



Lifetimes

December 2023

From the Pastor



Pastor Kai Nilsen

Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy.

With these words, Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, invites us into the theme of our Advent/Christmas Season, *Love Worth Experiencing*.

Throughout the fall, we immersed ourselves in the question, “What is a life worth living?” As Jesus’ followers, our response began with the vision of the kind of life Jesus lived—a life of compassion and mercy and justice and sacrificial love. Jesus then invites us to not only imagine that kind of life is possible but also to participate with him in co-creating a better, more loving world.

As we explore *Love Worth Experiencing* this holiday season, we will examine the unique kind of love at the center of God’s heart. Referencing Merton’s insight above, we can love others whether or not they are worthy, only because we reflect the heart of God who loves us whether or not we are worthy. If it was purely up to me, I’d create categories of “love-ability” based on my own narrow definitions. Buckeye fans—worthy of love. Michigan fans...meh?

That’s a simplistic example of the complex decision making that I/we use to draw people close or keep them at arms-length, to deem them as worthy of love or label them as worthless and unlovable. We also know and we feel the repercussions of our inability to see people as God sees us, to love them as God loves us. Divided communities and families. Threats and acts of violence and retribution. Unforgiving spirits. De-humanizing rhetoric. Walled off neighborhoods and walled off hearts.

Let’s go back to the unique kind of love at the center of God’s heart. Throughout this season, in homes and in worship, in the grand story of God’s entry into this world in the vulnerable child, Jesus, and in the specific story of how we enter into our worlds as vulnerable children of God, our “one job” is clear. In Merton’s words, “Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy.”

So, what will that look like for you this season as you:

- Greet the workers in the service industries you may frequent.
- Look out for your neighbors.
- Encounter the obnoxious co-worker. (Have you ever thought you may be the obnoxious co-worker? If so, how would you want to be regarded?)
- Welcome the “unlovable” family member.
- Care for those you know who are hurting this season.
- Pray for those around the world who are enduring unspeakable acts of violence and hatred.

We have been invited to imagine and then co-create a better, more loving world. It’s a love we first experienced from God. It’s a love worth expressing to the world!

See you in worship and in the community this season.

Peace, Kai



Jim Meinen
President

As we stand on the threshold of 2024, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable journey we have undertaken as a church community, guided by our faith and a commitment to grow. The year 2023 has been a testament to the collective efforts of our dedicated members, staff, and volunteers; resulting in the development of our three-year plan (3YP).

The 3YP is a roadmap that serves as our guiding light, illuminating the path towards a future of innovation, growth, and the deepening of our faith. It encompasses not only the strengthening of our existing ministries but also the creation of new ones - reaching out to young adults and seniors. The plan provides a framework for enriching our own spiritual lives while simultaneously extending our hands to serve the wider community, embodying Pastor Kai's vision of an inward and outward journey. Moreover, it addresses the development of our facilities, systems, and overall infrastructure, ensuring they align with our goals for the future.

The 3YP is more than just a collection of words on paper; it is a living document, a demonstration of our resilience and our commitment to fulfilling our vision of "A World Filled with God's Love and Grace". To successfully translate this vision into reality, we must embrace change, recognizing that the world around us is constantly evolving. Churches that stand still will inevitably decline, while those that adapt and innovate will thrive.

Operationalizing our 3YP requires a concerted effort, a transformation of broad goals into tangible actions. We must break down each objective into specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) steps, creating a clear roadmap for progress. This roadmap must be communicated effectively to all stakeholders, ensuring alignment and buy-in across the church community.

Allocated resources, both financial and staff, are essential to support the implementation of our plan. We must ensure that the necessary funds, talent, and technology are available to execute our strategies effectively. Regular monitoring and evaluation are crucial to track progress, measure the impact of our actions, and identify areas for improvement.

To assist in the 3YP's implementation, the Council determined that a task force be established to assist in operationalizing the plan. This task force will work closely with staff to ensure they have the support and resources required to drive toward success.

Throughout this journey of transformation, we must remember that we are not alone. God is our guiding light, illuminating the path ahead and empowering us to fulfill our mission. As we navigate the ever-changing landscape of faith and community engagement, let us embrace change with unwavering faith, knowing that God is guiding our every step.

