

WIND



SWEPT



Monthly Newsletter



December 2024

Happy Advent, Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year to you and yours!

My dad is one of those who writes a famous Christmas letter. In it he details all of the family members, their adventures, and usually at least one of their misadventures. I thought I'd do the same for Spirit of Joy.

We began 2024 with a series of misadventures. A pipe burst in the Faith Formation entry, cold weather postponed a guest speaker, and canceled Sunday morning worship... all before January 15.

In worship, we linked baptism and communion, focusing on each for an entire season. In Epiphany we heard how we are "Washed" of our sin. In Lent, we were "Fed" at Christ's table.

During Holy Week we experienced an overwhelming blessing from our high school youth. Our young women counted more than \$2000 dollars of quarters for Laundry with Love and young men joined the Spirit of Joy choir to tell the story of Jesus' last night with his disciples.

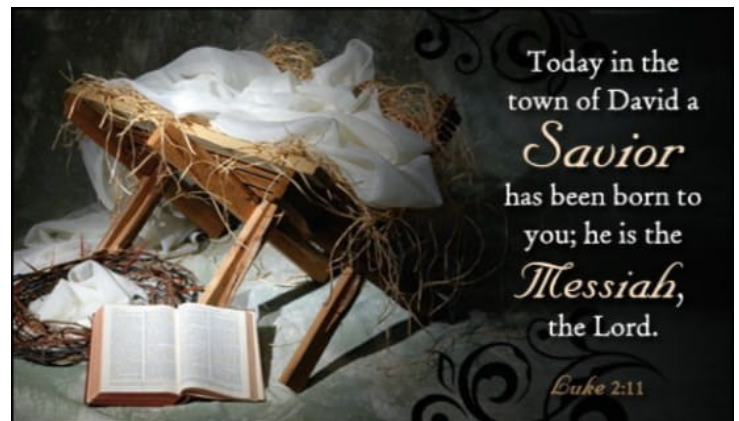
As summer approached we geared up for camp and were thrilled to see an uptick in attendance from recent years. Michele took our younger students to Shetek. Marnie took middle schoolers to Outlaw. Deacon Hannah took high school students to the ELCA Gathering. And, I went with families to Family Camp.

We intended to slow down for summer. The staff felt like we'd been running for nine months and hoped the rhythm would slow, but it didn't. Family Fun nights were...fun! We brought in Dakota Road, bouncy houses, and the SDSU Ice Cream Truck. We moved to one worship service and felt higher energy and saw higher attendance. And, we journeyed through an

unprecedented season of funerals for Spirit of Joy... together.

By the time fall came, we were ready for our regular rhythms. Little Lambs, Preschool, Children of Joy, Confirmation, Adult Education, they all launched together. Our Ministry Fair saw new volunteers for almost every facet of our ministry, but none more so than our preschool. Little Lambs moved to a larger space to accommodate its growth and Middle School Confirmation grew 20% in a matter of weeks. What do you do when you run out of Bibles and custom printed bags and need more in less than a week? What a good problem to have!

And, now this season, we are asking you to dive deep with us into the season of Advent. After the gifts of Confirmation, special guest artist Paul Oman, the sweet bitterness of All Saints, and one of the more challenging budget cycles in recent history, I know I need quiet. Holden Evening Prayer. The dark of the morning with my devotions. 7:00 worship on Christmas Eve high on the energy of 3 and 5, ready to settle into the dark still of the night. It's been a good year for Spirit of Joy. I wonder what next year will bring?



Welcome to Advent 2024, a “Dakota Road Advent”

The theme for the season is “The Journey to...” combined with resources from Barn Geese Worship we’ll highlight “**The Journey to...**”:



Hope: What do you see blooming this week—a plant in an unexpected place, a friendship, a new project or hobby? Can you find hope for the future in its blossoming? How do you cultivate Christian hope when nothing seems to blossom?

Peace: Where do you long for peace to arrive? Think of some examples of contemporary prophets whose hard work brought about change that fostered peace. What do you admire about them? What is difficult to understand?

Joy: When has the knowledge of a promising future brought you joy in the present? Have you ever felt someone wield joy irresponsibly when you were in pain? How does the experience of joy prepare you to recognize Jesus’ presence?

