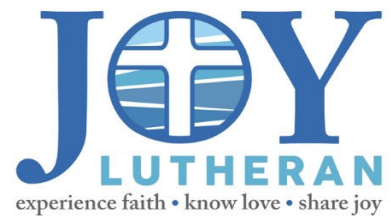




2023

ANNUAL REPORT



501 State Rd. 35 | PO Box 217 | Centuria WI 54824 | www.joylutheranwi.org | 715.646.2357



Joy Lutheran comes together in service to our community locally and globally to experience faith that comes from God's word; to know the love of God and to share the joy of our faith through Jesus Christ.

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JOY LUTHERAN CHURCH
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AGENDA
February 4th, 2024

1. Call to Order
2. Reading of Mission and Vision Statements
3. Devotions
4. Establish a Quorum
5. Additions and Approval of the Agenda
6. Approval of March 2023 Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes
7. Special Presentations (if applicable)
8. Committee Membership Appeal
9. 2023 Year-End Financial Review
10. Council Elections
 - a. Outgoing (eligible for election):
 - i. Jerry Livingston (Appointed by council to serve the remainder of Richard Schmalz's term)
 - ii. Debbie Korsan (Eligible for 2nd term)
 - iii. Emma Livingston (Appointed by council to fill vacant Young Adult representative)
 - b. Outgoing (ineligible for re-election): Lonnie Ellefson and Brent Priebe
 - c. Nominations from the Floor
 - d. Voting and Tabulation of Results
11. Adjourn Meeting

Next Congregational Meeting will be July 28th, 2024 following 10am Worship Service.

JOY LUTHERAN CHURCH
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes – March 5th, 2023

12. Call to Order by Terri Lunsmann

13. Devotions provided by Pastor Angie from Lenten Devotion booklet based on John 3:1-2

14. Establish a Quorum & Appoint Tellers

A Quorum was established with Sara Campbell and Bruce Christenson designated as tellers.

15. Additions and Approval of the Agenda

Lonnie approved agenda as submitted, Brent Bublitz seconded, motion carried

16. Council Elections

Dave Beaulieu nominated Lonnie Ellefson, Erin Kaiser Deborah Schmalz and Sandi Christenson for council. Ashley Sempf seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Carol Johnson asked how many positions are to be filled? It was noted that we need at least two positions to be v. We can fill up to six positions.

Sarah Campbell asked for clarification of the term period. It was noted that the term ends in February, so the new council will begin the term in the March meeting.

Bruce Christenson moved to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for the nominated candidates. Ashley Sempf seconded the motion and the motion carried.

17. Sanctuary Piano

A brief review of the need prepared by Julie Reimer and included in the meeting materials was presented. It was noted the Foundation will be willing to cover part of the estimated \$12,000 cost for the new piano but has recommended us to consider a fund raiser to cover the remainder. Pastor Angie noted that we have received an anonymous donation of \$5000.

Don Ellefson asked why someone who would want to buy our piano if it can't be fixed. Julie Reimer explained that the current piano would still be good in a utilitarian program, such as a dance studio or elementary school.

Cheryl Pepper commented that organ has more issues. It was noted that repair of the organ will need to be added to a council agenda for discussion.

Brent Bublitz asked if the Foundation has been formally approached and was informed that a formal request cannot take place until approved by council. Having an approved motion at this meeting will allow presentation to Foundation.

Joel Dittlefsen suggested taking money from the Parsonage fund with Terry Lunsmann recommending against this approach until a formal plan for parsonage money is developed.

Sara Campbell provided a fundraiser suggestion for an amount for purchasing one of the 88 keys on the piano.

Brent Bublitz made a motion to move forward with a fundraiser and after completion seek request from foundation.

Debi Korsan and Ben Wheeler seconded the motion and the motion carried.

18. Sidewalk / Concrete Work on Joy Lutheran Property (Reference 3 options in Meeting Material)

Brent Bublitz asked whether the foundation been approached and was informed that a formal request has not been made but the Foundation is aware of this need.

Debi Korsan asked whether the Foundation has been asked how much they will contribute. It was noted that the Foundation would not provide an amount at this time.

Ashley Sempf suggested that if we don't ask for money by the piano, they may provide more.

Brent Bublitz noted that the money is available from the foundation but that this request would be treated separately from the piano.

Joel Dittlefson inquired about the amount of money is available from the Foundation and was informed that there is >\$80,000 that is "touchable".

