



Annual Program Report

JUNE 1, 2025

Following Jesus, Making Disciples, Serving the World

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- Audit Report
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- When a Pastor Leaves a Congregation

AGENDA

1. Call to Order, Opening Prayer
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes from the February 2, 2025, meeting
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Pastor, Staff, and Ministry Reports
6. Unfinished Business
 - a) Pave the Way Update
7. New Business
 - a) Audit Report
 - b) Youth Endowment
 - c) Election of Council Members
 - d) Election of Endowment Members
8. When a Pastor Leaves a Congregation
9. Announcements
10. Closing Prayer / Adjournment

MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2, 2025

Congregational Meeting Minutes – February 2, 2025

1. A quorum of voting members gathered in the Fellowship Hall on February 2, 2025, for the semi-annual congregational meeting. The meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m. by council president, Paul Bulgerin.
2. Opening prayer by Pastor Brian Halverson.
3. Approval of June 2, 2024, annual meeting minutes. Motion to approve by Sandy Paukner. Second by Jeremy Beyerlein. Motion approved.
4. Treasurer Report presented by Carrie Peters.
5. Audit Report presented by Carrie Peters.
 - a. Question raised about when we last had an external audit.
 - b. Council members were unsure when last audit was done, but will check.
6. Pave the Way Update presented by Paul Bulgerin.
 - a. Question raised by Ken Bahr about how much has been spent.
Answer: of the \$302,000 pledged, \$193,700 was spent as of 11/30/24.
 - b. Question regarding why we are not getting an electronic sign.
Answer: St. John's is in an area zoned institutional that doesn't allow electronic signage. We would need to petition the Town of Brookfield to make a change.
7. New Business
 - a. Paul Bulgerin discussed what to expect after Pastor Brian's retirement.
 - i. Pastor Brian's last Sunday will be May 25. There will be one service at 9:00 a.m. with a reception to follow.
 - ii. Paul Bulgerin is in contact with the synod for guidance.
 - iii. We need to establish a MET (Mission Exploration Team) to lead the process.
 - iv. Interim pastor most likely to start mid-July. We will rely on supply pastor until then.
 - b. Committee Reports presented by Carrie Peters on behalf of the committee chairs.
 - i. Endowment
 1. Switched from Vangaard to Fidelity in 2025.
 2. Question raised about the Endowment funds having separate accounting.
Answer: The goal for 2025 is to have all committees on St. John's Balance Sheet since all use the save tax ID number.
 - ii. Gifts and Memorials – notable for 2024 was the release of funds to narthex furniture.
 - iii. Memorial Garden
 - iv. Preschool

MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2, 2025

1. Reminder that the Preschool financial report is for 2024 calendar year but the school operates by the school calendar so the info can be a bit confusing.
 2. Laura Rickinger explained that the Preschool began receiving grants during Covid. Grants are still being received but that have decreased.
- c. Nominating Committee
 - i. The list of candidates for the Nominating Committee was presented. They are: Pastor Brian, Paul Bulgerin, Carrie Peters, Jim Morgan, Keith Paukner and Josh Werner. Floor was opened for further nominations. There were none.
 - ii. Motion to close nominations was made, second, and motion passed.
 - iii. The 2025 Nominating Committee was elected as presented by unanimous vote. Committee members are Pastor Brian, Paul Bulgerin, Carrie Peters, Jim Morgan, Keith Paukner, and Josh Werner.
 - d. Thank yous and Acknowledgements
 - i. The Finance Team, especially Carrie Peters, for their hours of work.
 - ii. The Stewardship Team that is being formed, upon approval of Council. The Team will be chaired by Phil Peters.
8. 2025 Budget presented by Carrie Peters.
- a. Discussion of deficit budget
Many hours with Finance, Outreach, staff, and others, went into creating the budget. 2025 will be a unique budget.
 - b. Income
 - i. Giving - copied from 2024
 - ii. Investment – much in CDs so fairly conservative
 - iii. Other – biggest piece is \$12,000-ish released from the fund established in 2023 when we planned for a deficit, but the funds were not needed until 2024.
 - c. Salaries and compensation
 - i. Hardest part was planning for pastor compensation for June – December. The Synod is confident we can find an interim within our budget.
 - ii. Preschool Director salary moved from salary to sharing and caring for transparency per current constitution.
 - d. Caring and sharing
Accounting funds were created for all giving so no funds have negative entries, such as payments for flowers.
 - e. Worship
Paused delegation travel funds (other than Becky's trip to El Salvador which had already been started.)
 - f. Music
Designated funds were used last year and will be used in 2025.

MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2, 2025

- g. Children and youth
 - i. Designated funds will be used but some saved to fund trip next year.
 - ii. We will call on congregation to help support items like young adult/college packages.
 - iii. Question raised about how this affects Stephanie.
Answer: It is stressful. It will limit the hours she has for ministry because more time will be sent fundraising.
 - h. Discussion began with Jeremy Beyerlein suggesting an addendum of \$50,000 to the budget. We should ask for the “extra.” Council would watch trends and release funds, if able. A challenge budget will be discussed later in the meeting. Also, the new Stewardship Team will be tasked with the ask.
 - i. Administrative
A pause was put on technology upgrades. Building maintenance is increasing because the building is aging (and so is the property team. 🌀)
 - j. Benevolences
Budget amount set in conversation with Outreach Team. The Team will decide how to spread out the giving.
 - k. Motion to approve budget made by Kathy Davis, Second by Jerry Hanson. Motion passed.
 - l. Motion to amend budget by Jeremy Beyerlein:
“Motion to add a \$50,000 challenge budget to restore budgeted cuts to music, children and youth, and benevolences. Council would review giving levels to projected levels, at least quarterly, to unlock the challenge budget as appropriate.”
Motion seconded. Motion passed with one nay vote.
 - m. Vote taken to approve the budget as amended. Approved unanimously.
9. Motion to adjourn made by Linnea Logan. Second by Jerry Hanson. Motion approved.

ADMINISTRATION

Council President Report

Paul Bulgerin

Our big focus this past year has been up on Pastor Brian's up-coming retirement. Knowing that he was leaving at the end of May was at the center of much we have done this past year.