While this article may sound a bit corporate in its approach to implementing our 3YP, I believe that this structured approach is necessary for success. Remember, even God created the world in seven days, and he had a plan! So, let us follow his lead and embrace a planful approach to growth, knowing that God is always with us, guiding our journey with love and grace.



2023 Council Priorities

1. Create a 3-Year Plan
 2. Increase Transparent Communications
 3. Conduct an Internal Financial Review
 4. Create Budgets with Positive Net Contributions
 5. Rethink Giving
-

ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans Summer 2024

Incarnation has 13 youth and 3 adults already signed up for the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, LA (July 16-20). This life-changing trip is open to all 8th through 12th grade students at the time of registration (Fall 2023). Regular registration deadline is February 14, 2024. A Youth Participation [Registration form](#) (print, fill-out, and return to us). A \$150 deposit is due at registration and can be paid via [Realm](#) or by check to the church office. Talk to Mike or Nate for more info. We have 2 fundraising events coming up:

- Wed, December 13 – Not So Silent Night: Jambalaya, Jesus, Jazz (Advent event)
- Sun, February 11 – Shrove Sunday Waffle Breakfast (Lent event)

CREATED TO BE

2024 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING
New Orleans JULY 16-20, 2024

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

MYLE
Multicultural Youth Leadership Event of the ELCA
JULY 13-18, 2024

the tAble
An ELCA Gathering of Youth with Disabilities
JULY 13-18, 2024

Young Adult Gathering
A new ELCA Gathering for Young Adults
JULY 16-20, 2024

Event
Fundraiser

NOT SO SILENT NIGHT

w/ Joe Davis
+ Poetic Diaspora

*JAMBALAYA, JESUS, JAZZ
*ADVENT CONCERT & DINNER
*FUNDRAISER FOR THOSE GOING TO THE ELCA YOUTH GATHERING, JULY 2024
*TLC KIDS MEETS AS USUAL
*SCAN BELOW TO REGISTER

DECEMBER 13, 2023 (5:45-7:00PM)
INCARNATION LUTHERAN CHURCH
INCARNATION HALL

JOE DAVIS IS AN AWARD-WINNING SPOKEN WORD ARTIST AND BESTSELLING AUTHOR WHO USES POETRY TO POWER POSSIBILITY.

CREATED TO BE

INCARNATION

Primetimers

Don't worry - you'll have fun!

Celebrate Christmas with Primetimers

THURSDAY, December 21, 10:30 a.m.
GRACE HALL at INCARNATION

Celebrate Christmas with Christmas music and caroling led by Amy Maakestad and Marlys Nelson! Lunch served.

Please make your reservations by December 18 for the luncheon through the church office at 651-484-7213.

Two Sundays in December will provide you with the opportunity to make a gift which is truly "good". The Hunger Awareness and Advocacy group will staff a table on December 3 and 17. By gifting through the ELCA World Hunger Program, the gift you purchase will benefit your recipient as they see the help it provides others AND by providing something important to someone in need.

The gift choices are many - from livestock of all kinds (bees, llamas, sheep, chickens, pigs), to education and supplies, to gifts which support health and safety. There are opportunities to gift seminary education or provide Bibles. Some gifts benefit individuals/families while others are designed for entire communities. Gift prices range from \$10 into the thousands.

Stop by and make your "purchase" with cash or check through Incarnation. Or you can pick up a catalog from ELCA World Hunger and shop online from home later. Either way you can "gift" twice, a really good way to give a gift during the upcoming holiday season.



While donations to the ELCA World Hunger program are welcome through Incarnation or directly, year-round, this special way of gifting during the Advent season brings extra meaning to preparing for the arrival of the Christ Child.

Holiday Baking Bag Drive Deadline December 10

Share the Joy of Baking this Holiday Season **HOLIDAY BAKING BAG DRIVE**

Join us in spreading warmth and joy this holiday season by creating a Holiday Baking Bag for a family in need. Your simple act of kindness can make someone's holiday season a little sweeter!

WHAT TO INCLUDE:

FLOUR

WHITE SUGAR

BROWN SUGAR

OIL

CHOCOLATE CHIPS

VANILLA

BAKING POWDER

BAKING SODA

OPTIONAL - SPRINKLES,

COOKIE CUTTER, MEASURING CUPS, ETC.