Sarah Campbell asked about the purpose of the parsonage money and was informed that the use of the parsonage funds needs to be addressed by council. Council's recommendations regarding the use of funds in this category will need to be presented and approved at a congregational meeting. It was noted that the funds are in an savings account and earning interest.

Sandi Christenson noted that the fear of using parsonage money is unwarranted. If it is something we need, use of these funds should be considered. Pastor Angie noted that the mission of the church is to be alive and share the good news with others...the money isn't ours to keep.

Elizabeth Ebensburger made a motion to approach the Foundation for half of \$25,000 [Option 3] and use cash on hand to pay for the remainder of the expense. This motion was seconded by Ben Wheeler and the motion carried.

19. Food License Purpose / Status

Our Food license in process and will require an inspection before issuance.

20. Committee Sign-Up

Congregational members were encouraged to sign up for committee participation.

21. Adjournment

Ashley Sempf made the motion to adjourn. This motion was seconded by Jerry Livingston, Todd Sturgel and Brent Bublitz. The motion carried.

PASTOR ANGIE'S 2023 REPORT

Dear Friends in Christ,

Every year during Epiphany we choose Star Words. The idea is that whatever word we choose becomes our word for the year. That throughout the year we will be on the lookout for how our word is showing up, is playing out, in our individual lives as well as our collective lived experience. Over the years I have had some pretty good words. Interesting words. Words I could work with. That is, until Epiphany 2023, the year the Star Word entered my life.



Now, **tough** is a fine word, a good word, a necessary word, of course, but wasn't a word I would choose to spend a year being on the looking out for, nor a word I would invite into my life or my call. In fact, I tried choosing another word, then another word, but the more I chose the worse they got. So, I embraced my **tough** word, and I paid attention, listened, and learned a lot about toughness in the process.

According to Mirriam Webster Dictionary, **tough** means: difficult, hard, stressful. 2023 had its share of difficult, hard, and stressful moments. The reality of life in this world is that we can't escape tough moments. We have grieved the deaths of people we love; said good-bye to our Intern, Kristin Boland; and voted to give a large portion of the proceeds of the parsonage sale (\$120,000) to the Feed My Neighbor Food Pantry in Centuria. None of which was easy. The word **tough** also means strong, resilient, determined, to persevere, to endure, which is the kind of tough I associate with Joy Lutheran Church. As we wrap up our 4th year of ministry together, I am mindful of your toughness, and thankful for the Holy Spirits challenge to be the church you know you are called to be. Even when the challenge is uncomfortable or scary. Your strength, determination, and faithfulness to the Gospel allowed us to put action to the promises of our vision statement: "to serve our community and God's world by; faithfully welcoming and including all people, serving and meeting the needs of poverty and hunger, striving for justice and peace in the world, and gathering together as a JOYful community to be refreshed and sent".

Your strength, determination, and faithfulness meant another year of welcoming friends and strangers to the Font and the Table. Throwing our doors open meant the community could gather, hospitality could be practiced, love could be shared. 2023 brought changes to staff and the birth of a children's choir. Together generations worshiped, children led, and disciples

studied. Of course, we wore pajamas to worship, and collected donations for the Community Referral Agency. Noah (as in the guy who built an ark in the desert, AKA Bruce Christiansen) showed up on Wednesday nights during Lent to help us better understand the story and God's promises. We LOL'd 😂 on Holy Humor Sunday, and tapped our feet during the ukulele services. We saw our gift of \$120,000 to Feed My Neighbor inspire another anonymous gift making it possible for the pantry to purchase a building of its own. The Quilting Ministry took on a life of its own this year, making and giving more than 80 quilts, many of which went to Feed My Neighbor. We participated in God's Work Our Hands, resumed Faith5, taught Confirmation and First Communion, and Lutheran 101 classes. Whew! That's a lot of vision living, Joy! Thank you for being **tough** and for being faithful. Lives have been changed, burdens have been lifted, people have been welcomed, friendships have been made, and hungry people have been fed because of your strength and determination. It is an honor and privilege to be your pastor and to minister, love, and journey alongside such an amazing community. I look forward to 2024 and all the Holy Spirit will reveal to us. Are you ready? Get set. Go!

Your partner in Faith, Love, and J♥y,

Pastor Angie Kutney

PS My star word for 2024 is OVERFLOW.



