

## **Rationales behind the Proposed FY2026 Budget**

Each year, Good Shepherd's voting members are asked to consider and approve the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which runs from September 1 through August 31. This year, the budget-approval meeting will be held on Sunday, August 24, following the 9:30 a.m. worship service.

Since early this summer, Core Ministry leaders, staff, the Finance Team, and the Board of Servant Leaders have been working together to create a budget proposal that balances predicted expenditures against predicted income (that is, regular offerings to the General Fund as well as interest income).

This pamphlet contains information about how much funding the ministry areas are requesting, what things those requests will pay for, and why the ministries are asking for increases or decreases in their budget areas compared to the current fiscal year's budget.

During the budget preparation process, the Finance Team asked the Core Ministry leaders, staff, and the Board to bear in mind that FY2025 income and expenses are expected to be below the planned levels that were used to create the current (FY2025) budget—and indicated that they do not expect income in FY2026 to increase significantly over what is actually received in the current fiscal year.

The Finance Team is required to submit a balanced budget.

As you look through this pamphlet, you'll see that many budget requests for the upcoming year are at or below what was approved for the current fiscal year. We anticipate that your generous support to the Above & Beyond program will help our ministry areas achieve their missions.



# **Christian Life & Engagement**

*Heidi Cooper, Director of Engagement*

## **Where the money goes**

Funds support and develop:

- Life Groups (Manic Mondays, Word Workers, Young Adults, Thursday Bible Study, and Men’s Friday Breakfast gathering)
- Fellowship/congregational events (e.g., Fall Festival, Chili Bingo, food trucks)
- Women’s Ministry (e.g., the annual women’s retreat, the Advent Tea)
- Men’s Ministry (e.g., Saturday breakfast, retreat)
- New Member engagement activities (e.g., receptions, classes)
- Outreach events

## **Budget request rationale**

In determining the budget request for FY2026, expenses from the previous year were evaluated. Adjustments were made (reduced) in areas where the full amount for the previous year was not spent (small groups and new member activities). Other areas were left as is with anticipation of utilizing those funds in the new FY (outreach event planned for 2026). The amount for congregational events was increased as a new directive to host a food event each month is planned.

Budget support approved for FY2025 \$9,250

**Budget request for FY2026 \$9,000**

# Congregational Care & Nurture

*June McGurn, Ministry Team Leader*

## Where the money goes

- Subscriptions for *Portals of Prayer* booklets, various care ministry pamphlets, and the weekly Taking Faith Home handout
- Supplies for volunteers, who send more than 700 cards each year for life events
- Mementos for Baptisms

## Budget request rationale

Spending for the devotional material is predictable, and most of the work of this Ministry is performed by volunteers who in many cases donate the cost of any materials used. No increase was requested for the FY2026 budget year. If additional expenses involved in organizing health-related programs and activities exceeds the CC&N budget, a small Above & Beyond category will be requested for the Spring 2026 A&B Catalog.

Budget support approved for FY2025 \$1,550

**Budget request for FY2026 \$1,500**

# Discipleship

*Pastor James, Ministry Team Leader*  
*Holly Vanderhoof, Youth Ministry Director*  
*Michelle Tenhaeff, Children's Ministry Coordinator*

## Where the money goes

- Adult Bible Studies
- Library
- Sunday School curriculum (2 yrs–8th Grade)
- Sunday School supplies (2yrs–8th Grade)
- VBS supplies and curriculum
- High School education (Grades 9–12)
- Education/Training materials/Seminars for Sunday School staff
- Education–Confirmation class materials
- Education–First Communion class materials
- Middle School education (Grades 6–8)
- Senior Youth–High School Ministry (HSM)
- Middle School Youth–Middle School Ministry (MSM)

## Budget request rationale

Although the budgeted increase in the FY2026 budget is only \$900, funds from related Above & Beyond accounts will be used to cover the additional \$13,050 necessary to provide the resources and materials to maintain strong and viable education and youth ministry programs. The overall increase is the result of two factors. First, we are entering the third year of the same Sunday School curriculum, which needs to be updated and refreshed. In order to purchase curriculum for the 2026-27 education year in advance of the educational year, the Sunday school curriculum budget request has been increased to ensure curriculum availability at the start of the school year. Curriculum costs have increased, which also contributes to the increase in program funding.

Additionally, the VBS, middle school, and high school education and ministry programs' FY2025 budgets were reduced as they are in the FY2026 budget by using Above & Beyond funds to meet overall funding requirements. Thus, the 2025-26 budget will ensure the availability of funding and resources to maintain and grow the Sunday school, middle school, and high school ministry programs.

Budget support approved for FY2025	\$10,400
<b>Budget request for FY2026</b>	<b>\$11,300</b>

# Board of Servant Leaders

*Rob Fekete, Board Chair*

## Where the money goes

- Materials and supplies for the Board of Servant Leaders
- Synod Convention Assessment

### Notes

**When needed, the Board budget area** covers costs for called worker searches and for related moving expenses for new called workers. The Board budget area also covers the cost of the Synod Convention Assessment, due again in 2026.

