

Lord of Light Lutheran Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
*God's work. Our hands.*  
801 South Forest Avenue. Ann Arbor, MI 48104

## ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION

For the Year of Ministry

2025

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**2026 LORD OF LIGHT LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL  
MEETING**

**JANURARY 25, 2025**

**3:00 PM**

Held in a hybrid form and

In person at Lord of Light Lutheran Church and Virtually via Zoom

Zoom

<https://umich.zoom.us/j/91545409772>

Meeting ID: 915 4540 9772

**Agenda**

- **Welcome and Opening Prayer** – Anna Dahlgren
- **Approval of the 2025 Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes**
- **Reading and Approval of the Reports**
  - President's Letter – Anna Dahlgren
  - Pastor's Report – Pr. Elizabeth Friedman
  - Facilities Report – Anna Dahlgren
  - Financial Report – Anna Dahlgren
- **FY2026 Budget Presentation**
- **LCM Board Report** – Curtiss Engstrom
- **Presentation of the 2026 Lord of Light Congregational Council** – Anna Dahlgren
- **Nomination of the 2026 Lord of Light Congregational Council President**
- **Additional Comments**
- **Adjournment**
- **Closing Prayer** – Pr. Elizabeth Friedman

## Minutes from the last Annual Congregational Meeting 1/19/25, Dominique Diokno

- First motion to approve the minutes
- Curtiss motioned to approve the President's letter. Passed.
- Report from Pastor Elizabeth. Things are going well! Successful Friendsgiving, student leaders, Faith&, Gather (young adult gathering). Worship attendance is strong and growing, w/ an influx of freshmen. New keyboardist from the music school–Logan! - Motion to approve pastor's report passed by Casey.
- Various repairs enacted around the church, planning to repair other parts of the building as well. Recent fire inspection–we passed! But we have to replace a few exit signs. - Motion to approve facilities report passed.
- (Report delivered by Rick) Income was over 100, about 105%. Designated giving offering was very successful, and expenses were slightly under budget. Been consistently declining in deficit, net annual increase in assets. Designated giving originally under one line item, but will ideally be itemized so we can see giving for each month. Invested within the ELCA mission fund. - Moved to accept the Treasurer's report. Passed by Casey.
- Budget–Maddie moved to approve the budget. Passed.
- Casey Francis is a new member of the council.
- Maddie moved to reinstate Anna as the president. Seconded by Casey.
- Maddie moved to conclude the meeting.

## **Letter from Council President, Anna Dahlgren**

Dear Lord of Light Congregation,

What a year it has been! I appreciate everyone who has made it such a great year. Between our students, our long-time members, and everyone in-between, it has been wonderful to see the congregation flourishing. I will reflect on some of the highlights of this past year.

This past year, several of our members graduated and/or moved on to new and exciting places as they continue in their personal and professional growth. It is such an honor to be a part of their journey, and I look forward to seeing how our congregation continues to support members for however long they are with us. In this vein, we have gained several new faces and have seen steady attendance for Sunday services, even during this past summer which is typically the season that has the lowest attendance. This fall, we also had a couple of unique Sundays where we had over 50 people in attendance. It is exciting to see our community continue to grow.

Similarly, we have seen consistent attendance at our mid-week get-togethers in collaboration with LCM and Gather. We have the undergraduate Faith & group that meets weekly during the school year for discussions about faith and life. The young adult Gather group started a weekly bible study this fall as well as continued planning monthly events. LCM and Gather also held joint events such as pumpkin carving and the annual Friendsgiving meal. Thank you to everyone involved in the organizing and running of these groups and events. It is wonderful to see them continue to grow and evolve to meet the needs of our congregation.

Last spring, we held an intergenerational dinner after one Sunday service to encourage conversation between different groups in our community that typically don't eat dinner together. I heard several positive comments about this event, and I'm excited to plan another one for this winter.

Our altar guild (organized by Curtiss Engstrom) has been going strong. We currently have three members that set up communion, run the sound system, collect offering, and clean up after service. Near the end of this last year, we also started to formalize organizing greeters for each service to welcome folks and hand out bulletins/hymn books before service as well as return hymn books after service. We are looking for additional volunteers to serve either on altar guild or as a greeter.