STATISTICAL INFORMATION FOR 2023

2023 Year-End-Membership:

453 Individuals are currently being tracked by the Administrative Office

198 Active Adult Members

99 Active Child Members

156 Individuals classified as one of the following:

Inactive Adult Member, Inactive Child Member, Active Adult Visitor, Active Child Visitor, Inactive Adult Visitor, Inactive Child Visitor, Active Contributor, Prospect.

Average Worship Attendance: 93

BAPTISMS

Bridger Charles Lee Nelson

Xebryna Lois Swenson

De’Kari Michael Anderson

Tucker Tyler Kram

Beau Michael Kram

Colton James Kleidon

Adeline Judith Schrupp

Grayson Matthew Timmers

Beau Luke Turner

Margaux Delphine Sommer

Chloe Ann Lofgren

DEATHS

Ronald Dahl

Beverly Edgell

Marcella Frokjer

Doris Gullickson

Mary Hahn

Bernie Hinck

Charles Johansen

Harland Lofgren

Sharron Lofgren

Carol Nelson

Mary Pollock

Carole Shern

Ardis Swenson

WEDDINGS

Megan Anderson and Andrew Flor

Katie Jensen and Danny Leach

NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED

Karen Wondra

Brandon and Stephanie Whittaker (Callie and Clayton)

JOY LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023 Disbursement Summary and 2024 Approved Spend Plan

DISBURSEMENTS	2023 Approved Spend Plan	2023 Disbursements	2024 Approved Spend Plan
GENEROSITY			
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin/ELCA	\$8,000.00	\$7,980.00	\$4,000.00
Luther Point Bible Camp	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Apple River Conference	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
Missionary Sponsorship	\$1,100.00	\$1,410.00	\$1,100.00
World Hunger	\$0.00	\$1,105.00	\$0.00
Food Shelf	\$0.00	\$825.91	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$11,150.00	\$13,370.91	\$7,150.00
PASTOR AND INTERN			
Salary	\$53,200.00	\$53,200.08	\$55,860.00
Housing Allowance	\$15,960.00	\$15,960.00	\$16,758.00
Supply Pastor	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$300.00
Pension/Health Insurance	\$31,400.00	\$34,458.84	\$33,000.00
Continuing Education	\$1,000.00	\$70.00	\$1,000.00
Mileage	\$3,000.00	\$3,634.81	\$3,000.00
Publications	\$300.00	\$386.37	\$300.00
Intern Salary	\$5,400.00	\$4,500.00	N/A
Intern Mileage	\$500.00	\$0.00	N/A
TOTAL	\$111,960.00	\$112,210.10	\$110,218.00
ADMINISTRATIVE			
Office Administrator	\$29,536.00	\$27,264.00	\$30,126.72
Marketing & Online Media Manager	\$9,672.00	\$8,935.92	\$9,865.44
Treasurer	\$2,400.00	\$2,400.00	\$2,400.00
Employer FICA	\$8,100.00	\$7,507.21	\$8,300.00
Office Supplies	\$3,000.00	\$3,063.45	\$3,000.00
Postage	\$1,400.00	\$1,213.60	\$1,400.00
Copy Expense/Lease	\$4,500.00	\$5,002.23	\$4,500.00
Continuing Education	\$400.00	\$196.64	\$300.00
Conventions/Retreats	\$1,000.00	\$150.00	\$1,000.00
Technology Fund	\$1,000.00	\$3,573.72	\$1,000.00
TOTAL	\$61,008.00	\$59,306.77	\$61,892.16