## Budget request rationale

In determining the budget request for the upcoming fiscal year, the Board considered the budget needs of previous years and planned activity for this year. Funds are not included in this budget request for called worker searches, related moving expenses. Funds are included for the Synod Convention Assessment, due again in 2026.

Budget support approved for FY2025	\$500
<b>Budget request for FY2026</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>

# Missions

*Bill and Lisa Schuler, Ministry Team Leaders*

## Where the money goes

Funds in this budget area are used to support reviews/appeals from many organizations worldwide in deciding which ones Good Shepherd will support. While we support the Southeastern District annually, other mission efforts may vary from year to year but will fall under these broad categories:

- LCMS mission programs
- Lutheran World relief
- U.S. missions
- International missions

## Budget request rationale

The Mission budget proposed will continue support for the Southeastern District, LCMS mission programs, Lutheran World Relief, U.S. missions, and international missions. We will augment mission support through the Above & Beyond catalog for organizations the team feels could use additional funding beyond what was budgeted and/or organizations not included in the budget due to limited availability of funding.

Budget support approved for FY2025	\$50,000
<b>Budget request for FY2026</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>

# Community Service

*Holly Vanderhoof, Community Service Coordinator*

## Where the money goes

- Cornerstones
- South Lakes High School Food Pantry
- Weekend Grocery Packs
- Fellowship Square
- Other local charity requests

## Budget request rationale

The \$2,500 will support local charities, including SLHS Food Pantry, Cornerstones, Fellowship Square, and other local charity requests that fall under the larger umbrella of local charities/community service (school support, etc.).

Budget support approved for FY2025 \$4,500

**Budget request for FY2026 \$2,500**

# **Worship & Celebration**

*Julie Schorfheide and Georgia Thorstenson, Ministry Team Leaders*

## **Where the money goes**

- Altar Guild (communion wine, candles, candle oil, paraments, vestments, palms, dry cleaning, robes for acolytes)
- Music Ministry (music for the vocal choirs, Praise services, the bell choir, the organ; special music/musicians for festivals; choral section leaders; maintenance of all pianos, the organ, handbells and chimes)
- Sound system upgrades and maintenance
- Children’s activity bags
- Bulletin covers for Christmas, Easter, other special services, funerals and weddings
- Flowers; special decorations for festivals
- Licenses, copyright fees, and subscriptions that allow us to use music in our worship services and on streaming platforms and to record our services for later viewing and listening
- Baptismal supplies
- Substitutes for our organist

## **Budget request rationale**

The Worship Team reduced its budget request for FY2026 by relying on the Above & Beyond program to help fund more special music in worship as well as an additional Section Leader in the Sanctuary Choir. Other adjustments (mainly decreases) were made to more accurately reflect actual costs in other areas within the Worship & Celebration Ministry.

Budget support approved for FY2025 \$37,725

**Budget request for FY2026 \$30,800**

# Communications

*Jeff Donahue, Communications Director*

## Where the money goes

Funds pay for media subscriptions, applications, and supporting tools to support the GSLC mission and all ministry teams:

- The GSLC website (Ekklesia 360)
- Mass email marketing (Constant Contact)
- Graphic design application (Canva)
- Livestream/recorded service platforms (e.g., YouTube, Facebook Live, and Vimeo)
- Domain-hosting provider
- Online sign-up tool (Signup Genius)
- Service slide application (Proclaim)

## Budget request rationale

In determining the budget request for the upcoming fiscal year, the Communication Team considered what special efforts we might undertake and the status of recurring costs. It was determined that maintaining the FY2025 approved funding level would be sufficient for our ongoing needs. With the continued growth of our online platform, maintaining the current requirements, and levels of support, should maintain our current service levels and allow for minimal increases on a case-by-case basis. The Communication Team continued to make significant changes to our website this fiscal year, to include capturing all events on our online calendar. The current fiscal year saw an increase in the number of reports, such as the annual report, summer A&B catalog, and general fund pamphlet. These reports, which increase transparency of church activities and funding, led to an increase in personnel funding for 2026. If needs change, a thorough review will be undertaken, as necessary, and a request in the future Above & Beyond (A&B) Catalog can be completed.

Budget support approved for FY2025 \$2,620

**Budget request for FY2026 \$2,620**

# Finance

*Mike DeWan, Finance Team Leader*

## Where the money goes

- Offering envelopes
- Copier leasing and supplies
- Postage
- Other office supplies
- Telephone and Internet services
- Tech support
- Payroll processing
- Fees associated with banking and credit card processing
- Background checks for volunteers
- Payment of the mortgage and other loans

## Budget request rationale

FY2026 finance expenses were determined using actual expenses from FY2025 for those elements that are usage variable and factoring a change to FY2025 levels based on estimated usage changes for FY2025. Fixed-cost items for mortgage and equipment leases were based on legal agreement rates. Loan rates remain the same as in last years budget. Mortgage requirements in the FY2026 budget include principal and interest as has been the case for past year budget preparation.

