

WINDSWEEP

DECEMBER 2020



Birth: Preparing for the Unknown

A couple weeks ago we threw an impromptu curbside baby shower for an 18-year-old woman who was due to give birth within weeks and who had “absolutely nothing” for her baby. I heard about this young mother through a local colleague, who heard about her through our mission partner Church on the Street, and then within days a handful of young Spirit of Joy families filled up my Subaru Outback with baby essentials. Because sometimes that’s how the Holy Spirit works.

As I drove away from the woman’s apartment, I thought of my own baby showers, just a few months back. There were stark differences, to be sure, not least of which because mine occurred before COVID changed everything.

What struck me most, in my reflections, were the similarities. I may not have had a curbside baby shower in the literal sense, but I was equally dependent on the generosity and wisdom of the community. Nearly everything Anja uses and wears is a gift. Most of her clothes are hand-me-downs, as are many of her favorite bouncers and toys. Even our baby registries themselves were a gift: I had hosted two friends for an evening to walk me through what, exactly, the mysterious creature brewing in me would expect to have in her house, and with each item I clicked “Add to Registry.”

Though I am literally twice the age of this new mother, save for a few extra years’ babysitting experience under my belt, she and I probably entered motherhood with similar degrees of cluelessness. Weeks before Anja was born I asked Jon, in a panic, what type of toothbrush he thought we should buy for her. He gently reassured me that our baby probably wouldn’t come out with teeth.

Birth is like that, isn’t it? It’s always unknown. It’s always panic-inducing. It is always, by definition, uncharted territory. It throws all prior expertise and expectations out the window. It makes us utterly dependent on the wisdom of elders and the care of the community.

And so it is this Advent season, this season of preparation for the birth of the Christ child. It’s an Advent like no other: the culmination of a whole year of laboring through a global pandemic, racial uprisings, the ongoing climate crisis, and a historically divisive presidential election. We need new birth. Meanwhile the birthing is painful.

May we seek out and receive the gifts we need for this birth and the new life it will bring: the wisdom of elders, the care of the community, and the familiar songs and story of Advent and Christmas. God’s peace be yours this Advent.

In hope,
Pastor Christy



Just as I sat down to write these words, I received word that the young mother is in labor. By the time you read these words, Lord willing, she will be holding her healthy baby girl.



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December Worship Schedule

You may worship online via our YouTube channel. Watch your email each Sunday morning for a link to that service or visit our YouTube page. **Children of Joy** will remain virtual until further notice.

- ◆ December 6, 13, 20 online Sundays - Children of Joy Christmas program will be part of the Sunday, December 20 online worship service. Thanks to the many families who participated!
- ◆ Holden Evening Prayer online Wednesdays during Advent
- ◆ Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Worship times and sign-ups **coming soon**
- ◆ December 27 - Service of Christmas Lessons & Carols on Zoom, watch for the link



Financials through October 31, 2020

Checking Account:

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| General Fund | \$34,825.57 |
| Building Fund | \$89,408.31 |
| Donor Restricted | \$70,080.50 |
| Sunday School | \$999.03 |
| Reserve Fund | \$4,360.10 |
| Petty Cash | \$200.00 |

Savings Accounts:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Building | \$359,528.30 |
| <u>Donor Restricted</u> | <u>\$69,514.27</u> |
| Total Cash Balance | \$628,916.08 |

| | October 2018 | October 2019 | October 2020 |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Attendance | 1797 | 1921 | ??? |
| General Offering | \$ 43,133.38 | \$ 47,259.90 | \$ 36,511.35 |
| Building Offering | \$ 10,018.53 | \$ 400,081.32 | \$ 76,908.31 |

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Year-to-date Income for Ministry | \$473,183.19 |
| <u>Year-to-date Expenses for Ministry</u> | <u>\$507,907.82</u> |
| Net Income/Deficit for Ministry | \$(34,724.63) |

Capital Campaign Totals

Pledged: \$2,478,485
 Received as of October 31, 2020: \$1,582,779.62

Spirit of Joy Leadership Team Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

I. Unfinished Business

A. Building Expansion

1. Pay Application #8 November 2020: Jodi Hanson moved and Michelle Stanek seconded to approve the payment of \$335,701.35 as noted on the Application and Certificate for Payment from Journey Group Companies (Invoice #201101-08). Motion carried.
2. Move in Day to New Offices-November 9th: Discussed other items that have been completed or are nearly completed in the new building.

