and faithful preaching are foundational to this. (Most recently I think of Kara’s Christmas sermon that acknowledged all that IS in the world and our lives and the NEVERTHELESS of the gospel that “there is nothing, nothing, nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.” The reminder I needed in the midst of a gloomy Christmas.) I think of our guest preacher the first Sunday of Advent, Mike, and our theme of lullabies – again in the midst of the harsh realities of this human life and our world. I remember clearly also Lisa’s amazing and faithful wrestling good news from the hard “Wedding and Mayhem scripture from Matthew 22” and her invitation to center the story on the banquet, reminding us “the banquet is more powerful!” I also love that worship is participatory – all ages, in prayers, sharing communion, sharing milestones/kingdom

of God sightings, and the singing, with the great gift of Erin's music leadership in that. (Good medicine for the soul!)

5. Church Chats – Having others to reflect on life and faith in a theological and spiritual way feeds me, especially since retiring as clergy and not having this kind of engagement and reflection with others in my life in a daily way. This feels like another way God has been providing for me in this post-retirement wilderness.

6. Sharing gifts – It is heartening to see God at work through others sharing their gifts. I have received from so many among LNPC, hospitality, kindness, caring and connection. I have been lifted by the gifts of others of all ages in worship, dinner party/listening gatherings, one-to-one conversations, and so many other occasions. I've been grateful to join in the opportunities to care for others and help out. I also have been moved and felt the invitation of God through others perceiving what I may have to offer and inviting me to share what I have to give. At the heart of this is belonging – being seen and being wanted. That is a huge gift from God at this time in my life. I'm looking forward to serving on session and walking with our LNPC community in discerning what God is up to in/through us!

I'm grateful to God for LNPC as a spiritual home and to be in community with others already seeking to live out spiritual practices together that are already life-giving and formational to me in living this journey of life and faith.

For all God has done in 2023, thanks be to God! And ... I wonder what God is up to in 2024!

Jim Kendzel (Treasurer and Incoming Elder)

Oh my gosh, it is hard for me to capture in writing the ongoing times I see God at Work in 2023. First and foremost, God directed Barb (my wife) and me to try out that little Church down the road from us and see if we might fit in with the community. From the first service we attended we knew that it was God's plan for us to become a member of LNPC. I see God at work everytime I look into an LNPC community member's eyes and in the warm hugs I receive. The immediate acceptance of us into the community and the blessing we have received throughout the year from being a part of the LNPC community are all excellent examples of God at Work. Another example of God at Work in my life are those moments when a stranger walking by me or I come across in my daily activities stops and says hello with a smile. It is a blessing that warms my heart (my star word by the way) and reminds me how I may impact others I run across with a simple hi and a smile.

In working with those on Session, I see God at Work in our coming together and working to ensure the long term sustainability of our Church community. There is a courtesy and respect within the group that only comes through the grace of God. There is no doubt that our Church

community is rich in God's blessings and truly walks the talk in spreading that grace throughout our community and those we serve. I look forward to a year of spiritual growth and new opportunities for our Church community and each of us individually to show all those we encounter that God is constantly present and at work if we take the time to listen and be open to those we encounter throughout the day.

Erin DeBoer-Moran (Director of Music and Worship Arts)

Is it just me or has our singing gotten louder, more confident, and more joyful?? LNPC folk have been coming along with me on this musical adventure of new music for the last 6 years and I believe we've come into a place of musical resonance. We've leaned into this musical resonance, and I personally have experienced some thin places between us and God.

From our retreat singing to psalm chanting, new songs in worship almost every week to boldly singing on the patio during summer Saturdays for all the neighbors to hear, our singing has allowed us to assume the inner stance of least resistance to the grace and presence of God.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this community, a community that is so in-tune with the Creator, that their singing expels the breath of God.

