



Elim Evangelical Free Church

9421 128th Street East, Puyallup, Washington, 98374

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

2024 Pastor's Annual Report

By Lead Pastor Ryan White

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

I have now been Elim's lead pastor for nearly four years, and we continue to praise God for calling us to be part of this church family. We are grateful for you all and appreciate your care, friendship, and partnership in the gospel. It is truly my joy to serve this congregation as a shepherd under Christ.

This past year I feel as if the Lord clarified His vision for us as a church. We sense God calling us to be a community of everyday missionaries who are ever growing in our love of God, His Word, His people of every culture and ethnicity, and His purposes in the world. As those sent by Christ into our neighborhoods, families, and workplaces, we aim to be missionally prayerful (PRAYER), relationally engaged (CARE), and gospel fluent (SHARE). It is our fervent desire to equip and encourage our people for this joyful task.

Looking back at 2024, a few highlights come to mind.

- On June 30th, at a joint potluck with our Spanish-speaking sister congregation, Casa de Restauración Hossana, we had the opportunity to dedicate Elim's new front yard playground. It was a moment of celebration as we honored all those who labored and gave to bring this dream to reality. Signs display the heart behind the project. One prominently announces, "Jesus welcomes and loves you! Trust Him. Know Him. Find refuge and joy in His care." It has been so fulfilling in the months since to see many of our unchurched neighbors take us up on that invitation. Stop in during the week and you may meet one of the young moms or nannies who frequent the space, bringing their children to play. Many will pop into the church for a prayer or to chat with Ms. Beth, our Kids' Director. Several have even come and joined us for Sunday worship.
- Another cherished memory was the return of Elim's Family Camp at Millersylvania State Park this past August. Though Saturday night boasted an unexpected thunderstorm and downpour, it was a joyful time of play, shared meals, and rich conversation. Nothing will ever be quite as sweet as the campsite Sunday worship after the rains.
- This year I was privileged to help the relaunch of Puyallup and South Hill's John 17 Pastors Prayer Fellowship. Languishing since Covid and the retirement of its founders, this community of local evangelical pastors from across the denominational spectrum now meets every month here at Elim to cultivate our God-given unity in Christ. We share a meal, dive into the Word, and vulnerably pray for one another and our congregations. Not only is the Lord knitting together our hearts as shepherds, but God is binding together our congregations too in gospel partnership. God is forging us into His Church for the city and already our community is taking notice.

We have so much for which to be thankful. What appeared to be a daunting budget deficit for much of the year was entirely erased by your faithful giving. We navigated a contentious election season with courtesy, compassion, conviction, and aplomb, bringing glory to Christ. On Sunday mornings, we have

met many new friends, as neighbors make their way through our doors and as our folks eagerly invite acquaintances and loved ones to come experience the love of Jesus and His people.

And, of course, I cannot end my report without shouting out those we saw baptized in 2024 in testament to their faith in Christ: Ben Olson, Isiah Richmond, Lucy Vanderhoff, Christine Bass, and Janelle Crawford!

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3)

2024 Elders Report

By Lars Passic, Elder Board Chairman

2024 was a year of stepping out in faith. All of Elim's elders who had been through the turmoil of the pandemic were suddenly no longer on the elder board. We would have to learn to survive on our own, building upon the knowledge and wisdom bestowed upon us by elders past.

Teaching is an important part of the biblical role of "overseer" so as elders it is vital that we seek to carry out this task. Striving to help Ryan better in this area, I preached my first full sermon ("Boasting about Tomorrow") to allow Ryan to take his birthday off. Writing a sermon within the James series Ryan was preaching was a challenging and rewarding experience for me. This also gave me a personal connection to a new priority: helping to find substitute preaching for Ryan's much needed time off or in times of illness.

This year, Pastor Ryan White led the elders through reading the book *Sent: Living a Life That Invites Others to Jesus* by Heather and Ashley Holleman. This was a helpful study in how God has put each of us in our unique situations to be His messengers. I enjoyed learning how to take a genuine interest in other people, by asking them this question: "What question do you wish other people would ask you about yourself?" Being intentionally curious about other people will build real connection. Real connection leads to gospel conversations.