Now that he has retired, we shift this focus to the up-coming interim ministry which aims to keep all our ministries and programs smoothly running, the Mission Exploration Team (MET) process, which will help shape our future vision for St. John's and following that the creation of a call committee as we seek a new pastor to lead our congregation.

We faced budgetary difficulties in 2024, ending with a significant deficit. However, the Finance Committee worked diligently, making hard decisions, to create a more sustainable 2025 budget. So far, our giving has been strong in 2025.

We will continue to focus on our congregational giving as we continue with all the changes we will see.

I want to give my thanks to Pastor Brian, for his years of service to St. John's. I know we all wish him a blessed retirement.

I also thank the many leaders in our congregation who do so much, both publicly and behind the scenes, to make things click at St. John's. A special thanks goes to those members of the church council whose terms are ending - Keith Paukner, Carrie Peters and Jim Morgan.

We also need to thank our Property Committee for their day-to-day work, the members of the Interiors Committee who have helped redesign the Gathering Space and our wonderful musicians who bless our worship in so many ways.

As council president, I have gotten to know the members of the church staff better and have a deeper appreciation for all they do running many of the ministries of our church.

A lot will happen in the coming months. Working together, led by the Holy Spirit, I am confident that we will see great things happen at St. John's.

In Christ,
Paul Bulgerin

ADMINISTRATION

Senior Pastor Annual Report

Pastor Brian Halverson

This has been an exciting and challenging year at St. John's. As you will read in the following ministry reports, St. John's has provided a breadth of activities, programs, and opportunities to serve our communities that help to create and sustain connections and relationships.

Our worship life has consistently been excellent, as our musicians and singers have performed outstandingly, with various instrumentalists and soloists augmenting the variety of music we hear on Sundays. Our youth ministry remains vital, incorporating creativity into the learning structures of the curricula, while also providing many opportunities for the young people to serve and have fun. Seven youth affirmed their baptismal faith in May, and in our older youth went to the ELCA Youth Gathering last summer which brought them closer together. The pre-school staff continues to teach at the highest level of service and care for the children entrusted to us by grateful parents. We have upgraded and enhanced our building interior and grounds to be as welcoming a place as we can be.

A deep and special thank you to everyone on our staff. They have been a blessing to me as I have worked them in our common mission of the church. Their commitment and dedication is such a strength and inspiration for St. John's. They have demonstrated with their talents and gifts the privilege it is to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

We have welcomed a new staff person to St. John's. Heidi Bischmann is the new office coordinator who keep us organized, well-functioning, and on-track. We are grateful to have her on our team! I also want to thank Carrie Peters, who has performed her duties as church treasurer with unswerving dedication over these past years! In fact, St. John's has been blessed with great lay leadership, and I have been blessed to have worked with excellent church councils and particularly with three of the finest Church Council presidents for whom a pastor hope – Kathy Davis, Brian Zach, and Paul Bulgerin.

As you move forward in 2025 and 2026, I am confident that you will explore new ways to incorporate your faith in the life of the church and to provide opportunities for spiritual growth through worship, service, and small group ministries. The mission of the church remains the same: to carry the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ into the world, relying and depending on the grace of God through the enthusiasm of the Holy Spirit who gives all of us the guidance and strength to accomplish what God has in store for us and the world.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you in the six and one-half years. Cindy and I have always felt at home here, and as we move on, we will carry you in our hearts!

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit". (Romans 15:13)

ADMINISTRATION

Membership Report for 2024

(January 1 – December 31, 2024)

submitted by Heidi Bischmann, Office Coordinator

Members Received:

Paul and Karen Bulgerin (Children: Samantha and Hannah) – May 2, 2024

Members Removed:

Seven members were removed by death during 2024.

211 members were inactivated in the Power Church database for statistical adjustment due to inactivity and financial giving.

Baptisms:

Senna James Belli – September 8, 2024

Charlotte Grace Grissman – May 19, 2024

Avery Joy Johnson – June 30, 2024

Westley James Johnson – June 30, 2024

Lola Anne Koscielniak – June 30, 2024

Maria Jo Koscielniak – June 30, 2024

First Communion:

John Cornelis Beukema – March 10, 2024

Kekoa Naveen Broussard – November 10, 2024

Beckham August Lenell – November 10, 2024

Hannah Lennell – March 10, 2024

Grayson James Lipscomb – November 10, 2024

Jude Philip Peters – November 10, 2024

Jacob Thomas Roth – November 10, 2024

Confirmations:

Lily Michelle Fuller – May 5, 2024

Adelyn Sophia Lange – May 5, 2024

Chase Mahoney – May 5, 2024

Maelyn Judith Olson – May 5, 2024

Maddie Vanden Heuvel – May 26, 2024

Deaths/Funerals:

Jane Mary Russell Babcock – February 26, 2024

Patricia Ann Dybro – December 2, 2024

Dorothy K. Eisenberg – August 7, 2024

John R. Gugel – February 19, 2024

Cheryl Ione Hintze – February 15, 2024

John “Jack” T. James – July 28, 2024

Gerald “Jerry” J. Mahoney – July 28, 2024

Neal F. Schulz – March 3, 2024

Gerald “Jerry” Waller – November 15, 2024

Weddings:

none

ADMINISTRATION

Communications

submitted by Pam Klink, Communications Coordinator

Worship

- Worship support is provided with bulletins, PowerPoints, lector sheets, and streaming.
- The regular AV crew and the substitute volunteers are amazing: Phil Peters, Dayne Peters, Penny Holt, Stephanie Broussard, Josh Werner, Lily Fuller, Jeremy Beyerlein, and Malachi Beyerlein. Worship would not be the same without them – in person or online. *(There is room for 1-2 more to join the team on a regular or substitute basis. Training provided!)*

Social Media

- Our 8:30 service is live streamed to YouTube.
- Our YouTube channel grew to 314 subscribers.
- Our Facebook page grew to 586 followers.

Announcements

- Announcements are on the back of the bulletins each week.
- A PowerPoint of announcements runs before the early service and between services.
- Announcements are sent weekly in the Happenings email.