• *Add a personal touch by including your favorite cookie recipe*

• Please return your baking bag to the church no later than December 10, 2023



The Ralph Reeder Food Shelf (RRFS) has a holiday project underway! We want to help RRFS meet their goal to provide all of their clients with a bag of goodies for holiday baking. You can help to provide this baking opportunity to our neighbors with food insecurities in a number of ways.

First, you can provide any number of complete "Holiday Baking Bags" by collecting each item in the "Holiday Baking Bag Drive" list (to the left) into a shopping or gift bag; then drop them off at Incarnation or RRFS.

Second, you can purchase any items from the "Holiday Baking Bag Drive" list and drop them off at Incarnation or RRFS.

Third, you can make a financial donation that is always welcome. Donate online (link to <https://onrealm.org/IncarnationLuth/-/give/now>) or make checks out to Incarnation—with "Ralph Reeder Food Shelf" in the memo.

Note that non-perishable donations should be dropped off at RRFS or Incarnation no later than December 10. Thank you for making the holidays merry and bright for our neighbors in need!

Preschool November Food Drive-Incarnation Preschool families donated 314 items in their annual November Food Drive for the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf! Thank you families!

Coming Soon: Pizzas for Preschool! Incarnation Preschool will be doing a Heggies Pizza fundraiser in early January to help offset overall programming costs. Support our preschool and enjoy some deliciousness at the same time! Pizzas can be ordered and picked up at Incarnation. Ordering will be available for one Sunday only on January 7. Expected delivery is at the end of January. If you would like to order pizzas but will not be present that Sunday, please email Kirsten Henry at khenry@incarnationmn.org. Thank you for your support of Incarnation Preschool!

Staff News

Rebecca Christiansen, Director of Children and Family Ministry, will be out of the office for six weeks following surgery on December 4. She will not be available by email or phone, so she has time to heal. If you have an immediate need, please contact Pastor Joel Vander Wal and he will assist you.

Thank you to the many volunteers who have jumped in so Rebecca can have time to care for herself.

Yogadevotion Being Offered

Yogadevotion Instructor, Jill Burton is a Registered Yoga Teacher (E-RYT 200) and is offering a class beginning in January.

Classes are Hatha yoga style, focusing on alignment, building strength and promoting flexibility. In addition, Vinyasa (which means flowing with breath) flow style is integrated; utilizing full-body sequenced yoga postures to promote balance, strength and agility in both seated and standing poses. Breathing techniques are also introduced to create awareness of energy, focus and/or enhance relaxation.

Classes incorporate relaxing music, encouraging inspirational readings, and always end in a relaxed restorative pose. If you do not have a yoga mat, some will be available at class. You will feel energized and renewed! All levels welcome. No yoga experience necessary.

This seven week session runs Tuesdays, January 9 – February 27 in the Fireside Room from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. You can register at <https://yogadevotion.com/class/incarnation-lutheran-church-shoreview-yogadevotion-flow/>.

**Kairos meets Sunday Mornings at 10:15 a.m.
in the Fireside Room
Mondays, Zoom, 7-8:30 p.m.
Link to meeting on
on incarnationmn.org/ministries/adult-formation**

**Dec. 3 and 10, 10:15 a.m. Fireside Room
Waiting and Hoping: Reading the Bible in the Season of
Advent**

**Anna Marsh, Visiting Assistant Professor of Old
Testament, Luther Seminary**

Advent is a season of waiting, of expecting, of anticipating, of hoping. Anna Marsh, visiting assistant professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary, describes Advent as a season when we together, as church, await the coming of the Christ child.

But we all hope and wait for lots of other things, too. Did you know that hoping and waiting are connected in the ancient languages that the Bible was written in? In this two-week series, explore HOPE in a variety biblical texts, learn a little bit of Hebrew and Greek, and discuss how we experience those feelings in our lives today. The sessions will invite you into deep reflection on these big ideas in biblical faith and hopefully (*wink, wink*) deepen your experience of the Advent season this year.

At Luther Seminary, Marsh teaches a variety of courses in Biblical Hebrew, prophetic literature, gender, and food. She teaches regularly in congregations and enjoys inviting people of faith into a creative and challenging encounter with Scripture.

