

WIND SWEPT

Monthly Newsletter

February 2026

The Holy Spirit Is Moving

February is one of those, what I would call, in-between times. Across the South Dakotan prairie, we're used to wildly changing weather patterns. This month also inspires hope for what rests beneath the frozen ground. Bulbs. Roots. Growth. I can't wait for spring to blossom at SoJ!

We are only one month into 2026, but much has happened for God's people. Too many folks are crying out and hurting. Suffering seems to be the new norm with discord in our government, violence on our streets and the winter blues in our hearts. We all have special ones in our circles for whom pain is raw – family feuding, victims of abuse and hate crimes, the unhoused, hungry children and food insecurity. As a community, we continue to pray for healing and peace. Come, Holy Spirit, come! Hear our laments!

Every year now since Valentine's Day 2017, I grieve the anniversary of my dad, Gary's death. He was in home hospice the last week of his life. I will cherish our final conversations until he no longer had strength to speak. Dad reassured me he was ready to go. He talked openly about God and his faith... things I had never heard him say. From birth until he was 76 years old, the Iowa farm boy lived next door to a little country church named Zion Lutheran-Jubilee.

This month as we look back at another year of living out our faith in service to the Lord, what will you remember about 2025? What tasks on your to-do lists did you accomplish, or not? What were your joys and sorrows? How did you daily take care of yourself and others? What fears have followed you into the future?

As your pastor, I will continue to pray for the Great Wind Spirit to abide and accompany us. This flock is amazing in how we carry out our collective call to be Jesus' disciples. Between ministering to all ages, connecting with our nine Featured Ministry Partners and being gentle with each other, our holy mission work is inclusive and welcoming! SoJ's Strategic Visioning project has begun. Watch for opportunities to engage with your ideas and voices! On Sunday, February 8th at 10am, our Congregational Meeting will be held. Please join us.

In these bitter cold days, remember you are not alone. Feel the warmth of the body of Christ surrounding you with love. Together, we breathe in awe and wonder of God's glorious creation.

"Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." -Joshua 1:9



~ Pastor Dayna

Strategic Visioning @ SoJ

Initial Interviews are underway and we have greater clarity about what we're trying to accomplish for Spirit of Joy. Review our core values. Understand what work still needs to be done from our 2016-17 visioning process. And, get clear with the people of Spirit of Joy what our dreams are for the future of our congregation so that we can articulate that vision and create the goals that will help us achieve it.

You have received in your email a brief survey that is limited to understanding the nine (9) goals that emerged from the 2016-17 Strategic Trail Map. After the interview and survey phase of our work we will begin to understand your input and shape a series of cottage meetings to take place on Wednesdays at 7pm at Spirit of Joy (we hope we have to add more times because so many of you want to participate!). **Visit spiritofjoy.net/signups.**

**Complete the survey sent to your email during the week of January 18th.
Or, sign up in the Gathering Space at SoJ.**



Initial Cottage Meeting Times

**Wed, Feb. 25th at 7pm
Wed, March 4th at 7pm
Wed, March 11th at 7pm
Wed, March 18th at 7pm
Wed, March 25th at 7pm**

Timeline

December 2025– Team Formation and Information Gathering
Jan-Mar– Information Gathering (Individual Interviews, Survey, and Cottage Meetings)
Mar-April– Congregation Wide Visioning Retreat
April-May: Formulation of Findings and Recommendations
Summer-Fall 2026: Implementation

What's Happening in Worship @ SoJ

Welcome to "What's Happening in Worship @ Spirit of Joy" where each month Pr. Dayna and I will explore our themes for worship, explain some of our common threads (and what is a common thread), and highlight a piece or two of our intentionality in worship at Spirit of Joy.

Every season and every service are undertaken with special care and intention. Pr. Dayna and I work on some possible common threads individually. Then, we gather with worship staff to talk through and tighten those proposals before bringing them to the Worship Team. Worship Team chooses a theme and 3-5 pieces that unite each service through a season. Then, it goes to Visual Arts and back to us to bring their ideas to life.



February bridges the seasons from Epiphany to Lent. Our theme for Epiphany is "Exposed". Each week we are looking at ways that Jesus was "exposed" as child of God, prophet, and Messiah through the readings of the season. The Old Testament readings all contain references to light, so our central decoration is the lighted cross. We are dimming lights at the beginning of worship to symbolize our movement from darkness to light, but all the while lights glow forth from the cross wall pointing us towards the truths that were exposed in that place. God's love. Human cruelty.