Emails

- The *Happenings* email is sent each week on Friday.
- The *Inspire* newsletter is published each month. A link is sent via email to those who are subscribed to receive the newsletter. It is available on the website (makedisciples.com) under Resources along with a limited number of paper copies. We continue to mail a few newsletters to those unable to view it online and unable to pick up a copy.
- Prayer requests are emailed to the Prayer email list as requests are received.
- The “Subscribe” button on the bottom of each website page is the place to manage the emails you receive. There currently are five email lists: newsletter, Happenings, prayer requests, members, and Sunday School. If your email is not on the list, you will not receive that information. (Please contact me with questions.)
- Emails are currently managed through MailChimp. The possibility of switching to Constant Contact is being explored to have emails better integrated with our PowerChurch database.

ADMINISTRATION

Finance Team/Treasurer Update

submitted by Carrie Peters

The Finance Team at St. John's meets monthly during the week before the Council meeting to examine the financials and make any necessary recommendations to Council.

The April 30 reconciled financials yielded the following:

- Giving year-to-date 19% over budget. Year to date giving is \$46,380 over this time in 2024.
- Total income is 16% over budget*
- Expenses are at 99% of budget year-to-date.

*Total income includes \$12,102.31 moved from 2023's Deficit Reduction Fund this year to make additional funds available for operations and ministries.

St. John's has approximately \$166,254 in assets invested in CDs as a proactive way to boost income. We also invested \$100,000 of the Capital Improvement Fund in a separate CD last year, which matured this year. As a result, \$3998.60 in investment income was added to the Capital Improvement Fund.

In response to giving being above goal as of April 30, Council voted to release \$6,000 to the three ministries most impacted by this year's budget changes—Benevolences, Music, and High School (\$2,000 to each).

Finance Team: Gary Schettler, Carrie Peters, Jim Morgan, Keith Paukner, Dawn Williams, Curtis Templin

ADMINISTRATION

Human Resources

submitted by Lori Schettler

The staff members at St. John's Lutheran Church are vital to our ministry. The Human Resources Committee (the "Committee" or the "HR Committee") is a strategic partner with St. John's Lutheran Church leadership and the Congregation and is committed to assisting in the development of a high performing staff, capable of supporting the mission of the church. The Committee's core responsibilities include maintenance of job descriptions, participation in recruitment and staffing, performance management, employee relations, investigations and disciplinary actions through termination, employee development, compensation and benefits design, budgeting and administration, Human Resource information management, regulatory compliance related to employment, Human Resources policy development and monitoring of compliance with them.

During the program year ended May 2025, the HR Committee participated in the selection and recruitment process for the positions of Office Coordinator and Custodian.

The HR Committee assisted in updating the job descriptions for the following positions: Music Director, Communications Coordinator, Children's Ministry Coordinator and Bookkeeper.

Throughout the program year, the Committee kept abreast of and discussed new laws and regulations pertaining to human resources. The HR Committee Chair worked closely with the Office Coordinator to ensure that each employee had a properly completed I-9 form on file and the labor law posters were updated and posted per government regulations. The HR Committee also worked with the Office Coordinator to update access control for authorized users for our IT systems and applications.

The HR Committee continued to monitor St. John's performance management process, which enables managers to have more robust discussions with staff about what each is doing well and how that person can be even more effective. The performance management process at St. John's continues to be effective and enables us to serve our strategic priorities.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with Council to ensure that St. John's continues to have a high-performing staff, which serves the mission of our church at a high level.

Respectfully submitted,
St. John's Human Resources Committee

Tom Potratz, Chair
Lori Schettler, Secretary
Paul Bulgerin, Ex-Officio
Brian Zach

Kathy Davis
Scott Bingenheimer
Steve Wimmer
Lisa Belli-Fuchs

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Endowment Fund

submitted by Jennifer Cranfill, chair

Committee:

- Jennifer Cranfill, chairperson (term expires May 2025)
- Angie Rose-Mueller, alternate Secretary (term expires May 2025)
- Phil Peters, recording secretary (term expires May 2026)
- Curtis Templin (term expires May 2027)
- Rich Warp, Financial Secretary (term expires May 2026)

The St. John's Endowment Fund was set up to generate income to be awarded to groups/ministries/charities recommended by St. John's members. The restricted balance (principal) is the accumulation of donations made to the fund over the years, for this purpose.

The Endowment Committee was able to offer an "Open-Window" campaign in January of 2025 to accept nominations for Endowment grants. This campaign was used to award \$20,050 of income to 17 grant requests. The grant award recipients were:

Habitat for Humanity	\$1,500
Just One More Ministry	\$1,500
Women's Center	\$1,500
Waukesha County Creation Care Network	\$500
United for Waukesha Resiliency Center	\$500
Milwaukee Public Museum-Beyond Tribute	\$1,000
Katy's Kloset	\$1,500
Camp American Legion-For Veterans	\$1,500
Cub Scouts Pack 1	\$1,500
ELCA disaster relief: CA wildfires	\$750
Belize Dentistry Mission Project	\$1,000
El Salvador Scholarships	\$1,500
St. John's Newborn kits	\$1,500
St. John's Christmas Food Box Drive	\$1,500
St. John's Quilting Group Sewing Events	\$300
St. John's Children's Ministry & All Peoples	\$500
St. John's Preschool scholarship program	\$1,000

Due to the balance of the Endowment over the restricted amount, we decided to offer a second open-window period March 31 – April 13. Positive financial performance of the fund was used to award 9 more grants for a total of \$7300:

Community Projects for Seniors	\$500
Hope Center (meals)	\$1000
Family Service	\$1000

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Literacy Services of WI	\$1000
Hebron House – Siena House	\$1000
Oaks Indian Mission	\$500
ELCA World Hunger – good gifts	\$1000

Gifts and Memorials

submitted by Barb Reed, Chair

The Gifts and Memorials committee meets as needed to give approval on expenditures from the account. A brochure is available which explains procedures used within the committee and offers information on memorials to families who have lost a loved one. You're welcome to leave a gift or memorial in memory or honor of someone at any time. All that is needed is to complete a "Designation of Gift" form. Persons or committees requesting to use undesignated memorial funds for an unbudgeted need within the church can complete a "Request for Use of Funds" form. Both forms are available at the Information Desk or from the church office.

