St. Mark's Lutheran
ASHEVILLE, NC
Love • Grow • Serve

10 N. Liberty Street Asheville, North Carolina 28801

2026 Budget Planning Notes

Our budget planning process has several major cost increases from the 2025 plan and actual spending. Fortunately, we are in a very positive financial position with significant pledges and giving that allows us to be able to absorb the cost increases. Here are a few notes to begin our explanation - more to follow at the Congregational Meeting on December 7 at 9:30am:

1. **Giving from pledges increased** - Pledge volume and value have increased significantly this year. Thank you to everyone for your willingness to commit! The Faith Factor and New Giving expectations are lower in 2026 than in previous years thereby providing comfort the giving plan is reasonable.
2. **Staff Salaries increased** - After years of minimal increases for rostered ministers (2.6% annually since 2021), the NC Synod guidelines recognized spending power was not keeping up relative to inflation. St. Marks remains committed to paying our Pastor and Deacon based on the guidelines and has embedded the increase in our staff salary costs. Additionally, our Cantor's salary has not kept up with other local congregations, and the budget provides to increase his salary to the market rate.
3. **Property Maintenance** - We expect to install a new roof in late 2025 or early 2026. The budget was reduced to recognize our lower spending rate this year and then also reduced for the 2025 roof repairs. We do have money set aside in Emergency Maintenance Fund and a Capital Improvement Fund for any large, unexpected costs (e.g., Heating and air).
4. **Loan Payment supplement reduced** - Over the past two years, we have funded The Building Loan Fund with about $600 per month to accelerate payment on our loans. This budget item has been eliminated and the accelerated loan payment will be reduced from $1,800 per month to $1,200. We have some additional options/ideas on how to manage our loans and will communicate them over the next 4-6 months.
5. **Quilting expense reduced** - For the past years, we have a Quilting Fund and also a line item in our budget. The gifts and the spend for quilting have been included in the Quilting Fund the past few years and a budget has not been necessary. We expect the dedicated gifts for quilting to continue to meet the spend, but will monitor the fund closely to support the quilting team as needed.

We will cover these and other changes in our budget and financial discussion on December 7th. *If you have concerns or questions about the budget changes, please send an email to Mary, Natalie, and Tom (all three) in advance of the December 7th meeting.* We will provide the responses to your questions and concerns in the presentation for the budget.

Yours in Christ,

Mary Brady, President (mwb.chalmers@gmail.com)
Natalie Haynes, Finance Chair (nhaynes86@gmail.com)
Tom Biltz, Treasurer (tombiltz@outlook.com)

ST. MARKS LUTHERAN 2026 OPERATING BUDGET

INCOME	2025	2025 YTD (10/31)	2026	% change
Pledged Giving	$304,816	$348,553	$462,662	52%
Unpledged Consistent Giving	$190,000	$114,466	$73,214	
New Giving	$10,000	$0	$10,000	0%
Loose Offerings	$9,000	$6,400	$8,000	-11%
Outside Group Contributions	$10,500	$16,545	$12,200	16%
From Future Ministry Fund	$0	$0	$0	0%
Faith Factor	$34,504	$0	$18,322	-47%
TOTAL INCOME	**$558,820**	**$485,964**	**$584,398**	5%

EXPENSES

WORSHIP	2025	2025 YTD (10/31)	2026	% change
Altar Supplies	$850	$269	$650	-24%
Guest Musicians	$3,500	$1,495	$3,500	0%
Music	$1,000	$943	$1,000	0%
Organ/Piano Maintenance	$3,000	$1,118	$3,000	0%
Supply Organists	$1,250	$500	$1,250	0%
Worship Expense	$1,000	$835	$1,000	0%
Supply Pastors	$1,800	$1,246	$1,800	0%
Online Worship Expenses	$300	$245	$300	0%
TOTAL WORSHIP	**$12,700**	**$6,651**	**$12,500**	**-2%**