Three of our community members (Curtiss Engstrom, Dayle Matheny, and Maddie House) attended Churchwide Assembly this summer as voting members for the Southeast Michigan Synod where they voted in Rev. Yehiel Curry as the Bishop of the ELCA.

Thank you all for a great year as council president. I want to especially thank the current council members for their work and Pr. Elizabeth for her support. Finally, thank you to the whole congregation for a wonderful year. I look forward to seeing where this new year takes us!

Respectfully,  
Anna Dahlgren  
LOL Congregation President

## **Annual Pastor's Report, Lord of Light Lutheran Church & Campus Ministry**

Rev. Elizabeth Friedman

January 25, 2026

Dear People of Lord of Light,

I continue to be grateful for all that God is doing in our life together. I am so proud of the ways our church has reached out to the surrounding community and continues to show God's love to all. We continue to be student-centered, and therefore experience a lot of transition, but Lord of Light provides an anchor for students, young adults, and grown-ups alike.

Communities like Lord of Light provide a healthy space for people to live together in faith and find their next step forward together, especially in a time of turmoil. Though the mountains shake and the earth trembles (Ps. 46), God continues to be with us.

Thank you so much for continuing with me on this journey as your pastor. I feel so blessed to be a part of your lives.

In gratitude,

Pastor Elizabeth

- **Worship**

- Worship has continued at 5pm and attendance has been robust, often with a majority of students and young adults in attendance.
- Logan is taking a gap year after finishing his MMus. He continues as our student keyboardist (transitioning to future DMA program). He is auditioning for DMA programs this spring, so we anticipate engaging in a search for a new student from SMTD this spring.
- We hosted guest preachers Rev. Anna Taylor-McCants (FedUp Ministries) and El Egbert (Young Adults in Global Mission), and Dan Carlson (Living Water Ministries)
- We celebrated special Sunday services celebrating Camp Sunday with LWM, our annual Advent Lessons and Carols Service, and of course RIC Sunday
- We continue to collaborate with ecumenical partners for Ash Wednesday and Holy Week

- With joy, we celebrated two baptisms this year at Lord of Light. I presided over the baptism of Ezra Zola Ferguson, daughter of a couple I married a few years ago during the pandemic. Rev. Perry Francis baptized his granddaughter, Elenor Marie Francis.
- I performed the weddings of Hans (SEAS '24) and Maggie Leisman and Hunter Gandee (Mechanical Engineering '23) and Sophie Dettling (Public Health '23).
- We officially welcomed new members Julian Creutz, Zane Berlanga, Elizabeth Stout, and Sheila and Peter Strand.
- **Dinner**
  - Sunday dinners continue to be hosted by various congregations from around the synod as well as individuals from Lord of Light and LCM. Special thanks to Kathy Bonds and Mark Mau for providing such delicious dinners so often! This continues to be a major way we build community here at LoL and LCM.
- **Leadership**
  - Our 3 student leaders this 2025-2026 year are Dominique (senior), Leah (sophomore), and Maya (sophomore), and we continue to meet weekly on Wednesday evenings at 7pm.
  - Council leadership continues to have more student representation than technically required.
  - Curtiss continues as our Gather coordinator, ensuring weekly Bible studies and monthly social events for young adults and grad students take place.
- **Outreach**
  - We took most of the opportunities to table this past year: Ann Arbor Pride, Pride Outside (UM), FestiFall, GradFair, and FestiFaith.
  - I've continued to take students out for coffee and lunch for 1-1s, and students know they can sign up for a slot on my Calendly.
  - We have made more of an effort to keep Vida open during weekdays this year, and it has been well received. Trinity Ann Arbor has been collecting packaged snacks and granola bars for us to use at Vida.
  - Our Ragnar team filled a whole van this year (6 runners, 1 safety officer, and 1 driver) and we raised well over \$13,000 for Living Water Ministries, a large part of the over \$130,000 total!
  - We were approached by MISSION's daytime warming shelter to open our building in an emergency capacity over the winter break. I was not only



away on planned vacation during that time, but I also wound up being sick enough during the second week that I needed to stay away. A huge thank-you to Jamie and Tom for helping make it possible for us to open our building to our neighbors in need of warmth.