The Gifts and Memorials committee can consist of five members. We currently have only three members: Dick Granholm, Barb Reed and Jim Truax. Two new members for the committee are needed. If you're interested in serving, contact one of the current members

Interiors Visioning Team

submitted by Gail Rennie, Chair

The Interiors Team has seen the "creation" of the Gathering Space come alive with the way our church family has been drawn into the spaces created by the furnishings, high top tables, the fireplace and the curiosity created by the new sculpture, *The Holy Spirit*, which was recently installed. The Pave the Way campaign has provided the congregation with a way to refresh, update, and compliment the way we as a church family engage and fill this user-friendly place to gather.

The bonus of a "new pastor" becoming part of our family over six years ago was seeing the need to "refresh" and "update" our worn-out spaces. As a team, we were blessed to share this journey with Pastor Brian, Groth Design Associates and architect, Paul Barribeau, and our Council. This all became part of the vision that led to the Pave the Way campaign.

Signage, which is so important for newcomers, has been installed thanks to the help we were able to share with the sign team in their efforts to make our building more user-friendly. New features, such as the welcome table, coffee station, the staff bulletin board and our comfortable, bright seating areas speak to our efforts to be more "welcoming" with a fresh, new look. Updated information is conveniently visible on the screen and the attention-getting messages displayed by our staff on the wall outside the nursery.

Soon you can expect an updated look to the monthly donation location between the office and the nursery. This is a work in progress, and we are gratified to see it all coming together thanks to the

COMMITTEE REPORTS

cooperation with our committee leaders. We will continue to do enhancements to the space and to monitor its use. Please feel free to offer your suggestions and help us provide settings for a more welcoming building for newcomers, guests and future members.

Interiors Team:

Dick Granholm

Jeff Gubbins

Ken Bahr

Jan Delzer

Marion Schreiber

Gail Rennie

Library

submitted by Peg Schellin

St. John's Library has a large collection of books and virtual materials available for everyone to check out. There is a wide range of topics, such as the Bible, Luther, Devotionals, Prayer, Outreach (El Salvador), Children's Bible stories, Parenting, Aging, Christian living, and much more.

There also are numerous resources that are very useful for the Bible Study Groups.

Memorial Garden with Columbarium

submitted by Mark Aamot

Dedicated in October 2017, the St. John's Memorial Garden and Columbarium continues to serve our congregation in end-of-life planning, death and burial. There are 72 niches in the Columbarium. At this time thirty-seven niches have been purchased for sixty-two individuals. The Garden is debt-free. The budget is separate from the church budget.

Beautifully engraved pavers are placed on the "floor" of the Columbarium to honor loved ones. They may be purchased at any time for \$125. It is a very special gift for a family member or special friend.

Committee members perform the upkeep for the Columbarium throughout the year. The Garden is a beautiful place for meditation and prayer. Funeral services may be conducted in the Garden. On Easter Sunday the sunrise service is held in the Garden.

The following committee members are available for further information: Karen and Mark Aamot, Carrie and Ben Allbaugh, Mary and John Almasi, Darlene Bahr, Dick Granholm, Pam and Chris Klink, Kyle and Jeff Weyer, and Marlene and Ralph Zick.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Ps. 23.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Stewardship Team

submitted by Phil Peters

First and foremost, thank you for your faithful stewardship so far this year. When we talk about stewardship at St. John's, we mean more than just financial giving—though your generosity in that area is deeply appreciated. Stewardship is also about sharing your time, your talents, and your heart with others.

And wow—this congregation shows up in so many ways. Believe it or not, there are over **50 ministry and service opportunities** available at St. John's. That's not a typo—**fifty-plus** ways to engage, support, serve, and grow. Whether you're making coffee, mowing the lawn, teaching Sunday School, or moving furniture for Project Move, *you* are living out our mission and bringing God's love into the world.

Here's what the Stewardship Team has brought you so far this year:

- **Monthly giving updates** to keep our community informed and transparent about where we stand financially
- **Impact stories** to highlight how your gifts—both financial and hands-on—are changing lives
- And most importantly... **LOTS of gratitude** (we hope you've felt it!)

And here's what's on the horizon:

- We're helping to **update the Ministry Connection Booklet** to better reflect all the incredible ways you can get involved
- We're preparing for a **fall pledge drive**—more than just a budget conversation, it's a chance to reflect on what we can do *together*
- And of course, you'll continue to see **impact stories and lots more THANKS** coming your way

Stewardship is not a seasonal activity—it's the way we live out our faith all year long. Thank you for being a congregation that gives so generously of your resources, your time, and your spirit. You are making a difference, and we're so grateful to be walking this journey with you.

In gratitude,
'Uncle" Phil



COMMITTEE REPORTS

Worship Team

submitted by Pam Klink

This year we worshiped on Sunday mornings with a traditional style at 8:30 a.m. A more contemporary style worship began at 10:45 a.m. during the program year and at 10:00 during the summer. The summer 10:00 worship was held outside in the circle drive, weather permitting. The new pavement on the circle drive was much appreciated!

We had weekly Wednesday worships at 6:30 p.m. during Advent and Lent. A combination of Holden Evening Prayer and Joyous Light liturgies were used in the Wednesday worships. A meal was offered at 5:45 p.m. before these services.

There are many to thank for sharing their time and talents to create meaningful worship.

- all of our talented musicians for providing inspirational and worshipful music: praise band, choir, handbells, Kids of the Kingdom, soloists, and instrumentalists
- communion coordinators, set up teams, and servers
- lectors, ushers, and AV tech
- decorating team during Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter
- all who donate weekly altar flowers.

CARE MINISTRIES

Funeral Reception Ministry

submitted by Carol Wasemiller

The Funeral Reception Committee offers with care and concern an opportunity for family and friends to gather at church for post funeral receptions. The brochure with the options is available to families when they first meet with the Pastor. (available on website or from the office.) Since June 2024 we have served two families with funeral services at St. Johns. Thank you to everyone who made this ministry possible. Contact any team member if you are interested in joining us to call, bake, shop, set-up, serve or clean up in the future.

Mary Almasi	262-549-1369
Darlene Bahr	262-894-9582
Barb Lange	262-542-4010
Carole Lewis	262-617-0605
Cindy Schaefer	262-271-6623
Carol Wasemiller	847-651-4694

Prayer Shawl Ministry Group

submitted by Linda Nelson

As always, our mission is to bring comfort and hope to anyone who needs it. We meet monthly on the second Friday of the month from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Our usual place to gather is in the narthex. When the weather permits, we meet outside in front of the church. We welcome new participants – from those who have years of knitting or crocheting experience to those wanting to learn. (We will teach you!) If you are unable to meet with the group every second Friday, come when you can. If you are unable to meet on Fridays, you may knit or crochet at home. New participants in this ministry are always welcome! Yarn is available for this ministry.