B. Reopening Church Building Update:

1. November: The Reopening Task Force still recommends no in-person worship at this time due to an increase in the number of cases.
2. Advent and Christmas: Discussed potential for multiple Christmas services with limited sign-up seating.

C. Coordinator of Communications: Discussed job requirements and compensation. An interview team will interview a qualified applicant within the next week.

II. New Business

A. Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Bankruptcy Impact on Chartering Organizations: Motion by Jodi Hanson and seconded by Carole Chell for Pastor Jeff Eisele to contact a lawyer to get a Proof of Claim regarding the BSA bankruptcy. Motion carried.

B. Letter of resignation from Deacon Katherine Eisele. Discussed ways to thank, honor, and bless her for her service to SoJ.

C. Youth Ministry Leader: Jon Splichal Larson will be leaving his position as Interim Coordinator of High School Faith Formation. He has recommended an Augustana University student as a short-term replacement. Motion by Lori Tripp and seconded by Jodi Hanson to approve a team to interview an Interim Youth Ministry Leader and if deemed acceptable, the team is authorized to make an offer between \$15-20 per hour for up to 20 hours per week. Motion carried.

D. November benevolence: Michelle Stanek moved and Sarah Manthey seconded to approve the following benevolence payments. Motion carried.

Lutheran Church of Nicaragua \$1000; ILFE Missionary Support \$1000; St. Dysmas \$1000; Pueblo de Dios \$2000
Horace Mann Elementary School \$800; Charis Ministry (for turkeys) \$270

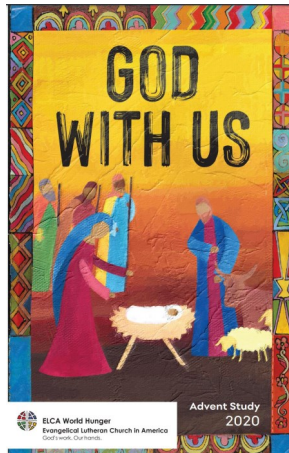
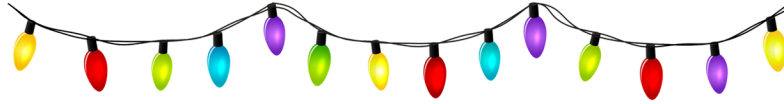
E. 2021 Mission Plans for Congregation Ministry, Building and Preschool: A line item review of the Mission Plan was completed. Motion by Lori Tripp and seconded by Jodi Hanson to approve the 2021 budget proposal for \$750,819.97. Motion carried.

F. Annual Fall Congregational Meeting Agenda-Sunday, November 22nd at 9:00 a.m.: Motion by Lori Tripp and seconded by Jodi Hanson to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

1. Second vote on congregation constitution
2. Election of leadership team
3. 2021 mission plans/budgets for congregation ministry, building and preschool

*Next Leadership Team Meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, December 3 at 6:30 p.m.***

Faith Formation This Month



“God With Us” ~ Our 2020 All-Congregation Advent Read
It’s not too late to enjoy and ponder this rich resource. It is available by download here: [“God With Us” Devotional](#). You can also pick up a hard copy at either door at church. We will enjoy time in conversation about the very short weekly readings every Sunday morning at 10:30 am via ZOOM. You can find the link to that meeting on your Constant Contact Sunday morning email. You can join any Sunday, even if you have not joined previously. All are welcome.

Are YOU Taking the Advent Challenge?

You may not wish for one more “challenge” in this year. But THIS challenge is a good one. I promise!