OUTREACH	2025	2025 YTD (10/31)	2026	% change
NC Synod Mission Support	$50,225	$41,854	$51,732	3%
ABCCM Support	$14,088	$11,740	$14,510	3%
Homeward Bound - A-HOPE	$10,979	$9,149	$11,308	3%
Habitat for Humanity	$1,500	$1,250	$1,545	3%
Task Force on Racial Healing	$1,250	$1,041	$1,250	0%
Living Waters - Cherokee	$7,841	$6,534	$8,076	3%
Seminarian Support	$1,000	$1,500	$500	-50%
Additional Benevolance -CAT	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	0%
Evangelism & Hospitality	$1,500	$452	$1,500	0%
Reconciling in Christ	$0	$0	$500	
TOTAL OUTREACH	**$90,383**	**$75,520**	**$92,921**	**3%**

LEARNING	2025	2025 YTD (10/31)	2026	% change
Faith Formation	$5,000	$4,632	$5,000	0%
Library & Quilting	$775	$27	$275	-65%
Stewardship	$3,500	$2,934	$3,500	0%
Synod & Cong. Meetings	$1,750	$2,949	$1,750	0%
Vision Implementation	$2,000	$2,000	$0	-100%
TOTAL LEARNING	**$13,025**	**$12,542**	**$10,525**	**-19%**

ST. MARKS LUTHERAN 2026 OPERATING BUDGET

FELLOWSHIP	2025	2025 YTD (10/31)	2026	% change
Family Ministry	$500	$75	$500	0%
Fellowship/Kitchen supplies	$1,500	$1,178	$1,500	0%
Youth Ministry	$3,000	$582	$3,000	0%
TOTAL FELLOWSHIP	**$5,000**	**$1,835**	**$5,000**	**0%**

PROPERTY	2025	2025 YTD (10/31)	2026	% change
Insurance	$21,500	$18,800	$22,462	4%
Janitorial Supplies	$1,600	$1,356	$1,600	0%
New Equipment/Improvements	$2,000	$608	$1,500	-25%
Property Maintenance	$16,000	$11,243	$13,500	-16%
Utilities	$16,000	$12,382	$16,000	0%
Capital Improvements	$12,000	$10,000	$12,000	0%
Building Loan Deficit	$7,000	$5,833	$0	-100%
Interior Updates	$500	$0	$500	0%
Security/Background Checks	$300	$39	$300	0%
TOTAL PROPERTY	**$76,900**	**$60,261**	**$67,862**	**-12%**

ADMINISTRATION	2025	2025 YTD (10/31)	2026	% change
Archive Expenses	$100	$0	$100	0%
Copier Maintenance	$2,300	$2,220	$2,500	9%
Annual Fees/New Computer	$1,375	$636	$1,450	5%
Office Supplies	$3,300	$2,885	$3,300	0%
Postage Expenses	$500	$449	$500	0%
Telephone/Cell phone	$5,640	$3,835	$5,640	0%
IT/Website Support	$2,000	$1,248	$2,000	0%
Endowment Fund Materials	$200	$0	$200	0%
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	**$15,415**	**$11,273**	**$15,690**	**2%**

STAFF MINISTRY	2025	2025 YTD (10/31)	2026	% change
Staff Salaries	$275,084	$231,578	$303,233	10%
Staff Benefits	$42,298	$35,249	$46,707	10%
Payroll Taxes	$21,415	$17,857	$23,660	10%
Mileage Allowances	$1,600	$811	$1,600	0%
Staff Continuing Education	$2,100	$1,003	$2,100	0%
Pastoral Coaching	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500	0%
Books/Periodicals	$400	$28	$300	-25%
Discretionary Expenses	$1,000	$153	$800	-20%
TOTAL STAFF MINISTRY	**$345,397**	**$288,179**	**$379,900**	**10%**

TOTAL EXPENSES	**$558,820**	**$456,261**	**$584,398**	**5%**