

# WIND SWEEP

## Monthly Newsletter

June 2026

My best friend for years was a man named J.R. He is a finish contractor, skilled at trim, joints, and details. It took a while for me to realize that meant that he sees the world differently than I. He analyzes gaps in a joint without conscious thought. He notes things I don't even notice. The same is true for him about relationships and presentations. I notice things that would never occur to him. We're so different. That's good. We need each other, make each other stronger and better, and build community by celebrating each other.



~ Pastor Eric

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." -Acts 1:8*

On Sunday, May 17th I found myself reflecting on our sermon series on the Book of Acts (you can find it on YouTube or at [spiritofjoy.net](http://spiritofjoy.net)). I took the idea of each disciple, their varied backgrounds, one a tax collector, one a theologian, one a fisherman, and explored how they, with such different lenses might have experienced Jesus. Then, I revealed the Jesus that I see in the Book of Acts.

### What I See

*Acts portrays the gospel as breaking ethnic, cultural, and religious barriers. God's covenant community expands beyond Israel to include all peoples from all nations.*

Another pastor with different experiences and different priorities likely sees the Book of Acts differently. That's good. We need each other, make each other stronger and better, and build community by celebrating each other. And, the same is true at Spirit of Joy.

As we look at backwards at Spirit of Joy we each experience it differently. Our experiences, the depth of our involvement, the people we're connected to, and the moment in time around us all impact how we interpret any given moment. The same is true for this moment together as Spirit of Joy. So, I thought I'd share what I see when I look at SoJ.

### What I See

**Change:** *25% of partners have joined since 2021. Middle School Confirmation now represents 9 schools. More new partners have been over the age of 60. And, they come from all over the city, not just our neighborhood.*

**Grief:** *Our Founding Pastor retiring. More funerals (many of them long time partners) in the last three years than the seven years prior. Loss of intimacy that comes with growth. Continued & regular staff transition.*

**Commitment:** *Volunteers give 300 hours each week. We fundraised to replace the sound system in a single day. People show up to worship, service, and fellowship, even when piled on top of each other. Leadership has multiple excellent, but challenging meetings each month.*

**Hope:** *A new seminary student. A balanced budget and restored benevolence practices. Clarity about priorities (see next page). Staffing that is well thought out and reflective of your desires and needs. Space for new volunteers and participants across all facets of our ministry.*

What you see may be different that what I see. That's good. We need each other, make each other stronger and better, and build community by celebrating each other.

# Strategic Visioning @ SoJ

Your Strategic Visioning Team will meet with Leadership Team and present at the June 7th Town Hall. As information gathering came to an end our areas of priority for the near future as Spirit of Joy became quite clear. Worship. Relationships. Sustainability. Now, it turns to Leadership Team, Core Values Team, and Staff to decide how we can best live into these values over the next 3-5 years.

**Worship:** *Worship is our anchor, where we experience Christ's love in community.*

Colossians 3:16: New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

<sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

1 Chronicles 16: 8-10 The Message

Thank God! Call out his Name! Tell the whole world who he is and what he's done! Sing to him! Play songs for him! Broadcast all his wonders! Revel in his holy Name, God-seekers, be jubilant!

**Relationships:** *Without regard to race, beliefs, gender, age, sexual orientation, lifestyle, or anything else, we know each other, we show up for each other, because all people matter to God.*

Hebrews 10: 22-25a: The Message

So let's *do it*—full of belief, confident that we're presentable inside and out. Let's keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his word. Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshipping together as some do but spurring each other on.

Matthew 22: 37-39 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup> This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

1 Peter 4: 8-10 The Message

Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything. Be quick to give a meal to the hungry, a bed to the homeless—cheerfully. Be generous with the different things God gave you, passing them around so all get in on it: if words, let it be God's words; if help, let it be God's hearty help.

**Sustainability:** *Spirit of Joy is here for the long haul. We will steward resources to ensure sustainability.*

Proverbs 16:3 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.

Matthew 7: 24-25 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

"Everyone, then, who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on rock.

1 Corinthians 3: 10-11 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

According to the grace of God given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Let each builder choose with care how to build on it. <sup>11</sup> For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.



# What's Happening in Worship @ SoJ

This Summer our Sermon Series is "Lutheran 101". During June, Pr. Eric, Jamie Lennon, and Synod Staff Joel Pakan will introduce us to Martin Luther, the origins of the Reformation, and more. In July we'll learn about "The 5 Solas" of the Reformation. And, in August, we'll come closer to home with American Lutheranism, the ELCA, the SD Synod, and even a look at our belovedly imperfect Spirit of Joy. Along the way we'll be using bits of familiar Lutheran tradition, including weaving "A Mighty Fortress is our God" throughout each Sunday service. The following is adapted from Taylor Brantley writing at hymncharts.com.

