

# WIND SWEEP

## Monthly Newsletter

February 2025

I have a little contrarian streak. Often, though, when I give in, I find beauty and joy. I didn't start Harry Potter until after book five was out. Then I was in line waiting for book seven. I didn't want to like Holden Village. It couldn't possibly be everything people said it was. And then? Even better. The image of Susan Briehl slowly moving around the firepit lecturing late one evening with feet dangling from the floor above and 20 of my colleagues rapt, is burned into my memory as a place of beauty and comfort and joy. That's what I mean when I say that my focus word for the year is "embrace". I want to get past my hesitation and natural resistance to experience the beauty and joy I know is waiting. That includes things like inviting new colleagues onto our team and into our community.

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. -Philippians 4:6-7*

The Call Process is difficult and holy work. And we're going to take our time in it. We'll do the deep dive of site study with intentional time looking at our mission, our vision, and our values. We'll ask each team and area of our mission and ministry to think hard about who they are and who they want to be. Then, we'll ask questions about the steps we need to bridge the gap between the two. Finally, we'll be ready to call a pastor who complements my gifts and the gifts of our team, and who brings skills that will help Spirit of Joy to continue to thrive.

My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will guide the process, and we will end with a clearer understanding of ourselves and a new teammate working alongside us in mission and ministry. To get there, we need you to join me in the "embrace" of the process. We'll have a prayer team and regular devotions. Pray for your staff and leadership. Pray for your fellow partners and our Ministry Partners. We'll have town hall meetings and small group gatherings. Show up. Speak up. There will be congregation surveys and assessment tools. Complete them. Let your voice be heard.

We begin that process at our Congregation Meeting on Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am. Join us in prayer and reflection as we prepare to move forward together as Spirit of Joy!



