

QUILTING

2025 was a banner year for thee quilting group.

103 quilts were assembled and sent to Lutheran World Retreat. Baby and children quilts were distributed, king sized quilts were matched and sewn, and some quilts were locally distributed, the most important part of this group, aside from sewing the quilts is the friendship and humor we share with one another. It seems we support one another as much as we help keep people warm.

We thank all of you for your support with raffles. Current members Ruth Baxter and Carol Norwick are the backbone of the group sewing the quilts together, using a variety of pieces of material, locating sheets and ordering filler. Meg Eaton tirelessly cuts squares, evaluates materials, and is helpful in deciding the ways they can best be used. Mary Beekman and I help the others tie quilts, help wash filler materials. It is a fun and productive group that welcomes anyone who wants to join.

We meet weekly on Mondays from 10 :30-12:00 or beyond for those who want to stay. We are a Fund of the Month for January 2026. We also welcome Thrivent Cards to help with expenses and supplies.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Stacy



BACKPACKS

This year's backpack giveaway on August 13 was a great success thanks to many volunteers from Lebanon as well as Shoreline Elementary PTO and Shoreline Principal Beth Whaley.

We gave away 122 backpacks on the night to a total of 58 Families/Groups.

10 Additional Backpacks were sent to Hart Schools courtesy of Sarah Schmalz

10 Additional Backpacks went to restock the school supply cupboard at Shoreline Elementary.

That's a total of 142 backpacks!

This is an increase on last year of +18 backpacks

We also had stations for school supplies and water bottles & water bottle decals

The Book-Bike from White Lake Community Library made an appearance and kids could pick out a new book to take home.

The Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts provided information on how to join.

HealthWest provided information about Mental Health treatment and support for people of all ages.

Wesco provided lots of their delicious popcorn as well as job applications for adults

Thank you to all the volunteers who grilled hot dogs and provided drinks for everyone.

The spray-painted t-shirts were the most popular station! Thanks to Ariel and Steve Ogden for streamlining the T-shirt station this year, and painting 75 T-shirts!

Some other statistics from the event:

36 of the families/groups attend school in the Whitehall district

13 attend Montague (double from last year)

5 attend Reeths-Puffer

8 attend other districts: (Notably: 3 families from Muskegon, with a total of 8 kids)

(Some groups were mixed school district so would be counted twice)

27 kids attend Middle or High School (6th – 12th Grade) (increase on last year)

95 Kids attend Elementary School or below (Pre-School – 5th Grade)

36 Families signed up for our mailing list to be notified about other events at Lebanon, including Kids Church, Day Camp, Swim Lessons, and next year's Backpack Giveaway.

We have already started planning for the August 2026 Backpack Giveaway.

Submitted by

Jenna Brown



ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild fulfills a very important role for the Church. The tasks of the Altar Guild include:

- Setting the wine and juice into the serving trays
- Keeping the candles filled from week to week
- Setting the altar table before service
- Changing the parament colors with the change of season
- After service cleanup of washing the wine cups and storing trays and linens in the closet
- Washing and ironing of church linens as needed

Many thanks to those volunteers who have participated with setup and/or cleanup this past year, including Al Wheeler, Meg and Glenn Eaton, and Barb and Dave Dusenbury. Sheila Fretty has provided delicious communion bread for many years, and has taken some time away from that task to focus

on her health. I'd like to welcome Lucinda Glover as a new communion bread volunteer! It is wonderful to have these volunteers to help keep the altar beautiful (and tasty) for Sunday worship!

Additional volunteers are always needed and welcomed. A volunteer can help in any way that they feel comfortable, and as often, or seldom as they wish. Michele and Al Wheeler are very happy to provide one-on-one training. The job is not difficult, but is integral to Sunday morning service occurring seamlessly.

Sign-up sheets for Altar Guild 2026 are located on the table in the entry way near the front double doors.

Will you consider helping with this important job?

In addition to the Altar Guild, there are other opportunities to serve, including the reading of lessons (Lector) or assisting in Holy Eucharist (Communion Assistant). Those sign-up sheets are also located in the entry way.

**Michele Wheeler,
Altar Guild Chair**

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

The committee members are Becky Wahr, Tony DiNicolo, Sarah Stacy-Schmalz, Jenna Brown and Terry Beekman.

It was a very good year for Endowment Fund gains.