Dementia Friendly Worship Service

This worship service, open to all, will be hosted by Roseville Lutheran Church on Wednesday, December 6 at 11:00 a.m. Designed for those with memory loss and their friends and family, the 30-minute service will include hymns, scripture readings, a short story or meditation and communion. For more information contact Roseville Lutheran Church at: 651-487-7752.



CARE OF CREATION CORNER



Consider less waste when you wrap your holiday gifts. One of the savviest zero-waste decisions is to save wrapping paper, tissue paper, bows, and ribbons to into a wrapped present, the fancy paper itself is most likely to be laminated with plastic, foil, glitter, or other non-paper materials that contaminate a recycle bin. The short fibers in tissue paper make it unrecyclable too. Rather than wrapping paper, go for reusable gift bags. Or adorn your gift with fabric like a scarf (new or vintage) that can be worn. Look also for old maps, sheet music, newspaper funnies, or plain paper painted with your children's handprints and art.

Apostles Library Book Review



The First Notes: The Story of Do, Re, Mi

By: Julie Andrews and her daughter, Emma Walton Hamilton

This book has a lot of things which make it an inviting and interesting book for readers of all ages. First, it is written by Julie Andrews and her daughter; secondly, it is the true story of the beginning of written music; and thirdly, it shows, in

pictures, the words to the song from the musical, "The Sounds of Music". The illustrations are lovely, too.

Most of us do not know the story of Guido d'Arezzo, a monk in the 11th century in Italy. He loved to sing and figured out a way to notate music using the first syllables of each line of his favorite hymn and square notes. He used his hand to teach this to others, assigning musical notes to each finger and joint. His discovery remains the foundation for learning music today, and inspired the famous song "Do-Re-Mi."

The book includes a historical note about life in a monastery, a note from Julie Andrews about her role and singing "Do-Re-Mi", and a historical note about Guido himself, as well as a good glossary. Sharing the beautiful Italian artwork with children will find you all humming or singing along.

January 4, 2024

6:30-8:00 p.m.

"The life of God at work in us and among us" is how licensed marriage and family therapist, spiritual director, and author Melissa L. Johnson, LMFT defines beauty. When it comes to messages about what defines beauty, we are often swimming in toxic waters. Melissa will help us look with a new lens at how to cultivate a healthy body image. She will explore:



Melissa Johnson, speaker

- The widespread impact of media
- How beauty and diet culture impact mental health and body image
- The importance of redefining beauty from a spiritual perspective

To learn more, please check out Melissa's new book, *Soul-Deep Beauty: Fighting for Our True Worth in a World Demanding Flawless* and her podcast "Impossible Beauty"

To assist with planning, please indicate your presence by contacting Julie Durbin at 651-484-7213 or emailing jdurbin@incarnationmn.org This is a free event open to all ages. A free will offering will be taken. Questions: contact Pastor Janet Karvonen Montgomery at jkmontgomery@incarnationmn.org. Bring your friends and neighbors!

Positions Available

Incarnation Preschool is seeking a qualified and experienced candidate to fill an assistant teaching role on MWF from 8:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Substituting hours are also available if interested. For more information and a complete job description, contact Kirsten Henry at khenry@incarnationmn.org or 651-766-0723.

Faith Formation Leader for Children's Ministry

This person will assist in adapting curriculum for the program year, assist in executing ministry on Sunday and Wednesday for children in preschool through fifth grade, assist with the planning and preparation for family & preteen fellowship events throughout the year and assist with special projects as they come up. The ideal candidate will have a heart for Jesus and children along with a minimum of two years of experience working/volunteering with children in a ministry setting. Computer skills are required. This position has flexibility to work remotely or in an office environment. Please submit a cover letter and resume to dgriffith@incarnationmn.org.

Greetings from the music department! Incarnation is absolutely brimming with musical activity! How wonderful it was to have Joyful Noise (our children's choir), in worship singing with the Senior choir! These types of cross generational collaborations are so important to knitting together a strong connected community - not to mention - it's just really fun! I want to again thank Kathleen Johnson for the incredible work she is doing with our children's choir.



On November 19, we hosted Siama Matuzungidi and his wife, Dallas, for our 10:30 service as they shared music and stories from his roots in the Republic of Congo. Having people from different cultures, sharing their stories through music is always such a great reminder that we are all so much more alike than we are different.