2024 also brought challenges. The elders worked through situations of loss, conflict, and sadness. In some of these difficult situations, the correct path forward was extremely unclear. I believe that in moments like these, we need to draw closer to God and ask him for wisdom. We need to be honest when our ideas are rooted in the desire for an easy path, instead of what God calls us to do.

I am optimistic for 2025. The elders are changing some of the cultural norms of the elder officer roles. We are continuing to invest in Ryan's ability to take time off work and recharge, while simultaneously receiving exciting new voices on Sundays at Elim. The congregation voted to appropriate funds for an exciting and long overdue bathroom remodel. The Elders are learning together about the important topic of God-honoring masculinity and are investing in Elim's programs that minister to men.

God, please be with us!

2024 Kids' Ministry Report

By Beth White, Kids' Ministry Director

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink!"
{Jesus, John 7:37}

It is my joy to serve our church as a shepherd to your children. I am sure that the Lord is wonderfully forming the hearts of all the kids here at Elim, and I am thankful that I get to be a part of the process. The Lord continues to provide everything we need, and this is not a surprise, since the needs we have are for the purpose of fulfilling the work that he himself has given.

- We have an excellent new playground that is being used both by Elim's kids after church and midweek by families from the neighborhood. Praise God may our space continue to be a place to experience the peace and joy that Jesus gives.
- We hosted a VBS with our friends from Celebration again, this time with over twice as many kids as last year. Even with the larger numbers, we had exactly the right number of volunteers to make it a joyful experience for all involved.
- We are blessed to have a handful of faithful and capable preteen girls taking turns helping in the nursery every week- serving the church, loving the littlest ones, and practicing their childcare skills, praise God!
- Several times, the hearts and attitudes of children were helped immediately as a direct result of prayer. We saw the power of the Holy Spirit at work!

Looking back, the theme of the year's teaching was *following true wisdom*. In their class time, the kids learned from Proverbs and from the life of Jesus. When we know the Lord and listen to his words, we are building our lives on a solid foundation and storing up treasure for eternity. He gives us everything we need for life and godliness; it is our goal to share this truth with the kids.

The final thing I want to highlight from 2024 is our new custom of praying over the kids together at the beginning of every Sunday service. After the congregation sings, we invite all the kids to come up front. We have a short lesson or word of encouragement, and then, united as a church body, we lift them up in prayer. This accomplishes two things: the building up of our church's love and appreciation for the children of the Family, and the mystery of the unseen work that the Lord is doing as we faithfully commit their souls to him week after week.

2024 Student Ministries Report

By John Reynolds, Student Ministry Director

What an incredible year it has been for our youth ministry! God has been moving in powerful ways, and we are excited to share the highlights of what He has done over the past year.

Spiritual Growth & Decisions for Christ

This year, we saw 15 students make the life-changing decision to follow Christ! Each of these decisions is a testament to God's work in the hearts of our youth, and we continue to walk alongside them as they grow in their faith.

Throughout the year, our students engaged in meaningful Bible studies and discussions centered on learning about Jesus—His love, His teachings, and what it means to be His disciple. From studying the Gospels to diving into topics like prayer, identity in Christ, and serving others, our students have grown in both knowledge and passion for their faith.

Winter Retreat & Summer Camp

Two of the most impactful events this year were our Winter Retreat and Summer Camp.

- Winter Retreat was a powerful time of worship, fellowship, and deepening our relationship with Christ. Students were challenged to step out of their comfort zones, seek God wholeheartedly, and build strong faith-centered friendships.
- Summer Camp was life-changing! We had an incredible week filled with powerful worship, dynamic teaching, and fun outdoor activities. It was during this camp that we witnessed 15 students surrender their lives to Jesus! God truly moved in an amazing way, and we continue to see the fruit of that experience in our weekly gatherings.