  
Pastor Eric Ohrtman

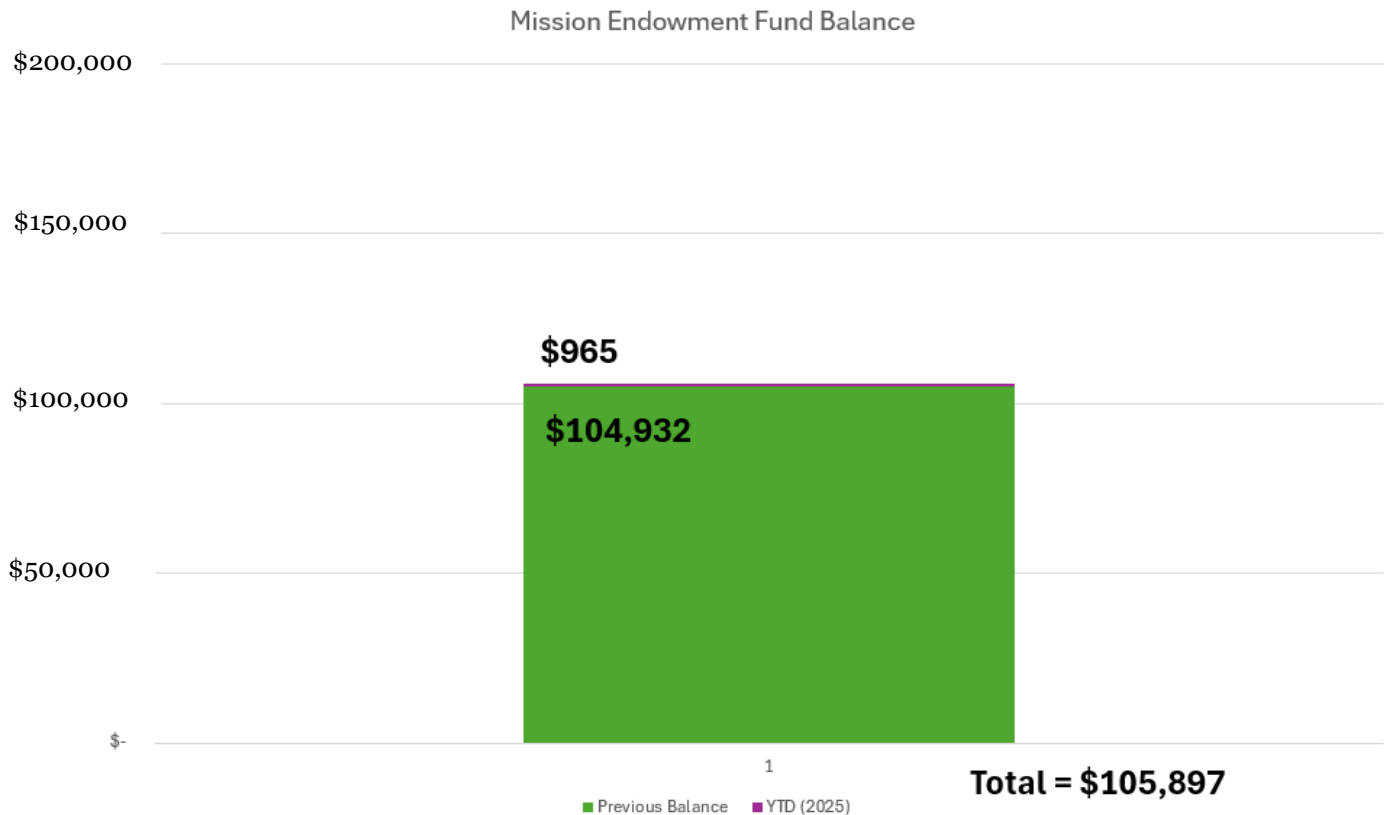


# Spirit of Joy

MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND

## Please consider investing in SoJ's future!

Another charitable way to give to our Mission Endowment Fund is through planned gifts that pay an income. These include charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder annuity trusts and charitable remainder unitrusts. With this type of gift, a partner makes a sizeable donation in cash or securities or possibly through their IRA, it is invested through the ELCA Foundation, and the donor is paid a fixed income for the rest of their life with any residual value upon death going to SoJ. In addition to tax advantages, the ELCA Foundation can facilitate legal counsel to assist in drafting the trust documents at very low or no cost. Please consider giving any amount for a brighter future together!



For more information on Mission Endowment Fund, visit:  
[spiritofjoy.net/mission-endowment-fund-2](http://spiritofjoy.net/mission-endowment-fund-2)

# OVERVIEW OF STEPS IN SEEKING A NEW PASTOR

The following is an overview of the call process provided by the South Dakota Synod of the ELCA. The comments in italics are the efforts already undertaken by Spirit of Joy. Please join us in prayer throughout the process, beginning on Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## 1. INFORM THE SYNOD OFFICE OF YOUR ROSTERED MINISTER OPENING

- a. Have time for prayer and reflection as your congregation goes through this transition.

*Pr. Eric notified the Synod Office of our intent to pursue an Associate Pastor on December 23, 2024. A weekly devotion written by Spirit of Joy partners will be shared every Sunday throughout the duration of the Call Process, beginning on Sunday, Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

## 2. ARRANGE FOR PASTORAL ASSISTANCE DURING THE TRANSITION

*Pr. Eric is coordinating with colleagues to preach once each month during the Call Process.*

## 3. COMPLETE A CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT

- a. Create a call committee.

*Election of the Call Committee will take place the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. Leadership Team began considering candidates in December with a particular eye to widespread representation of the partnership of Spirit of Joy. Six candidates have agreed to have their name forwarded to the meeting. Additional nominations will be taken from the floor of the meeting. Those pre-nominated are: Charles Berdahl, Mary Tranberg, Tim Hazlett, Jamie Oyen, Mindy Dold, and Kaelyn Tvinnereim.*

- b. Complete a Ministry Site Profile (MSP).