Use the Taking Faith Home Resource for the Advent Challenge (emailed to you every Sunday morning). Daily, (or regularly) share highs and lows with your family, your spouse, or a friend. Read the Scripture for the week, and finally pray the prayer of the week and share the blessing of the week. [Click here for an easy to follow instruction sheet.](#)

Milestones News ~ Anniversary of Baptism—January 10, 2021

Do you have a baby/child who was baptized at Spirit of Joy in 2020? Every year, on the day we celebrate Jesus’ baptism, we celebrate the baptisms of all baptized in the previous year.



Watch for more on the worship service on January 10, 2021 – whether virtual or gathered together in person, we will bless these children and their parents. The Growth Team will be distributing gifts for the children’s Faith Chests (and bathtubs!). God bless you and your children as you “live wet” in the promises given at Holy Baptism!

Deacon Katherine Eisele | family@spiritofjoy.net | 333-2004

Ministry Moments



This is God's Word for YOU!

Twelve 3rd graders and their parents participated in our Bible Milestone this past month. For two Sundays we gathered together over a ZOOM meeting, explored their new Whirl Bibles (NRSV), learned how to look up verses and practiced doing just that. And much more. Their homework now is to look up a number of verses in their new Bibles, (some of the dearest to Christians) and to place a star on those verses. If you know a 3rd grader at Spirit of Joy, please ask them how that's going! A special thank you to Mary Tranberg who co-taught with me.



*Top left to right: Elijah, Reece, Kendall & Taylor, Zoey, Brady
Bottom left to right: Beckett, Evan, Macklin, Max & Sid, Haley*

May God bless these children and their families as they lean into God's Word for strength, wisdom, encouragement, and peace. Deacon Katherine Eisele

Sounds of the Season

Virtual Advent and Christmas Celebrations

Among the great treasures in our church are the ELCA's colleges and universities, several of which are within five hours of Sioux Falls. Each Advent thousands of students at these institutions present Advent proclamations that, for me, literally prepare the way for the coming of Christ. I have had the good fortune of being blessed by these sacred events since my youth. Particularly thrilling was to sing in Christmas concerts as a college student and to attend Christmas Vespers when my daughters and husband were involved. These concerts provide more than music; each is rich worship in song and word. They are gifts to the soul.

Unfortunately this year these Advent and Christmas celebrations cannot be in-person events, but the good news is that there are virtual options that can be viewed in the comfort of our own homes. Several Spirit of Joy partners share their musical talents, so watch carefully! You will be amazed by their talents!

In a year when we wander in the wilderness and yearn for hope, thirst for justice and long for healing, I urge you to be nurtured by the beautiful promises of God in any or all of these events. Check out the links below. Note that registration is required for some events.

[Augustana Christmas Vespers](#)

[Augsburg Advent Vespers](#)

[Gustavus Adolphus Christmas in Christ Chapel](#)

[Concordia College Christmas Concert](#)

[Christmas at Luther](#)

[St. Olaf Christmas Festival](#)

In Advent hope,
Deacon Susan



Serving Opportunities

Hurricane Response

The South Dakota Synod of the ELCA supports The Faith and Hope Lutheran Church of Nicaragua and a missionary, Rev. Dra. Claudia Soliette López Ortega. Rev. Claudia Soliette Lopez Ortega joined us on our Zoom Congregational meeting last month to give us an update on the situation in Nicaragua. She described the devastation in the region, including loss of life, property and crops.



We invite you to consider a donation to support our sisters and brothers in Nicaragua. The link below will take you to the ELCA website where you can find more information and donate.

<https://sdsynod.org/seeds-for-nicaragua/>

The Banquet

Spirit of Joy Partners volunteered at The Banquet West last month.



Necessities for Neighbors

Donations will be distributed by volunteers on Sunday, December 6. Thank you for your generosity!





Spirit of Joy Preschool



Preschool Happenings!

We have been having a great time in preschool this fall. We are grateful for the warm weather and healthy children in our care. We have been able to go for many garden walks and to enjoy signs of fall.

The Bike-a-Thon was the show-stopper this fall. Children were able to bring bikes to preschool to participate. Bikes were decorated with flags and crepe paper to give them a festive look. Because the old sanctuary was free of chairs, we were given permission to ride laps in the space. Many laps were ridden- over 100 laps were completed by one child to support the preschool ministry. Special thanks to all who assisted and support the preschool in a variety of ways. Our total for the event was \$1,753.00- \$253 beyond our goal. THANK YOU.