Love: Where have you encountered love embodied in another person? As love inspired Mary’s song, what music, art, or poetry does this experience bring to mind for you? Create something or reflect on someone else’s creation.

Christmas: This is the ultimate gift, the gift of Christmas: Jesus has come. God is among us, Emmanuel. You do not need to be perfect to deserve this or to make it happen. It has happened already. It is for you. This priceless, selfless love of God is already yours.

You’re invited to dig deep this season.

On Sundays: Dakota Road Advent Worship

On Wednesdays: Holden Evening Prayer

Daily beginning December 1: Devotions- available online and in print

Christmas Eve Worship: 3 (Family-no communion), 5:00 Choir Cantata, 7:00 Deep Still



Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church

2208 W LaQuinta Street | Sioux Falls, SD 57108

December 4, 2024

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Please accept this communication as my formal letter of resignation from my call as your Deacon and Director of Congregational Life. My last day of serving as your Deacon and partner in ministry will be January 31, 2025. My last Sunday is Sunday, January 26, 2025. I have been offered a pastoral internship position at First Lutheran Church, Brookings, SD.

I have prayerfully considered my personal and ministry goals and have decided that it is time for me to explore new ministry challenges and experiences that will help me grow and develop as I discern my call to Word and Sacrament ministry. I have been immensely blessed doing ministry at Spirit of Joy and appreciate the opportunities that you have afforded me.

Please know that I am available to assist in the transition process in any way possible.

Thank you again for your support and guidance provided as we did ministry together. I love you with the love of the Lord. May God continue to bless us and keep us as we walk together in this Church because our God is good! All the time!

Blessings,

Deacon Hannah Moneahn Clementine Fleming

Thank you, Deacon Hannah, for your faithful service to Spirit of Joy!
We wish you the best on your leadership journey and will hold you in prayer as you go.

**Spirit of Joy, join us on Sunday, January 26th
as we bless and send Deacon Hannah into her internship.**

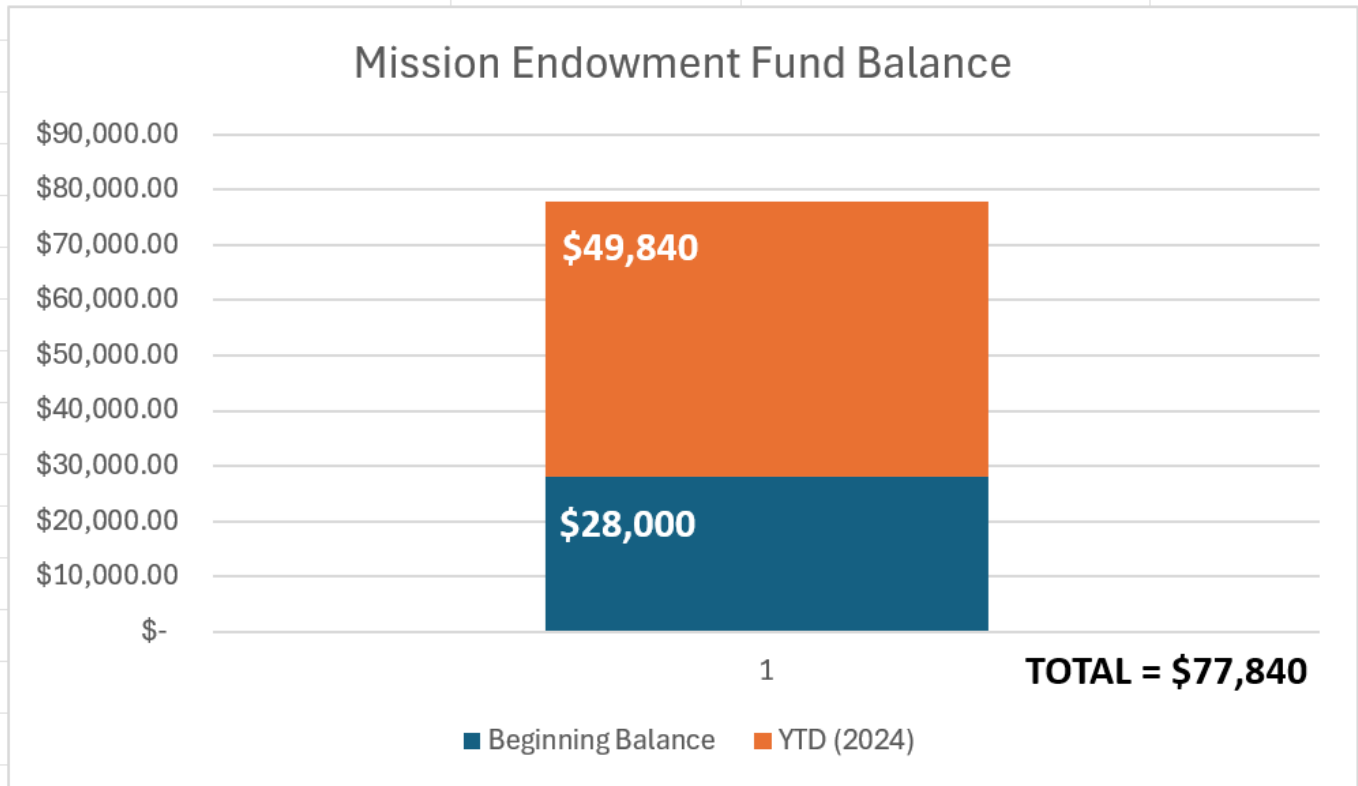
More details to come soon!