Martin Luther hardly needs an introduction. On October 31, 1517 in Wittenberg, Germany, he nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church to challenge the sale of indulgences. His ideas, derived from Scripture, advocated for a personal relationship with God over reliance on priests, shifting power from the Church to the common man. This bold act ignited the Protestant Reformation. Along the way, music took center stage.

So important did Luther deem music, he stated he "... would allow no man to preach or teach God's people without a proper knowledge of the use and power of sacred song. Luther took to writing his own hymns; hymns that congregations took joy in singing; hymns that broke the concept of needing a middle man to commune with God.

He wrote it during the darkest time of the Reformation, a time of widespread persecution from the Catholic Church. For the persecuted, no greater words were there to sing than:

*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;  
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:  
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.*

So powerful was the hymn's impact during those days that it was dubbed "The Battle Hymn of the Reformation."

There is some debate among scholars as to whether Luther wrote the music to A Mighty Fortress or adapted it from an existing melody. Some sources attribute the tune to Luther himself, based on his musical training and skill. Others suggest that the tune may have been derived from a Gregorian chant or a secular song that Luther modified. The exact origin of the tune is not certain, but it is clear that Luther had a great influence on the development of hymnody and liturgical music in the Protestant tradition. He composed the hymn tune between 1527 and 1529, naming it EIN FESTE BURG from the first line of the text. The tune is in a rhythmic meter that differs from the later isometric version that is more commonly used today. Luther was a skilled musician who played the lute and the flute, and he wrote many hymns to express his faith and encourage congregational singing.

The hymn's title and themes are inspired by Psalm 46, verse 1, which in Luther's German Bible translation states: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott). The hymn paraphrases concepts from this psalm about God being a stronghold and refuge for His people amid life's trials. However, the exact wording "A mighty fortress is our God" does not appear verbatim in the Bible.

In the 16th century when Luther wrote this hymn, fortresses and castles were common strategies for military defense. A fortress provided safety and protection for a town or city from attacking forces.

The "mighty fortress" metaphor draws on this context. It conveys the idea of God as an impenetrable stronghold defending believers against the attacks of the devil and all evil. Just as a fortress shields a city from harm and prevails against siege, God provides an unflinching refuge for His followers amid life's hardships and trials.



Martin Luther by Lucas Cranach

**Summer Worship Time**

**9:30am**

**RADICAL HOSPITALITY BUDGET REVIEW**

Your stewardship team reviewed the Radical Hospitality budget to share the purpose and impact of key areas of our ministry.

**BUDGET STATUS**  
 Year to date Radical Hospitality spending is about  
**30%**  
 of the annual budget -  
**ON TRACK**  
 for the first third of the year.

*Your generosity creates a*

**WELCOMING EXPERIENCE.**

**1 KITCHEN**



This budget line is mostly used for coffee, but also includes items in the hospitality fridge like canned water and snacks. For coffee, Spirit of Joy partners with The Breaks Coffee, a local company that also supports our ministry partner, Lutheran Social Services.

**2026 BUDGET: \$2,500**  
**SPENT YTD: \$676**

(plus \$198 received in Kitchen offerings)

**2 GIFTS**



This budget line honors important moments for our partners. A onesie and Bible are gifted to partners who welcome a new baby to their homes, and Spirit of Joy gifts a memory item to partners who lose an immediate family member.

**2026 BUDGET: \$1,500**  
**SPENT YTD: \$569**

Over 1/3 of the annual budget has already been spent due to many births and funerals at the end of 2025, requiring a large restock early in 2026.

**3 BUILDING HOSPITALITY**



This budget line supports the visible touches that make our building inviting - balloons, photo backgrounds, signs and other details that help everyone know they belong. Most recently, balloons were used for three separate events, stretching funds even further.

**2026 BUDGET: \$600**  
**SPENT YTD: \$311**

**POWERED BY VOLUNTEERS**



**\$5,100+ hours**

volunteered year to date - more than \$184,000 in value to our ministry.

**SUPPLEMENTAL INCOME**

**17 Thrivent Action Teams**

provided \$4,250 in funding for fellowship & new partner events.