The preschool team is already preparing for next fall with open registration beginning January 5 for current preschool families and SOJ Partners. New friends and families can register beginning January 11. Watch for a preschool video in your inbox soon. Details about registration as well as scenes from a day in the life of preschoolers. Share the video with neighbors and friends. Invite them to call for more information. The preschool staff would love to meet them. *Your help promoting the preschool makes a difference.*

“Love Your Neighbor” Projects

As a part of our curriculum, preschoolers are offered an age-appropriate service option each month. Last month, children handcrafted over thirty-five Thanksgiving cards for residents of a nursing care facility. The colors were bright and messages kind.

Art creations were also shared at La Luna Café in downtown Sioux Falls. Children’s watercolor paintings were hung to help decorate for the restaurant. They looked fabulous in the restaurant. The children were happy to share their art with others!

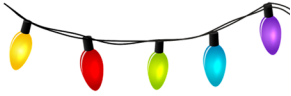


[Facebook.com/spiritofjoypreschool](https://www.facebook.com/spiritofjoypreschool)

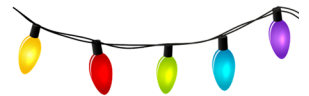
Visit the SOJ Preschool Facebook page to see more about our daily events.

Welcome New Partners

We welcomed seven new households as ministry partners during a November Discovery Class via Zoom.



We asked each of them, "Why Spirit of Joy?"



Jason & Maija Lovro
Jack, Kate

We were looking for a congregation that was close to home and the right spot for our children to expand their faith education with other kids in their school district. From the moment we walked in the front door for our first worship service, we felt welcomed with an abundance of hospitality. As we continued weekly worship, listened to the message and learned more about the church and the leadership, we knew that Spirit of Joy was the right spot for our family.

Nancy Olson & Bill Beddow

Warm Hospitality of the Pastors and Congregation



Bob Preloger

It is an open, welcoming congregation.



Dan & Kelli Rogotzke
Emerson

The welcoming community at Spirit of Joy made it easy for us to feel like we were at home! It was important to us to have ways for Emerson to be involved at a young age. We enjoy little lambs!



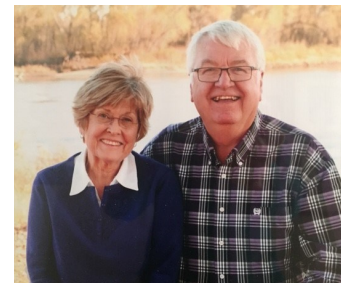
Rick & Lori Voss

We were introduced to Spirit of Joy by our son and his family. When we moved to Sioux Falls, it was the logical choice. However, over time, we have found it to be a place where we felt at home.



Ron & Lois Walpole

We have visited many times and always enjoyed the welcoming fellowship, the uplifting service and music, and the celebration of children and youth.



Nathan & Nicole Welsh
Jackson, Declan

We immediately felt at home. The whole family enjoys the service, pastors and congregation.



Many Thanks...



Roughly one year ago I joined with the Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church community as your Interim Coordinator of High School Faith Formation. I've taken great pride in having by far the longest title of any staff member. Ha! I am sincerely grateful for

this opportunity to serve with you and to follow Christ together. I'm especially grateful for the awesome young people (high schoolers and their families in particular) and the gifted staff. What a blessing SOJ is for many people!

As my lengthy title says, I am an *interim* staff member, meaning temporary. And, now my time in this position has come to an end. As an ordained pastor in the ELCA, I continue to be open to call, and as of this fall I am serving as Interim Pastor at St. John Lutheran Church in Madison, SD. It's been a full plate, but a very good one, too.

My sincere "Thanks" to all of you for serving together. Ministry in the midst of a pandemic is different; not something any of us anticipated. It altered many of our plans, including high school ministry, most notably cancelation of two summer trips and the suspension of indoor in-person youth group. But, we adapted and worked to stay connected.