For Lent, our theme is "Free. Accountable." Our temptation as Lutherans, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, is to proclaim 'cheap grace'. He defined that as forgiveness without repentance, accountability, or expectation. On Sundays, you'll hear only the writings from the epistles of the New Testament and the proclamation of God's grace for all. On Wednesdays, we'll worship in a Taizé (simple and repetitive) style while focusing on Martin Luther's call to return to daily to our baptismal calling and the promises made there.

On Sundays, our worship will include both the Thanksgiving for Baptism from All Creation Sings Setting 11 and the most traditional of our Confession and Forgiveness liturgies from Evangelical Lutheran Worship. The one tweak you'll notice is that the absolution of sins is held until the close of the communion liturgy as a declaration that our eating and drinking are part of the means of grace and the real experience of taking in God's forgiveness as heavenly food. In addition to the Baptism and Forgiveness rituals we will bring back an SoJ favorite, "Give Thanks". In the past we've sung the whole and isolated a chorus. This time we'll meet in the middle as we sing the whole, but without the repeats.

Ash Wednesday at Spirit of Joy is always a night of special blessing as we gather in community to acknowledge our sins and prepare ourselves for a season of repentance. This year will be very traditional with the extended Confession and Forgiveness, a sung liturgy, the Imposition of Ashes, and Holy Communion.

Outreach Opportunities

Tied to SoJ's Purpose: "...to *SEND* out one another as Jesus' compassionate servants in the world," are its Featured Ministry Partners. Each program year (September-May) is to align with nine Partners. This month, the featured Ministry Partner is



Lutheran Social Services (LSS) has been serving our state since 1920. Their vision is "that all people in South Dakota will be healthy, safe, and accepted." The organization offers a range of services to meet God's people where they are. The professional staff and volunteers (including a handful of SoJ partners) work together as the body of Christ. LSS focuses on building relationships, strengthening family bonds and creating opportunities for success. The Center for New Americans has been a favorite ministry of SoJ for the past years. Their main goal is to surround immigrants and refugees with care in all aspects of daily living. Folks visit the Center knowing they will find what they need. A new addition to LSS is a food pantry that specializes in ethnic foods. There are many ways to get involved with LSS as a Partner.



Bring donations of fullsize TOOTHPASTE & DEODORANT to church for the distribution

Necessities for Neighbors Distribution

Sunday, February 1
2:00 - 4:15 p.m.



[SIGN UP ONLINE](#)

family fun night

5:30-8PM

ON THE ROAD...
TO BEING ME

Friday, February 6



* Camp-Style Worship *

* Bible Story * Craft * Pizza *

* Bounce House *

Service Project: LSS Collection

sign up online:
spiritofjoy.net/signups

1. **Bring milk or juice bottle lids for our car wheels!** Find the collection box outside Miss Michele's office. Please drink your milk and donate the lids!!!!

2. **Participate in the collection for LSS.** We are gathering shelf stable food items for new neighbors from Guatemala. These items include:

- Black beans
- Rice
- chicken bouillon
- tomato sauce or paste
- shelf-stable corn tortillas
- hot sauce.

3. **Register today for Family Fun Night today!**

Sign up online: spiritofjoy.net/signups

Spirit of Joy



Happy
HOUR

@ Jack Rose

February 9, 5:30-7:00
69th and Western

Join us for some adult time with food, drinks, and conversation.

HELLO THERE!

MY NAME IS

**INTERESTED IN
DEVELOPING A SMALL
GROUP?**

**JUST WANT TO GET TO
KNOW MORE PEOPLE
AT SOJ?**

**KIDS AT FAITH
FORMATION AND YOU
DON'T KNOW WHAT
TO DO?**

SOJ

**7PM WEDNESDAYS
JAN 7-FEB 11**

MCNALLY'S IRISH PUB

**JOIN PR. ERIC FOR
INTRODUCTIONS,
CONVERSATION, AND
A CHANCE TO DEEPEN
CONNECTIONS**

Resignation of Tori Rasmussen

It is with great joy for her time among us and great sadness for her departure that we announce the resignation of Tori Rasmussen, Coordinator of High School Faith Formation. We ask that you would join us as we say thank you and goodbye to Tori over the next month.

Her position will be posted Feb. 1. Leadership Team has identified filling this opening as a top priority before summer. And, we have a plan for an Interim, if we do not have a new staff person by March 1.