Please consider investing in SoJ's future!

The \$20,000 Matching Gift Campaign is complete! Thank you to all who have donated to the Mission Endowment Fund and doubled the impact.

WAYS TO GIVE BEFORE 2024 ENDS - The end of the year is the perfect time for a charitable gift that makes an impact and reduces your taxes. Whether through cash gifts, appreciated securities, IRA contributions or a gift annuity, you have powerful options to support SoJ ministries. Finish 2024 on a high note by investing in SoJ's future!



For more information on Mission Endowment Fund, visit:
spiritofjoy.net/mission-endowment-fund-2

Congregational Life

Social Justice Series: Immigration

Tuesday, December 10 | 9:30AM | sign up online: spiritofjoy.net/signups

Why does immigration matter in our society? How is immigration a social justice issue? And how does the issue of immigration concern Spirit of Joy and the church at large? Join us for a discussion led by Lutheran Social Services Center for New Americans on how the church can make a difference.

Save the Date: Tuesday, January 21 at 9:30AM

Mental Health Discussion led by SoJ partner, Deb Nelson.

Monthly Women's Rotational In-Home Fellowship

Beth Hagen's home on Monday, December 9 at 1PM. Contact Deb Stapelman with questions.

Surviving The Holidays: GriefShare

Monday, December 9 | 9:30AM

The SOJ Befrienders invite you to the final two-hour meeting about Surviving the Holidays! Learn how to honor your loved one while also navigating the holiday season. All are welcome. For more information go to GriefShare.org or contact Marilyn Gannon. Sign up at the SOJ website for the final session.

December Adult Sunday School

Sundays between services (10AM)

December 1: Sharing the Dream in Guatemala - Shop their annual pop-up shop in the Shalom Center. Lauren Vaske, Executive Director, will share with us their amazing ministry stories.

December 8: Pastor Kari Sansgaard will present on Christmas in Difficult times/Blue Christmas in the Well. Pastor Kari is a Chaplain at the Dougherty Hospice House. Bring your treats/coffee and come hear God's servant tell the beautiful story of God. Check out the SOJ website for our Sunday school scripture and discussion topics.



Thank you for supporting your high school youth group annual Lefse fundraiser!! Your time, purchases, and donations of ingredients helped us raise \$1,640. Thank you for always showing up and sharing the love of Christ to God's people.

Youth Page



9th-12th Grade

Join us for a night of fellowship and learning. Wednesday nights from 7-8pm in the youth room! Bring a friend.

December Schedule:

12/4 - Lesson

12/11 - Lesson

12/18 - Movie Night @ the Church

12/25 - NO Youth Group, Merry Christmas!

Coming in January: Bowling Night (1/22 @ 7PM)

To receive direct information/messages from the youth ministry team please:

Enter this number: 81010

Text this message: @sojyou

Parents, Middle School, and High School Youth Mental Health-Suicide Prevention | January 8 | 7PM



Suicide is a serious public/mental health concern. It is complicated and tragic but is often preventable. Join us on January 8 at 7pm for our annual winter congregational event! The focus is on suicide prevention. Chantelle Friedman, a co-founder of Live Inspired 365 and our own partner Stefanie Kummer will be sharing with us on that night. Live Inspire 365 is a non-profit organization that promotes Mental Health Awareness & Suicide Prevention through their projects & products. They have a store in Sioux Falls and give 100% of all proceeds back to support those that struggle. We all have a story and need to do our part in supporting others.