In the afternoon on the same day, Incarnation opened its sanctuary space for a concert featuring Wingspan's "Glee Club". Wingspan Life Resources is a non-profit organization that offers residential care in group homes and in-home programs to adults with developmental disabilities. They are licensed by the State of Minnesota to care for as many as 120 individuals in 30 residential facilities in Hennepin, Ramsey and Dakota counties. I have had the great privilege to work as director of Wingspan's Glee Club for a number of years and it has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life. For more information visit wingspanlife.org/

Advent is upon us! Our Wednesday night Advent services began on November 29 from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. The Holden

Evening Prayer service will again be the format. Among the cantors serving during these services will be none other than Pastor Kai as well as his wife, Patty! We will also have the delight of hearing the children's bells and children's choir as part of the last of the advent services on Wednesday December 13.

December will bring many wonderful musical offerings from our choirs, brass, and soloists culminating in our celebration of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Incarnation ensembles will provide a wide variety of music in support of the Christmas story. In addition to our ensembles throughout the day, we will be joined by none other than Jearlyn Steele (Steele Family) at our 3:00 p.m. service.

In addition to all things worship, the Incarnation Music Series will host "Twin Cities Bronze" on December 10 in our Sanctuary from 4:00 - 5:30. Our adult handbells will also be taking part in this concert. What better way to "ring in the season" than a handball concert given by one of the top performing organizations in the country? Amy Maakestad has curated a very exciting lineup of concerts for this series so please make plans to attend!

We are grateful to all who are participating in music here at Incarnation! If you or anyone you know would be interested in getting more information about our programs, please contact me (sturner@incarnationmn.org), or Amy Maakestad (amaakestad@incarnationmn.org).

See you in worship!
Sean

Recently, on behalf of Incarnation, over 12 mats and cushions were delivered to The Listening House in St. Paul. The mats are given to those experiencing homelessness to add a little cushion for wherever they sleep. The mats are crocheted using plastic bags. It takes approximately 500 bags to make a 3 ft by 6 ft mat. The mats give cushion, are waterproof, and are easy to clean.

Dubbed the "living room of the homeless by guests," Listening House is a daytime drop-in community and resource referral center providing hospitality, practical assistance and guidance to men and women experiencing homelessness, loneliness, and deep poverty.

During this delivery, a visitor at the house, saw the mats being delivered. He said, "Wow, can I have one? I had one and it was stolen from my tent, and I really miss it!"

Ministry in the Community

Thank you to all who are making mats and to all who contribute bags! If you are interested in learning how to make mats, please contact Danette Griffith at dgriffith@incarnationmn.org. Continue collecting bags and keep them out of the landfills!



Volunteers help unpack mats and cushions.

The 2024 All Hands on Hope MobilePack™ is scheduled for April 24-28, 2024, at Incarnation. We are planning to host almost 2,000 volunteers, pack 614,000 meals and raise \$180,000 which will feed 1,683 kids for one year. We are currently focusing on fundraising to ensure we can pay for the meals we will pack. With a financial donation, your generosity makes a huge difference in the lives of thousands of kids around the world in need. At least 6,200 children die each day from hunger-related causes (Source: UNICEF). There are many ways that you can donate as an individual or a business which are outlined below. Please prayerfully consider these donations and pray for the children around the world who are suffering.

Individual Donations

- Visit the event donation page on the FMSC web site.
- Make a check out to Incarnation with “FMSC MobilePack” in the memo and mail it to Incarnation at 4880 Hodgson Road, Shoreview, MN 55126.
- Make a donation via Incarnations secured site. Select your donation amount and use the drop down menu to select “Feed My Starving Children”.
- If you are currently making an on-going monthly donation to Feed My Starving Children, you can easily direct that to the 2024 MobilePack by following the steps below:
 - o Call FMSC at 763-504-2919
 - o Ask the representative to direct your donations to event number 2404-016EA
 - o Any future donations will be allocated to the 2024 MobilePack
- If you're a Thrivent member, and you applied for a Thrivent Action Team Grant of \$250, your Action Team card can be applied to this MobilePack event. Mail it or drop it off at the Incarnation Office.

- Your employer might double or triple your giving! A list of companies that provide matching programs can be found here. Consider applying for matching dollars using the event number 2404-016EA.



