

The General Fund: How Your Offerings Support the Ministry of Good Shepherd



Introduction

This booklet is intended to help you understand Good Shepherd's budget and how your regular offerings support the ministry of our congregation.

What exactly is the "General Fund"?

The General Fund is what "pays for" the spending approved by the voters each year. All offerings that are not specified for a particular program or fundraising effort go into the General Fund.

How do my regular offerings to the General Fund support Good Shepherd's ministry?

Your regular offerings support the space where we gather, those who lead and facilitate the ministry, and those who serve and tend the flock.

The bulk of Good Shepherd's spending relates to compensation for staff and contractors, to the mortgage, and to the maintenance of our facility. These expenses are fixed for the most part and represent more than 80% of where your gifts and offerings to the General Fund go throughout the year. The rest of the budget goes to support basic program needs.

Our building is an important element in our ministry. It is a place where our members and friends gather for worship, fellowship, service, celebrations, and farewells. It also offers space for our neighbors and to help our neighbors (e.g., AA members, Food Pantry workers and storage for Pantry items).

Our ministry is accomplished through people, so supporting our staff (called, lay, and contractors) is essential to Good Shepherd's ministry. Without people actively ministering or facilitating the ministry, what do you have?

Contributions to the General Fund also support **basic program needs** that help our Core Ministries meet the strategic goals established by the Board of Servant Leaders.

Good Shepherd's Budget, FY2026

Total approved by the voters, August 2025: **\$1,143,433.82**

Budget Breakdown, by spending areas

Personnel	\$600,213.82
Property & Facilities	238,850.00
Finance	194,350.00
Missions	40,000.00
Worship & Celebration	30,800.00
Discipleship	11,300.00
Christian Life & Engagement	9,000.00
Staff Conferences, Continuing Education, Mileage	8,800.00
Community Service	2,500.00
Communications	2,620.00
Congregational Care & Nurture	1,500.00
Hospitality	1,000.00
Board of Servant Leaders	2,500.00

*Your regular offerings support
the space where we gather,
those who lead and facilitate the ministry,
and those who serve and tend the flock.*

*Please remember Good Shepherd in your prayers
and your giving this summer
and throughout the coming year.*

Who decides what's in the budget?

Each year, usually at the end of August, 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.

Months before the budget is presented to the voters, Core Ministry leaders, staff, the Finance Team, and the Board of Servant Leaders work together to create a budget proposal that balances predicted expenditures against predicted income — that is, your regular offerings and gifts.

Before voters are asked to approve the budget, however, the Finance Team presents information about how much funding the ministry areas are requesting, what things those requests will pay for, and why the ministries are asking for that amount (increasing or decreasing their budget requests).

Once the budget has been approved, not much is said about it until the next time it comes up for a vote.

So what, exactly, is happening with your offerings throughout the year? Where does all the money go?

As this booklet shows, your regular offerings help pay the bills and fund our ministries and programs throughout the year. Your regular offerings are essential to keeping our ministries running.

What about “directed giving” and the Above & Beyond program?

“Directed giving,” sometimes called “designated giving,” refers to contributions that can be spent only on the item specified by the giver. For example, when someone gives money for poinsettias at Christmas or spring flowers at Easter, that money cannot be spent on anything else.

Our Above & Beyond program is an example of directed giving. Core Ministry leaders and staff identify specific projects or programs that Good Shepherd members and friends might support to enhance and grow our ministry programs further than our general budget can accommodate. This booklet also gives information about the support that various budget areas receive through the A&B program.

Personnel



General Fund support: \$600,213.82

Where the money goes

- Called Staff, Lay Staff, and Contractors

Notes

Compared to many other congregations, the percentage of the whole budget that this line item represents is lower, in some cases, significantly lower.

Line items for compensating custodians, instrumentalists, choir section leaders, and so on are included in other areas of the budget, such as in Worship & Celebration, Finance, Property & Facilities.

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 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.

Property & Facilities



General Fund support: \$238,850

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)

Notes

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) or changes in commodity prices (e.g., electricity, natural gas).

Above & Beyond support \$75,120

Contributions to the Properties & Facilities Above & Beyond fund will allow us to buy commercial dehumidifiers for the sanctuary (addressing the mold issue) and to undertake Phase 2 of the HVAC system upgrade .