## 4. MINISTRY SITE STUDY

## 5. CANDIDATE PROCESS

- a. Candidate profiles are sent to the call committee for their review.
- b. Interviews with candidates are scheduled and completed by call committee.

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

- a. Leadership Team takes action on the recommendation of the call committee

## 7. CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO VOTE ON THE CANDIDATE

## 8. CANDIDATE DISCERNS CALL

## 9. INSTALLATION

### **Annual Congregational Meeting: Sunday, February 9 | 10AM**

We will review our ministry of the past year and look ahead to opportunities in this new year.

We'll also elect a Call Committee to lead us in finding our next Associate Pastor!

*All confirmed partners are encourage to attend.*

# Outreach Opportunities

## Laundry with Love

Tuesday, February 11 (701 N. Cliff Ave.)

Spirit of Joy is serving Laundry with Love on Tuesday, February 11th. Volunteers are needed to prepare a meal, welcome guests, serve the meal, and be available to distribute donations. Check out the sign up page for more information and ways to volunteer. **Sign up online at [spiritofjoy.net/signups](https://spiritofjoy.net/signups).**



**Empty Bowls Event**

February 20, 2025  
5-7 pm  
MULTI-CULTURAL CENTER, COLISEUM

The poster features a large, stylized bowl graphic on the left. Inside the bowl are four circular photos: a young boy rolling dough, a woman holding a white bowl, a man and a child working together, and a woman and child at a table. On the right, there are logos for 'JOURNEY OF HOPE', 'CHURCH OF THE STREET', and 'Pueblo de Dios'.

## 2025 Lent Wellness Challenge

For Lent 2025, we will again be going “screenless” in worship as SoJ. In addition to the practice of resetting, you are invited to a number of challenges for the season. While we will not cover every area of the Wellness Wheel, we hope to inspire you to care for your body and spirit throughout the season of repentance and preparation.

Each challenge will have a signup at [spiritofjoy.net](https://spiritofjoy.net). **Each facet you sign up to complete will entitle you to an entry into the raffle for a number of excellent prizes!**

Look for more information and plan to join us as we work to honor God with our bodies, minds, and souls in Lent 2025!



## Liberia Mission Update

The students, parents, and staff of the school (New Dawn Learning Center) in Liberia expressed sincere gratitude to partners and friends of Spirit of Joy for their generous contribution to Liberia's education mission. Your partnership has made significant progress in the lives of the children of Liberia. In September, we opened the school to the community, and sixty-seven students (K-6th Grade) were enrolled; ten teachers and five support staff were hired. Most of our students are from no-income to low-income families. This means most students attend the school on full scholarship with help from donors in the United States. The good news is that sixty-seven children are off the streets and 15 parents can feed their families.

February has been set aside to raise funds for the Liberia mission! Larry Schoeszler will present an

update on the Liberia mission on February 2 at 10:00 a.m. in the Shalom Center. We invite you to come, listen, and contribute to our next mission. Our sixth graders will be entering seventh grade and will need classrooms. We pray you will join us in our fundraising effort to provide more classrooms for those young children. Checks made to Spirit of Joy with "Liberia" in the memo.

We thank and appreciate all of you and pray that you will join us again in the next step of our mission.



The Church's Role in Addressing Social Justice Series

# Climate Change

Steven Mazner

Augustana University Professor of Biology

**Tuesday, February 18 at 9:30 AM**

Bring your passions. Bring your questions. Bring your doubts. All are welcome!



Hello High School Youth & Families-

Blessings to you all. SoJ is going through a transition as Deacon Hannah was blessed by the congregation and off to do her seminary internship in Brookings, SD. We have begun the process of calling a second pastor. High on the priority list is also finding someone to lead our Youth Group, that may be the new pastor or an additional staff person. We will keep you posted and invite you into the conversation as we move forward.