Budget support approved for FY2025 \$193,500

**Budget request for FY2026 \$194,350**

# Hospitality

*Michele Clair, Administrative Assistant*

## Where the money goes

Supplies for Sunday morning fellowship time:

- Coffee
- Tea
- Creamers
- Cups
- Other supplies

## Budget request rationale

In determining the budget request for FY2026, the Hospitality Team decided to keep the budget the same as FY2025 as needs were considered to stay fairly consistent in the upcoming year.

Budget support approved for FY2025 \$1,000

**Budget request for FY2026 \$1,000**

# **Staff Conferences, Continuing Education, Auto Mileage**

*Pastor Johann*

## **Where the money goes**

- Modest resources for staff to attend conferences and receive continuing education for ministry
- Reimbursement for mileage costs related to pastoral visits for grieving, illnesses, mental health counseling, spiritual counseling, communion for shut-ins, and marital counseling

## **Budget request rationale**

Now that we are fully in the post-pandemic era, considerations included increased in-person conference and continuing education attendance similar to pre-pandemic times. In addition, adjustments for auto mileage were made, since beginning with the pandemic area, more visits have been necessary. If some people can't or won't come on campus for face-to-face interaction, then the ministry needs to go visit them, for many obvious reasons. In addition, we are continuing to weather a historic level of mourning in the life of Good Shepherd. Moreover, a number of married couples and families with relationship issues need visitations and counseling. Therefore, we anticipate that many visitations by pastors, particularly with communion, are highly desired in this coming year.

Budget support approved for FY2025 \$8,600

**Budget request for FY2026 \$8,800**

## **Personnel (Called)**

*Rob Fekete, Board of Servant Leaders*

## **Personnel (Lay Staff, Contractors)**

*Pastor Johann*

### **Where the money goes**

- Called staff, lay staff, and contractors

### **Budget request rationale**

This line item is the largest macro item of the budget, for obvious reasons. However, the item represents a reduction of close to \$35,000 from 3 years ago, \$14,000 from 2 years ago, and \$12,000 from last year. Moreover, the amount of this line item is significantly reduced from pre-pandemic times. In addition, as compared to many other congregations, the percentage of the whole budget that this line item represents is lower, in some cases, significantly lower.

Over the past several years, the staff and core ministry leaders have worked to involve more volunteers, partially due to the Business Manager's and Senior Pastor's philosophy that, "At the end of the day, the church is a volunteer organization" (Pastor Johann). Involving more volunteers not only increases efficiencies and cost-savings but also encourages more members and participants to be involved, offering their time and talents, gratis, and raising personal stewardship to the Lord and His church. As an illustration, the Office Assistant position has still not been replaced; volunteers have stepped up with skill and responsibility. As an additional example, the two, separate positions of Director of Choirs and Organist have been combined into one.

Accordingly, these reductions have been accomplished by virtue of this increased emphasis upon stewardship even while cost-of-living increases to all employees have been made for this coming financial year. We have also been able to "mothball" or retire a few additional expenses incurred during Covid times and the few years following those years. Finally, we've recently completed a multi-year process of reconstituting our staffing. Only 3 workers remain on our current staff from the pre-pandemic era, due to retirements, repositioning, the needs of the new digital age, and pandemic-era issues. A number of Core Ministry leaders have also joined our ranks or been replaced by other servants.

Budget support approved for FY2025 \$590,210.10

**Budget request for FY2026 \$600,213.82**

# Property & Facilities

*Roger Thorstenson, Team Leader*

## Where the money goes

- Maintenance of the grounds and the building (e.g., snow removal, pest control, elevator inspection, custodial maintenance, security, tools and other such supplies)
- Insurance
- Utilities (electricity natural gas, trash removal, water)

## Budget request rationale

The Property and Facilities budget area has two overall types of expenses: those that are relatively predictable due to existing service contracts (e.g., insurance, pest control), and those that can fluctuate significantly due to environmental factors (e.g., snow removal), grounds (maintenance and repair) or changes in commodity prices (e.g., electricity, natural gas). In determining the budget request for the upcoming fiscal year, the Property and Facilities Team increased the request in some areas based on current pricing trends and weather-related events. Overall, the Property and Facilities budget request for FY2026 reflects about a 3.0% increase over its FY2025 budget primarily due to increased costs of contracted support services (e.g., snow removal, landscaping, building and HVAC maintenance).

Budget support approved for FY2025	\$231,950
<b>Budget request for FY2026</b>	<b>\$238,850</b>

*Building up God's people  
through His Word  
for His world*



**GOOD  
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