JOY LUTHERAN CHURCH

2023 Disbursement Summary and 2024 Approved Spend Plan - Continued

DISBURSEMENTS	2023 Approved Spend Plan	2023 Disbursements	2024 Approved Spend Plan
PROPERTY			
Custodian	\$4,800.00	\$4,800.00	\$4,896.00
Insurance	\$4,500.00	\$5,036.20	\$4,500.00
Church Maintenance	\$5,000.00	\$16,410.90	\$5,000.00
Gas - Church	\$3,660.00	\$3,188.09	\$3,600.00
Electricity - Church	\$7,800.00	\$6,400.38	\$7,800.00
Snow Removal	\$1,800.00	\$2,825.00	\$1,800.00
Telephone/Internet - Church	\$1,900.00	\$1,871.64	\$1,900.00
Garbage Church	\$325.00	\$312.00	\$325.00
Sewer/Water - Church	\$1,300.00	\$734.21	\$1,300.00
Electricity - Parsonage	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
Maintenance - Parsonage	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
Sewer/Water - Parsonage	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
Gas - Parsonage	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
TOTAL	\$31,085.00	\$41,578.42	\$31,121.00
WORSHIP			
Worship/Altar Supplies	\$4,000.00	\$2,324.18	\$2,000.00
Church Music Supplies	\$1,000.00	\$2,057.77	\$1,000.00
Piano Tuning/Organ Maintenance	\$800.00	\$1,765.58	\$800.00
Music Director	\$15,375.00	\$14,734.75	\$15,375.00
Organist/Musicians/Special Music	\$5,000.00	\$2,882.50	\$2,500.00
TOTAL	\$26,175.00	\$23,764.78	\$21,675.00
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION			
Childrens Ed (0-6th Grade)	\$1,200.00	\$45.94	\$1,200.00
Youth Ministry (7th-12th Grade)	\$1,200.00	\$2,011.01	\$1,200.00
Adult Education	\$200.00	\$866.17	\$500.00
Mission Trip: Money is collected by mission trippers and donations. This is for help as needed for the mission trip.	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	N/A
Youth Associate	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
TOTAL	\$3,600.00	\$2,923.12	\$2,900.00
HOSPITALITY & OUTREACH			
Generosity	\$3,800.00	\$3,616.00	\$3,800.00
Materials/Supplies/ Advertising	\$400.00	\$1,086.49	\$450.00
TOTAL	\$4,200.00	\$4,702.49	\$4,250.00
TOTAL BUDGET	\$249,178.00	\$257,281.59	\$ 239,206.16

INDIRECT EXPENSES: \$33,405.66

JOY LUTHERAN CHURCH
2023 Monthly Financial Comparison

Month		2022	2023
JANUARY	INCOME	\$ 14,757.55	\$ 16,688.50
	EXPENSES	\$ 20,991.11	\$ 23,511.33
FEBRUARY	INCOME	\$ 16,229.99	\$ 13,481.61
	EXPENSES	\$ 19,143.58	\$ 23,439.15
MARCH	INCOME	\$ 16,866.79	\$ 17,041.81
	EXPENSES	\$ 19,812.77	\$ 22,624.19
APRIL	INCOME	\$ 18,055.51	\$ 17,043.02
	EXPENSES	\$ 20,392.47	\$ 20,941.74
MAY	INCOME	\$ 15,463.41	\$ 19,303.76
	EXPENSES	\$ 17,378.33	\$ 21,165.87
JUNE	INCOME	\$ 15,903.30	\$ 17,697.30
	EXPENSES	\$ 22,793.14	\$ 28,878.26
JULY	INCOME	\$ 13,581.48	\$ 18,039.56
	EXPENSES	\$ 21,739.12	\$ 29,869.69
AUGUST	INCOME	\$ 23,521.84	\$ 29,465.90
	EXPENSES	\$ 20,617.28	\$ 38,083.65
SEPTEMBER	INCOME	\$ 12,044.66	\$ 11,354.35
	EXPENSES	\$ 22,669.09	\$ 19,468.35
OCTOBER	INCOME	\$ 13,060.44	\$ 22,428.60
	EXPENSES	\$ 18,375.06	\$ 19,293.67
NOVEMBER	INCOME	\$ 23,223.66	\$ 18,596.15
	EXPENSES	\$ 22,672.50	\$ 19,083.58
DECEMBER	INCOME	\$ 35,296.53	\$ 24,049.10
	EXPENSES	\$ 18,061.45	\$ 24,327.77
Grand total income		\$ 218,005.16	\$ 225,189.66
Grand total expenses		\$ 244,645.90	\$ 290,687.25

JOY LUTHERAN CHURCH
2023 Savings and Investment Account Summary

	Beginning Balance	Deposits	Interest	Withdrawals	Ending Balance
General	\$3,397.87	\$0.00	\$15.60	\$0.0	\$3,413.47
Youth	\$607.23	\$426.00	\$3.93	\$0.0	\$1,037.16
Memorial	\$8,446.93	\$0.00	\$38.54	\$558.8	\$7,926.67
Generosity	\$2,594.28	\$1,308.30	\$11.59	\$1,000.0	\$2,914.17
Parsonage	\$211,943.44	\$0.00	\$793.68	\$155,000.0	\$57,737.12
Subtotal	\$226,989.75	\$1,734.30	\$863.34	\$156,558.8	\$73,028.59
ELCA Mission Investment Fund	\$71,012.26	\$0.00	\$657.49	\$15,400.0	\$56,269.75
TOTALS	\$298,002.01	\$1,734.30	\$1,520.83	\$171,958.8	\$129,298.34