Monthly Fun & Fellowship

In addition to learning and growing spiritually, we made sure to have plenty of fun along the way! Each month, we hosted exciting events that strengthened friendships and built community, including:

- Game nights
- Bowling
- Served community by helping hootnanny and VBS.
- Overnighter
- Lake Day

Looking Ahead

As we step into a new year, and a moment of personal sadness for myself, because I have to step away for this season. I am excited to see what great things God will continue to do in the group. I believe the goal remains the same: to disciple students, build strong relationships, and provide opportunities for them to encounter Jesus in a real way.

Thank you to our amazing leaders, volunteers, and parents who continue to pour into the lives of our students. Your support and prayers make all the difference!

God Loves you, and I love you, and there is nothing you can do about it.

2024 Ministry to Women Annual Report

By Rachel Hofmann, Leader of Ministry to Women Team (MtoW)

Members: Rachel Hofmann, Julie Brannon, Lori Cantu, Stacie Kierum, Janine Lawrence

2024 was a year to be grateful for all the Lord has done in the lives of the women of Elim.

The first MtoW event of 2024 was our *Parents Night Out* held in February. This event was a favorite as an opportunity for parents to have a few hours for a date night with childcare provided by the MtoW leaders and youth leaders at the church.

Cultivate! Women's Workshops organized by Julie Brannon continued quarterly throughout the year. These workshops dealt with various topics important to women including hospitality and exercise/health.

During the summer months, *A Simple Evening – Women's Gatherings* were held twice a month. This created opportunities for women to gather at a host house while sharing times of prayer, devotionals, and fellowship. These will most likely be continued in summer 2025.

Our annual *Elim Family Advent Night* was well attended. Many families gathered and enjoyed delicious soups and desserts, games, and an advent craft. Donations for CareNet were gathered as an outreach opportunity.

In March we held a *Bunco night*. This is a great outreach to bring non-Elim friends to a fun and welcoming environment. It was well attended as usual.

We provided over a dozen *Meal Trains* this year, as an effective way to show practical application of being the hands and feet of Jesus to those at Elim. Janine Lawrence and Lori Cantu led the organization of these Meal Trains.

Julie Brannon continues to be our ministry lead over our women's small groups. These groups continue to flourish, creating ways for the women of Elim to learn and grow in their walk with the Lord and other believers.

Women's Retreat was held again at Black Lake Bible Camp in October. Elim attendance was very small, so MtoW will be doing a survey to determine the best way to make a women's retreat available in 2025.

At the end of summer, Rebecca Passic stepped down from the team. We are so thankful for her involvement in MtoW over the past several years and her heart for serving and guiding the women of Elim. Stacie Kierum joined MtoW this past year and has been a wonderful support with assisting in events and bringing new ideas and energy to the group.

With all the blessings of 2024, Ministry to Women is looking forward to seeing how God is going to work through the lives of the women of Elim in 2025.

2024 Worship Ministry Report

By Nathan Brannon, Worship Deacon

I'm blessed to have been nominated by the elders in October for the position of Worship Deacon.

In a discussion with all Deacons we worked on how our individual strengths and roles could support our mission as a church. Essentially, I am to be a liaison between the congregation and our worship teams and staff regarding the direction of our music and praise. This means that I want to hear the ideas you have about our worship services.

- What do you like?
- What would you change?
- Do you have songs you would like us to include in our worship?

With input from the congregation, Pastor Ryan, and staff, I will be collaborating with our worship team leaders and musicians, with God's guidance, as we strive to grow and seek his will in the structure of our worship.

The end result is that we, at Elim, through this will all grow together in our worship, as one body in Christ. I am just getting started, so, please pray for me, and don't be afraid to reach out if you have ideas to share.

2024 Small Group Ministry Report

By Julie Brannon, Small Group Ministry Deacon

New Groups:

- In March, *Mom 2 Mom* was developed by Corrie Chase and Brianna White. They meet bi-weekly on Thursdays)
- In November, a couple's group, *Covenant Keepers*, was developed, co-led by Stacie Kierum, Janelle Crawford and Julie Brannon. They meet bi-monthly to do a marriage study and to have a fun outing bonding event

Apprenticeships: We continued to talk about apprenticing new leaders within groups, Jane's Tuesday group lead the way previously in this endeavor.

