



annual report

2025

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PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor Sam Dittrich, Executive Pastor



A year ago, my wife and I moved into a hobby farm that was wildly overgrown—buckthorn everywhere, thick brush, and hidden rocks that turned mowing into an obstacle course. But even in the chaos, we could see the beauty and potential buried beneath it all. Most of our first year was spent clearing out the buckthorn and digging out rocks—slow, sweaty work that often felt like it made little difference. But week by week, little by little, we kept going. Trusting that something good was taking shape.

That slow, steady approach mirrors what it's felt like to take on this *For The Valley* vision over the past three years. *For The Valley* began with a bold question: *How can we genuinely endear ourselves to our community so that they know we're here and are better off because we are here?* It hasn't always been easy. As a church, we've had to build new muscles, learn new rhythms, and embrace a different way of working—all to faithfully prioritize this call. And the result? Like the hobby farm, it's taken time, persistence, and a lot of unseen effort. But now, the fruit is beginning to show. The process is paying off.

Here are just a few *For The Valley* highlights from this past year.

- 318 cards were submitted during January worship services highlighting the steps of faith taken by this congregation in the past year.
- 33 *On The Way* small groups, made up of 348 people including 14 new small group leaders, gave unconnected people a chance to jump in to community.
- 167 individuals attended the 6-week *Growing Through Loss* series led by the St. Croix Valley Grief Coalition and hosted by Shepherd.
- 11 face-to-face meetings with community leaders were held to learn about their roles, needs, and perspectives.
- Monthly *Shepherd Shifts* were hosted at Valley Outreach, Loaves & Fishes, Union Gospel Mission, and Hudson Backpack, supporting these mission partners and providing meaningful serving opportunities for our congregation.
- Also, the kids fishing tournament at Hudson Booster Days was pretty fun!

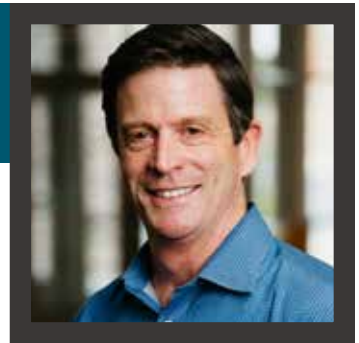
Recently I received an email from our partners at Fellowship of Christian Athletes that communicated their gratitude for our support of Sports Camp and for our broader support of FCA. This was meaningful because it affirmed the strides we have taken toward our goal to be the best supporters of FCA. Did you know that FCA hosts 14 “huddles” or small groups that are led by 75 student leaders, reaching hundreds of students and coaches in the St. Croix Valley alone? What a gift to partner with a Christ-centered mission to reach student athletes for Jesus!

For The Valley has moved from an aspirational goal to become an integral part of our identity. We are excited to share our new vision beginning this fall and it will directly dovetail with the work we have done over the last three years. *The good news and bad news?* It will be far more impactful and far more challenging for each one of us!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam". The signature is stylized and cursive.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mark Gaertner



As I reflect on the past year, I'm filled with gratitude and joy for all we've accomplished together. This has been a remarkable year marked by growth—spiritual growth, attendance growth, and financial growth..

One of the most significant testaments to our collective strength has been the seamless way we have navigated Pastor Jeremey's well-deserved sabbatical. It has been inspiring to witness our staff and countless volunteers rise to the occasion, embracing new responsibilities and ensuring that our ministries continue without missing a beat. This summer has truly showcased the depth of talent and commitment within our church. Each staff member and volunteer who stepped up during this time deserves our great appreciation.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to embark on our new vision, a journey that will guide us in deepening our faith and expanding our outreach. Even as we embrace this fresh direction, our commitment to our foundational mission and For The Valley heartbeat remains steadfast. We will continue to be a church that connects all people to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ, making a tangible difference in the lives of those around us, just as we always have.

As we've now paid off our mortgage debt (hurray to being debt-free!), we've begun a comprehensive process aimed at ensuring our physical spaces align with our evolving ministries and future needs. While these discussions are currently in broad terms, we anticipate sharing more specific details with the congregation in the coming year. This planning is about preparing our church for the next chapter of its impactful journey, ensuring we can continue to serve God and our community effectively for generations to come.