Our ministry provides three different items. First, are the prayer shawls. These are available in the narthex to be given to anyone in need of comfort or support. (i.e. illness, recovery, new baby). Second, are Pocket Patches. Essentially, these are mini prayers shawls that fit in your pocket. Third are baptism blankets, that are given to anyone being baptized. Periodically, the completed items are blessed in worship.

We continue our ministry with love and hope.

CARE MINISTRIES

Quilting Group

submitted by Klaudia Hollander

St. John's quilting group is made up of 8-10 women who meet monthly on the first Tuesday evening of the month from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Our focus is to assemble and sew quilts for Lutheran World Relief. LWR distributes these quilts to people in need in our country and around the world. In 2024 we packed and sent 82 quilts following our annual Quilt Sunday in October.

In addition to our monthly group, we are supported by other members who help by sewing quilt tops and tying the assembled quilts at home. This past year several of our group and other members attended special sewing days held at church. They learned the bargello technique and sewing a heart block using half square triangles. These skills were applied to making quilt tops for our group.

New members to our group are always welcome. In addition, 'Quilt To Go' packets with instructions are available in the gathering area for anyone interested in supporting this mission by sewing a quilt top at home.

Visitation Ministry

submitted by Karen Aamot, Facilitator

A team of approximately 20 volunteers visit our Shut-Ins, who are unable to attend worship in person. There are approximately 9-12 shut-ins who are visited monthly by a pair of visitors who bring communion. The visits often include singing hymns and praying together. The Youth make greeting cards for our Shut-Ins at Christmas. Visitors also share prayer shawls with Shut-Ins. Thank you to the Visitation Team volunteers!

"So faith, hope and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love," I Cor. 13

Yoga Group

submitted by Kathi Hanson

Physical health is as important as spiritual health. Yoga sessions at St. John's are led by Kim Walbrun, on Mondays from 10:00-11:00. There is a \$10 cost of each session attended. Everyone is welcome to join this small group of 2-6 people – bring your own yoga mat and wear comfy clothes.

Questions? Contact – via text or call – Kim (414-698-7774) or Kathi (414-421-4206).

GROW MINISTRIES

Preschool

submitted by Laura Rickinger, St. John's Lutheran Church Preschool Director

St. John's Preschool, having completed our twenty-sixth school year, is part of the Children, Youth and Families Ministries. We are proudly a diverse community both culturally and with the skills, gifts, and challenges of our children. Our neighbors are happy to belong to St. John's Preschool as well as the nine preschoolers, representing eight families, who are St. John's members. We continue to be blessed to welcome children with special needs and challenges and where they can learn and grow receiving the attention they need and cannot receive in other preschools. We have six children using our tuition scholarship program.



St. John's Preschool

WHERE WE PLAY, DISCOVER, LEARN AND GROW.

2024-2025 Preschool Year Highlights:

In our Two-Year-Old class, team teachers Mary Wagner and Lana DeCoto enjoyed the eagerness of ten children playing and learning as their first classroom experience. We continue to be successful in enrolling children throughout the school year after their second birthday. We are proud of our 100% retention rate into our Three-Year-Old class.

Our Three-Year-Old class with fourteen children, taught by Mary and Lana, showed us how children learn and grow with the age-appropriate learning skills that are introduced and practiced every day in a fun, fast-paced and nurturing classroom.

Our Four-Year-Old class with seven eager and energy-filled learners was led by LaBree Paukner. Our families appreciate the opportunity to use our class as either their child's Four-Year-Old experience and then move on to public school 5K, or to attend our Preschool and then enter their school's 4K class. LaBree has an emphasis on Group Work Skills to practice and learn collaboration, communication, and problem-solving. We are confident that each child is well-prepared for their next step after this year of our Playing to Learn curriculum.

We are proud to share these testimonials we received at the close of this successful school year:

St. John's Preschool represents faith, family, and community. For the past nine years, it has truly been a second home to our family. We could not have asked for a more nurturing, loving, supportive, and accepting environment. Through our time here, we've formed lasting friendships with both staff and fellow families. St. John's has strengthened and nurtured the foundational tools our children need to move forward in their academic journeys—with confidence, compassion, and humility.

-Madeline C.

The teachers and staff have become like family. Teachers have been so receptive to our feedback and insight into our children's learning needs. They are fantastic partners in our children's education. The staff focuses on meeting our kids where they are to encourage them to achieve their goals. St John's preschool has been an incredible start to foster a love of learning in each of our kids.

-Justine B.

GROW MINISTRIES

St. John's provides a wonderful, nurturing preschool experience with age appropriate curriculum for children. Every morning my children are excited for school because of the warm, welcoming teachers greeting them. There is always a large variety of play based learning activities set up for the day that support children's overall social and cognitive development.

-Jena J.

We are so grateful for the learning experience our children have had at St John's Preschool. All of the teachers are experienced, knowledgeable, thoughtful and kind. They provide a nurturing, play-based environment offering an individualized approach which allows each child to learn and grow at their own pace. We highly recommend St John's preschool as a top choice for early childhood learning.

-Susan B.

Children's Ministries

Joanna Salinas, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Sunday School had a great year! This is our 10th year utilizing the Large Group/Small Group format. Children gather first in Large Group, where they experience music, stewardship, the lesson and prayers all together as a group. Families often attend this time together and several families have now dubbed this time as "kids church". Then students ages 2-5th grade head to Small Groups where they build peer relationships and expand on the lesson.

The benefits of this framework are that it allows us the freedom to be highly creative in how we present the lesson and allows for greater volunteerism and family participation. It also provides an environment for children with specific needs to fully participate in (and enjoy) Sunday School in areas where they may struggle in a traditional format. We are utilizing Think Orange Curriculum.