- Rob Miller became the leader for the family group *Living in the Light* that meets on Sunday afternoons
- Jason Comerford became the co-leader with Pastor Ryan White for the Wednesday men's group

In September our *Annual Small Group Outreach Event* was held. All our groups had representation so that the people of Elim could learn what is available and get more information and/or sign up.

2024 Benevolence Report

By Darlene Short, Deacon of Congregational Care

In 2024 the benevolence fund was used to meet emergency/urgent needs within the congregation and in our community. Approximately \$4300 in designated funds came in from Elim giving and about the same amount was paid out to meet some urgent needs. We also offered many community resources that met individual needs.

Congregational care areas included home visits, phone calls and texts of encouragement and meeting some practical needs in the areas of transportation and food. In partnership with other ministries at Elim, we helped to host a homeless family twice in the Oasis house while offering other community resources to help them move toward stable housing.

2024 Operation Christmas Child Report

By Veronica Jaloba, Community Needs Outreach

Operation Christmas Child is a young ministry at Elim, our goal is to share the Love of Jesus Christ with children around the world. Every shoe box we pack is a Gospel opportunity for a child/family/community to hear and learn about God for the very first time!

We started to pack shoe boxes as a church in 2022 and look how our numbers have grown!

- 2022 - 67 boxes
- 2023 - 134 boxes
- 2024 - 236 boxes

May our Lord be glorified! Our shoe box effort was blessed through physical items during *Christmas in July* and financial donations which allowed us to purchase items for our shoe boxes like toys, school supplies, hygiene items, clothing and shoes! We also received a donation of 50 soccer balls from World Vision which made a huge impact because soccer balls are one of the most expensive items and one of the favored "WOW" items for boys!

Our 2024 shoe boxes went to children in Thailand. Please join us in prayer for every child receiving a shoe box, and most importantly, that the children will receive the Greatest Gift of All- Jesus Christ!

2024 Environments Report

By Corrie Chase, Deacon of Environments

The Environments Team is Corrie Chase (ministry leader), Fran Amos, and Heather Williams. Our goal is to make Elim's facilities an inviting place to worship. This past year we focused on freshening up inside Elim's front entry to make it feel like a "Welcome Home." The rarely used coat rack was removed and the wall patched. The veeeerrrry tall walls were painted. (Huge thanks to Zach Brownell and Fran for climbing the scaffolding!) We changed out the chandelier, dressed the room up homey and built the mountain art. Paul Busic was a HUGE help and support in many of the projects involved.

For Christmas, Regina Atchison helped plan the cozy quilt themed décor.

The team also kept up on freshening the stage between seasons as well as planning the next big project.

In 2025, we have the huge goal of updating the sanctuary. Fresh paint, new covers for our acoustic panels, a more permanent stage décor and a few other upgrades. This is penciled in for work during the summer. We are also eager to make the new bathrooms look pretty, when that time comes.

If you have specific skills or tools that you're eager to share, please chat with me. There are plenty of projects, aside from the ones mentioned, that you may be the perfect person to help bring to life. We can't do this on our own.

2024 Embrace Grace Annual Report

By Becky Vanderhoff

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's Grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10

A new command I give to you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:34-35

Our goal for Elim's Embrace Grace Ministry:

Any woman who finds themselves with an unplanned pregnancy to have a church to go for spiritual, emotional and physical support. That we, the leaders of this group and our church family can be stewards of God's love. Be the hands and feet of Jesus for these beautiful brave ladies who are choosing life for their sweet babies.

Highlights of 2024:

With a leap of faith, we started our first Embrace Grace group in September 2024. Looking back and reflecting on our first group, I praise God for his faithfulness, His strength, His direction when stuck in tough situation with our ladies. I thank God for all the people he brought to help navigate and lead each Tuesday night Bible study Group, volunteers for childcare, dinners provided and served, and all the help with our Princess Day and Baby Shower events. People courageously shared their testimonies with the ladies. All events spoke volumes to these ladies. They felt loved and heard. We as leaders felt touched and completely blessed with everyone's help and support. Sometimes things didn't fall into place until seconds before the group started, but the Lord always provided. We were honored to have four ladies join our group last year, with four very different circumstances.