- **Programming**

- **Sunday School 2.0** has been successful on Wednesday evenings at 8pm: We choose typical Sunday School Bible stories and have a more grown-up Bible study, but with crafts. This has been well-attended and well-received. This has replaced Faith &, at least for now.
- **UnClobber:** A 5-part series on the “clobber” verses Jan-Feb 2025
- **Mark Charles:** We attended an event at Campus Chapel on April 9 and listened to Mark Charles speak about Christian Nationalism, Creation Stories, and Corn: Understanding the Doctrine of Discovery’s Devastating influence on our Health, our Faith, and our Politics. We had about 10 people from LCM/LoL show up, and I took some folks for bubble tea and further conversation after this event.
- **“Unplugged” Autumn retreat** with All.Together Oct 10-12: We went to the EarthWell Retreat Center in Manchester after scrambling to find a replacement venue when our original plan fell through. The retreat was quite successful, and the students who attended had a really good time.
- **Moving From Pity to Partnership, Nov 15:** Student leaders organized and implemented a disability justice presentation in the Trotter Multicultural Center. Our speaker was Rev. Sarah Mayer-Flatt, who is an ELCA pastor in our synod, uses a wheelchair, and has been active with various disability justice organizations within and outside of the ELCA. We received a grant from U of M to provide an honorarium for Pastor Sarah and food.
- **Friendsgiving** November 19
- **PowerPoint Night** December 3
- **Study Break & Pajama Party:** The Polar Express and hot chocolate, December 10 – this was poorly attended because most students were gone. However, it’s something we might tweak to do on a different date next year.
- **Finals Lunches:** Due to a mix-up, a partner church showed up with food (3 soups and accompanying sides) on a day when someone else had already signed up to bring dinner, so we provided soup and bread for the first 3 days of finals. We plan to coordinate this again, intentionally, in the spring.

- **“Beloved” Winter Retreat** at Love Rising Lutheran Church in Detroit Jan 16-18, 2026
  - **Description:** Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King once said, "The aftermath of violence is bitterness; the aftermath of non-violence is the creation of beloved community; the aftermath of beloved community is redemption and reconciliation." During this retreat, we engaged in activities and conversation around racism, how we can respond faithfully, and how we can witness to and work for God's justice in the world.
  - **The retreat went well.** Ultimately, 6 of our LCM students attended, which turned out to be about the right size for the group. We opened with dinner church on Friday night, had 4 sessions led by Pastor Michael Johnson of Love Rising Lutheran Church on Saturday (The History of Racism; Defining Racism; Inside-Out; The History of Resistance), went to dinner at a local Lebanese restaurant on Saturday night, and concluded with breakfast and worship on Sunday morning with Love Rising Lutheran Church. The retreat space also has a perfect cozy movie-watching setup, so we watched *Knives Out: Wake Up Dead Man* in two parts, which is a murder mystery with excellent religious and theological commentary.
- **Gather** is coordinating and leading its own Bible study at 6pm on Thursdays. I will attend when able and invited, but our young adults are very knowledgeable and capable of co-leading this Bible study.
- **Move-Out Ann Arbor:** We will plan to participate again as a hub for Move-Out Ann Arbor at the end of term. I will be seeking more people to help make this happen smoothly.
- **Continuing Education:**
  - **LuMin Fundraising Cohort:** This year-long cohort concluded in August.
  - **Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies:** I was accepted into a continuing education cohort funded by the Lilly Endowment and organized by Christ Church Cranbrook, Hartford Memorial Baptist Church in Detroit, and the Episcopal Diocese in Atlanta. The website says: “The re-established Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies will be a congregationally-based effort to bring together intentionally ecumenical and diverse groups of clergy to build leadership capabilities, develop networks, and provide a spiritual grounding to pastors that shepherd congregations in Metro

Detroit.” The course includes two cohorts, one in Detroit and one in Atlanta, and involves two intensive courses (one in Atlanta in January and one in May at Cranbrook) and monthly day-long meetings as well through the spring, with a wrap-up in October. The course is paid for fully by the Lilly Endowment.