We started this year with a balance of \$126,976 and ended it with a balance of \$149,843 at Fidelity

Investments. This included a November grant of \$3,734 from the Outreach Fund for the Church Council to support other non-profits. They subsequently donated \$2,500 to Living Waters Ministry and \$1,234 to the Bishops Discretionary Fund. There was a total gain on investments of \$33,740.

General Building Fund – This is a restricted fund in which the gains can be used to maintain, remodel and repair the original Sanctuary built in 1877. The balance in this Sub-Fund as of December 31, 2025 is \$54,772 with \$34,772 available for use.

Outreach Fund – This is a Non-Restricted Fund in which the gains can be used to support our Christian Mission. The balance in this Sub-Fund as of December 31, 2025 is \$95,073 with \$59,968 available for use.

Please consider investing some of your gifting to the Endowment Fund and including it in your estate planning. Further information is available from the Committee Secretary, Tony DiNicolo or myself, including methods of giving, The Mission Statement for use of the Funds and the application forms and the procedure to request a grant from the Fund.

**Respectfully submitted, Terry Beekman –
Chairperson**

We accomplished a lot prior to the 150th anniversary, but the Historical Committee took a hiatus in 2025. There are still many photographs to identify, and a growing number of newspaper clips to copy onto archival paper and paste into scrapbooks. If anyone has an interest in working on these projects, please contact Irene Parks or Barb Aardema.

We plan to seek input from the church council about displaying the scrapbooks and photo albums on a rotating schedule. Currently they're stored beneath the display case in the lounge. Suggestions as to where a more visible display could be mounted are welcome!

Barb Aardema, committee member



KIDS KLUB

A 45-minute meeting targeted for children aged 4-8 years met 4 times in 2025, with 5 more meetings from 9:15-10:00. Notifications are sent to families via email. The leaders are Toni Schillaci and Amy Swope.



This year, we began using an ELCA curriculum called “Holy Moley” that includes a short video based on a biblical theme, paired with a lesson-based craft and take-home worksheets so families can discuss the lesson at home. We also read a short story explaining the theme in greater detail.

Thanks to some very generous Thrivent funds, we enjoyed the raucous fun of Circus POP! Holiday Bubble-bration this December, “featuring the extraordinary talents of Logan Jimenez. This thrilling one-man extravaganza combines world-class bubble artistry, magic, circus skills, and comedy; an unforgettable experience for children of all ages.”

We have more fun planned for 2026. We sincerely appreciate the support of the entire congregation as we demonstrate that our young people are a treasured part of our Lebanon family.

If you wish to volunteer, if you know of a family who might like to join us, or if you have any questions, please contact Amy Swope at (517) 589-9974 or amyvan85@yahoo.com.



Respectfully submitted,

Amy Swope and Toni Schillaci

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Our mission has been to reach children both within the congregation and those who live far away. We have had at our core, the intent to let them know we are thinking of them, that we care about them, and also send them messages of God's love for them. We have also sent Bible teaching that followed the liturgical calendar, since many watch our services on YouTube.

I was sad when we received a notification from Augsburg Press that they were discontinuing publication of our Sparks Family Magazine. That meant we would have to change our method of reaching out to the children. I had been mailing the magazine, plus coloring pages with Bible stories, bookmarks, stickers, and projects, additional safety, reading material ideas, and climate/environmental project ideas etc. as the seasons changed and materials became available. Teens were always the most difficult to find materials for so I had resorted to writing them a Christ-centered letter quarterly with a bookmark.

Laura Hollister and I met with Amy Swope and Toni Schillaci to discuss Christian Education. I gave them the extra Sparks Magazines, coloring books, etc. that I had for them to use in their program with the children they serve monthly in the church. Toni expressed the need to hand over the mailing of the children's birthday cards, whereupon

Amy Swope immediately offered to take that over, even after hearing how many were on the list. Toni and Amy continue to do an exemplary job with our children in the church, The Kids' Klub.

In order to let all of the children know we care and also keep them learning about the unconditional love God has for them and the forgiveness and grace God sends to everyone, no matter what, we are pivoting from a physical magazine to an online program. This program is available through Augsburg Press for children of all ages, including a great plan for teens! I'm especially happy that the teens will at last have something that they can relate to!

To facilitate this program, I reached out to Jenna Brown, knowing she has had extensive experience working with computer technology. She graciously accepted the task as soon as she was finished with the backpack event. We will set up the plan for executing the program for the various age groups. I am very pleased to place this part of the program into her excellent and capable hands. Please make yourselves available to her when she calls upon you to take a small part in this ministry. "Many hands make light work!"