Corporate Donations

We encourage corporations, both large and small, to be a part of this important event. We are looking for both financial sponsorship and volunteers to encourage community participation and team-building. Below are different levels of sponsorship and the impact made:

- \$5,000 donation sponsors three classrooms of local students to pack meals for one shift
- \$10,000 donation covers the cost to pack 41,667 meals
- \$25,000 donation feeds three villages of 100 children for one year
- \$50,000 donation pays for 208,333 meals to feed 570 children for one year

Corporate donations will receive recognition during the event through logo placement within the packing venue, social media recognition, and verbal announcements during the orientation portion of the packing session.

For more information on corporate sponsorship, please contact Don Martin.

“The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.” Proverbs 22:9

Among the Congregation

PRAYER LIST:

Max Sailsbury; Roger & Dede Mattison; Marian Johnson; Sue Lange; Jan Kuhmeyer; Maggie Yauk; Becky Trancheff; Pastor Donald & Emmy Kiwanga; Maddie St. Martin; June Fischer; Kirsten Blaseck; Wayne Quehl; Carol Beckerleg; Gene Lindholm; Marian Ness; Joe Stepka; Lowell Odland; Linda Hudepohl; Connie Wikman's sister; Sue Bernlohr's mother; LeAnn Sullivan's daughter, Ruthie; Lana Bergin's brother; Bob & Sue Lange's nephew; Nicole & Troy Heller's brother-in-law; Mike Wielenberg's parents; Bill Fitzsimmons' brother; Al and Carolyn Ek's son; Kris & Steve McCormack's friend, Lori; Roger & Dede Mattison's friends, Linda and Yvonne

SYMPATHY TO: the family of Freda xMunson on her death; Claudia Wiebold & family on the death of her Mom; the family of Ella Strand on her death; the family of Carl Kuhmeyer on his death; Karen Graden & family on the death of her father; Rachel & Phil Reim & family on the death of Rachel's mother; Joy Alizadeh & family on the death of her sister; the family of Bud House on his death; Kathy Kvinge & family on the death of her father

RECENTLY BAPTIZED: Lauren Grace Gallagher, daughter of Emily & Matthew Gallagher and Sage Quynh Nelson, daughter of Huong Xuan Quynh Vu & Brett Nelson

Winter Small Group: The Saint John's Bible

Explore the illuminations (artwork) and calligraphy (written text) of The Saint John's Bible. Hear how this illuminated Bible was created and how it is being used at Incarnation and in the community to ignite spiritual imaginations. Experience the faith practice of Visio Divina to see and



hear how the illuminations speak to you and to others. This is an exceptional opportunity – Incarnation has a Heritage Edition of The Saint John's Bible (one of only 300 copies). Past group members have found this small group to be rich with insights and information. Led by Grant Rykken. To register or find out more contact dfloe@incarnationmn.org.

When/Where: Five sessions, starting in January 2023, at Incarnation

Daytime Small Group: *We Make the Road by Walking*

As we start a new year, take the next step in your faith journey by getting together with others to talk about Brian McLaren's book, *We Make the Road by Walking*. The book is a chance to explore an honest, living, growing



faith by retelling the Biblical story and reintroducing the Christian faith in short chapters with Bible readings, reflections by Brian McLaren and thought-provoking questions. This group will meet every other week, for six sessions, with short readings between each session. No experience with Bible study or Bible reading is needed. Led by Anne Cremons. Purchase your copy of the book in your favorite format.

When/Where: Tuesdays, 1:30-3:00 p.m. at Incarnation

Sunday Morning Small Group – January 2024

Connect with others to explore short readings, engage in conversation, and try new faith practices. Sunday morning small groups are open to all and designed especially for those new to Incarnation. They are easy-to-do with no preparation needed and a short commitment, usually meeting for only 3-4 gatherings. The winter small group will meet from 10:00-11:15 a.m. at Incarnation. Interested? Contact Denise Floe at dfloe@incarnationmn.org.

When/Where: Sunday mornings, 10:00-11:15 a.m. at Incarnation

Think Big: Fostering Innovation through Endowment Fund Grants

heart, mind and spirit of the community through the gift of music. The first concert, featuring the Jack Brass Band, took place in October and drew 130 attendees. The December 10 concert features Twin Cities Bronze, Handbell Ensemble.