**We are called to be generous in every way. 2 Corinthians 9:11**



June 7<sup>th</sup> @ 11:00am

# ANNUAL

## *Town Hall Meeting*

Update on Worship Space Sound Fundraising, Ideas for Future Staffing, Strategic Visioning Reports, Staff Updates, and Your Questions



# SUMMER SECTIONALS

*Wednesdays 6-7PM: see dates below*

*June 3: Alto*

*July 22: Tenor*

*June 17: Soprano*

*July 29: Bass*

*June 24: Alto/Soprano*

*August 12: Tenor/Bass*

*We're singing "Hallelujah Chorus" Easter 2027  
Everyone is welcome!*



# Church on the Street Worship

Spirit of Joy is hosting on Saturday, June 20  
11:00 a.m. Heritage Park (330 N Weber Ave)

For food donations and to help serve the meal,  
please sign up online at [spiritofjoy.net/signups](https://spiritofjoy.net/signups)

**Partner Congregations are encouraged to attend  
and meet the people that worship**

## Playground Invitation & Guidance

The Spirit of Joy community is blessed to have a playground on its property. Children are welcome to use this space however, please keep the following guidelines in mind to insure it is a safe place for all...

1. The playground is designed for children approximately 2-6 years old. Please keep this in mind to avoid damaging the equipment.
2. Please return the playground equipment & toys to its original state when leaving (cover sandbox, close playhouse doors, etc). This act will provide a safe place for the next child. Consider checking the playground prior to leaving the property.
3. Please do not remove the items inside the playhouse.
4. The playground is not supervised but always open.

Contact the front office in the event of  
damaged property or concerns. Thank you.





# Calling All Families

Help us welcome people to Spirit of Joy this summer!

Provide smiles, open doors, and welcome partners and guests to worship  
No previous experience required

More info and sign up online: [spiritofjoy.net/signups](http://spiritofjoy.net/signups)

## Summer Children's Message

Take turns bringing a mystery item for Pastor Eric to use to proclaim God's good news!



**13 spots available for the summer series!**  
**Sign up: [spiritofjoy.net/signups](http://spiritofjoy.net/signups)**



# SPIRIT OF JOY PRESCHOOL

Grace to you and peace,

We are writing to inform you of the decision to close the Spirit of Joy Preschool effective immediately.

The quality of the education environment, the love of our students and their families, the excellence of our teachers, and the deep appreciation for the way this ministry fit all pieces of our mission and values made this an exceedingly difficult decision. However, after more than two years of concerted discernment it was our consensus that the time had come to move forward in other faithful ways. We thank you for your attendance at listening sessions and congregation meetings. We're grateful to the Business Planning Team for their careful work over the last months. And, we must acknowledge the excellence and faithfulness of our Preschool Team members and staff through such challenging conversations.

We understand the timing is difficult. To that end, we have been in contact with a number of area preschools and will provide a list of opportunities for the children. We also have financial support available for families as they move to new centers. We ask you to hold families and staff in prayer and care as they navigate this change.

Going forward, we hope you'll join us for the following opportunities:

## **Town Hall Meeting**

Sunday, June 7 @ 10:30am

## **Sending, Blessing, and Popsicle Reception**

Sunday, July 12 in worship and after (9:30am)

In peace,

Christa Henderson  
President Leadership team

Pastor Eric Ohrtman  
Lead Pastor

# Yearend Program: "Let Your Light Shine"



On May 20<sup>th</sup>, thirty-five weeks of learning, Chapel time, field trips and friendship were celebrated with preschool families and friends. Preschoolers shared art, music, refreshments, and memories of their year.

### A few favorite things:

"My favorite thing about preschool is playdough... the stacking pegs... eating lunch here."

### What did you learn?

"God is everywhere, even when we cannot see God."

"God gives us love and teaches us to be kind."

"We are all a part of God's family."

Preschool Advice for new friends:

"When you miss your mom, the teachers will help you."

"At Spirit of Joy Preschool, people love you here!"



**Words are not enough to express our gratitude** for the support shown by volunteers, prayer partners, and donations to the preschool this year. Thank you for your commitment to this ministry and mission: Rod Domke, Bob Jenson, Joel Christensen, Gene Benson, Jim & Susan McAdaragh, Susan Obermoller, Gary & Suzanne DeBoom, Crystal Domke, Liz Lynch, Evie Brouwer-Thomson, Jamie Appel, Amy Orr, Becky Amdahl, Sara Crank, Alyssa Domke, Jennifer Bergan Gabor, Melissa, Evelyn and Mae Gibson, Karissa Haddican, Danielle Mourer, Stacie Swanstrom, Donna Ver Wey, Tracy Dahl-Webb, Ron Risty and so many more!