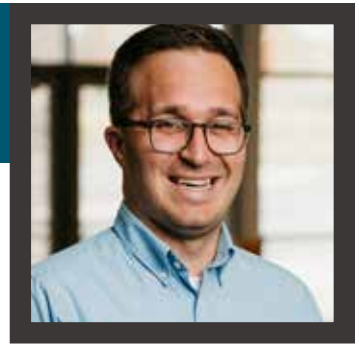
Finally, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Kris Olson and Max Gierke for their exceptional service on the Church Council over the past three years. Their wisdom, dedication, and thoughtful leadership have been invaluable, guiding us through many important decisions and contributing significantly to the health and vitality of our church. We are truly blessed by their commitment to Shepherd.

Thank you for your continued faith, generosity, and participation. It is an honor to serve alongside each of you.

In His Grace.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Andrew Dinndorf



Thank you, Shepherd! Your continued financial generosity amazes me.

Fiscal year 2025 was another great financial year for our church as income grew 4.2% over the previous year thanks to broad, generous giving from the congregation. Expenses were managed within the approved budget and ended the year \$85,000 under budget. While our budget planned to use \$200,000 from our cash reserves to fund capital improvement projects, the strong giving and expense management allowed us to fund these projects without relying on our reserves. The Benevolence Committee maintained our commitment to giving 10% of our income to churches, nonprofits, and missionaries outside of Shepherd, making more than \$271,000 in gifts. *Finally, in January 2025 Shepherd retired its mortgage debt and is debt-free!* Savings from this debt retirement have been incorporated into the budget for the coming year.

As has been our practice for several years, for fiscal year 2026 we've planned our expenses based on fiscal year 2025 giving levels. This approach follows recommended practices and ensures our spending plans remain conservative. Savings from debt payments will be used to fund ongoing capital projects including a continuation of a multi-year investment to update HVAC units that are original to our building. The fiscal year 2026 budget fully supports our ministries, maintains and updates our building, cares for our staff, and is balanced without reliance on reserves.

As instructed by our bylaws, Shepherd provides for a full audit of its financials. I'm pleased to share that a clean audit opinion of our prior year ending June 30, 2024, was received this last year. An audit of fiscal year 2025 will be completed later this fall.

Thank you for being a generous church. Your faithful giving allows God's Kingdom to grow through Shepherd of the Valley.

To Him be the glory.

INCOME & EXPENSES

	FY25 Budget	FY25 Actual		Fiscal Year 2026 Budget
INCOME			INCOME	
General Contributions			General Contributions	
General Fund ¹	\$2,759,724	\$2,882,732	General Fund	\$2,837,117
General Offering ²	16,307	18,074	General Offering	17,970
Funds from Reserves	200,000	0		
Total General Contributions	2,976,031	2,900,806	Total General Contributions ³	2,855,087
Total Other Income ⁴	0	23,113	Total Other Income ⁴	17,790
Total Income	2,976,031	2,923,919	Total Income	2,872,877
EXPENSES			EXPENSES	
Operations			Operations	
Administration	120,600	117,464	Administration	123,600
Building	188,600	181,999	Building ⁵	29,000
Facilities	171,300	186,380	Facilities	199,400
Total Operations	480,500	485,843	Total Operations	352,000
Programs			Programs	
Benevolence	277,603	271,202	Benevolence ⁶	285,509
Small Groups	23,300	22,533	Small Groups	28,300
Serving	33,400	35,159	Serving	35,300
Engagement	14,600	16,247	Engagement	17,100
Children's Ministry	34,700	27,712	Children's Ministry	33,400
Student Ministry	30,700	29,219	Student Ministry	33,900
Worship	42,550	29,965	Worship	43,350
Total Programs	456,853	432,037	Total Programs	476,859
Total Capital Improvements ⁷	200,000	188,624	Total Capital Improvements	70,000
Total Payroll Expenses	1,838,678	1,782,000	Total Payroll Expenses ⁸	1,974,018
Total Expense	2,976,031	2,888,504	Total Expense	2,872,877
Net Ordinary Income	0	35,415	Net Ordinary Income	0

See page 6 for footnotes.

INCOME & EXPENSE FOOTNOTES

¹ General Fund giving for fiscal year 2025 was 2.3% higher than the prior fiscal year and 4.2% ahead of the budget plan.

² General Offering, anonymous gifts of cash, was 10.8% ahead of the budget plan.

³ For fiscal year 2025, General Fund income is budgeted to remain even with fiscal year 2025. Differences between FY25 Actual and FY26 Budget are due to final month estimates that coincide with finalization of the coming year budget.

⁴ Other Income includes \$17,907 in interest income from cash management activities designed to take advantage of current interest rates. Anticipated interest income has been included in the FY26 Budget as Other Income.

⁵ Building expenses are budgeted to decline with the retirement of mortgage debt in January 2025.

