

WIND SWEEP

Monthly Newsletter

January 2026

I like to use January to introduce my word of the year and how I imagine it will impact my mindset and come alive with Spirit of Joy. **In 2024, the word was “Together”.** I admitted that there were ways in which I failed at living that out among our community. **In 2025, “Embrace”.** I did a better job of living into that word. I approached it as an opportunity to practice curiosity, inclusion, and cultivation. I was gifted the experience of a few other synonyms, “comprehend”, “support”, and “cherish”. Personally, I experienced a number of things I might not have and found in them lifegiving communities of support. What it meant at Spirit of Joy is deeper relationships with people and ministries. **Inside you’ll find an introduction to our nine (9) Featured Ministry Partners for 2026,** several of which are a direct result of that openness cultivated by “embrace”! I hope that by now you’re wondering what the word for 2026 might be.

Affliction produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

—Romans 5:3-4

Growth

Increase. Evolution. Progress. Development. Expansion. Advancement. Improvement. Emergence. Elaboration. Maturation. Flowering. Enhancement. Betterment. Refinement. Ripening. Flourishing.

“Growth” came to mind when I was challenged as abandoning our values over proposed changes in the ministry partners we support through Bold Service and Extravagant Generosity. As I listened, read, and reflected on the accusation I kept coming back to the experience of grief and the difficulty of change, which led me to **my favorite definition of growth... “progressive development”**. I am not the same pastor I was when I arrived at Spirit of Joy, and Spirit of Joy is not the same. While that is hard and painful and sometimes sad, I also think that’s good... for all of us.

I do not believe that we have abandoned our values. I do believe we have continued to develop. In church language we are solidly in the throws of the movement from a “pastoral” sized congregation to a “program” sized congregation. The trick is that we’ve been in that space of transition since before 2020 and I feel a certain weariness. But, what we have is too good to let the fatigue win. We must press on as Paul says in Romans 5. It means the necessary death of some of what was. It means the introduction of some new in the hope of moving forward. It means the immensely difficult challenge of leaping to the next financial tier. It means we need to plan carefully and move forward purposefully (**look inside for an invitation to our Strategic Visioning**). I want for us to choose together how we will develop and where we will go. Along the way, we’ll disagree and be faced with challenging decisions. But, we are Spirit of Joy. We’ve chosen each other as people we want to have these conversations with. Our choosing of Radical Hospitality and Lifelong Faith Formation means there is room for all of us and a belief that we can progressively develop our whole lives long. What is at the center of it all? Our Passionate Worship of the God who declares each and everyone of us “beloved”!

~ Pastor Eric



Strategic Visioning @ SoJ



Brad Bass is a retired Fortune 250 company dairy plant manufacturing operations manager and division director. He and his wife, Laura joined SOJ in 2021 after moving back to SD to be close to children(4) and grandchildren (9). They reside on the west side of Sioux Falls.

Jim Barringer and his wife Gloria transferred their membership from Bethlehem Lutheran-Aberdeen in the spring of 2023. Members at Bethlehem for 33 years, they moved to Sioux Falls in 2019 for ease of travel, medical services, but mostly to be near children and grandchildren (also SoJ partners).



Glenna Burg, beloved child of God, has been blessed with two sons, their wives, and three grandchildren. From an early age Glenna was called to care for others and has been a registered nurse for nearly 50 years. She has a special interest in caring and advocating for all people, but especially those who lack basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, and health care. She most recently served in Leadership at SoJ as the Congregation Secretary.

Jim Stavenger has been married to Carolynn for 47 years. He's the father of 3 and grandfather of 7. A retired mortgage banking executive he has lived in Minnesota, Colorado, Arizona, and South Dakota. His Leadership experience at Spirit of Joy includes serving as President and chairing the Building Expansion Committee.



Strategic Visioning @ SoJ



Adam Punt serves as the Financial Manager for the South Dakota Air National Guard. He has served in the Air National Guard for 27 years, 14 enlisted and 13 as an officer attaining his current rank of Lieutenant Colonel. The Punt family have been members of Spirit of Joy since 2005 and they reside on the east side of Sioux Falls. His family consists of his wife Brittni and children, Lilli, a freshman at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Amelia and Oliver who attend Brandon Valley High School.