Feb. 22nd: Tori's Last Sunday

Tori will preach and lead Children's Time. The congregation will share a blessing with her and present her with a gift.

Feb. 25th: Youth Group Sending Party

Youth Group students will be invited for their own brief blessing as we share special treats and say our goodbyes.



February Calendar - Join Us!

Wednesday nights at 8PM

- 4th - Youth Group
- 11th - Youth Group
- 18th - No Youth Group - Ash Wednesday
- 25th - Goodbye Party for Tori

Join the SoJ Text List

Stay updated on all Spirit of Joy happenings and never miss an event.

Scan QR for more information and to sign up



Reply STOP to unsubscribe or HELP for help. 5 msgs per month, Msg&Data rates may apply.



Find SoJ on Podpoint or where you find your favorite podcasts



Faith Formation



Adult Sunday School

This year's adult education will follow closely with our Bible in a Year Program. Each week will be an independent overview of an entire book or books of the Bible. Come regularly.



- Feb 1- LSS
- Feb. 8 - Congregation Meeting
- Feb. 15 - Psalms
- Feb. 22 - Proverbs
- March 1 - CoTS

Brewed Theology | Monday, 2/16 7PM @ Jack Rose Social

Divided Times: Grounded in Gratitude

**BREW
EDTHE
OLOGY**

If you've recently heard, said, or thought, "We're just so divided right now," you're not alone. There is a strong sense that what divides us as Americans (and beyond) is stronger than what unites us. Divisions are highlighted on mainstream and social medias, and the number of topics that are taboo to talk about in public (or even with friends and family) seems to be growing, as does resentment of "the other." But then again: are we really? Disagreements surely abound and are emphasized. But when we break down what people really want, and what we deeply care about, isn't it often the same things? And

what does our faith say about all of this?

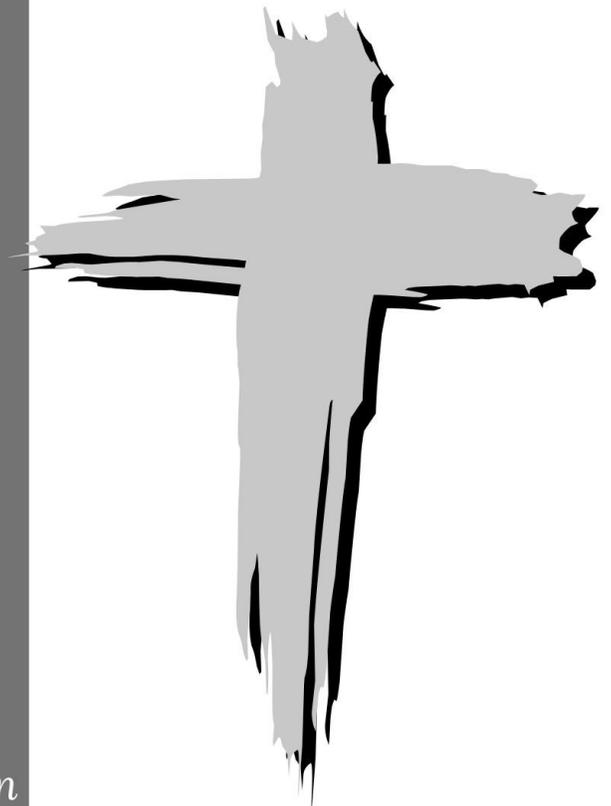
Find more information and the pre-reading at spiritofjoy.net/signups.