- **My experience so far has been excellent.** Everyone in both the Atlanta and Detroit cohorts is fully engaged, and I’m excited for our follow-up sessions. We have three monthly 1-day sessions in February, March, and April, and another multi-day intensive session with the Atlanta cohort in May. There is one final one-day session in October.
- **The focus of this continuing education course is around adaptive leadership.** Our first session focused on defining adaptive versus technical challenges, considering our authority as pastors, and learning to appropriately energize our communities to co-lead.

- **Service**

- I concluded my service on the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church in March of 2025.
- I concluded two terms of service on Synod Council in April 2025.
- I continue as Dean of Conference 10.
- I am serving on the planning committee for the LuMin Conference in 2026 in Denver, and we will be hosting the LuMin Conference in Ann Arbor in 2027.

## **Facilities Annual Report for 2025**

We continue to use the FCA Report provided by A3C a few years ago, as a guide for projects. Tom Mikesell is doing an excellent job of working through these projects! And a special thanks to Mark Mau and Curtiss Engstrom for their continued volunteer work! Below are a few highlights...

- The front main steps were repaired and sealed. This is an annual spring repair project.
- Windows cleaned and some window/seal repairs completed.
- Window wells in front of the fellowship hall were cleaned and painted.
- Kitchen door walkout area on the back of the building was cleaned and painted.
- Carpeting was deep cleaned throughout the building.
- Flooring was replaced in the library nook in Vida.
- Flooring was replaced in one of the apartment rooms. Two of the apartment rooms were painted and new blinds hung in the rooms.
- We hosted MISSION for 2 weeks in December.
- General maintenance throughout the building was completed.
- Landscaping is looking better than ever!

Looking forward to Vida updates in 2026!

## **Financial Report for 2025 Fiscal Year**

### **Income:**

Our income was again over the projected budget.

Increase in expected regular contributions at 114.1%

Increase in savings interest at 111.8%

Increase in Thrivent contributions at 152.3%.

Designated giving at \$8179.41 (last year was \$4,464.24)

### **Expenses:**

Expenses were slightly under budget overall.

### **Assets:**

Total current assets for LOL in January 2026 are \$79,432.75.

### **Savings Plan:**

Savings was moved into a ELCA Mission Fund account in 2024, that has increased our investment interest while supporting ELCA ministry work.

### **Designated Giving:**

Reconciling Works: \$548

Global Refuge: \$700

MISSION: \$506

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land: \$1,224

FedUp: \$406

Ozone House: \$356

Salem Lutheran, Flint: \$864

Samaritas: \$756

Living Water Ministries: \$640

Church World Service: \$819

Hope Clinic: \$720

Good Gifts: \$641

**Biographies of those who are standing for  
Election as new members of the Council**

**Linda Edwards**

Linda first became involved with the ministry of Lord of Light in 1981 after graduating from Valparaiso University. She is a retired Special Education teacher consultant who now tutors students on a part time basis. Outside of teaching, she enjoys reading, exercising, volunteering, and working for issues of social justice. While she has not been a regular member throughout the years since first joining, she recently returned in the spring of 2024.

**Helena Jolliffe**

Helena is an undergraduate student in Engineering and work at a theatre complex. In her free-time she likes to read, run, and draw. She's been at Lord of Light since fall 2024.

**Elizabeth Stout**

Elizabeth is a qualitative health researcher at the Ann Arbor VA's Center for Clinical Management Research where she is involved in interviews dedicated to improving health care for veterans. She received her masters of public health in health behavior and education from the University of Michigan in 2024. Elizabeth also enjoys spending time in nature, playing piano and trombone, baking, and hiking with friends and family. She is from Kalamazoo, MI and joined Lord of Light in 2023, including playing piano for the 2023-24 season.