Princess Day pampered the ladies with some of their favorite foods, special gifts, and a trip to a salon. They got all dressed up, had their hair done and had a fun maternity shoot. This day ended up with each being crowned while we spoke truth over them. They were told they are a daughter of The King; how much they are truly loved by their Heavenly Father, and that no matter what they have done in the past, present or what they'll do in the future nothing will change His love for them.

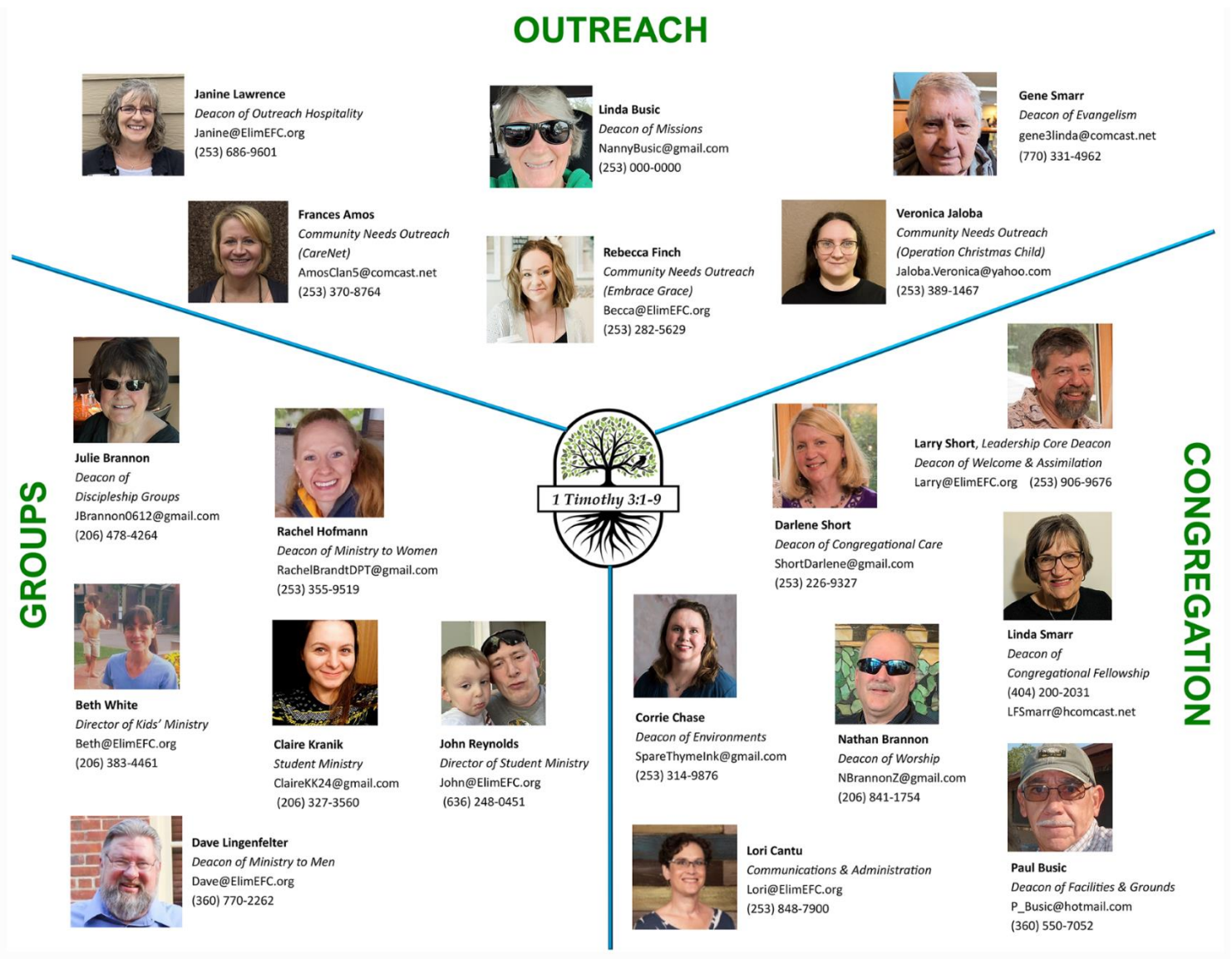
The *Baby Shower* was beautiful. The ladies were blown away by everything they were gifted. Having people from Elim show up to the baby shower, serve food, pray over the ladies and just be with them spoke volumes to them.