Scholarship Funds	Beginning Balance	Income	Interest	Withdrawals	Ending Balance
ELCA Mission Investment Fund	\$7,313.72	\$1,281.73	\$0.00	\$2,250.00	\$6,345.45
ELCA Mission Investment CD	\$65,001.82	\$0.00	\$1,281.73	\$1,281.73	\$65,001.82
Edward Jones	\$40,731.75	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$41,399.68
RCU Savings Account	\$23,909.36	\$100.00	\$99.35	\$0.00	\$24,108.71

Fristad Cemetery Thrivent Account	
Beginning Balance	\$ 29,985.98
Ending Balance	\$ 32,625.49

ELCA Mission Investment Fund	\$10,000 for Joy day to day expenses	\$5400 for Food Pantry
Withdrawals:		

RCU Savings Account	\$120,000 for Feed My Neighbor Food Pantry	\$15,800 for concrete (sidewalks)	\$19,200 for Joy day to day expenses
Withdrawals:	\$1000 for family in need	\$558.80 for music supplies	

\$5400 was the balance left of the indirect income given for the emergency food pantry. When Joy's emergency food pantry closed, that remaining \$5400 that was designated was given to the Feed My Neighbor Community Food Pantry

JOY LUTHERAN CHURCH
2023 Year End Revenue Summary

REVENUE	2022 Revenue	2023 Revenue
Regular Envelopes	\$177,629.03	\$173,460.55
Cash, anonymous (loose)	\$1,282.78	\$3,063.12
Special Envelopes	\$240.00	\$0.00
Other Income	\$8,060.51	\$8,992.36
Thrivent	\$1,275.00	\$1,298.00
Parsonage Rent	\$6,000.00	\$0.00
World Hunger	\$1,105.00	\$1,100.00
Missionary Sponsorship	\$1,430.00	\$1,740.00
Food Shelf	\$6,593.00	\$650.00
Intern	\$14,389.84	\$3,147.50
TOTAL INCOME	\$218,005.16	\$193,451.53
Indirect Income	---	\$31,738.13
Checking account interest earned	---	\$25.04

Indirect income is money coming in for specific items that were expenses for the church. For example, Fair Trade Coffee and Chocolate brings in money as product sells and Joy purchased the products up front (indirect expense).

WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Joy Lutheran WELCA 2023 Report

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: JOY Lutheran Church Women provide opportunities for education, fellowship, and mission, to support each other, our church home, our community, and global missions through prayer, discipleship, justice, and stewardship.

On-going throughout the year: Sponsor Missionary first Sunday of each month
Altar Guild established to prepare communion

Bible studies use Gather Magazine, 2nd Wednesday of each month, 1:30 pm OR 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm at JOY

Fellowship Hall Décor Committee
14 Funeral Lunches provided

Quilting Ministry gave 88+quilts to local people in shelters, Community Food Pantry, congregation members, Veterans, who are seriously ill, suffering tragedy, or for a happy occasion, to surround recipient with warmth, caring, prayers; meet twice per month

Sanctuary Committee changes paraments and keeps pew needs updated

Sunshine Committee remembers our members through Correspondence at Birthdays, Holidays, Get Well, Thinking of You

Supplying most kitchen needs and upkeep

Shared articles to Apple River Conference newsletter

January- \$500 and quilt to Mary Pollock benefit
\$175 to local man for rent help

March- Lenten Supper: Loaded Baked Potato Bar

Bold Women's Day (women who act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ) first Sunday

April- Bakeless Bake Sale provides Youth Camperships to Luther Point Bible Camp
Hosted Apple River Women's Spring Conference and provided lunch for 100