Kits containing mental health resources and tools. A grant of \$1,500 was made to support a youth-initiated project designed to help meet the growing demand for mental health care services in the Twin Cities. The newly created kits will be given to people as they become outpatients of the EmPATH (Emergency Psychiatric Assessment, Treatment and Healing) unit of MHealth Fairview Southdale Hospital. This kit contains a variety of items that can help calm outpatients and contribute to their safety, and also is intended to help prevent future mental health crises. The goal is to initially create 400 kits, 200 of which are being funded by this grant. An online document with instructions and links to materials will be created for future volunteer groups to use to make these kits for EmPATH.

During its first three years, the Budding Idea Grants program has awarded a total of \$19,200 in support of eight projects. For more information about this program, including an application form, visit the web page Budding Idea Grants - Incarnation Lutheran (incarnationmn.org).



Three projects received Budding Idea Grants (BIGs) from Incarnation's Endowment Fund in 2023. BIG funding supports innovative outreach programs that align with the mission and values of Incarnation Lutheran Church.

First-Annual Block Party. A grant of \$1,000 was made for this debut event at Incarnation, which took place on Friday, September 8. The intent of this complimentary event was fellowship and outreach, and it drew more than 400 people. At least 25 percent of them were not already a part of the Incarnation community. The grant covered one-fourth of the total expenses, helping to defray the cost of The Teddy Holidays, a Beatles+ cover band, which provided the soundtrack for the evening. The Block Party also featured a pig roast picnic, inflatables, a climbing wall, and exhibits featuring Incarnation's various areas of ministry.

Community Concert Series. A two-year grant was approved (\$5,000 in 2023 and \$5,000 in 2024) to support the startup of the Incarnation Music Series, which invites the surrounding community to Incarnation for a series of musical performances representing diverse musical styles and artists. The mission of this series is to feed the

Updates for the Praise Ground Coming!

The front left section of the sanctuary is being transitioned to a worship area for families with young children. This alteration reflects the values we share as a church community and the desire to provide an opportunity for all to come together for a worshipful experience. Many parents prefer to have their children with them during the worship service. Having a dedicated space in the sanctuary, with quiet activities, allows these families to worship together. Even the youngest of children are sensitive to their surroundings and absorb a sense of what is happening around them. Having the children close to the altar, pastors and musicians introduces them to important elements of worship.

Child size furniture that is compatible with the sanctuary furnishings is being purchased. As much as possible, items made from natural materials to complement the overall worship space will be used. Until the new furniture arrives, children's furniture previously used for contemporary services in Incarnation Hall is temporarily in place.

Helping children to worship without disrupting worship for others is a delicate balance. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we develop this special worship space in the sanctuary.



Blue Christmas
December 17
5:00 p.m.

If you are feeling a little or a lot blue, this quiet worship is for you. You are welcome to come and just be.

Incarnation Music Series

The Incarnation Music Series will feed the heart, mind, and spirit of the community through the gift of music. We are striving to fill the world with God's grace and love through locally available, high-quality music. This is an opportunity for us to give generously and inspire hope. We invite you to experience the transforming power of music. Bring a friend!

December 10, 2023

4:00 p.m.

Twin Cities Bronze, handbell ensemble
Freewill Offering

Twin Cities Bronze is an auditioned handbell ensemble of advanced ringers known for its energetic and visually appealing performance style. It is distinctive among handbell groups for performing without a conductor. For more than 20 years, this ensemble has engaged audiences with innovative performances in concert halls, churches, schools, and community centers around the country. These concerts and educational outreach workshops inspire audiences by showcasing the possibilities of rhythmic energy, sensitive musical interpretation, and the expertise of this excellent musical ensemble.