A charitable gift annuity (CGA) is a simple agreement that allows you to make a gift to support SoJ while receiving fixed income for life. You may contribute cash, securities or other assets in exchange for fixed payments. After your lifetime, the remaining funds strengthen the mission of SoJ. For donors age 70 ½ or older, there is also an opportunity to make a one-time transfer of up to \$55,000 from an IRA to fund a CGA. Please consider investing now in SoJ’s future!

**Mission Endowment Fund Balance**

Previous YE Balance \$141,606.87  
 2026 YTD \$47,949.68  
**Total \$189,556.55**



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

# Creation Care Corner



Do any of you have the Merlin Bird ID app on your phones? I know, I know, one more app – ugh!! However, this app is very useful when you are outside and hear a bird call would like to identify who it is.

Have any of you noticed that you don't hear the Western Meadowlark singing as much as we used to? My parents and I have been saying that for several years and a recent article in South Dakota Magazine verified this. Sadly, there has been a 40% decline in the population for the last half century.

Some of the reasons for this decline include the reduction and destruction of tallgrass prairies and other grassy landscapes, plowing, increased use of chemical pesticides and herbicides, and effects of climate change (i.e., drought, extreme heat, wildfires). The loss of tallgrass prairie hits especially hard since the meadowlark is a ground-nesting insectivore.

Although we do need to see large-scale conservation efforts to combat this loss, there are things we can do in our neighborhoods and as a church family. We can add bird habitat to our yards. SDSU Extension recently published “Native Plants for Bird Habitat in South Dakota” and I urge you to check it out. Here are some quick highlights that we can do:

- Provide shelter, nesting materials, and food
- Add native plants to your yard (Big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass, narrowleaf purple coneflower, blanket flower, chokecherry, plains milkweed, and many more – refer to the guide)
- Provide bird baths or ponds and keep the water fresh and clean
- Reduce use of chemicals and pesticides
- Plant in a way that you provide food sources for birds throughout the year
- Leave your grass plants tall throughout the winter as a seed source
- Mow less often
- Install a bird feeder or hummingbird feeder

We have a strip of land devoted to native grasses and wildflowers at Spirit of Joy. Please check it out! And, finally, get out and enjoy nature. Go for a walk and take your Merlin Bird ID app with you and keep track of what you hear and see.

**Psalm 104:12** Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches.



Find SoJ Channel on Podpoint or where you find your favorite podcasts



## CATCH YOUR FAVORITE EPISODES

FOR YOUR DRIVETIME...ON VACATION

Podcast episodes from SEASON ONE will replay  
Monday - Thursday beginning June 1st

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## Financials through April 2026

### Checking Account:

General Fund	\$42,656.13
Building Fund	\$3,414.51
Donor Restricted	\$133,416.16
Reserve Fund	\$4,360.10
Petty Cash	\$200.00

### Savings Accounts:

Building	\$150,423.75
<u>Donor Restricted</u>	<u>\$41,434.65</u>
<b>Total Cash Balance</b>	<b>\$375,905.30</b>

	<b>March 2024</b>	<b>March 2025</b>	<b>March 2026</b>
Attendance	1123	1862	1767
General Offering	\$ 79,387.19	\$ 62,835.59	\$ 68,964.51
Building Offering	\$ 25,675.51	\$ 7,782.30	\$ 4,296.81

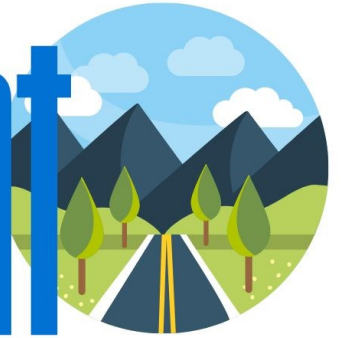
Year-to-date Income for Ministry	\$309,347.03
<u>Year-to-date Expenses for Ministry</u>	<u>\$295,197.79</u>
<b>Net Income/Deficit for Ministry</b>	<b>\$14,156.51</b>

# family fun night

6:30-8PM

ON THE ROAD...

TO GRACE



Wednesday, June 10

\* Camp-Style Worship \*  
\* Bible Story \*

\* Craft \* S'Mores \*  
\* Yard Games \*

## Engaged to Change: Middle School Camp @ SoJ

Worked hard serving our community  
Played hard making new friends  
Made lasting memories together