In the meantime, youth group continues! Our adult leaders will be present each week for youth as guides and mentors. Pastor Eric & Marnie will help them organize and share information. Marnie will take on HS Milestones & Confirmation (more on those to come!). We are excited to get to know more of our high school youth and families and to share in ministry and faith together. Let us know if you have any questions.

Peace –  
Marnie & Pastor Eric



## UPCOMING DATES

**TO RECEIVE DIRECT MESSAGES ABOUT YOUTH GROUP**  
text: 81010, send: @sojyou

### FEB

- 5 – Scooters Night (85th & MN)
- 12 – Random Acts of Kindness @ SoJ
- 19 – Board Game Night @ SoJ
- 26 – Service Project Offsite (TBD)

### MAR

- 5 – Ash Wednesday Worship (5:30 & 7:00), No Youth Group
- 12 – Bingo Planning Night at Charlie's Pizza
- 19 – Service Night: Kid's Against Hunger Freshmen Mentors Invited (6-7:30)
- 26 – Great Bear Tubing/Movie (\*weather dependent)
- 30 – (Sunday) Bingo! 4pm

### APR

- 2 – Craft Night @ SoJ
- 9 – Scavenger Hunt & Ice Cream Location TBD
- 16 – Holy Week, No Youth Group
- 23 – Service Night: Place TBD
- 30 – SoJ Backyard Campfire & Smacos

**SUMMER TRI**  
Adventure Camp  
@ Outlaw Ranch  
July 20-25



# Creation Care Corner



*“God, I’m running for Your heart, I’m running for Your heart, Til I am a soul on fire” – Third Day, “Soul on Fire”*

In this month of “burning love,” let us use this opportunity to talk more about fire, smoke, and air quality since that has been such a hot topic lately (sorry, that was bad, I know). Have you ever heard of the Air Quality Index (AQI)? It’s a scale that measures how clean or how polluted the air is and then conveys the health risks to the public. It looks at 5 major air pollutants (ground level ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide) and then provides a risk level, a number index scale, and a description of who will be most impacted (airnow.gov has a good visual). An AQI of 100 is considered safe for most people. As you can imagine, the score during the time of a wildfire increases exponentially.

Did you also know that there are two key pollutants which can exacerbate symptoms in individuals with asthma and other lung diseases? Further, studies have shown that air pollution can trigger heart attacks, irregular heart rhythms, and strokes in people already at risk for these conditions. Particle pollution is the biggest culprit. You may even hear about PM 2.5, which refers to particles that are 2.5 microns or smaller and which are exceptionally dangerous as they can penetrate deep into the lungs and even into the bloodstream. When a wildland fire moves through a town, then of course vehicles, houses, and appliances burn emitting a toxic mixture into the air. What ends up in the mix? You have copper from plumbing pipes; lead from car batteries; copper, chromium, and arsenic from pressure-treated lumber; chlorine from plastics; chlorinated compounds from PVC (including phosgene, which is a chemical warfare agent).

Additionally, the heat of a fire influences the types of pollutants released. A smoldering fire, for example, yields gases including carbon monoxide and methane in addition to compounds like formaldehyde and polycyclic aromatic compounds (PAHs), some of which are known to cause cancer and disrupt hormones.

On that note, did you also know that gas stoves emit nitrogen dioxide into the home (see 5 major air pollutants above) and put children at risk for developing asthma? In addition, studies have shown that most gas stoves leak, even when shut off, and when they do they emit nitrogen dioxide, benzene, formaldehyde, and particulate matter (PM), harkening back to the AQI measures above.

How can we help our brothers and sisters impacted by recent fires? We can pray for them daily. We can go to Lutheran Disaster Response ELCA and click on Wildfires.

Do we need to be concerned with fires in South Dakota? The answer is yes. There is an excellent podcast on this topic from South Dakota Public Broadcasting (SDPB) titled [Lessons for South Dakota from the California fires](#) that is definitely worth a listen.