Financial Report - October 2023

Actual October Operating Giving	\$136,625	YTD Operating Giving	\$1,500,493	YTD Operating Giving Budget	\$1,606,936
Actual October Operating Expense	\$160,127	YTD Operating Expense	\$1,659,140	YTD Operating Expense Budget	\$1,712,650
TOTALS	-\$23,502		-\$158,648		-\$105,714

Actual October Mortgage Giving	\$25,573	YTD Mortgage Giving	\$275,184	YTD Mortgage Giving Budget	\$248,420
Actual October Mortgage Expense	\$20,675	YTD Mortgage Expense	\$244,250	YTD Mortgage Expense Budget	\$244,250
TOTALS	\$4,898		\$30,934		\$4,170

Memorials

We honor the memory of loved ones in the memorial gifts given below:

Date Range: 10/20/23 to 11/28/23

Donor	Fund Name	In Memory of
Gary & Mary Lunstad	Memorial – Undesignated	Al Anderson
Jim & Julie Meinen	Memorial – Operating	Murlene Brainard
Grant & Deb Rykken	Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Murlene Brainard
Marlys J. Nelson	Memorial – Worship & Music (Bell Choir)	Murlene Brainard
Marlys M. Nelson	Memorial – Ralph Reeder Food Shelf	Thomas Crawford
Jim & Carol Fruehling	Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Carl Kuhrmeyer
Jon & Jill Nelson	Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Carl Kuhrmeyer
George & Connie Aram	Memorial – Undesignated	Carl Kuhrmeyer
Dick & Ann Christiansen	Memorial – Undesignated	Carl Kuhrmeyer
Eberhard & Erne Bulach	Memorial – Undesignated	Carl Kuhrmeyer
Ken & Rosalie Grosch	Memorial – Undesignated	Carl Kuhrmeyer
Andrea Johnson	Memorial – Undesignated	Carl Kuhrmeyer
Norbert & Mary Ellen Conzemius	Memorial – Undesignated	Carl Kuhrmeyer
Bruce & Tami McNeil	Memorial – Undesignated	Carl Kuhrmeyer
Madison & Nancy Overmoen	Memorial – Undesignated	Carl Kuhrmeyer
Marlys J. Nelson	Memorial – Worship & Music (Sr. Choir)	Chris McDermid
Greg & Sarah Sampson	Memorial – Undesignated	LaVonne Rasmussen
George & Connie Aram	Memorial – Undesignated	Joan Reichwald's Mother
Elizabeth O'Mara	Memorial – Feed My Starving Children	Tom Schultz
Mike & Vicki Engelen	Memorial – Tanzania Education	Tom Schultz
Arvin & Jane Gehrking	Memorial – Tanzania Education	Tom Schultz
Ken & Rosalie Grosch	Memorial – Tanzania Education	Tom Schultz
Don & Martie Martin	Memorial – Tanzania Education	Tom Schultz
Dan & Lynn McGinty	Memorial – Tanzania Education	Tom Schultz
Multiple Unnamed Donors	Memorial – Tanzania Education	Tom Schultz
Paul & Ruth Tillquist	Memorial – Tanzania Education	Tom Schultz

This list reflects donations that were made payable to Incarnation Lutheran Church in memory of someone. Memorials are applied to whatever fund the donor designates. If not designated, sometimes the family requests what fund they would like the memorials designated to. Note: If a memorial gift is received and the check isn't written out to Incarnation Lutheran Church, it will be forwarded directly to the organization that the check was made payable to. Those memorials are typically acknowledged by the organization that receives the donation.



Advent & Christmas Worship Schedule

Mid-week Advent Worship

November 29, December 6 & 13 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Holden Evening Prayer

These services will be livestreamed.

Blue Christmas Worship

A quiet worship for those feeling blue in this season.

December 17, 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Worship

11:00 a.m. - Worship for Families with Young Children

3:00, 5:00 & 7:00 p.m.

Worship with Traditional Carols, Communion, and Candlelight

Nursery available at 3:00 & 5:00 p.m.

Livestream available at 3:00 & 5:00 p.m.

Worship on Monday, December 25

The Christmas Day service will be at 10:00 a.m.

Worship on Sunday, December 31

Worship at one service at 10:00 a.m. Nursery available.

Offices will be closed December 26 and January 1.

We wish you the most joyous & peaceful Christmas.
From the staff of Incarnation ~

Abby Amy F. Amy M. Andy Barbara Carol
Charlie Claire Cole Cooper Danette Denise Drew
Emily T. Emily V. Heather Heidi Ian Isaac Jack
Jacy Janet Jenny Jillian Joe Joel John Jolene Julie
Kai Karen Karl Kate Kathleen Kirsten
Michael Mike Nate Paul Rachel H. Rachel S.
Rebecca Reid Rick Robert Ryan
Sean Theresa Tim Trygve