⁶ Benevolence for fiscal year 2026 is budgeted at 10% of General Fund and General Offering. Operating expenses for benevolence activities are provided for in the Serving budget.

⁷ Capital improvement projects in fiscal year 2025 included replacement of rooftop HVAC units, audio improvements in the Community Center, and network upgrades.

⁸ Payroll expenses are budgeted to increase due to staff raises.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025

	FY25	3 Year Average
Additions	111	43
Average Sunday worship	634	537
YouTube average weekly views	435	306
Baptisms	17	42
Funerals (onsite)	7	12
Marriages (onsite)	0	6

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

August 24, 2025

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Pastor's Devotional

Pastor's Report

Approve Minutes from August 2024 Annual Meeting

Nominating Committee Report

Treasurer's Report | Fiscal Year 2026 Budget (July 1, 2025– June 30, 2026)

Other Business

Closing Prayer

Adjourn

2024 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

August 25, 2024

Council President Mark Gaertner announced that a quorum had been reached and called the meeting to order at 12:04pm.

Opening Prayer

Alli Hansen led the congregation in an opening prayer.

Pastor's Devotional

Pastor Jeremy King shared a devotional on Philippians 1:9.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Jeremy King gave a report to the congregation. Pastor Jeremy reported that Shepherd is starting to see momentum growing. Pastor Jeremy reflected that Shepherd is moving into the third year of the vision to endear the community to Shepherd. He reported that there has been growth in each defined area - schools, parents, and neighborhood. He reported that *Engage* has been growing in numbers and that new attendees have reported that Shepherd's defined vision is how they first learned about Shepherd. Pastor Jeremy reported that the Council and Pastors will be preparing for a retreat to pray and discern the next three year vision. Pastor Jeremy thanked members for being faithful and for loving people in their neighborhoods, schools, and activities.

Approval of the Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting

Resolved that the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting are approved. Upon motion duly made by Cynthia Fritsche and seconded by Paul Schoonover, the motion passes.

Nominating Committee Report

Andrew Nippert presented the Nominating Committee report. Andrew gave an overview of the nominating committee process.

The Nominating Committee recommended the following slate of candidates for Church Council:

- Sam Croswell
- Mark Gaertner
- Jim Jefferis

The candidates recommended for nominating committee are:

- Steve Fisher
- Hanna Gaertner
- Jim Hanson
- Jill Steenis
- Kari Thielke
- Dan Webb

Congregation voted for Council and Nominating Committee members. Results will be reported as an addendum to these minutes.

Pastor Jeremy thanked the outgoing council members: Alli Hansen and Andrew Nippert. He presented them with Shepherd jackets in thanks for their service. The Shepherd members present honored the outgoing council members with a round of applause.

Treasurer's Report

Andrew Dinndorf, Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's report to the congregation. Andrew reported that Shepherd of the Valley had tremendous growth (12%) year over year and is a financially healthy church. Andrew highlighted that Shepherd has continued to tithe 10% to outside missionary organizations, amounting to \$282k donated outside the church walls. Andrew reviewed the results of the 2024 fiscal year. He reported that net income for the fiscal year was \$271k net, including income from the employee retention credit. Andrew reported that in the upcoming fiscal year Shepherd plans to pay off the debt on the building, two years ahead of schedule. He reported that funds will continue to be budgeted for maintenance and upkeep of the building. Andrew reported that the upcoming budget will be based on the previous year's expenses. He reviewed some of the capital projects included in the next fiscal year update, including HVAC updates and A/V updates in the Community Center. He reported that Shepherd undergoes an audit each year and the audit for fiscal year 2023-24 was clean.

Resolved that the 2024 Treasurer's report is accepted. Upon motion duly made by Jim Moy and seconded by Todd Kluge, the motion passes.

Other Business

No other business was presented to the members.

Council President Mark Gaertner asked the Shepherd staff to stand; the members gave the staff a round of applause.

Closing Prayer

Pastor Sam Dittrich closed the meeting in prayer.

Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Resolved that the Annual Meeting is adjourned. Upon motion duly made by Cynthia Fritsche and seconded by Jill Wurm, the motion passes.

Council President Mark Gaertner adjourned the meeting at 12:30pm.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Jessica Faust, recording secretary.

ADDENDUM: Elections Results

Following the meeting, ballots for new council members and Nominating Committee were counted. The results are:

Nominating Committee:

- Hanna Gaertner
- Kari Thielke
- Dan Webb

Council Members:

- Sam Croswell
- Mark Gaertner
- Jim Jefferis

Results were reported to members in the Shepherd *The One Thing* email distribution.



SHEPHERD
OF THE VALLEY

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