Kara Root (Pastor)

When 2023 began, we were feeling deeply connected and grateful, but also in a state of practical disarray. Post-pandemic we were just beginning to figure out our new normal. At our session retreat in March, we discussed church life feeling like a ship, where, for over two pandemic years, I had the wheel and held us steady (not going anywhere just preventing capsizing!), while the congregation/"crew" became experts at bailing water and tending to the sick.

Now that the storm was over and we were in new waters, we knew deeply how to be Church (capital C) - to seek God and care for one another - but we didn't really know how to be church (lowercase c) - to share leadership, tend the space, navigate in new directions, and smoothly run regular activities. The mechanisms, patterns and processes for doing life together in a non-emergency, ordinary way needed to be rebuilt. We talked about it as being in a season of "way-finding." Then Brian told us about the Milwaukee airport, where the place after security that you shuffle to in your stocking feet with your toiletries, laptop, jacket and shoes in your arms has a big sign that reads, "Recombobulation Area." That felt apropos. While sabbatical was supposed to happen summer 2023, we were not (I was not!) ready for more upheaval and more postponing of our recombobulation; it felt important for us to sit down and put our shoes back on. (So sabbatical was postponed to 2025). I confess I was feeling overwhelmed and anxious about how to proceed, and the session seemed filled with trust and equanimity, which brought

me back to trust and hope. I saw God's leading profoundly in the work of discernment and the leadership of the session this year to wait on God and follow where they sensed God was directing us.

As the year ends, it gives me such delight, gratitude and wonder to say that we feel "recombobulated!" (We're bringing back decently and in order!) Our hospitality teams mean that – for the first time in this congregation – nearly EVERYONE knows how to make coffee, unlock the door, turn on the heat, and prepare the sanctuary for worship (and if you don't know these things yet, talk to your team and watch our How-to videos!). We restructured our giving practice, tidied up our designated funds, stepped up website communication, and our Interim Treasurer (Thank you, Sue!) trained in a new treasurer (Yay, Jim!). With the Swedish Death Cleaning, Building Care Team, and our group of building dreamers, we've reclaimed our building, reimagining and reconfiguring spaces for who we are now, including consolidating office space, increasing gathering areas, and creating restrooms accessible to all.

We have established patterns of retreating together, we've cared for one another when we've been sick, had surgery, or welcomed a new family member, and we've been holding Dinner Party with a shared meal, kids' 'Sunday school' experiences with me, and listening groups for parents – and now for everyone, as we deepen our practice of holy listening. This year we had several rich times of learning and conversation with the confirmants, who will be confirmed in a couple of weeks. We've picnicked and mandalaed, shared recipes for an impending cookbook, updated the church logo, gotten new sweatshirts, sabbathed, blessed, made art together and brunches with Brittany.

We've done all this paying close attention to our own and one another's capacity – upholding humanity, leaning toward less instead of more, and being intentional about our choices. We've been conscious about doing things from joy, instead of overcommitting ourselves, or moving faster than the speed of our souls. Things this year have gone slower and taken longer, and we are learning (I am learning) that's ok. In fact, it may be that doing less and going slower makes us deeper and more thoughtful. By fall, it felt like we were 'combubulated' enough to invite company over for dinner, and we confidently hosted a wonderful presbytery event.

Pre-pandemic we had an established, shared narrative and language. Then we developed a pandemic-strange, attentive, flexible way of functioning. Now it feels like our shared life together is becoming more steady and grounded, with rich integration of who we've been and celebration of who we are. That gives me such joy.

I felt ministered to this year. The session encouraged me to take a lot of unused vacation days this past summer, which gave the congregation some practice taking the wheel and me some practice letting it go, as it should be (as it used to be! We are all ministers!) I got to step in and out and get some much-needed rest. I also want to note how special it was for me as a mom

when the congregation blessed Owen and our family when he graduated and headed to college. It was a notable experience of simply receiving without leading, and watching the church that has cared for my son since he was three years old support him in this life shift. I was overwhelmed with gratitude.