2024 Leadership Core Report

By Larry Short, Leadership Core Deacon

“Leadership Core” is Elim’s group of 18 deacons/ministry leaders. During 2024 we met quarterly to provide mutual support and coordination for Elim’s ministry teams and their “mission-critical moments.” It’s too easy for individual ministries to develop a “silo mentality” where they are thinking primarily of their own ministry and its needs. To combat this, we seek to communicate well together, to pitch in to help other ministry areas fulfill their goals, to help channel volunteers in accordance with their passion and gifting, and to represent the needs, challenges and victories of these ministries to the congregation and the Elders.

The Leadership Core currently consists of three ministry areas, demonstrated by the chart below which lists ministry leaders in each of the three areas:



Lori Cantu is not technically a deacon or ministry leader, but she provided vital administrative support to the Core Team. Additionally, not listed in this chart but vital to the healthy functioning of the Leadership Core is our lead pastor, Ryan White. His partnership with and support and encouragement of each ministry area in 2024 was amazing and absolutely critical.

We also appreciate the assistance of Brianna White and Beth White who helped us with childcare during our classes!

In 2025, we will seek to continue walking the path before us: communicating frequently, meeting quarterly, praying for each other without ceasing, supporting each ministry's "mission-critical moments," and helping raise up volunteers to assist each ministry area.

Welcome & Assimilation Ministry

By Larry Short, Deacon of Welcome & Assimilation

Welcome and Assimilation fulfills three functions vital to the health, growth and well-being of this church we all love:

1. We recruit, train, schedule and support the greeters who welcome you warmly for each service, who provide security for our parking lot, children's classrooms and offering counters, and who keep certain records regarding our worship service attendance.
2. We encourage everyone who calls Elim "home" to help us reach out to newcomers and make Elim a more welcoming place to be. We also are a part of a cadre of people who reach out to newcomers to welcome them to Elim and to see how we can make their experience here more fulfilling.
3. We host three classes for Elim visitors, potential members, and ministry volunteers: Elim 101 (Newcomer's Luncheon), Elim 201 (Membership Class), and Elim 301 (Body Life Assessment which helps each attendee understand how God has created them to use their gifts, skills and passions in a fulfilling way in serving the Body of Christ here and in our community). Our goal is to host each of these three classes at least once (and probably twice) each year. We appreciate the assistance of Elim's staff, Elders, and Deacons (primarily Julie Brannon, Dave Lingenfelter and Darlene Short) in pulling these classes off.

Our goals for 2025:

1. Continue to help equip Elimites to more effectively be the hands and feet of Jesus, greeting Elim newcomers and attendees, and helping our family to develop an ever-more-welcoming presence.
2. Continue training and coordinating the efforts of security greeters to guard the property God has entrusted to us and to help keep Elim and its children safe while meeting here.
3. Repeat and refine Elim 101 / 201 / 301 classes at least once or as often as needed, as we seek to welcome newcomers and new members and equip Elimites for more effective ministry to our congregation and community.

2024 Financial Report

By Lori Cantu, Bookkeeper

As bookkeeper and a member of the Elim Stewardship Team, I thank God for your continued faithful giving in 2024. Through His never-ending grace, we were able to meet all our financial obligations for the year, including all local and international ministries, and we finished the year in the black!

For 2024, Elim's members approved an operating budget of \$ 343,605.08, and our giving toward the budget was \$344,273.78.

Benevolence giving for 2024 totaled \$4,573.19.

Thanks to the Elim family for approving and supporting this budget.

[Our banking account balances have been removed from this copy of the report, please contact office@elimefc.org for a full copy of the financial report]