I'm also excited for you, SOJ, as my departure allows for the addition of a new staff member. Madeline Trosvig has accepted the call to serve in the same capacity. She brings many gifts, experiences, and passion to ministry at SOJ. I'm so grateful for her coming on board as I conclude my time with you.

Thank you again for your support of high school youth ministry and the entire ministry of this congregation. Thank you for your faithfulness and outreach in the larger community. May God bless you in this Advent and Christmas

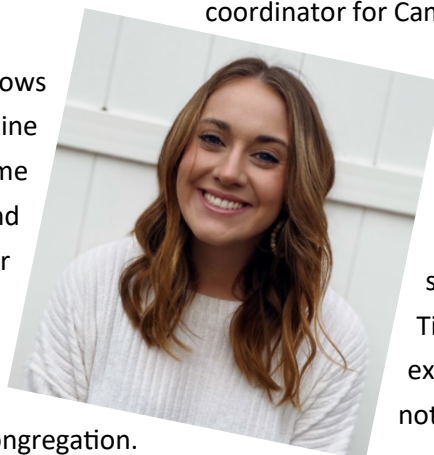
season as we welcome Jesus again into our lives and into this church. Thank you, Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church.

~ Pastor Jon Splichal Larson

Hello Spirit of Joy! I am Madeline Trosvig and I am taking on the Coordinator of High School Faith Formation position here at Spirit of Joy.

I was born and raised in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. I am the oldest of three girls. My sister, Annie, is a sophomore in high school and my youngest sister, Tessa, is in eighth grade. My mother works at the veterans home as a recreational therapist and my father owns his own one-man construction company—Minnesota Custom Construction.

Currently, I am a sophomore at Augustana University (Skol Baby!) and am double majoring in Classics and Religion. My hopes for the future include attending seminary and working in ministry. I was very active as a youth member at my home church and have been a camp counselor for two summers now—this past summer being at Shetek Lutheran Ministries! I also serve as the publicity coordinator and a Bible study coordinator for Campus Ministry at Augie.



Some of my hobbies and passions include anything to do with Minnesota lake-life, music, working out, calligraphy, synchronized swimming, gathering with loved ones, Tiger King, tea, and traveling! I am so excited for this opportunity and can not wait to grow in this community!

~ Madeline Trosvig

Many Thanks...



We received this testimonial through Charis Ministries and Food to You. The words came from a patron who received food through a recent Food to You gathering. We are grateful for the ways SoJ partners support Food to You and Charis Ministries with time and financial gifts from our budget. These gifts matter!”

I want to give you all a huge thank you and express my gratitude.

It’s been at least 5 years since I’ve used any food pantry or community assistance. I have worked hard to maintain my home and life and know I’m blessed to have what I do. Even through the close-downs at the beginning of the year, I managed to maintain work mostly.

However, as life is a never ending series of ups and downs, my luck has changed recently. I have been in a jobless limbo for over a month and with a husband who’s career is in hotel maintenance (work has been greatly effected but steady enough to not qualify for assistance), our savings and ramen supply was basically depleted.

I didn’t expect much when I pulled into your parking lot just days before Thanksgiving, I even cried a little because I was scared and confused about the process of where to park or what I should be doing. But I found you on google and needed help.

When I pulled up to the front of your church, the kindness in the woman’s voice who took my information made me feel welcomed and calmer as we joked about face masks, and the interaction, while brief, made me feel better. I didn’t see what was put into the back while we chatted, but I drove off feeling uplifted as the surrounding volunteers sent me off with positive well wishes.

And then I got home and saw how much there was! And the first thing I said as my husband approached me was “we have a turkey!” And as he put things away, our amazement only grew by the quality of items provided.

I cannot express what your donation has meant to us: it truly has impacted our lives. Our kitchen has not been this full nor had this many options of actual meals to cook in the 10 years of being together. Nutritious choices and real options.... I’m still in awe.

Not only did you give us meals and options, but you gave us hope. Memories (This was the first time either of us had even cooked a turkey, and our first Thanksgiving dinner we’ve cooked at home in the 10 years of being together). That wouldn’t have happened without you.

Thank you for doing what you do.