Your accountability to using 25% of my time for writing and teaching outside the congregation is life-giving to me, and extends the gifts of this congregation to the broader Church. This year I completed my second book—reflections, prayers and practices from our shared life together—which came out in December, and began my third book, written together with Andy, about leading and parenting in resonance. I led a couple different retreats for pastors and church staffs, and did some work for the ‘Presence-Centered Parenting’ project through Youthfront. I saw God in the lives and ministries of those people and churches in other places – it’s so good to be reminded that we all belong to each other.

I am blessed by the wisdom and depth of our Parish Associate Lisa Larges, who is always willing to use her pastoral gifts of preaching and leading, and grateful to be able to draw on the experience and insight of retired pastors Kristen and Kelly. (A lot of “solo” pastors are far more “solo” than I am. I do not take this for granted!)

When I came in 2008 I had coffee with every person in the congregation, and I did it again five years later (Fall 2013), and again five years after that (Fall 2018). Fall 2023 I started my fourth round of “Coffees with Kara.” I LOVE sitting with each of you and listening for what God’s up to in your lives; Christ is present when we are with and for one another.

Our conversations about resonance—through worship services, retreats, waffle worships, church chats and our all-church book read—was my favorite way to be church: integrating learning together with practicing being open to experiences of God’s presence and leading. When we’re paying attention, watching for God together, and encouraging each other to join in God’s love in the world, I experience the Kingdom of God.

This is not hypothetical: we ARE church. We are all in this together, in a very tangible way. 2023 is proof. I love being Church (and church) with you.



Personnel Team Report

2023 ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LNPC ANNUAL MEETING FEBRUARY 2024

The Personnel Team has had informal check-ins with staff through the year, but again did not orchestrate comprehensive reviews. Be prepared, congregation, in 2024, to be asked to share your perspectives on the work of those who lead us! As a Team, we are filled with gratitude for the quality and effective work of Kara, Erin, and Krysta in keeping us focused on the Way of God in which we seek to live.

The Team touched base in November 2023 and made recommendations for staff compensation adjustments for 2024. Even with unlimited resources, we could not compensate our amazing staff sufficiently for their impact on the life of our congregation. However, looking at guidelines from various other denominations and recommendations from the Presbytery, we recommended that all staff receive 4% increases for 2024.

Session approved the increases, effective January 1, 2024, to Krysta and Erin.

The congregation is now asked, with the recommendation of Session, to approve an increase to Kara's Terms of Call, also effective January 1, 2024.

In consultation with Kara, we realized that, due to her plan to pursue additional education, it would be most helpful to her to receive an increase in the Continuing Education Allowance. This currently stands at \$2,000 per year, cumulative over three years to \$6,000 (it combines Continuing Education with Book Allowance, often separate line items for clergy). Personnel and Session recommend that, for 2024, Kara's Continuing Education Allowance be increased \$3,000, to **\$5,000**. Future years' allocations will determine the three-year cumulative amount. This is above the 4% given to other staff, but results in a savings to the congregation due to its exemption from Pension/Medical costs. If 4% (\$2,500 based on 2023 salary/housing) were added to her Salary/housing, our total cost, with 39% of that increase added for pension/medical, would be \$3,472. Kara will receive no less medical coverage. We will trust her to allocate funds to her pension, or other retirement account, as she determines.

Salary/housing will remain at **\$62,450, her 2023 compensation.** *[The presbytery minimum compensation, for a brand new pastor in the metro area in 2024, is \$59,440. Kara has completed 15 years of ministry with us.]*

Board of Pensions dues, for health care and pension, paid by the congregation, will remain at \$24,355.50

Terms of Call, to be voted on by the congregation, are attached.

Gratefully, your Personnel Team:

Sue Goodspeed, Amy Leafblad, Terry Gilberstadt

Treasurer Summary and Fiscal Report

The LNPC 2023 Annual Statement of Activity and Financial Position as of December 31, 2023, are provided below.

Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church Statement of Activity and Financial Position January – December 2023	
	Total
Revenue	
Offerings / Giving	184,251.20
Building Revenue	46,594.80
Grants	10,000
Investment Income	7,015.35
Total Revenue	\$247,861.35
Expenditures	
Building Costs	101,924.81
Administration	52,303.69
Pastoral Ministry	92,625.48
Worship / Ministry	19,016.89
Total Expenditures	265,870.87
Net Revenue	-\$18,009.55
LNPC FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023	
Net Assets December 31, 2022	\$104,524.79
Net Assets December 31, 2023	\$86,515.24

Key takeaways and concerns related to the church statement of activities and financial position:

- 2023 Offerings/Giving from our church community increased slightly from 2022. Thanks for your continued support of our church community.
- Total expenditures in 2023 showed a slight increase of less than 1% compared to 2022 which is a positive based on current inflationary trends.
- Net assets have dropped in 2023 and based on current revenue trends it is anticipated the church will need to further deplete assets in order to cover expenditures. Session will be looking at this concern in 2024.

Jim Kendzel, Treasurer

LNPC Giving Report

Each year, LNPC gives to a few core areas where we see God at work in the world, and where we feel called to remember our belonging to God and to each other.

We direct six \$1,000 gifts to organizations that focus on:

- **food/housing insecurity**
- **financial justice**
- **community-based programming in South Minneapolis**
- **racial justice**
- **climate action**
- **Emergency response or particular need**

In 2023 these partners included EveryMeal, TRUST, Exodus Lending, Simpson Food Shelf, ClimateGen, and East Phillips Neighborhood Institute.

History of our Giving Practice

LNPC's giving practice started in 2014, in a time when we were feeling financially insecure, which created anxiety about money and made us act as though money was what gave us security. By choosing to give more of it away, we were reestablishing our trust that this is God's church and we are here to participate in God's ministry. We chose to begin giving away 10% of contributions to expressions of God's work in the world outside our congregation. It felt scary and big and did what we hoped it would: it put us back into joy instead of fear, and it gave us a couple years of cool connections with outside groups (like Marnita's Table). A month after we decided to do it is when the first Spanish-speaking congregation approached us about worshiping in our space ("God told me to stop here and ask you if we could worship here"), paying us roughly the same amount we were giving away. It made us remember we belong to God and each other and practice trusting that. This practice went on for many years.

Over time, however, the tithing practice stopped doing what it was meant to, and became a duty. Session had trouble keeping up, thinking of places to give each month, and communicating all this with the congregation. In recent years, session has directed six months of tithes to various local nonprofit organizations and six months of tithes toward building

maintenance, in recognition of the role our space plays in supporting and connecting with our neighbors. In this time, many groups were using our space, and the money went to cover a new roof, and then toward the building project in the basement that allowed the Mandala to take up residence in our building. But as the building use paused during the pandemic, and then neighborhood use of the space changed, the practice of “tithing” to the building also started to feel out of sync with how we want to stay connected to God’s broader work in the world.

Our current giving approach:

After several months of discussion, in 2023 session voted to formally end the previous tithing practice, shifting our giving instead to a few core areas where we see God at work in the world and where we feel called to remember and rehearse our belonging to God and to each other.

Rachel Farris, Clerk of Session

2024 Budget Notes

Session approved the 2024 budget during its January 18, 2024 meeting.

From Brian Rainey (Elder):

In recent months, session has been bumping up against the limitations of our current online giving setup. There are a lot of different "pots" and it isn't always obvious which one(s) to use when donating online. Likewise when it comes to using our money, session spends a lot of time figuring out which pot a certain expense should come from. Or if a pot's name reliably reflects what we use it for, or if we need more pots. Or fewer pots. Ultimately, we're finding that the need to be dynamic with the way we direct our resources is important now more than ever. In response, we will be reducing the number of options on our online giving page, in favor of more detailed line items in the overall budget. We're hoping this can maximize our ability as a church to both give and discern as faithfully as possible.