Kerri Tietgen serves as CEO of EmBe, a 100-year-old nonprofit dedicated to uplifting the potential of women, children, and families. She has been a partner at Spirit of Joy for 18 years and served as congregational President and Vice President from 2021-2022. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the Washington Pavilion, Southeast Technical College's Foundation Board, and served on Thrivent's Regional Board for 9 years. She is married to Jeremy Tietgen, and her favorite role is Mom to Cooper (a senior) and Kennedy (a junior), both students at Harrisburg High School.



Abby Gooch joined Spirit of Joy in 2023 with her husband, Logan. A lifelong Lutheran with roots in Marshall, MN, she is a proud alum of Klein Ranch Bible Camp and Augustana University. Mom to Cooper, she now serves as the Tournament Manager for the Sanford International Golf Tournament.

Timeline

December 2025- Team Formation and Information Gathering

Jan-Mar- Information Gathering (Individual Interviews and Cottage Meetings)

Mar-April- Congregation Wide Visioning Retreat

April-May: Formulation of Findings and Recommendations

Summer-Fall 2026: Implementation

2026 Featured Ministry Partners

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. The ELCA or other-affiliated ministries include local, regional or international organizations. Our Bold Service Team leads discussions about our yearly partnerships and, in turn, offer their vetted recommendations to Leadership. On the first Sunday of the month, a ministry representative will be onsite during and/or after worship to share their mission story.

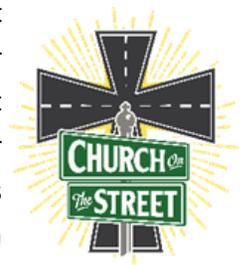
Charis Ministry Partners



In collaboration with a network of Sioux Falls area churches and businesses, Charis Ministries has been a grassroots resource hub since 2009. Faithful community members help get essentials for healthy living distributed where needed most. Their two main programs are Food to You and Necessities for Neighbors. They hold neighborhood mobile food pantries and events at which folks pick up items like laundry soap, diapers, hygiene products and toilet paper. SoJ has served at Charis Ministries alongside other dedicated volunteers and board members for several years. This amazing partnership is based on Jesus' teachings: "Sharing God's love, through daily essentials, for our neighbors in need."

Church on the Street

SoJ has been actively supporting the Christ-centered, inclusive ministry of Church on the Street (COTS) for nearly a decade. We continue to have regular volunteers whose passion for outreach to unhoused neighbors shines. We have a bin in Shalom Center to collect unperishables, clothing, toiletries and other usable items. There are many ways to serve our COTS siblings including offering prayers, helping at their worship services or ministry events like Laundry with Love, packing candy and making monetary donations. On January 31st from 1-3pm at The Coliseum, we will be involved with their annual Health and Healing Event. Watch for a sign-up. May God continue to bless the stellar partnership between our congregation and Church on the Street.



Feeding South Dakota



Going with the flow of SoJ's Partners, we welcome back Feeding SD. Our congregation has experienced a committed, long-term partnership. This standout organization has the capacity to shrink hunger gaps for all ages and walks of life. The tireless community ministry of Feeding SD continues to have an impact on children, adults and seniors. At the core of our Partner's mission is to provide food access to all. Highlights from their website for the 2025 fiscal year show: 11.6 million meals were served across 66 counties; 2,171 senior boxes were distributed monthly and 188,351 Backpacks were filled. Feeding SD acknowledges that their ministry takes place on indigenous lands. Among the pallets of fresh fruits and veggies, SoJ volunteers find their niche.

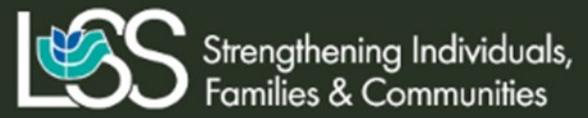
Horace Mann Elementary School



For eight years, SoJ has had a soft spot for Horace Mann whose work focuses on nurturing youngsters to explore lifelong learning in a safe, caring and engaging environment. One part of our congregation's ministry has been to gather items for their "store" (students strive to earn points toward milestones which equal tickets to spend on prizes.) Other ways we have shown support include raising funds for a climbing wall, volunteering as mentors and hosting events especially for school staff. Our church family looks forward to building on a solid partnership. Remember "SOAR" - Safety. Ownership. Acceptance. Respect.

Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota Center for New Americans

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.



New Dawn Learning Center School

SoJ partners have supported the New Dawn Learning Center in Monrovia, Liberia since 2023. The Center's vision was made possible through Changing Lives International Ministries (CLIM), a non-profit launched in 2008. This mission project has had success with \$39,269 raised by our congregation at the close of 2025. Key dates have included a land purchase in 2008, groundbreaking in 2022, and construction Phase 1 completed with the first K-6th students attending class in 2024. Future goals are roofing and building interiors. We pray for continuing to impact the education, well-being and spiritual growth of young minds in the Duazon Community.

Sharing the Dream in Guatemala

Although Sharing the Dream is a new Featured Ministry Partner, their team has had a meaningful relationship with our church for several years – from board members to product sales helpers. At the end of May, another cohort will travel abroad. The organization began in 1996. Their nonprofit supports such programs as educational workshops, feeding and medical ministries and student scholarships. During Advent we hosted a crowd favorite pop-up to sell our



Partner's fair trade crafts; about \$2,200 was raised. All proceeds return to the artisans. Sharing the Dream has a local brick and mortar boutique at First Presbyterian or folks can shop or donate online. Their mantra is: "Everything helps, and together we can weave a tapestry of opportunity for our Guatemalan friends."

St. Dysmas of South Dakota



The St. Dysmas family of believers, known for their hospitality and passion for Lord Jesus, relies solely on individual and community financial support to sustain. Gifts may be made via their website or sent c/o Eastside Lutheran. St. Dysmas hosts

three church locations – on the hill at the SD State Penitentiary, at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield and at the Yankton Minimum Unit. Visitors mean a lot at St. Dysmas; access Forms are required which can be found online. For many years, SoJ has been praying for, donating to, visiting and worshipping with our fellow disciples behind bars. Outside groups help the congregation with special ministry projects. Matthew’s gospel speaks to the need for human companionship: “I was in prison and you visited me.” (25:36). The Holy Spirit sends us out to break down barriers.

Lutherans Outdoors of South Dakota

Historically, SoJ has been the top congregational donor to our state’s ELCA camps, which include NeSoDak, Outlaw Ranch and Klein Ranch. Financial support to LOSD helps fund camperships, maintain facilities, provide quality programming and preserve natural spaces. Thousands of campers, families and retreat participants, of all ages, experience the love of Christ each year. As we know, bonds made at church camp so often turn into life-long friendships. Although LOSD has gone through transitions, they remain committed to their core values. SoJ will continue to pray for our Partner’s ministry in the great outdoors.



Health & Healing Event

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1 | 1-3 PM
The Coliseum of Sioux Falls (515 N Main)

Volunteers are needed in several different ways.

More details coming soon!



**MONDAY, JANUARY 26 | DOORS OPEN AT 5:15PM
FAMILY FRIENDLY MOVIE**

SOJ @ THE MOVIES

\$5/TICKET - MOVIE BEGINS AT 6PM



January Calendar - Join Us! *Wednesday nights at 8PM*

- 7th - Service Project @ SoJ
- 14th - Wellness Wheel
- 21st - Social Wellness
- 28th - Occupational Wellness

Friday, January 23 | BINGO | 4:00PM
More details coming...



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

NEW PARTNER CLASS

Interested in becoming a ministry partner of Spirit of Joy?



Sunday, February 1 | 12:15 - 2:30 PM

Come for Lunch, Fellowship, Learning

Sign up online: spiritofjoy.net/signups

Wednesday, January 7, 6PM

Service of Light & Labryinth



Welcome the season of Epiphany with a special worship of song and prayer.

Worship begins at 6PM.