Blessings!

Melanie Schaafsma

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Doug Aardema, Terry Beekman, Glenn Eaton, Scott Keller, Wietse Schaafsma, and Tony DeNicolo

Tasks Completed in 2024

- Performed routine building and grounds maintenance: raking, minor mowing, weeding, pruning, minor plumbing, roof and siding maintenance.
- Reorganized ornament and Christmas decoration storage.
- Took down sanctuary Christmas tree and removed to goat farm.
- Pruned and repotted plants in planter.
- Replaced old plug for the roof drain clean out port
- Cleaned up water from roof leaks.
- Purchased and installed new ceiling tiles in lounge.
- Painted lines for handicap parking and access aisles in compliance with Michigan law.
- Painted East parking lot curbs
- Repainted stripes on West and East entrance steps.
- Treated plant growth on playground shed roof.
- Cleaned and organized interior of large shed, discarded broken stuff.
- Repaired rotten boards on shed and installed metal flashing, sealed bottom to cement pad.
- Prepped, primed and painted large shed.
- Cleaned grills in preparation for Backpack Event.
- Cleaned out roof drains several times.
- Prepped South landing for floor covering installation.
- Prepped East entryway for painting.
- Purchased and spread wood chips for garden on East side of building.
- Patched pothole in parking lot.
- Assembled new picnic tables.
- Addressed mole invasion.
- Replaced foam in communion kneeling pads

- Reorganized Scout storage room
- Replaced yellow tap on steps to narthex.
- Inspected storage areas for compliance with fire codes.
- Tested all exit and egress lights.
- Put up Christmas garland around interior doors and parking lot posts.

Coordinated/Facilitated

- Repair of exterior light adjacent to East entrance doors.
- Replacement of broken door closer and repair of keypad for East exterior door.
- Transition from Boardwell Mechanical to Hurst Mechanical for HVAC
- Replacement of flat roofs
- Spraying for spiders on church exterior

Projects for 2026

- Install flooring on landing inside South entrance.
- Repaint yellow lines for all parking spaces.
- Install wooden chair rail on wall leading to lounge elevator door.
- Paint East entrance vestibule.
- Repair crack in stained glass window above sanctuary doors.
- Repair basketball hoop and backboard.

Submitted by Glenn Eaton, Property Chair



CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS

NEW MEMBERS

Sally Kahlo
Roy Baldridge
Esther Baldridge
Earl Hertel
Lucy Grover

DEATHS

Darrel Brown
Barbara Smith
Helen Bartlett
Vern Sutherland
Elin Frietsch
Mitchell Johnson
Mary Bernhardt
Ronald Scott Funderberg*
Karl Glass

TRANSFERS

BAPTISMS

Gemma DeMumbrum
Earl Hertel

ATTENDANCE AVERAGES:

Total Attendance for 2025 was: 3,097
**Only 53 weeks were noted on the usher chart.
Average weekly participation: 58
Average on-line: 40

MEMBER STATISTICS:

Total Membership – 293
Active Adult Members: 171
Kids: 44
Homebound: 7
Active non-members: 36
Inactive Members: 76
If we inadvertently missed anyone, we apologize.
Please call the church office (893-5745), so that we
may correct our records. Thank you.

Lebanon Lutheran Church

Minutes of Annual Congregation Meeting

January 26, 2025 - In Person - In Church Lounge

In Attendance: Cheri Crouch, Curt Crouch, Diane Eastman, Toni Schillaci, Amy Swope, Doug Aardema, Earl Hertel, Mary Koenen, Barb Aardema, Marie Hendrixson, Virginia DeMumbrum, Frank Hollister, Alice Hollister, Jennifer Nordberg, Suzanne Troy, Stephen Troy, Carl Nordberg, Melanie Schaafsma, Wietse Schaafsma, Al Wheeler, Kara Jaekel, Brian Jaekel, Michele Wheeler, Laura Hollister, Lucinda Grover, Barbara Dusenberry, David Dusenberry, Sarah Schmalz, Donna Stacy, Terry Beekman, Jenna Brown, Pastor Doug Ogden

Welcome, establishment of Quorum: President Wietse Schaafsma called the meeting to order at 12:22 pm. A quorum was established. Wietse welcomed all, and called upon Pastor Doug Ogden for the opening prayer.