From Jim Kendzel (Treasurer and Incoming Elder):

The following summarizes the key discussions items and action steps related to the budget:

- Session agreed to encourage our church community to donate contributions without designating an area to use the funds. In this way, Session will have greater flexibility in allocating funds during the annual budgeting process in a manner best suited to serve the community and address financial needs. The designated contribution line items on the on-line donation page will be removed. This change is reflected in the 2024 budget.
- Session discussed the importance of reserving funds in the budget specifically available to use when a church member is in need. It is understood that the funds may not be given in a particular year however, Session believes it is a critical part of serving the members of the church community and should be reflected in the budget
- Due to the generosity of members of the Church community several years ago we have been fortunate in having a healthy reserve fund. However, Session is aware that the reserve fund has been decreased to cover 2023 expenses and it is also budgeted in 2024 to further pull from our reserve funds to cover expenses. Projected 2024 Church community offerings have been set in the 2024 budget to be at the same level as 2023 based on a conservative approach. Although the Church will still have reserve funds remaining at the end of 2024, Session will be considering options for raising additional funds during the year.

2024 Budget

AS APPROVED BY SESSION

	2023	2024
Revenue		
Offerings / Giving		
On-line offerings/giving	146,264.20	182,750.00
In-Person Offerings/Giving	1,489.00	1,500.00
Memorials	4,290.00	0.00
Total - Offerings / Giving	\$ 149,043.20	\$ 184,250.00
Designated Offerings / Giving		
Building Maintenance Fund /Roof Loan	18,038.00	
Per Capita	710.33	
Retreat Income	3,431.64	
Lisa Larges Congregational Care Fund	1,670.00	
Roof loan	6,000.00	
Capital Campaign	2,358.00	
Total Designated Offerings / Giving	\$ 32,207.97	\$ -
Building Revenue		
Basement Use	2,970.00	3,000.00
Central Church	1,880.00	1,900.00
Other Income	2,894.80	0.00
Mandala Montessori	38,850.00	38,850.00
Total - Building Revenue	\$ 46,594.80	\$ 43,750.00
Westminster Grant	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Total Revenue	\$ 240,845.97	\$ 238,000.00
Gross Profit	\$ 240,845.97	\$ 238,000.00
Expenditures		
Building Costs		
Building Maintenance/Equipment	52,321.14	52,500.00
Utilities	22,868.67	23,020.00
Building and Roof Loans	26,735.00	26,735.00
Total Building Costs	\$ 101,924.81	\$ 102,255.00
Office Administration and Staff	\$ 52,303.69	\$ 54,438.00
Pastoral Ministry	\$ 92,625.48	\$ 93,586.16
Church Ministry		
Hospitality / Community	2,442.15	2,500.00
Retreats	4,853.02	4,900.00
Congregational Care	0.00	3,000.00

Worship	3,213.74	3,200.00
Formation/Education	257.98	260.00
Congregational Giving	6000.00	6000.00
Presbyterian Per Capita	2250.00	2250.00
Total Church Ministry Expenses	\$ 19,016.89	\$ 22,110.00
Total Expenditures	\$ 265,870.87	\$ 272,389.16
Net Operating Revenue	-\$ 25,024.90	-\$ 34,388.16
Other Revenue		
Investment Interest Income	7,015.35	2,500.00
Total Other Revenue	\$ 7,015.35	\$ 2,500.00
Net Other Revenue	\$ 7,015.35	\$ 2,500.00
Net Revenue	-\$ 18,009.55	-\$ 31,888.16
LNPC ANTICIPATED FINANCIAL POSITION ON 12/31/24 BASED ON BUDGET		
Net Assets as of 12/31/23		\$ 86,515.24
Net Assets as of 12/31/24		\$ 54,627.08