Highlights and milestones of the year include:

- Sunday School enrollment of approx. 40 children.
- Ten students received their First Communion.
- Bible Distribution to our preschoolers and 3rd graders.
- Over 12 Youth/Adult volunteers (Large Group team, Small Group leaders, planning teams)
- Collaboration with the Confirmation students in a Youth Leadership Team on Sunday mornings
- Stewardship Projects brought in over \$2500 in funds as we focused on local & world hunger, our Los Heroes partnership, and connecting with St. John's ministries.
- Impromptu Christmas Pageant.

Summer Programming

Summer of 2025

This summer we are offering a Lego themed VBS called **Build VBS: Faith in Action!** It is for kids 4-5th grade. Kids will learn to BUILD their lives on the Solid Rock of Jesus! Each day the Bible lesson will connect Legos and STEM as we explore putting our faith in action as we build a Giant Lego Man!

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Summer of 2024

Last summer we offered an Olympics themed VBS called Summer Games VBS: Champions in Training! Fifty-five kids competed in our own Summer Games using the Fruits of the Spirit as a guide. It took place at St. Johns the week of August 5-9.

Middle School Ministry, 6th-8th grade

Joanna Salinas, Middle School Ministry Coordinator

Our Middle School Ministries consist of approximately 35 students in 6th-8th grade. Our 5th & 6th grade students participate in a two-year Bible Overview Class and our 7th & 8th grade students are invited to participate in the Confirmation program. This is an age group that thrives with in person programming, and we were excited to create their own space for them downstairs in the Paul Room. We continued to partner with our High School Youth this year to offer weekly Sunday evening programming and meals for all our students.

5th & 6th grade Pre-Confirmation students participated in a twice monthly Bible Overview class on Sunday evenings taught by Karie Zach and Joanna Salinas using the Sparkhouse Connect Curriculum. This is a two-year program and this year we studied the New Testament.

Our 7th & 8th grade Confirmation Students participated in twice monthly instruction on Sunday evenings taught by Pastor Brian and Joanna Salinas. This year we explored the Parables of Jesus and connected them to students' faith lives.

In addition to our Sunday evening meals, we traveled to WI Dells for Youth Quake, a weekend in February where the students spent a weekend in worship, prayer, and workshops with 600 other young people from across the state. On Sunday mornings our Middle Schoolers participate in the Youth Leadership Team where they helped in Sunday School and participated in over a dozen service projects.

This summer, we will continue to connect with students during our Family Fun Nights, service opportunities, and as Camp Counselors during VBS.

High School and Young Adult

submitted by Stephanie Broussard, Youth Ministry Coordinator

2024 ELCA Youth Gathering – New Orleans:

This past summer, our high schoolers were blessed to participate in the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, joining thousands of young people from across the entire ELCA. We brought a group of seven youth who engaged deeply in this powerful, faith-filled experience.

Throughout the week, our youth took part in vibrant mass-style worship services that brought the entire gathering together in praise, reflection, and community. They heard inspiring messages from

GROW MINISTRIES

dynamic speakers who challenged and encouraged them in their faith journeys. The week also included opportunities to serve, as our group stepped into the New Orleans community to participate in service work—putting faith into action and learning the importance of being the hands and feet of Christ.

This event was a celebration of our shared faith and a powerful reminder that our young people are an essential, active part of the church today. We are so proud of their openness to grow spiritually, connect with others, and represent our congregation with grace and heart.

Youth Group:

Our bi-weekly high school youth group has continued to be a meaningful space for connection, growth, and community. Each Sunday evening gathering begins with the opportunity to share a meal together at church, creating a relaxed and welcoming environment for our young people to settle in and connect before diving into our time together.

Attendance fluctuated throughout the year based on the youth's various commitments and sports schedules, with an average of 4–9 students participating each week. While numbers may have varied, our focus remained steady: building strong, authentic relationships among the youth and nurturing their connection to the church community.

A new and exciting addition this year was the launch of a monthly, congregation-wide service project—each one led by our high school youth. These projects have not only given our young people the chance to serve, but also to grow as leaders and invite the wider congregation into meaningful acts of service together. This initiative has been a powerful way to live out our faith in action and build intergenerational connections within our church.

9th Grade Confirmation:

Our 9th grade confirmation program offered a rich and engaging year of learning, exploration, and spiritual growth. The first half of the program focused on comparative religions, beginning with a retreat at Lutherdale where students took time to reflect more deeply on their own Lutheran faith. From there, we welcomed guest speakers from a variety of religious traditions—including The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Judaism, Sikhism, and Islam—who shared their beliefs and practices with our group.

After learning about each tradition, students had the unique opportunity to visit different places of worship and participate in a worship experience, helping broaden their understanding and appreciation of faith beyond their own.

In the second half of the year, we shifted our focus to preparing for the students' Affirmation of Baptism. This was a time of reflection, ownership, and preparation as each student explored what it means to live out their faith. In May, we celebrated with great joy as seven students were confirmed, each playing an active role in the service and marking this important milestone in their faith journey.

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College and Young Adults:

This year, we were intentional about staying connected with our college students and young adults as they continued their journeys beyond high school. As a way to show love and encouragement from their church home, our high school youth took the lead in assembling and sending out care packages—thoughtful reminders that they are remembered and supported no matter where they are.

In addition, we invited the congregation to write notes of congratulations to our graduating young adults. These cards were mailed directly to their homes, celebrating their accomplishments and offering blessings as they step into their next chapter. Through these simple yet meaningful gestures, we continue to remind our young people that they are a valued part of our faith community.

Children, Youth and Family Board Report

Submitted by Linnea Logan, CYF Board Member

Our Children, Youth and Family Board's (CYF) mission is to help guide our educational programming. We would like to thank the members of the CYF Board and the CYF staff for their dedication and vision for the future of St. John's CYF programs.

Children, Youth and Family programs actively serve and engage many, including:

St. John's Preschool

Birth to 2 (formerly cradle roll)

Children Ages 2 - Elementary Age

Middle School Students

High School Youth Ministry

Young Adult Ministry

One of many highlights this year include students planning service projects for the entire congregation.

The board is excited to share the opportunity to start a Children, Youth and Family Endowment Fund. A generous donation of \$15,000 has been pledged to begin this process. It will serve as a matching gift to the congregation. Once we reach the \$25,000 threshold to begin a fund, we will use the ELCA's Ministry Growth Fund as the monetary vehicle for this fund.

The purpose of the Youth Endowment Fund is to provide youth of the congregation with educational scholarships, scholarships for church sponsored activities and/or trips, and to provide additional funding for special CYF programs or events. The fund is not intended to be used for funding normal planning, in the event of budget deficits.

The CYF board asks the congregation to consider proposed language for the constitution/bylaws specifying a framework for the CYF board and Youth Endowment Fund.

CYF board members - Sonja Beyerlein, Linnea Logan, Curtis Templin, Karie Zach

CYF staff – Laura Rickinger, Joanna Salinas, Stephanie Broussard

If you have an interest in serving on the Board, please reach out to any CYF board member or CYF staff.

GROW MINISTRIES

ADULT MINISTRIES

Adult Ministry Team

Submitted by Ralph Berglund

The purpose of the team is to provide opportunities for people to grow in their relationship with God and in their relationship with other people in our St. John's community. Our theme this past Fall was "Care of God's Creation". Key events in the Fall were a congregational wide book discussion of Sandra Richter's "Stewards of Eden – What Scripture Says About the Environment and Why It Matters". This was followed by two associated St. John's Academy lectures. The first was a presentation by Roger T. Williams from the Food, Faith, and Farming Network on the State of Farming in Wisconsin Today. The Second was a movie screening of "Common Ground", an uplifting story of the pioneers of the regenerative farming movement.

This Spring there were two academy lectures, both focused on how to deal with the chaos of our times. The first was presented by Pastor Kris Ruffatto on "Chaos and the Life of Faith: An Old Testament Motif for Our Day". The second was by Pastor Paul Bulgerin on "Jesus and Chaos: Living Out Our Faith in Uncertain Times and Situations".

This coming program year we will move from the theme of "Care of God's Creation" to "Care of God's Community" as we provide opportunities to continue to grow and strengthen our already strong community here at St. John's. Adult Ministry team members are Brian Cranfill, Kathy Davis, Steve Johnson, and Ralph Berglund.

SMALL GROUPS

Ad Hoc Small Groups

Two ad hoc groups met during the congregation-wide study. The fall 2024 study was "Stewards of Eden – What Scripture Says About the Environment and Why It Matters" by Sandra L. Richter. Kathy Davis led the Sunday morning group. Carol Wasemiller led the mid-week group.

Friday Morning Ladies' Book Club

submitted by Linda Gugel

We are a group of 20+ women who meet once a month to discuss the book we've chosen. We meet in each other's homes or at church on the first Friday of the month. We are open to new members.

This year we've read:

- The In-Between by Hadley Vlahos
- The Henna Artist by Alka Joshi
- Go as a River by Shelly Read
- The Women by Kristin Hannah
- Four Seasons in Rome by Anthony Doerr
- The Choice by Edith Eger
- Eddy Wilson is Looking for Love by Mary Ann Cronan.

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Friday Men's Group Discussion (MGD)

submitted by Chris Klink

The Friday Men's Group Discussion (MGD) meets at 6:15 a.m. weekly throughout the year. We have continued to meet by Zoom to allow members to join in from throughout Wisconsin, the rest of the US, and internationally. Our group has been in existence since the late 1990s and as we have all become more "seasoned", most of us are retired. We study a variety of biblical and faith-based topics. Our group currently numbers 11 and we are always open to new members. If you would like to find out more, please contact Chris Klink at klinklink@sbcglobal.net.

Koinonia Support Group

submitted by Doris Klitzke

We are a small group who meet after 8:30 a.m. church services for breakfast a few times each year. We are a support and social group.

Retired Men's Meal Ministry

submitted by Jerry Hanson and Roy Osmon

This activity addresses an important group in the St. John's church family, older men with a variety of backgrounds in their vocational experiences, who nonetheless desire to be a part of Christian life with others who can understand and value them and be mutually supportive. Virtually everyone wants to have an identity which puts them in a positive light, especially when one is now getting up in years and faces the special challenges of changes in body, mind and even spirit. Our gatherings provide a unique opportunity to share fellowship, food, a devotion and prayer, as well as caring for one another's situation in life.

The group meets for breakfast at 8:30 a.m. on the first Wednesday of the month at the Machine Shed in Pewaukee. On the third Wednesday of the month, we meet for lunch at noon at Good Eats Café in Pewaukee but a new location will be named soon. The breakfast session usually is attended by about 10-14 men with the lunch by 6-10 men. If you are a man in this age group and are not yet on the mailing list or just want more information, please contact either of us to get in on the fun.

Roy Osmon
Email: rosmon@wi.rr.com
Phone: 414-405-5799

Jerry Hanson
jerryhansonrhp@gmail.com
262-785-8098

Saturday Mornings Men's Group

Submitted by Ralph Berglund

This group meets every Saturday morning during the school year except Holiday weekends. Our purpose is to provide an opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and other Christian men through book discussion and Bible study. This past fall we started by participating in the

GROW MINISTRIES

congregation's discussion of Sandra Richter's book "Stewards of Eden" with the theme of Care of God's Creation. We followed with a several weeks discussion of Barbara Brown Taylor's book "Holy Envy". Then this spring we spent eight weeks with a Bible study of the book of Revelation. It is amazing the insights that you discover through discussion in a small group format.

We look forward to starting up again in the fall. Bring a mug of coffee and join us for some fellowship and meaningful discussion with other Christian men. Contact Ralph Berglund (email ralph.berglund@gmail.com or phone 262-547-8231) if you would like more information.

Saturday Night Couples Group

submitted by Steve Johnson

Meeting since 2000, this group is composed of 6 couples - three of the couples being current members of St John's, while the other three couples no longer attend St. John's. The group is primarily focused on individual spiritual development and fellowship. Almost all the group's members are already involved in a variety of service projects and caring ministries both within and/or outside St. John's, so the focus for the group has been on group study; it was not involved, as a group, in any service or caring ministry activities this past year. With the group meeting in the homes of the couples, space limitations do not allow for further growth at this time.

During the fall of 2024, SNC group participated in the Stewards of Eden book study. The idea of a study focused on "Care of God's Creation" was of great interest to the group. During the late winter and spring of 2025, the group did a study of Barbara Brown Taylor's book: Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others - a book which was both thoroughly enjoyed and challenging.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study Group

submitted by Kathi Hanson

The Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month, September thru May, at 9:00 a.m. We are a small group that alternates leading and hosting. (Our husbands love it when we host because they enjoy the leftover brunch items for lunch!) We always welcome more ladies to join us. Traditionally we have studied books of the Bible, Christian books or video studies. This year we have studied Test of Faith by Donna Snow.