Opening prayer: Pastor Ogden offered a prayer of thanks and asked for God's blessing and guidance for this meeting.

Approval of minutes from Annual Meeting 2024: Frank Hollister moved that the minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting be approved as written. Amy Swope seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Ballot for Elected Positions distributed:

With the exception of the Synod Assembly Delegates, nominations for all the vacant positions on Congregation Council and Committees had been printed on the ballot in advance of the meeting. President Schaafsma asked for any additional nominations from the floor. Frank Hollister offered thoughts about the importance and rewards of being a Synod Assembly Delegate. Kara Jaekel and Frank Hollister then volunteered for the positions. Curt Crouch moved that, with those additions, the ballot be approved by acclamation. Cheri Crouch seconded, and the motion passed. Those elected are as follows:

Financial Review Committee: David Dusenberry

Ushers: John Parks, Terry Beekman, Jim King

Endowment Committee: Becky Wahr, Sarah Schmalz

Council: David Dusenberry, Amy Swope, Cheri Crouch, Al Wheeler

Synod Delegates: Kara Jaekel, Frank Hollister

Special Thanks to Nominating Committee: President Schaafsma thanked those who had served their terms of office and the incoming members of Council and of Committees important to the functioning of our Church.

Review of 2024 Financial Reports: (See written reports in ANNUAL REPORT 2024):

Financial Secretary Curt Crouch reviewed the details of his report and discussed the various accounts and the roll that each play in the mission of the Church. He noted that until December of 2024 we were behind budget, but were blessed with some generous end-of-the-year gifts that resulted in our exceeding budget. There was discussion of the role that Thrivent Choice Dollars and Thrivent Action Cards play in our non-budget mission. Curt recalled that, in August of 2024, the Finance Committee authorized a transfer of \$12,000 from our Investment Account to our checkbook in order to pay bills. In January 2025, that \$12,000 was returned to the Fidelity Account.

On the expense side, Curt drew special attention to the reduction in costs for operating the food pantry. He said that this is due primarily to the efforts of our new Coordinator, Paul Collins, who has worked tirelessly to obtain the lowest costs for the food that we purchase for the pantry. Curt thanked everyone for a great year and yielded the floor to Treasurer Terry Beekman who attended this meeting by Zoom. A revised copy of the 2025 proposed budget was then distributed.

Review of 2025 Proposed Budget (See 2025 Revised Budget):

Treasurer Beekman noted the main differences between 2024 and 2025 budgets. There was a 2.5% increase in wages for office staff, but a reduction in the work schedule for the Church Secretary will result in a net savings. Particular differences were noted in the increase in the Pastor's Salary as we are on a three- year program to bring his pay up to Synod guidelines.

Since Pastor Ogden is now enrolled in Medicare, there will be savings in insurance costs. The increase in Maintenance cost is mainly due to the scheduled inspection and maintenance of elevators. The Living Lutheran magazine has been added to this year's budget.

Frank Hollister questioned why the proposed budget shows no money for the categories of Evangelism or Stewardship. After an open conversation about the importance of Evangelism and Stewardship and alternate methods for funding them such as Thrivent Action Cards, Frank made a motion that they be funded \$500 each in the Proposed Budget. Carl Nordberg seconded. The motion, by voice vote, failed.

There was additional discussion about how we might conduct the Evangelism and Stewardship programs.

Curt Crouch moved to accept the Financial Reports, seconded by Kara Jaekel. The motion passed unanimously.

Looking Forward - Ministry Reports:

Curt Crouch moved that the Committee Reports be approved as written, seconded by Cheri Crouch. The motion passed unanimously.

President Schaafsma recognized Frank Hollister who posed a question regarding an item in the Endowment Fund that was titled Outreach. Frank wondered why that amount was not being used, and why we couldn't send at least part of it to Synod or ELCA. Pastor Ogden offered an explanation of how the fund had been established from what remains of multiple gifts and that endowments sometimes had strings attached. We attempt to use the endowments as the givers had intended. Pastor Ogden said that when Treasurer Beekman returns from vacation,

he would ask for a breakdown of what is included in that fund so that we can determine what options we have for its use.

Adjournment:

Michele Wheeler moved that we adjourn, seconded by Cheri Crouch. The motion passed unanimously. The Annual Meeting was adjourned at 1:47 pm and closed with a prayer by Pastor Ogden and a song of praise to God from all of those who were gathered.

Submitted by Secretary Al Wheeler

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