In the meantime, practice fire safety, check your smoke detectors, check your fire extinguishers, and have an evacuation plan in the event this would transpire.

*“<sup>28</sup>Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; <sup>29</sup> for indeed our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:28-29*



# Spirit of Joy Preschool

**Caring Community, Active Learning and Faithful Hearts**

## There is a place for you at Preschool

Do you ever wish you could play a little more in your day? (Think Legos, block towers, picture books, or coloring.) Love to spend time with amazing children? Love to ask questions while eating graham crackers with friends? Spirit of Joy Preschool is the place for you. We are seeking caring adults and would love to meet you. Here are a few ways to join the fun...



### **Preschool Substitute Teachers - Assist or Lead**

Monday - Friday options, 7:30am-12:15pm

Pick the days that work best for you. Substitutes can be on-call or scheduled in advance. All materials are planned and provided. Experience working with children desired. This role is a paid position. There will always be one staff member present.



### **Van Drivers**

Monday - Friday options, 7:00am-8:00am &/or 12:00-12:40pm

Drive as often as your schedule allows. Training provided. Valid driver's license required.



### **Guest Visits- Share your time with young learners.**

Monday - Friday options, times scheduled- 30-45 minutes.

Share your vocation - what do you do at work each day?

Share your hobby - sewing, travel, cooking, etc.

Work with preschool staff to create a fun activity that's just right for preschoolers!

Contact Amy Cauble for more information or to offer your time. All roles require completion of a background check. Thank you!



# Referrals are a wonderful way to share your preschool!

When someone you know and trust recommends something, it makes a difference. Please consider sharing your preschool with friends, families, colleagues and neighbors. Grab a preschool brochure (found on the Welcome Center in the Gathering Space) to give away, share and view the adorable preschool video on Spirit of Joy's webpage, or encourage them to schedule a tour today. Be sure to let us know about the referral for discounts on tuition and other benefits. We love to meet new friends!

## Fall 2025 preschool registration is now open!

Tours are being scheduled. Registration forms are coming in! Visit the church webpage or [facebook.com/spiritofjoypreschool](https://facebook.com/spiritofjoypreschool) to view photos and video of the program. Schedule your tour now by calling Amy Cauble, Director. Enroll your favorite preschooler online or in person today to experience a caring community filled with the love of learning, the love of God, and the love of friends. All are welcome.



# thrivent<sup>®</sup> CHOICE DOLLARS

Eligible Thrivent clients can direct Choice Dollars to Spirit of Joy. Find information online at [thrivent.com/thriventchoice](https://www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice)

All dollars received by Spirit of Joy in 2025 will be split between

- Horace Mann Elementary &
- Lutheran Social Services Refugee Resettlement

*Deadline for designation of 2024 dollars is March 31.*

# SOJ HOCKEY NIGHT

Friday, 2/21 | Midco Arena

7:07 PM | \$20/ticket

SAVE THE DATE!!

Ticket information coming in February



**Spirit of Joy Leadership Team** met on Saturday, January 18 for a full day retreat. Various staff members joined later in the afternoon. After a morning of introductions and team building below are the mission priorities we identified together.

## 2025 Mission Priorities

- **Worship Space Sound** - enhance worship and provide excellent quality to partners and guests both in person and online
- **Mission Endowment Fund**- grow the MEF, especially the Capital Fund to create long term stability and in anticipation of increased need
- **Prioritize High School Youth** - invest in staffing and programming to continue our Faith Formation and excellence for High School Youth and Families
- **Preschool** - clarify the purpose of our preschool for the congregation and strengthen the bonds between students, staff, partners, and families

## 2025 Leadership Team Meeting Dates

Typically, the Leadership Team meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 6:30pm. July is off for both Team Meetings and Leadership Team.

- Feb. 18\*
- Mar. 20
- Apr. 17
- May 15
- June 17\*
- August 21
- September 18
- October 16
- November 20
- December 18

\* Indicates the date has been moved from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday.