



W I N D S W E E P T

STORIES OF SPIRIT OF JOY LUTHERAN CHURCH

“I am a Spirit of Joy Partner”

THE HEWITT FAMILY

We sat down with the Hewitt family: Heather, Andrew, and their three kids Aubrey, Lauren, and Grady. It was so much fun talking about how the community of SoJ has impacted their lives.

How do your faith and daily life intersect?

Heather: We're high school sweethearts, we both grew up with a similar background where faith is kind of the foundation. How we treat people, how we act throughout our day. I always want to be helping others, that's kind of why I went into the profession that I did—I'm a speech therapist—and I like to serve others and feel like I'm using the gifts God gave me.

Andrew: I work for Junior Achievement. There's an element of helping others in my daily life. Just trying to love our neighbors as ourselves is sometimes more challenging. There are days that are good and some days where I could maybe do better. [It's] just kind of a foundational thing for us.

What is a meaningful SoJ moment?

Andrew: When we go up for Communion, there's been a few times where the girls have come back and after Pastor Jeff or Christy have blessed them they'll say, “God touched me!” So that's been kind of sweet. I know we've told Pastor Jeff and Pastor Christy before that they think Pastor Jeff is God and Pastor Christy is Jesus. Pastor Jeff always likes saying, “I have quite the lofty expectations to live up to!”

Heather, to girls: Do you guys remember when Mommy broke her ankle last fall and Grady was in my tummy? [*girls nod*] People brought us food, didn't they? That's probably another memory, it's been such a great community for us...i.e. we had people we didn't know at all just sign up to bring us food. We feel fortunate to be a part of the community.

Do you have any favorite faith practices?

Heather: We enjoy saying prayers as a family at supper time and at bedtime. The girls like to pick out a prayer; They have a couple of favorites. Lauren just got her Spark Bible through the three-year-old milestone.

Andrew: We just have appreciated getting to know lots of families. It's been an awesome place to be. Excited for the future with the new building. It's been a fun ride, and we're excited to keep going.



Photo provided by the Hewitt family



SoJ Sanford Hospice Volunteers (back row, L to R: Judy Dovenmuehler, David Kupka, and Bill Bauer. (front row, L to R): Alma Tonsager and Arlene Drew. Not pictured: Judy Flaten

Spirit of Joy Partners: Making a Difference as Hospice Volunteers

By Pam Cole

No fewer than six Spirit of Joy partners answered the call to become hospice volunteers this past May. My heart is full knowing I am part of this church family, and that we may individually and collectively work together to help others in so many ways. One very special option is to spend time with patients and their families during the final days and weeks of their lives.

Thank you for allowing me to present on hospice and hospice volunteering at Sunday Forum last spring. It was an amazing experience to share important information with others that have a heart for hospice. An inquisitive and caring group attended the presentation, and we discussed what hospice means to us personally. Many “hospice stories” were shared. Out of the 12 or so people in attendance, six now serve as hospice volunteers in Sioux Falls at Ava’s House: Sanford’s acute facility, the Cottages, or in patients’ residences. This can mean long term care facilities, houses, apartments, or assisted living.

Life is about coming full circle, and helping one another through all these stages. Hospice volunteering seems daunting, but as I tell my volunteers, “if you approach hospice service with love, everything falls into place.” Each patient has a different life story, and a different ending as well. Sharing the end of life with them and their families is an enormous privilege and I am so grateful to my Spirit of Joy friends who have taken this step. They will tell you they receive as much as they give.

I hope you may visit with each of them to offer encouragement and to find out more about helping those in hospice.

With Gratitude,
Pamela Cole
Sanford Hospice Volunteer Coordinator & Spirit of Joy Partner

Churchwide Assembly

By Deacon Katherine Eisele

Dear Partners and Friends of Spirit of Joy,

On August 10 I returned to Sioux Falls from the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) held in Milwaukee, WI. The Assembly is the highest legislative authority of the ELCA. There were over 900 voting members, including myself, elected from all 65 synods, who participated in this week-long triennial assembly to discuss and deliberate important matters of the church. I will share just a few:



Newly elected Secretary of the ELCA, Deacon Sue Rothmeyer (left) and re-elected Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (right).



Some of the South Dakota voting members at the Assembly.

Bishop Elizabeth Eaton was elected for a second term as Presiding Bishop of the ELCA. We elected Deacon Sue Rothmeyer as the new Secretary of the ELCA. Both will serve us well as we move into the future.

You may have heard (this made national news) that the ELCA adopted a memorial that affirmed our long-standing commitment to migrants and refugees and declared itself a sanctuary denomination. Individuals, congregations, and synods will not be directed to act unlawfully but rather to increase understanding and to act as directed by the Spirit and alongside others in faith communities to offer support and solidarity with sisters and brothers adversely affected by often devastating policies and circumstances.

At the Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA adopted a Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment which will serve as church policy for inter-religious relations. On stage with Bishop Eaton to witness this moment were sisters and brother of our human family representing diverse religious backgrounds: Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, and others. This was a moment filled with hope, trust, and possibilities.

A personal highlight for me was a prayer breakfast that highlighted our church's global work. I was inspired, heartbroken, heartened, and left in awe at the difficult work that our missionaries and teachers encounter in places far away, but places that are never far from God's care. I thank God for all our global missions, and keep them in my prayers. I hope you will, too.

There were many other actions taken at the Assembly, including the launch of celebrating the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women! I hope you'll take time to learn more by checking out the link to the short summary (<https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events>).

We are a church called by God. We answer that call in so many ways. And we are a church that at times agrees to disagree about the specifics of God's call. This Churchwide Assembly was no exception. But I want you to know that every meeting, every plenary session, worship service, hearing, and social gathering was bathed in prayer. We trust the Holy Spirit was guiding us.

God bless you as you, too, are engaged in God's work in God's world.
Deacon Katherine Eisele



Thanking outgoing SD Synod Bishop Dave Zellmer at the Assembly.

October 2019 Leadership Team Meeting

October 17, 2019

Unfinished Business

- A. Updated building expansion plan -
- B. Congregation constitution review and update - We will review the progress made on this at the November 14 meeting.
- C. Coordinator of High School Youth Faith Formation - still open.
- D. Audit Committee – Jason Appel is assembling this group.
- E. Election of Vice-President/President-Elect – Carole Chell moved to appoint Darlene Weber-Scott to fill the VP/President-Elect position for the remainder of this term. Lori Tripp second. Motion carries.

New Business

- A. New projector for current sanctuary - Darlene Weber-Scott motioned to purchase a new laser projector for the existing sanctuary with funds from the new building project. Lori Tripp second. Motion carries.
- B. Benevolence Payments: Carole Chell motioned to make the following benevolence payments: Darlene Weber-Scott second. Motion carries
 - a. \$2,000 Church on the Street
 - b. \$500 Lutherans Outdoors
 - c. \$1500 ILFE (Lutheran Church of Nicaragua) Missionary Support
 - d. \$2500 Lutheran Church of Nicaragua
- C. Sick Leave Policy Review - We need to review leave policies and clarify if necessary any questions about benefit continuation during maternity and family leave.

VI. Closing Prayer- the Leadership Team closed with the Lord's Prayer. Next meetings will be held Thursday, November 7 at 5:30 p.m. (for budget planning) and November 14 at 6:30 p.m. (for constitution changes and building plan review.)

Devotion

By Pastor Jeff Eisele

...for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

Thus says the Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel,

I will gather others to them besides those already gathered. Isaiah 56:7b-8

When we chose these verses for Spirit of Joy's most recent capital campaign, the emphasis was on our need to build a larger space if we, in fact, truly want to invite and welcome others to gather with us "besides those already gathered." The important detail we skipped by in these verses is the Lord's desire to make the Lord's house a house of prayer.

I was recently reminded of how important it is for congregations to keep prayer at the center of their life together. Dr. Andy Root, a professor at Luther Seminary, has done a great deal of thinking, writing, and presenting on the topic of how to be the church in this secular age, a time when "people no longer need a God." He notes that one popular strategy has been to try and bring more and more neighborhood interests and activities under the church's roof in hopes that by offering everything from children and youth games to financial planning in its space, congregations will also be able to hold people's attention to the main mission. A more faithful and realistic option, Root writes, is "to simply, but profoundly, teach people to pray..."

God has called us to more than keeping busy in our space, whether it be "secular" or "religious" activity. God is living and active. God speaks, sees, hears, and acts, and invites us, in prayer, to be attentive to how God is at work in our lives, God's church, and in God's world. God so deeply loves us that God is also willing to leave God's action open in order to respond to our prayers for transformation of the way things are.

You'll soon be hearing more about how we might more intentionally shape our old and new house into a house of prayer for all peoples. Stay tuned—and thank you for your prayers.