Creation Care Corner

Themes of watchfulness, preparation, and hope abound during Advent. We light candles for hope, peace, joy, and love on our Advent wreaths. The wreath is a circle, which over time came to embody Jesus' eternal victory over death, while the evergreens symbolized the faithfulness of God to God's people, even in death. The lighted candles are a reminder of the light of Christ in the world. In this Advent season and the hustle and bustle of the holidays, we will look more closely at **preparation** along with **circularity**, since this is our "jam" as your Creation Care Team. Just a reminder, a circular economy is all about designing, using, and disposing of material goods in a way that minimizes waste and maximizes resources. If you are prepared, you can celebrate, shop, and operate in a way that follows these principles. You can give gifts of time, such as volunteering. You can give gifts to ELCA Good Gifts that will have far-reaching positive impacts. You can forego plastic gift cards in favor of electronic gift cards or paper ones. If you do receive many gift cards, you can repurpose them in fun ways as there are many suggestions for this on Pinterest. Homemade gifts are always appreciated and are even better if they are made from upcycled materials. Try shopping thrift/vintage stores or using circular shopping apps.

This could be the year you try reusable fabric gift wrap, newspaper, or brown paper sacks for wrapping. However, if that is a bridge too far yet, here are some tips for recycling:

- Gift wrapping paper *is* recyclable as long as it tears/rips easily BUT it CANNOT be foil or shiny paper and it also CANNOT be recycled if it is full of glitter.
- Bows and ribbons are NOT recyclable.
- Photo paper is NOT recyclable so the Christmas card pictures you get in the mail CANNOT be recycled. Throw them away.
- Christmas cards **are** recyclable if made of paper and do NOT contain glitter, foil, metals, or other shiny material. You can repurpose the pretty fronts of the cards to frame or use to decoupage, etc.
- Garland is NOT recyclable.
- Christmas lights that do not work should be taken to the Household Hazardous Waste facility at 1015 E Chambers St and do NOT go in recycling, but please try to keep them out of your garbage and our landfills.
- Real Christmas trees and real wreaths can be taken to the Household Hazardous Waste facility or the fairgrounds (they have a drop off after Christmas) but are NOT to be put in recycling.
- If you use a lot of aluminum foil products with your baking and cooking, try to clean off as much food residue as you can (they don't have to be spotless), then roll them into a ball and place them in recycling.
- If you are eating a lot of pizza, you **can** actually recycle the boxes. A little bit of grease is okay and try to get off as much food as you can.
- If you haven't gotten into the habit of reusable shopping bags, remember to take your plastic bags to the collection bins at HyVee and Walmart and note that you can also put in: LDPE/HDPE films, newspaper sleeves, bread bags, product wrap (surrounding wrap), cereal liners, food storage bags, ice bags, pellet bags, produce bags, dry cleaning bags, grocery bags, case overwrap, packaging air pillows, and salt bags.

As always with recycling, "when in doubt, throw it out," but please try to keep single-use plastic to a minimum. We are here to help give suggestions.

And finally, real tree or artificial? If kept for at least 10 years, artificial trees are a good choice, but they are made of plastics which take thousands of years to break down, if ever. Real trees are preferable. Read this if you want more info <https://onetreepanted.org/blogs/stories/real-vs-artificial-christmas-trees>.



Spirit of Joy Preschool

Caring Community, Active Learning and Faithful Hearts

Preschool Christmas Program

Thursday, December 19 | 11AM | Shalom Center

Hear the Christmas story as shared by the preschool children. It is a cooperative program of song, art, and storytelling “Goodnight, Manger” by Laura Sassi. Together we hear the story of Jesus’ birth through the eyes of Mother Mary.

Preschool Registration for 2025-26 begins in January!

As partners in the ministry of the preschool, Spirit of Joy families are offered the opportunity to register early. Mark your calendars for January 5 to register your favorite preschoolers. Partner and sibling discounts are offered. If you would like to learn more about the preschool, visit the website for a fun video, tuition prices and an idea of the calendar year. (We closely follow the Harrisburg school district calendar.) All are welcome to attend – share a brochure from the Kiosk with friends.