**ASH
WEDNESDAY**

February 18

5:30 & 7:00 PM

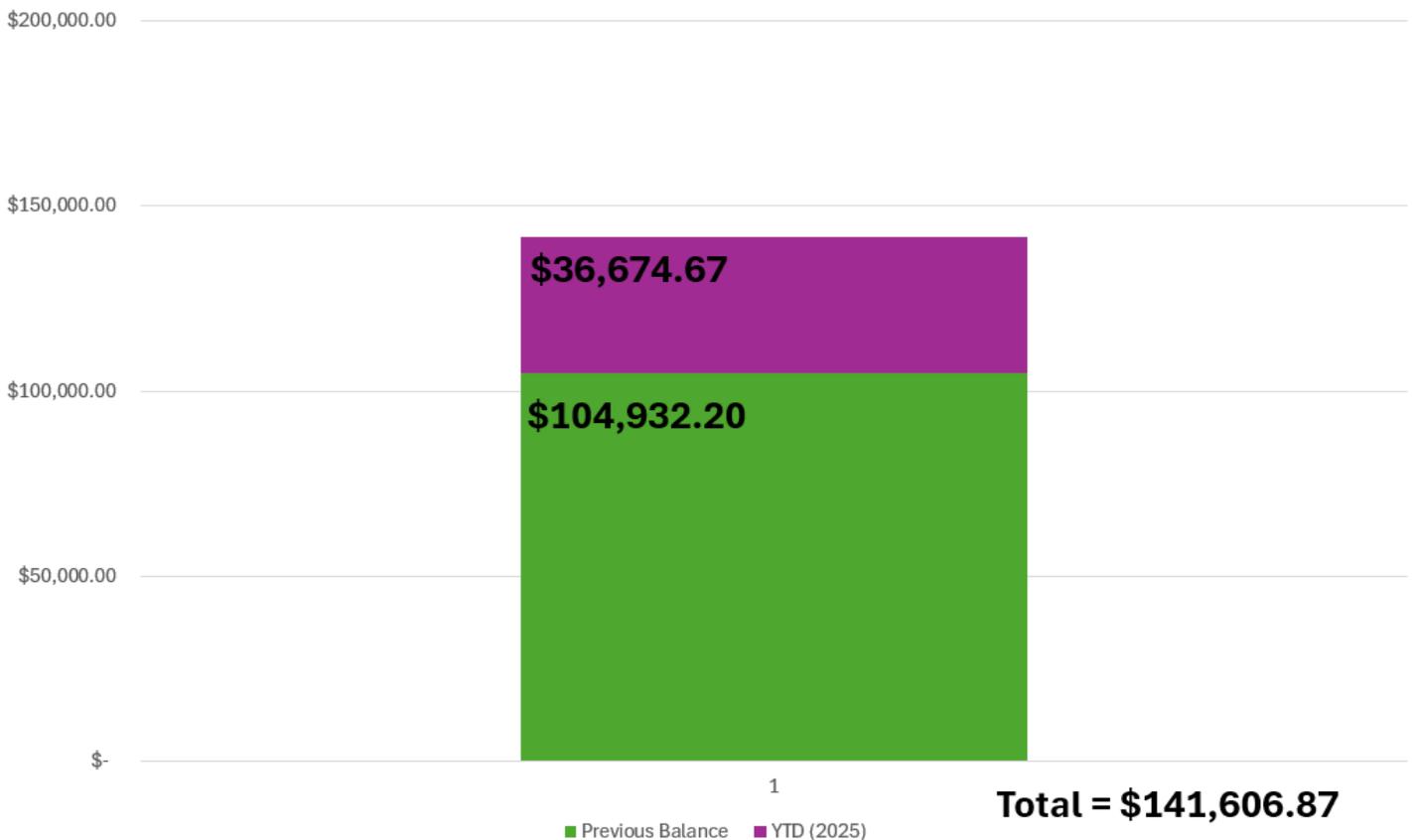
No Faith Formation





Our Mission Endowment Fund assets are managed within the ELCA Ministry Growth Fund. The ELCA was selected because their mission and values matched those of SoJ, they pledged socially responsible investing, they provided an impartial third party and they offered gift planning services. The overall ELCA Ministry Growth Fund returned 16.5% in 2025 which was in line with their targeted benchmarks. Please consider investing now in SoJ's future!

Mission Endowment Fund Balance



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

Creation Care Corner



I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” *John 13:34-35*

February is a month for lovers, or so it would seem that’s what the stores tell us. Have you ever received or written a love letter? Do you even write letters anymore? In biblical times, letter writing was an essential way of communicating for the early Christian church. The New Testament contains numerous letters written by apostles and other leaders to individuals and other churches. And in the ancient world, letters were the main form of long-distance communication.

Nowadays, you may not write as many (or any?) letters, but they are still important. Recently, the Creation Care Team met to write letters to berry companies encouraging them to change their practices around the use of plastic clamshell packaging (as these are not recyclable). Letter writing is still an effective way to make your point. In fact, composing letters to companies to demand accountability is an effective way to influence companies and corporations to “do business better” -- for the people and the planet.