Three King Sunday

JANUARY 4 | ONE SERVICE @ 9:30AM

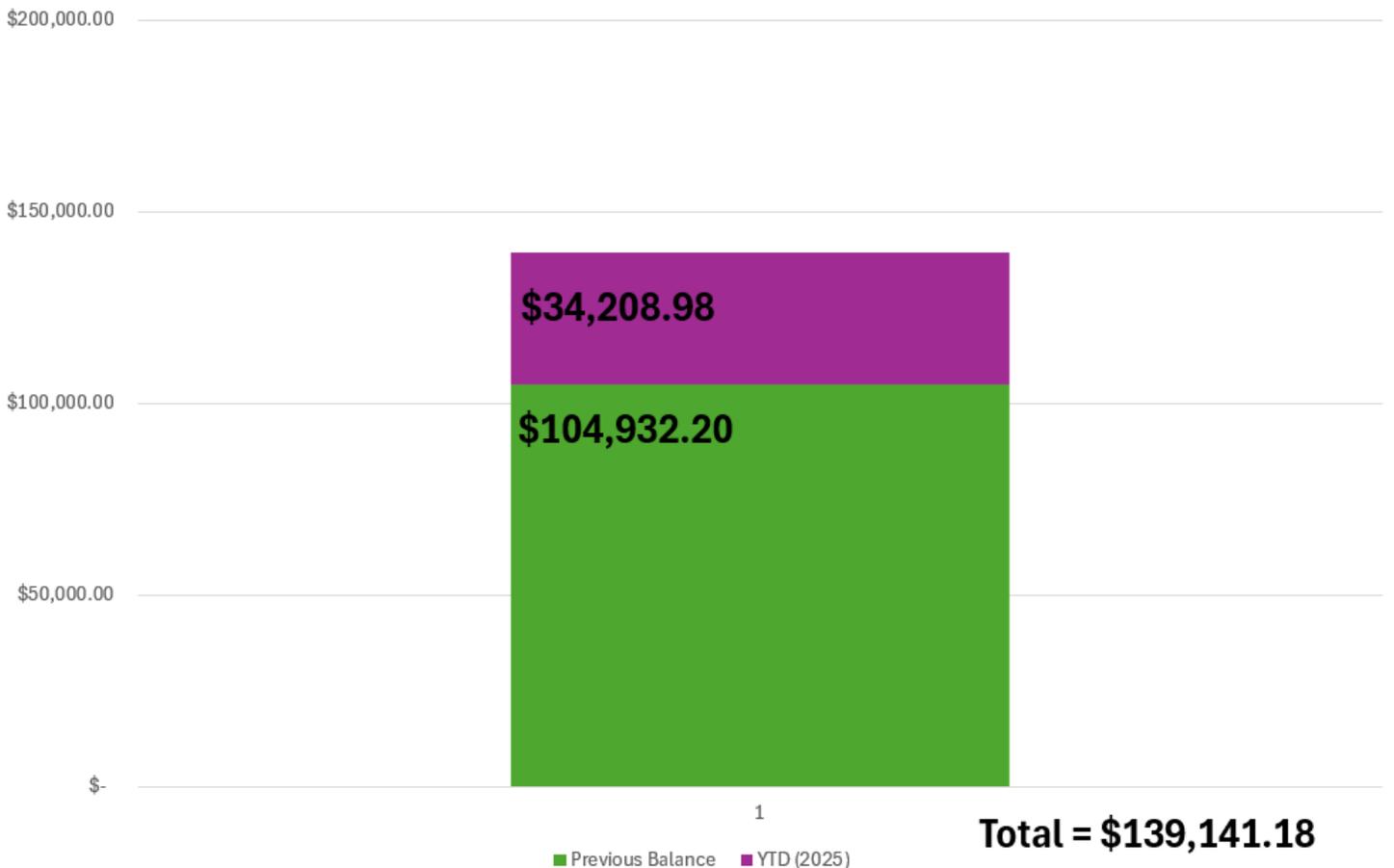
Intergenerational worship service to "travel" with the Wisemen.

Special coffee hour and craft to follow worship!



We received \$34,208.98 for our Mission Endowment Fund in 2025 pushing the grand total to 139,141.18. The mission of the Fund is to extend SoJ’s mission work and ministries beyond the annual operational budget into perpetuity. The momentum for this endeavor continued in 2025. Thank you for investing in SoJ’s future!

Mission Endowment Fund Balance



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



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.



- Jan 11- Ezra and Nehemiah
- Jan 18- Tobit & Judith
- Jan 25- Esther
- Feb 1- LSS

Brewed Theology | Monday, 1/19 7PM @ Charlie's Pizza

Mental Health: (It's NOT just you..) WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT IT?



If you're struggling *physically*, you likely complain about it. You let your family or friends know. You might go to the doctor and work on healing. If you're struggling *mentally*? You're less likely to complain about it. But our minds are as important as our bodies.