Finance



General Fund support:

\$194,350

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

Missions



General Fund support:

\$40,000

Where the money goes

- The Southeastern District
- LCMS mission programs
- Lutheran World relief
- U.S. missions
- Foreign missions

Notes

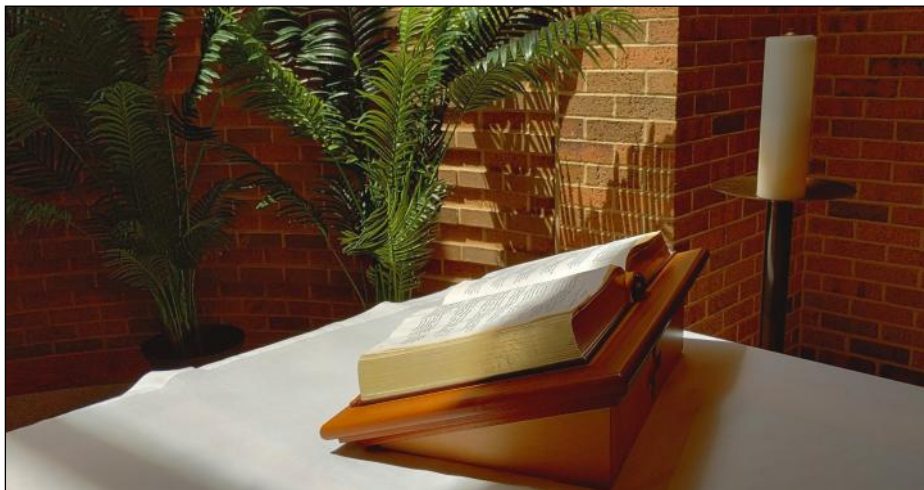
The Mission Team reviews appeals from many organizations worldwide in deciding which ones Good Shepherd will support each year. As a result, mission support varies from year to year but generally falls into the categories listed above.

Above & Beyond support

\$33,000

Contributions to the Mission projects in the current Above & Beyond campaign will support Evergreen Lutheran School; Lutheran World Relief; LCMS missionaries in Asia and Africa; FaithAID: Mustard Seed House and the Fraher family; Lutheran Bible Translators; a Lutheran church in Puerto Rico; the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces; and our own Helping Hands ministry.

Worship & Celebration



General Fund support: \$30,800

Where the money goes

- Altar Care (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

Above & Beyond support \$28,250

Contributions to the Above & Beyond fund for Worship & Celebration support choral section leaders and special music for festival Sundays.

Discipleship



General Fund support: \$11,300

Where the money goes

- Study materials, curriculum, and supplies for 3-year-olds to 6th graders, for junior and senior high youth, and for adults
- Vacation Bible School
- First Communion, confirmation, and educational seminars
- Resources for the High School Ministry (HSM)
- Resources for the Middle School Ministry (MSM)
- Resources for college-age and family ministry programs aimed at building relationships centered on Christian growth and fellowship

Above & Beyond support \$19,000

Contributions to the Above & Beyond fund for Discipleship further support areas funded by contributions to the General Fund, as well as other projects that are not included in the “regular” budget: Workcamp, rental vans for Workcamp, Senior Youth Ministry, Middle School Ministry, Vacation Bible School, and a “Spiritual First Aid” seminar.

Christian Life & Engagement



General Fund support:

\$9,000

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

Staff Conferences, Continuing Education, Auto Mileage

General Fund support:

\$8,800

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

Community Service

General Fund support:

\$2,500

Where the money goes

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

Above & Beyond support

\$24,500

This year, contributions to the Above & Beyond campaign will support and/or enhance specific community service efforts: Lake Anne House, Fellowship Square, Dogwood Elementary Grocery Gift Cards, Dogwood Elementary Support, Cornerstones, Meals of Hope/ Rise against Hunger Meal Packing, and South Lakes High School Food Pantry.

Communications

General Fund support:

\$2,620

Where the money goes

Funds pay for media subscriptions, applications, and supporting tools:

- 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)

Congregational Care & Nurture

General Fund support:

\$1,500

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

Support from Volunteers

Most of the work of this ministry is performed by volunteers who in some cases donate the cost of any materials used. This ministry supports memorial services and organizes memorial receptions, member care visits, and transportation, and includes the Take Them a Meal team that takes/sends meals to the ill, infirm, and their families, as well as families with newborn babies.

Hospitality

General Fund support:

\$1,000

Where the money goes

Supplies for Sunday morning fellowship time:

- Coffee
- Tea
- Creamers
- Cups
- Other supplies

Board of Servant Leaders

General Fund support:

\$2,500

Where the money goes

- Materials and supplies for the Board of Servant Leaders

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, which was due in 2026.

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



1133 Reston Avenue
Herndon, VA 20170
703-437-5020
gslcva.org

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#gslcva on instagram
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youtube.com/gslcva