

# Spiritual Leadership Council – 2023 Candidates



President: Chad Woltemath  
Years at St. Luke: 15

**Describe a situation when you have seen that “We reach. Christ restores.”**

Christ has a mission, and His mission has a church – and we are blessed to be part of that church as we reach into our communities and beyond with the love of Christ and the Good News He offers. As a staff member of the Michigan District, LCMS, I have the privilege of working with many compassion ministries that reach out with Christ’s love to communities all around the State on behalf of the District’s congregations. For example, ministries like Franklin Avenue Mission in Flint that reaches out with food, clothing, and bible study and Christ providing restoration through baptism and changed lives. I appreciate being part of a congregation that supports such at-large work, but also is very hands on with lifting up our own medical community and supporting programs and organizations in our own neighborhoods like Circles and Hope Clinic.



Vice-President: Julie Dunmire  
Years at St. Luke: 10

**Tell a story of how you have experienced one of our core values.  
Connection through authentic relationships.**

In 2020, as we all tried to stay home and stay safe, I have been extremely grateful for the authentic, discipling relationships I continue to experience at St. Luke—especially through my triad bible study and my home group. While at times we have had to experience that connection remotely through Zoom, that hasn’t stopped our ongoing support of each other, sometimes through some very hard things that life has thrown at us over the past year. When we experience and process complex truths together, like the death of a loved one or a health challenge, we help each other to be faithful in purpose and to deepen our dependence on Jesus.



Secretary: Libby Fink  
Years at St. Luke: 29

**How have you seen our mission statement lived out in your life?**

**Seeking everyone's story ... sharing in His story**

At a previous job I was often the person that my coworkers came to when they had problems, both at work and outside of work. So much of what they would come to me about was on the surface non-spiritual, but at the root tied to missing peace, hope, faith or joy. Because faith in Jesus and reading his word is my source of these things it was natural that our conversations would turn to Him. When one of my coworkers was in a highly stressful season of life our conversation turned to where we go for truth and comfort, and I mentioned that reading my Bible is a way I find great comfort and peace. She mentioned that she had an old KJV Bible but didn't know how to read it. When I left work that day I knew that I needed to give her a Bible. The next time we worked together I gave her a Bible, a simple bible study and a note suggesting she start with the book of John and ask me any questions she has. We only worked together for a few more months, but she brought up what she was reading in the Bible many times. Listening to her story allowed me to share my story and in sharing my story I was able to share God's story, the way it changes my life and how it could change hers.



Treasurer: Allen Morgan  
Years at St. Luke: 16

**Tell a story of how you have experienced one of our core values.**

**Connection through authentic relationships.**

A number of years ago (somewhere around 12 or so) I was invited to what was then and is now still referred to as 'theologizing'. This is a group of guys who get together pretty much weekly, as each person's schedule permits, have a drink or two, discuss the topics of the week, things going on in our own individual lives and the churches we call home. This is a mix of St. Luke members, past St. Luke members, other local LCMS church members and a Catholic friend from downriver. These are all very authentic relationships for each of us, and we rely on each other throughout the week as well via text messaging to keep up with each other. I do not attend every week, but I very much look forward to these times for the spiritual growth and encouragement they provide.



SLC At-large Member: Ellen Davis  
Years at St. Luke: 27

**Tell a story of how you have experienced one of our core values.  
Connection through authentic relationships.**

During these challenging days of COVID, I've continued to be encouraged by my younger brothers and sisters in our Sheepfold class (1st-3<sup>rd</sup> grade). They are always interested, interesting, and often downright funny! Especially on the days when this (ahem) somewhat older sister in Christ is dragging, their enthusiasm for Jesus and His stories is refreshing and brings me joy. At the end of last year, I received a great note from one of them that encouraged me to "Keep on believing in Jesus!"



SLC At-large Member: Chad Hayes  
Years at St. Luke: 19

**How have you seen our mission statement lived out in your life?  
Seeking everyone's story ... sharing in His story**

I have been so pleased & impressed by our pastors (both past & present) as they have continued to include real-life experiences where they have communicated just how they have interacted with their personal neighbors and in "out in public" situations where they have had the opportunity to connect with folks. Communicating how they learn about neighbors and everyday people they meet with different backgrounds & cultures always feels so great when talked over through sermons or announcements as we all work to fulfill this mission statement. Personally, I have really taken this commitment to heart by taking more time when meeting new people in my life to find out where they worship and find out more about their spiritual journeys. Sharing our different stories really serves to understand each other much better and build bridges that have led to a deeper understanding of each other.



SLC At-large Member: Johnnie Jackson  
Years at St. Luke: 3

**Tell a story of how you have experienced one of our core values.  
Openness to people and expression.**

There are so many opportunities, to be available and open to people we encounter on a daily basis. The Weekly Bible Study group I meet with, the clients I meet, the waitress, the owner.....It is my responsibility to reach out, listen and share with them as we go about our lives. The opportunity helps me, regardless of their religious affiliation, to grow in my faith, understand my faith and allows me to speak of what my beliefs are.