We want to share some tips with you on writing letters to corporations:

- Think of products that you use and companies you frequent. Would you like to see less plastic in the packaging? Would you like to see less water used when making the product? Do you want to see less damage to forests and the land while making the product? Do you want to see better conditions for the workers? Do you want a buyback program or more of a circular manufacturing process than linear (i.e., reusable)?
- Research the company and their practices. Then research who and where it is best to send the letter: The CEO? The head of manufacturing? Use their name when possible.
- Start with a personal appeal. State how much you love their product. State why this subject matters to you and why it should matter to them and to others.
- State the problem and use facts to back up your statements. Highlight problems, i.e., toxic chemicals, pollution, worker safety, environmental impacts, etc. If you can show how these changes would help the bottom line or profits in the long-term, you probably earn bonus points.
- Call for action by stating what you want the company to do. Offer solutions and ideas that would make the product more in line with sustainability and a circular economy.
- Remember the power of positivity! If you know of a company doing good things, thank them for that and encourage them to keep doing good. Also, spread the word about this company and their products.

You can type your letters or hand write them, or you can do a combination of both where you put your personal statement in your own handwriting. If you get stuck, just search “writing letters to companies to get them to quit using plastic packaging” and you will find help. We can make a difference TOGETHER. Also, check out PIRG at pirg.org (the Public Interest Network and their Beyond Plastic section) as they are frequently sending letters to companies regarding decreasing and eliminating plastic waste. Similarly, check out the Plastic Pollution Coalition. Let us continue to be actionable together and be the change we want to see in the world.





SPIRIT OF JOY PRESCHOOL

Caring Community • Active Learning • Faithful Hearts

A Community of Trust

Spirit of Joy Preschool is more than early childhood education. Partners and visitors have told me time and again that they experience a faith-filled community of support at Spirit of Joy. A place that offers invitation, hope, and accompaniment through big and small moments in life. What a wonderful testimony to this congregation- what a wonderful place to bring young children!

Preschool registration has already begun for Fall 2026 and we have hit the ground running with ten registrations expected/received at this time. Friends and families are returning to the preschool year over year, some for the fourth time. We have heard excited phrases like “This is our year to come, we have been waiting” and loving comments like “I don’t want to leave here (for a new school).” Thank you for your support in making this possible.

When someone you know and trust recommends something, it makes a difference. Please consider sharing your preschool with friends, families, colleagues and neighbors. It’s easy! Grab and give a preschool brochure (found on the Kiosk or the Preschool Bulletin Board), share the preschool video on Spirit of Joy’s webpage, join the preschool Facebook page. (facebook.com/spiritofjoypreschool) Tours are scheduled daily, registration forms & class offerings can be located online. All are welcome - encourage your friends to visit today.

**Be sure to let us know about the referral for discounts on tuition and other benefits.*

REGISTER TODAY

Soj website or Contact Amy Cauble (amy.spiritofjoy@gmail.com)

THANK YOU For Your Support!

“Merry Christmas” wishes were extra sweet this season with cards created by Spirit of Joy Preschoolers. They worked hard creating unique and personal artwork. The children are so proud of their contribution to preschool. Cards were sold to both partners and preschool families raising \$1,417.22 towards operating costs of the preschool. Thank you!



We look forward to February! Here are a few of our plans:

Preschool Conferences, Dental Health Month, Chapel Time with SOJ Staff & Friends, Friendship Party and a Beach Party! Watch the preschool facebook page for fun photos! [Facebook.com/spiritofjoypreschool](https://www.facebook.com/spiritofjoypreschool)

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, February 8 | 10AM



We will review our ministry of the past year and look ahead to opportunities in this new year. All confirmed partners (members) are encouraged to attend.

Financials through December 2025

Checking Account:

General Fund	\$28,381.43
Building Fund	\$6,647.56
Donor Restricted	\$147,527.99
Reserve Fund	\$4,360.10
Petty Cash	\$200.00

	December 2023	December 2024	December 2025
Attendance	1721	2072	1922
General Offering	\$ 121,184.42	\$ 118,421.20	\$ 115,348.32
Building Offering	\$ 31,910.78	\$ 16,314.69	\$ 6,647.56

Savings Accounts:

Building	\$183,954.09
Donor Restricted	\$41,435.33
Total Cash Balance	\$412,506.50

Year-to-date Income for Ministry	\$853,340.65
<u>Year-to-date Expenses for Ministry</u>	<u>\$835,151.11</u>
Net Income/Deficit for Ministry	\$18,189.54