Mental illnesses affect around half of the US population at some point in their lifetime. Even though it is so common in society, many people never seek out the help they need.

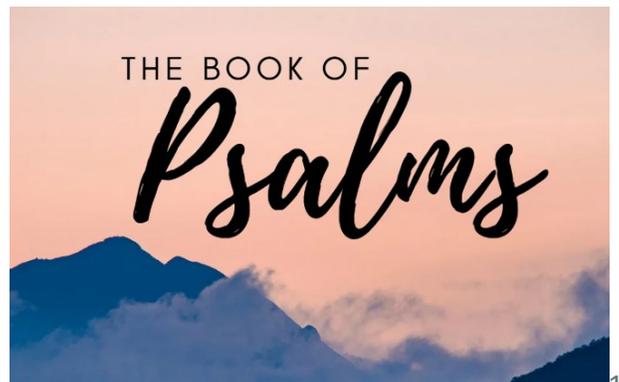
In this conversation, we will explore some of the reasons why mental illnesses are so prevalent and why they continue to live in secrecy and shame. We will also wonder how the church is called to respond. Using Jesus' own stories of healing as our guide we will wonder how connection and love can overcome a culture of shame and silence.

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

Women's Bible Study | Thursdays at 9AM | Beginning January 8

Women's Bible study will gather in Galilee to explore the Book of Psalms. We will ground ourselves in different texts each week and have discussions around various themes. At the first session, a guide will be provided showing our dates and weekly learning focus activity. No sign up is needed, but feel free to let Pastor Dayna know if you plan to attend.

PRE-READING: For Week 1 please pre-read Psalm 1, 36, 75, and 150. This will give us a taste of some shorter psalms to provide material for an overview conversation. To ponder before we meet, make note of your initial observations about any patterns, faith messages or words. What better way to move into the New Year than with the God-given gift of sacred, poetry from the Bible!





SPIRIT OF JOY PRESCHOOL

Caring Community • Active Learning • Faithful Hearts

Hip, Hip Hooray It's Registration Day!

Preschool Registration 2026 is now available for Spirit of Joy Partners and currently enrolled students. We hope you will join us.

Classes include two days/week (3 years old), 3 days/week (4 years old), & 4 days/week (PreK) 8:00am-12:00pm with extra time before and after for transportation. Weekly activities include learning centers such as math, literacy, science, music, and faith. Play-based activities encourage exploration of our world both inside and outside. Children share snacks and lunch together while here- a great time to socialize with peers.

Learn more about preschool by visiting our website, Facebook page or schedule a tour. Look at photos and learn about the program offering age appropriate, active learning and led by caring, professional teachers. Faith practices are integrated into each moment of the day along with weekly Chapel stories and activities.

Share your preschool with friends and family – referrals are the highest praise. Registration for new friends begins January 12. All are welcome! Feel free to share a brochure (or two!) with colleagues and neighbors. Brochures found on the Welcome Kiosk.

REGISTER TODAY

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

Nurturing Faith at our Family Christmas Milestone

It was a joyful morning at preschool. Preschoolers and their families shared time together to celebrate the season with songs, Bible stories, and crafts. Thank you to preschoolers for performing music at the event!

Each child received a Spark Bible. Miss Marnie taught us more about this special book and ways to explore it. Children use this Bible at preschool Chapel and in the classroom and will now be able to explore it with their families. Monthly Bible activities will be provided to families by Miss Amy to take faith home as well. Thank you, Preschool Team and Lifelong Faith Formation Teams, for your continued support.



Cozy Christmas

It was cold outside but cozy inside! Thank you for joining the cozy Christmas worship fun last month. With your support, we were able to raise \$1,410 towards preschool operating costs. What a joy to worship and spend time in community in support of our preschool. Thank you!



Creation Care Corner

“Hope blooms in a weary world...” from ELW 726

Creation Care Team members were asked to share Hope statements for 2026 or share a practice and/or habit they would like to see people adopt in the new year to help our environment.

Arley Fadness: My hope for the baptized, gifted people of God is that in 2026 we will, as faithful stewards, embrace more fully our sacred earth by contacting our legislators, encouraging them to pursue protections for our water, air and soil. I have just written 15 handwritten letters to our legislators.