# Board of Elders – 2023 Candidates



Elder: Frederic Himebaugh  
Years at St. Luke: 26

**Tell a story of how you have experienced one of our core values.**

**Dependence on Jesus.**

When Julie, my wife, experienced a recurrence of cancer, she became very sick after surgery and her doctor suspected she would not live more than six months. This turned out to be a misdiagnosis, but I believed it for almost 24 hours. I spent the entire day with her at the hospital, and as she was unconscious, I turned to the book of Job, the part of scripture for which I always had had little understanding. I read it in one sitting. With all of life's props pulled out from under me, I experienced a profound emptying of my mind, and I became open to absolutely anything Jesus might want to give me through his word. The story of Job's suffering—possibly the oldest story in the Bible—made complete sense to me on that day. Or maybe that's not quite true; better to say that I did not receive answers, but rather my questions and confusion melted away. I became reconciled to our need, in our fallen state, to be stripped of all false supports so that we can begin to understand our radical helplessness before God, and the infinite grace available to us through our Savior Jesus Christ.



Elder: Ron McCarty  
Years at St. Luke: 38

**How have you seen our mission statement lived out in your life?**

**Seeking everyone's story ... sharing in His story**

The mission statement has caused me to move forward with getting to know people and their families better. I enjoy getting to know people and hearing bits and pieces of their stories. Within the fellowship of believers sharing His story is fairly comfortable. Meeting people outside of church is a more challenging endeavor both in sharing in their story and sharing His. Extending the mission statement onto the vision statement of reaching out so that Christ can restore has encouraged me in many of the contacts I make both in visiting shut-ins and in personal relationships.



Elder: John Nees  
Years at St. Luke: 26

**Describe a situation when you have seen that “We reach. Christ restores.”**

God has been active and faithful in the life of my family as we have experienced the challenges of life with the COVID pandemic and as we faced serious illness and the accompanying treatments. We are still wrestling with some of those challenges, and they draw us to daily reliance on God’s promises. We are also daily experiencing the life and energy God gives us in Jesus. We have been blessed to have the support of prayerful partners, medical professionals, and the assurance that our struggles have been felt and borne by Jesus.

As my wife and I have taken the opportunity to share with some of our youngest believers the ways in which God lead his people through the prophets of the Old Testament, we have been impressed with the importance of trusting God to save His own people today. We see a small portion of God’s hand at work as we take part in the homeless shelter and service projects in the communities around St. Luke.



Kenneth Pingel  
Years at St. Luke: 32

**Describe a situation when you have seen that “We reach. Christ restores.”**

I joined St. Luke in 1990 when I married Susan Wintermeyer. Susan was already a member at St. Luke. We have participated in the same home bible study since that time. We and our two adult children have “grown up” at St. Luke. We have experienced Christ’s restoring power many, many times, in both our church and family relationships.

Specifically, during Covid, beginning in March 2020, we experienced the loss of in-person worship, receiving Communion and in person bible studies. What a deeply discouraging period, from sitting on our couch for Sunday service to Zoom meetings for Bible Study. But despite all that, through our persistence and with God’s grace, we kept our faith walk and encouraged one another in incredible ways. That is “We reach and Christ restores”.



Jim Putz  
Years at St. Luke: 35

**Describe a situation when you have seen that “We reach. Christ restores.”**

For me, a good example is the effort put forth by the church family during the Covid shutdown to first get an online presence but ultimately to bring back people to live, in person worship. Our congregation has been able to reach out and begin growing again.



Elder: Andy Smith  
Years at St. Luke: 50

**Describe a situation when you have seen that “We reach, Christ restores.”**

Three examples: When on the phone with administrators at local hospitals, as St. Luke was organizing some meals for healthcare workers, I had the opportunity to explain that we are happy to give, because God has given so much to us. Likewise, when our congregation was doing some projects in the community (cleanup after parade; cleanup in local parks), I could explain that our congregation sees it as a God-given mission to help where we can in the community. At my workplace, I accidentally sent a text message to some colleagues; the message was intended for St. Luke people and discussed our support for Hope Clinic and our hosting of homeless people in the gym. This created an opportunity for me to explain how our congregation reaches out to support vulnerable people in Washtenaw County. God used my clumsy mistake for His glory! In these cases, we were reaching with concrete acts of service, and God used that occasion to direct people’s attention to Himself — one step in “restoring.”



Elder: Austin Thomason

Years at St. Luke: 27

**Tell a story of how you have experienced one of our core values.  
Faithfulness to complex truth.**

A while back while at a family member's church, communion was offered, and I politely declined to receive it. Their church believes that communion is only a symbol, which is different than what we believe (and I believe) in the LCMS. My relative and his wife were confused and a bit offended. Later that day, we were able to talk about it. I explained what we believe in our church and why I wasn't comfortable communing in theirs. While they didn't get on board with the LCMS view, they did come to an understanding of what we believe and why we believe it. It was a great opportunity to bring up some of the deeper aspects of our faith, opening their eyes to another view and helping me to articulate why I believe what I do.



Elder: O'Neill Young

Years at St. Luke: 32

**Tell a story of how you have experienced one of our core values.  
Dependence on Jesus.**

I have experienced dependence on Jesus in several areas of my life recently. As a member of the call process, I've seen our congregation commit to prayer for the committee, the pastors, and the church. I've personally felt very loved and supported by the congregation. I have also seen it in my family and some close friends as they have experienced health uncertainties. The body of Christ has come together in a powerful way to commit to prayer and rely on God for healing, love, and mercy. I've seen the power of prayer at work in my life and of those around me.