Jim Kendzel, Treasurer

Statistical Report 2023

2023 MEMBERSHIP & PARTICIPATION INFORMATION FOR REPORTING PURPOSES
(as of December 31, 2023)

2023 Denominational Membership Reporting PC(USA) Book of Order G-1.04		2023 LNPC Internal Categories	
2023 LNPC church total	151	Congregation	151
Baptized Members	19	Faith Journeyers	95
Active Members	63	Dual Members (incl. in active)	1
Affiliate Members	2		
Other Participants	67		

2023 Membership Additions	
By profession or affirmation of faith	0
By letter of transfer	2
Reinstated	0
2023 Membership Losses	
Deaths	2
Transfers	0
Other	0
2023 Pastoral Rites	
Baptisms	0
Marriages	1
Funerals	3

Membership is one way in which we commit to being the Body of Christ with and for one another. As always, we share worship and community as a church family that includes those who are not connected in formal LNPC church membership, but nevertheless are part of Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church and the Body of Christ as expressed by this community. The internal designation “Faith Journeyers” most accurately reflects the number of people involved in the congregation’s worship and ministry, actively sharing life and faith together as Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church. The internal designation “Dual Member” indicates someone who maintains membership in another congregation as well, for reasons such as keeping ordination in another denomination, or actively participating in two congregations simultaneously.

Session Meetings and Leadership Summary

LNPC Session meetings were held once a month. Worship was held 1st and 3rd Sundays in-person with hybrid Zoom component. Second and 4th Saturday services were held in-person in the sanctuary.

In 2023, the Moderator was Rev. Kara Root (or Rev. Lisa Larges in Kara’s absence) and Session was composed of six ruling elders:

- Class of 2023: Brian Rainey, Sue Goodspeed
- Class of 2024: Andrea Domaskin (through January 2023), Rachel Farris, Amy Leafblad (starting in December 2023)
- Class of 2025: Sue Hensel, Jason DeBoer-Moran

Sue Goodspeed served as Interim Treasurer until August, when Jim Kenzel assumed the Treasurer role. Lisa Larges continued to serve in an unpaid position as Parish Associate for Congregational Care. Krysta Niznick continued her position of Office Manager and Bookkeeper, and Erin DeBoer-Moran served as Director of Music and Worship Arts. Rev. Kelly Soifer and Rev. Kristen Jeide each led monthly Holy Listening spiritual direction groups.

Congregational Meetings Summary

There were three congregational meetings in 2023: the annual meeting on February 5 and congregational meetings on May 7 and November 19 (minutes below).

Submitted by Clerk Rachel Farris

Report of the 2023 Congregational Meetings

MINUTES OF 2023 ANNUAL MEETING—FEBRUARY 5, 2023

The congregation of Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church met for the annual meeting in person and via Zoom on February 5, 2023.

Call to Order

Moderator Rev. Kara Root called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. Clerk of session Rachel Farris declared a quorum based on 20% of active membership attending (24 total attendees, 13 active members).

Reflecting on 2022: Video and Discussion

What did I love?

- Rally Sunday and working on the mandala together
- 100th anniversary party and seeing so many old friends
- Learning new things, particularly as we returned to the building
- The intimacy of Zoom
- The diversity of people who find their way to our congregation
- Getting to know and see Linda D. and Kelly S. in person.
- November retreat

What has been difficult?

- Deaths of people we love
- Losing touch with older members who couldn't or can't come to church and don't use Zoom
- Coming back to in-person church in the spring and feeling disoriented, like we were starting from scratch

Thoughts about your involvement in the coming year? What spirit do you bring?

- Gratitude for Andrea's leadership during this year of change, and for her attunement and discernment in deciding to step down from session
- A feeling of growth: decluttering the building, intentionality around parent group
- Gratitude and groundedness; feeling an almost mystical sense of embodying trust with deep roots
- Hope
- Excitement around finding new, creative ways to meet needs after the old ways were uprooted
- Belonging, being seen, accepted, known

Whom do we want to thank?