Arlene Brandt-Jenson: We all know we need grace when it comes to our actions and attitudes toward the environment. But as a *Lutherans Restoring Creation* board member recently said, “If we claim to be Christ’s church, we can do no other than to make our stand with God’s planet, God’s people, and God’s creatures, so help us God.” Review this brief list and choose to adopt at least one of these practices in 2026:

- Grow some of your own vegetables (even in pots)
- Eat out less often and when you do, bring your own containers for leftovers
- Plan your weekly menu to make less trips to the grocery store for impulse items
- Talk to your city councilor about sustainability issues that are important to you
- Read a climate book such as [Saving Us](#) by Katharine Hayhoe or [Following Jesus in a Warming World](#) by Kyle Meyaard-Schaap

Bob Jenson: Hope for 2026 – That we can get people more engaged with this issue. That while it is a daunting task – each person doing something adds up and we *can* make a difference. Something I wish people would do: Each year add a new practice. Start small and over the years it will help the earth heal. One wish would be for single-use plastic. If you are still using plastic bags at the grocery store, either request paper or bring your own and don’t ever buy a plastic water bottle.

Jim McAdaragh: My hope for 2026 is that we humans choose to be better stewards of God’s creation. Every sustainable choice we make -- from using clean energy to mindful consumption of the planet’s resources -- is a promise to future generations that we are committed to passing on to them a thriving earth that sustains the beautiful diversity of life that God has gifted to humanity.

Sue McAdaragh: A few weeks ago, Pastor Dayna recommended the book, All Creation Waits: The Advent Mystery of New Beginnings by Gayle Boss. Each short chapter describes how various animals prepare for the winter season. The creature I admire the most in my reading so far is the honeybee. I knew that bees cooperate with each other to find food and provide for their queen bee, but I didn't know how they huddle together in their hives and collectively shiver to maintain a constant temperature (92° F) that is needed for their survival. My hope for 2026 is for us as a church, a community, a country, and a world to recognize how much we are like the bees. We really do depend upon each other to support and nurture our planet. Every little "shiver" can make a difference!

Bill Webb: My wish is that people will join me in being "weird for the world" by being a nonconformist in a variety of ways:

- Decline plastic bags if you can carry it out or bring your own bags
- Decline plastic bottled water
- Take shorter showers
- Don't flush your toilet every time if it's yellow
- Put containers in your car when you go out to eat so you can bring your leftovers home without using Styrofoam

Pastor Dayna: It seems there are small, creation-minded, daily practices all of us can do. These would be very teachable to children and youth. Habits like: shutting off the faucet while brushing teeth or shaving, switching off lights when leaving a room, and keeping leftover water to water plants. These are simple ways to role model care for God's planet. Each tiny step matters.

Mandy Freesemann: I would like people to really stop and think before they throw items away. Is there a place this could be recycled (in our community, through a company such as TerraCycle, etc.) or can I reuse it in some way, give it to someone, or donate the item? Try thrifting more and buying less in general, especially fast fashion items and junk/poor-quality items. And I would love for people to stop using single-use plastic whenever they can as it is so harmful to our bodies and the planet. Also, be more active in holding corporations to account for pollution and harmful practices that harm people and the planet – write and call!!

Pastor Eric: My word for the year is growth. My favorite definition is progressive development. I like that it's graceful and persistent. I think my relationship to creation care is that way. Do my best. Keep getting better.



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

Financials through November 2025

Checking Account:

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| General Fund | (\$2,738.42) |
| Building Fund | \$3,368.59 |
| Donor Restricted | \$144,421.56 |
| Reserve Fund | \$4,360.10 |
| Petty Cash | \$200.00 |

| | November 2023 | November 2024 | November 2025 |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Attendance | 1104 | 1252 | 1460 |
| General Offering | \$ 44,296.79 | \$ 58,799.46 | \$ 77,776.02 |
| Building Offering | \$ 25,092.10 | \$ 27,946.66 | \$ 8,907.30 |

Savings Accounts:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Building | \$191,190.73 |
| Donor Restricted | \$41,455.71 |
| Total Cash Balance | \$382,258.27 |

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Year-to-date Income for Ministry | 738,990.47 |
| Year-to-date Expenses for Ministry | \$752,109.63 |
| Net Income/Deficit for Ministry | (\$13,119.16) |