Costume donations

Children's costumes are expensive. Wondering what to do with those extra and outgrown items now that the fall festivities are over? Share them with your preschool friends! Accepting sizes 3T - 6 with themes such as community workers, movie & tv characters and non-scary items only please. Examples such as construction workers, doctor, nurse, Minnie Mouse, Paw Patrol, etc. A donations box can be found in the Shalom Center through December 15. Thank you!

November Happenings





Spirit of Joy Congregational Meeting Summary

Constitution and Bylaw Amendments

- **Constitution:** C. 12.01 eliminates the requirement for a youth representative on the Leadership Team.
- **Bylaws:** Teams are renamed to align with Spirit of Joy’s Core Values. Their location in the document was changed for ease of use. And, redundant language about team makeup removed.

After discussion. Adopted unanimously.

Elections

President-Elect: Christa Henderson

Treasurer: Becky Amdahl

Extravagant Generosity: Chad Fickbohm

Bold Service: Heather Bart

Nominating Committee: Brian Oyen, Tracy Dahl-Webb, Marcy Colwell, Jan Campbell, Michele Vogel

Endowment Committee: Ron Risty

No additional nominations. All were elected unanimously.

Mission Plan (Budget)

Spirit of Joy - 2025 Budget At A Glance

	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	Changes
INCOME:				
General Offering	\$ 801,678.00	\$ 654,176.24	\$ 760,000.00	\$ (41,678.00)
Preschool Income	\$ 51,678.00	\$ 30,631.33	\$ 45,000.00	\$ (6,678.00)
Debt Reduction Reallocation	-		\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Total Income	\$ 853,356.00	\$ 684,807.57	\$ 905,000.00	\$ 51,644.00
EXPENSES:				
Salaries	\$ 417,615.00	\$ 322,315.24	\$ 403,595.68	\$ (14,019.32)
Allowances	\$ 187,874.00	\$ 150,537.76	\$ 193,306.00	\$ 5,432.00
Benevolence	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 102,837.15	\$ 129,000.00	\$ (21,000.00)
Ministry Resources	\$ 100,010.00	\$ 124,328.25	\$ 140,360.00	\$ 40,350.00
Worship	\$ 10,500.00	\$ 11,306.01	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 500.00
Hospitality	\$ 7,165.00	\$ 7,274.14	\$ 12,160.00	\$ 4,995.00
Growth	\$ 38,850.00	\$ 29,433.50	\$ 38,250.00	\$ (600.00)
Preschool	\$ 5,305.00	\$ 2,755.74	\$ 5,320.00	\$ 15.00
Total Expenses	\$ 917,319.00	\$ 750,787.79	\$ 932,991.68	\$ 15,672.68
NET INCOME:	\$ (63,963.00)	\$ (65,980.22)	\$ (27,991.68)	\$ 35,971.32

After discussion. Adopted unanimously.

Spirit of Joy Leadership Team Meeting Minutes



October 17, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.



New Business

A. **2025 Budget Process:** Congregation Meeting will occur on Sunday, November 17th after ONE service. Budget Transparency Meeting will be Tuesday, Oct. 29th. We will push hard to get many participants. Pr. Eric will work with staff and Chris Mutchler to develop a way to gather feedback regarding the budget, including these 5 areas:

Building Fund: Pause Debt Reduction Campaigns? Utilize funds in Building Savings for Maintenance and Repair?

Real Estate: Sell the west “sledding hill”? Sell the driveway on Western?

Preschool: Continue operation? Lease space to outside user?

Staffing

Benevolence: Continue with 20%? Other total percentage? If so, how to allocate between ministry partners and the South Dakota Synod?

III. Meeting Review and Lord’s Prayer: The meeting was adjourned following the Lord’s Prayer.

Next Leadership Team Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 14 at 6:30 p.m.

Church Office closed

December 25-27 & January 1st

Year-End Giving. Any gift that you would like to be reflected in your 2024 giving must be in the Spirit of Joy office by end of day on Monday, December 30. We’d love to have any remaining 2025 Commitment Cards in the office by the end of 2024! Thank you for your continued support of the mission and ministry of Spirit of Joy.