- Wendy F. for her enthusiasm in diving into things
- Rachel F. for taking on the clerk role
- Erik M., Jason D., and Brian R. for running tech during virtual and hybrid worship
- Gary J. for his faithful care of the building and being the face of our congregation to so many who use the space
- Erin D. for her love, energy, music, new earworms, playing on Saturday nights
- The congregation for maintaining warm connections with Central church
- Kelly S. for her willingness to jump into facilitator roles
- Lisa L. and Sheila K. for being with the tweens during Dinner Party
- Amy L. for bringing the moms together
- Sue G. and Terry G. for coordinating monthly Connections gatherings
- Kara R. for pastoral counseling, sermons, and influence
- The congregation for attunement during and coming out of COVID—many hands making lighter work
- Sue G. for ALL the things she handles (preschool liaison, personnel chair, interim treasurer, just to name a few)
- Krysta N. for keeping the wheels on the bus
- Owen and Maisy R. for sharing their mom with the church

Sabbatical Update

Kara shared plans to likely postpone her upcoming sabbatical from August 2023 to two years from now out of a desire to participate in this chapter of the life of the church, to nurture consistency and continuity instead of experiencing more upheaval, and to coordinate with Andy's next sabbatical and college timing for Owen and Maisy.

Nominating Committee

With Andrea Domaskin's resignation from session, the 2023 nominating committee will need to nominate one elder to the class of 2025 and two elders to the class of 2026.

- M/S/P—To dismiss the 2022 nominating committee of Sue Hensel, Kate Thompson, and Amy Leafblad with gratitude.
- M/S/P—To elect Sue Hensel to the 2023 nominating committee, with two additional spots still open.

Personnel Committee

Sue Goodspeed reviewed the personnel committee's report. Session approved 3% raises over 2022 compensation effective January 1, 2023, for all staff and recommended the same for Kara. In addition, session recommended clarifying Kara's vacation accrual as 32 working days.

- M/S/P—To approve the 2023 terms of call as recommended.

2022 Congregational Meeting Minutes

- M/S/P—To approve the minutes of the February 6, 2022, and October 6, 2022, congregational meetings as presented.

Treasurer's Report

Interim treasurer Sue G. reviewed the 2022 treasurer's summary and fiscal report, tithe report, and 2023 budget. Discussion items included remaining funds from the flood-related insurance payment, progress closer to financial sustainability in recent years, continuing need for intentional giving, status of off-site reserves, work to reclassify the preschool as tax-exempt, and our tithing practice, which began when reserves were much lower. The permanent treasurer position is still available.

Statistical Report

Kara led discussion of internal ("faith journeyer," "dual member") and denominational membership categories and reviewed the 2022 statistical report.

Resonance Grant

Kara led discussion of the \$10,000 grant that is part of the three-year grant the church received to focus on sharing experiences of resonance.

Building Updates

Sue G. provided an update on Mandala Preschool, which is in the midst of an ownership transition from the original owners to the current head of school. Jim Barke has provided valuable guidance in reviewing the lease, which was not originally written to include increases for rent or utilities over the course of the 10-year contract. Mandala will take over the office space most recently utilized by FRNNG at the same rent (\$450/month).

Conversations continue about renovating the gathering room, bathrooms, and stairs for greater accessibility, as well as turning office spaces into meeting rooms as part of the "Swedish Death Cleaning" project.

Closing Song: "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

The moderator adjourned the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Farris, Clerk of Session

MINUTES OF 2023 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING—MAY 7, 2023

The congregation of Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church met for a congregational meeting in person and via Zoom on May 7, 2023.

Call to Order

Moderator Rev. Kara Root called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m. Clerk of session Rachel Farris declared a quorum based on 20% of active membership attending (14 active members).

Session Retreat Update

Rachel and Kara gave a brief update on the recent session retreat and discussion about the season of life that the church is in. Kara has applied for a grant from Duke Divinity School to support this time of rediscovering and reestablishing new patterns after the years of upheaval of the pandemic and with a significantly changed congregational makeup. To provide a period of rest and reflection, and in recognition of her delayed sabbatical, session has approved Kara to take three consecutive weeks off in August using banked vacation time from previous years. The congregation will read Andy Root's new book, "When Church Stops Working," during this time.

Election of Nominating Committee

- M/S/P: To elect Lisa Phillips Johnson and Diane Hanson to the 2023 nominating committee.

The moderator closed with prayer and adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rachel Farris, Clerk of Session

MINUTES OF 2023 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING—NOVEMBER 19, 2023

The congregation of Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church met for a congregational meeting in person and via Zoom on November 19, 2023.

Call to Order

Moderator Rev. Kara Root called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m. Clerk of session Rachel Farris declared a quorum based on more than 20% of active membership attending (17 active members).

Election of Ruling Elders

M/S/P: To elect ruling elders as proposed by the Nominating Committee: Kristen Jeide and Jim Kendzel to the class of 2026 and Amy Leafblad to fill the vacancy in the class of 2024.

The moderator closed with prayer and adjourned the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rachel Farris, Clerk of Session

Pastor Terms of Call

PRESBYTERY OF THE TWIN CITIES AREA TERMS OF CALL or CONTRACT FORM 2023

_____Lake Nokomis Presbyterian ____ Church

Reverend Kara Root _____

Presbytery of Membership Twin Cities Area _____

X Full time

Part time: _____ % of full-time

Pastor

Designated Pastor Length of term: 2 years 3 years 4 years

Associate Pastor

Designated Associate Pastor Length of term: 2 years 3 years 4 years

Transitional Pastor

Transitional Associate Pastor

Stated Supply

Effective Date: 01/01/2024

Date of Congregational Meeting (if called position): 02/04/2024

Terms (all should be annual):

Salary & Housing: \$62,450 (Includes housing/utility allowance \$48,000)

2024 metro minimum is \$59,440

2024 non-metro minimum is \$53.112

Free Use of the Manse: ____ Yes _X_ No

Vacation: = 32 working days. (presbytery minimum is 4 weeks including 4 Sundays)

Tech Replacement Allowance: \$500/year, cumulative over 3 years to \$1,500.

Continuing Education/Book allowance: \$ 5,000 (minimum \$1,200) per year, cumulative over 3 years (minimum \$3,600).

Continuing Education leave: 2 weeks cumulative over 3 years to 6 weeks (minimum: 2 weeks, cumulative over 3 years to 6 weeks)

Pension Full (*39% of Effective Salary*)

Automobile allowance, IRS rate (2024: 65.5 cents/mile); Vouchered up to \$____ N/A

Professional Expenses: Vouchered up to \$ 800

Social Security Offset: Yes No
(FICA offset 2023: 7.65% of salary & housing)

Medical/Dental Supplement: Yes No Vouchered up to \$ _____

Optional Retirement Contribution: Yes No Amount \$ _____

Sabbatical: X Yes No

Length of leave 3 months; years of service required: 5 years.
(Presbytery guideline is 3 months after 6 years of service.) Session approval of dates and plan required.

Family Leave - When an installed teaching elder or spouse is to give birth, or to adopt a child, family leave shall be offered under at least the following terms: Eight weeks family leave at 100 percent of pro-rated annual salary and full housing allowance, or twelve weeks at 75 percent of pro-rated annual salary and full housing allowance. (See full Presbytery Policy on Family Leave for more details.)

Moving Expense Yes N/A No Vouchered up to \$ _____

Pastor _____ Date _____

Clerk of Session _____ Date _____

Date of Congregational meeting: February 4, 2024

We promise and obligate ourselves to review with you annually the adequacy of this compensation.