June - Milltown Fisherman's Party BINGO

July- Centuria Memory Days Pie & Ice Cream Social and Variety Show

Lutheran World Relief School Kit donations , assemble at God's Work Our Hands

August- Luther Point Summer Celebration and Auction

September- Lefse Making for Bazaar, God's Work Our Hands

October- Bazaar

December- End-of-year giving by WELCA \$5150

Cookie Walk- \$500 proceeds to ELCA Good Gifts Program

JOY WELCA 2023 Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance 2023	\$3,627.76
Income	
Bazaar	\$4430.77
AR Conference	\$972
Cookbooks	\$120
Bake Sale	\$1205
Cookie Walk	\$514
Funerals	\$4100
Freezer Donation	\$50
Coffee Hour	\$33
Wedding	\$500
Memory Days	\$334
Donation to Supply Klts	\$75
Quilting Donation	\$170
Unknown donation	\$38
Question Deposit (70)	\$70
Total Deposits	\$12611.77
Expenses	
Donations to 3 Families (500, 500,175)	\$1175
Going Away Gift	\$100
Postage	\$280.20
Dues	\$50
Kitchen Supplies	\$801.65
<small>\$812.23 +14.73 written twice -25.31 missed (</small>	
<small>\$822.81 (-10.58 from above)</small>	
Funeral Food	\$1400.59
Advertising	\$199
Office Supplies	\$329.55
WELCA FOOD Gatherings	\$464.69
Bazaar	\$74.18
Lefse Supplies	\$173.75
Appliances (1099, 929)	\$2028
Camperships	\$1146.25
Missionary Support	\$200
Quilting	\$260
Raffle license	\$25.50
Luther Point Bible Camp	\$600
ELCA Good Gifts	\$514
Interfaith Caregivers	\$400
Angels in Waiting	\$150
CRA	\$300
General Fund	\$500
Northwoods Homeless Shelter	\$400
Salvation Army	\$300

JOY WELCA 2023 Treasurer's Report – Continued

Missionary Support-Joy	\$300
Generosity Fund	\$600
Food Pantry	\$200
River's Rally	\$200
Personal Christmas Gifts	\$825
Total	\$13997.36

Beginning 2023	\$3,627.76
Deposits	<u>\$12611.77</u>
Total	\$16,239.53
Withdrawals	<u>\$13997.36</u>
	\$2242.17
	Off \$315.54
Ending Checkbook Balance 2023	\$2557.71

A Simpler, Humbler, and Bolder Church¹

Dear Members and Friends of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

It is time for your congregation's annual meeting! This is a great opportunity to reflect on the past year of faithful ministry. Now is the time to ask the BIG questions! How were we faithful in ministry? How were we faithful in participating in God's simple mission to love our neighbor? Now is the time to celebrate how God's Spirit has inspired your ministry! Give thanks to God and celebrate for the good that your congregation has accomplished!

Now is also the time to tell the truth about your ministry. How has your congregation fallen short and not been faithful to God's will? Lacked energy, a sense of purpose or mission? Now is the time to humbly tell the truth if your congregation has lost its focus or has little energy for God's work.

We all need to take an honest look in the rear view mirror of the last year and ask how have we been faithful and how have we failed to be faithful to our baptismal promises. Then we can boldly move into the New Year 2024 asking how we can with God's help do better.

The Church of England took a long look into the rear view mirror and with much prayer has discerned that moving forward they will strive to be a Simpler, Humbler and Bolder Church in the future. The Church of England described their vision for the future in this way:

Simpler, humbler, bolder are virtues we believe God is calling from us at this point in our history. They run through the vision and shape all we do and all that we are.

- **Simpler** because we are not as big a church as we used to be
- **Humbler** because we are facing our failures, and this is not easy.
- **Bolder** because the love of Christ compels us. We have a gospel to proclaim, and we live and minister in a world of much pain and confusion.

I believe these three virtues could also help us in the coming year. I invite your councils and leaders to lean into these questions in 2024:

1. **Simpler:** How can we simplify our structure so more time and energy can be spent on loving our neighbors and joining in God's mission in our community? How can we focus on what is really important and let go of the trivial or unnecessary?
2. **Humbler:** What isn't working? How have we fallen short? We can't do everything we use to do so what ONE thing can we do for Jesus? How can we work with other churches, denominations in our community?
3. **Bolder:** How can your congregation be braver and bolder in sharing the good news about Jesus in a hurting world? In prophetic witness to justice issues in our world? In working for right relationships with our neighbors and all of creation?

Friends, I am truly grateful for your partnership in the gospel and all the ways you are faithful in ministry. I invite you to move joyfully, simply, humbly and boldly into God's future in 2024.
Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

Philippians 2 Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he existed in the form of God... emptied himself ...he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

I thank my God for every remembrance of you, always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete^{it} it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:3-6

¹ [Jesus Christ Centred and Shaped | The Church of England](#) (accessed December 22, 2023)



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