Tuesday Afternoon Book Club

submitted by Darlene Bahr

Our group of ten meet once a month at St. John's from August thru May, with summers off. Members recommend books and the groups decides the choices with the person suggesting the book becoming the leader for that month. Most of our choices fall into the historical or biographical fiction genre, but we are open to all suggestions. Many heartfelt discussions on life issues have resulted from books chosen. The group is open to new members.

GROW MINISTRIES

Tuesday Night Bible Study Small Group

submitted by Kyle Weyer, facilitator

Our small group meets from 7-9 p.m. on Tuesday evenings. We schedule approximately six weeks in the fall and six weeks during Lent. We select books that are closely tied to books in the Bible. Our goal is to grow in discipleship. Because we meet in homes, we are at capacity at this time.

Wednesday Morning Circle

submitted by Kathy Hoepfner

The Wednesday Morning Circle group meets on the second Wednesday of each month from September through May at 9:30 a.m. in the library. We are a group of women who have a social hour breakfast followed by a Biblical video study. The women take turns hosting the breakfast.

Women of Faith Book Club

submitted by Patrice Krimpelbein

Women of Faith is a community of women ready to discuss topics inspired by the books we read, by current events and by the needs of the group. While we have previously met on Friday nights, we now meet on the third Saturday of each month (except December) at 9:30 a.m., meeting at the homes of our members. We read a wide range of book titles, selected by the group (those that are together at the time the list needs to be expanded) and then sent out to the full email list of members. We use the free version of the BOOKCLUBS App to keep track of our reading list and gathering times. We recently completed "Anxious People," "Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others" and "The Covenant of Water." Our upcoming book titles are "Northwoods" and "The Women."

You are not required to offer your home for meetings, and it is not necessary to have read the book to join us, so long as you attend with an open heart and a loving spirit.

Women's Monday Afternoon Study Group

submitted by Patrice Krimpelbein

Our group have studied from several sources, always based on the Bible and chosen to enrich our faith. We are currently using "30 Quick Bible Studies That Will Change Your Life for the Better" as a study resource. We meet on the third Monday afternoon, September through May, in the church library. We are a group of 12-15 women, who alternate leading the discussions and hosting. If you would like to join us, contact Patrice Krimpelbein.

*If your ministry group is not listed in this report,
please see Pam so it may be included next year.*

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

MUSIC MINISTRY

Music Coordinator/Organist

submitted by Becky Whelpley, Music Director

Dear Friends in Christ,

It has been a joy and honor to serve St. John's! I am thankful for the existing ministries as well as for the new ways that the Holy Spirit has moved us. I would like to thank the people of St. John's, the church staff, the choir members, instrumentalists, and Pastor Brian for all the support and collaboration. Many thanks to Kenn Anderson, Heidi Bischmann and Lisa Weiss-Cornelius, Lana DeCoto and Brent Logan for their wonderful musical leadership at St. John's.

A few highlights this past year included hosting the St. Olaf Orchestra on October 12, Creation Musical Sunday on November 17, Christmas Music Weekend, Advent and Lent Wednesday services, and of course Christmas, Holy Week and Easter.

A special middle school music ministry has grown from kids who have "aged" out of KOTK but still want to be involved in music. During the KOTK rehearsal time on Wednesdays I have been rehearsing with these young people to sing and add instruments such as hand chimes and percussion to hymns and KOTK songs. This has been a great blessing to me and the congregation.

All instruments have been faithfully maintained this year; the grand piano in the sanctuary will be needing some extra maintenance in the coming years due to age. More to come. Thank you to the congregation for supporting all of the music ministries.

The choir has been rehearsing all year and has certainly blessed our Sunday services. I am so thankful to these dedicated volunteers that rehearse weekly to enhance our worship. Thank you! In addition, the choir has collaborated with handbells, brass, and instrumentalists during the year.

Looking forward to serving with you in the coming year!

Handbell Choir

submitted by Heidi Bischmann, Handbell Choir Director

The Handbell Choir has had a strong 2024/2025. These are some of our highlights.

- Regular handbell musicians and available substitutes included: Chris Anderson, Sonja Beyerlein, Heidi Bischmann, Mickey Fank, Sue Keith, Pam Klink, Linnea Logan, Patti Mueller, Karen Natterstad, LaBree Paukner, Joanna Salinas, Pauline Shoemaker, Chris Standley, Bonnie Suhaysik, Mary Wagner and Becky Whelpley.
- The choir met regularly throughout the year on Tuesday evenings – September through May – to learn and perform 15 musical selections at 9 worship services/events.

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

- Our weekly rehearsal routine includes a devotion to begin our time together and a short closing focused on special prayer requests to uplift and strengthen us as we experience love, joy, challenge, and loss in our daily lives.
- For more than 30 years, the St. John's Handbell Choir has been an integral small group within our congregation. New choir members/guests are welcomed whole-heartedly, and the group regularly participates in book studies, Lenten suppers, and mission outreach projects.
- "The Winter Began Softly" composed by Sandra Eithun was the handbell choir's favorite piece this year and was shared during the Music Sunday advent worship service. This original work for handbells paints a serene picture of a winter landscape blanketed in lightly falling snow.
- Becky Whelpley invites the full handbell choir or a just a few musicians to ring with the adult choir from time to time throughout the year.
- This year, we welcomed Anna Sitterly to play flute with us on "O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus" arranged by Larry Shackley and Arnold Sherman on Maundy Thursday.
- A highlight during 2024 was the Summer Handbell Camp held at St. John's July 29–August 1 with clinician and well-known handbell composer Sandra Eithun. This fast-paced, multiple choir event brought many people to St. Johns. It was a truly unique experience for both musicians and people who stopped to listen throughout the week and or attended the closing concert. We are excited to offer Summer Handbell Camp in 2025 – July 28-31. There will be a closing concert featuring the music from the workshop on Thursday, July 31 at 7:00 pm. The concert is free and open to the public.

New musicians are always invited and encouraged to join the Joyful Bells for laughter, prayer, fellowship, fun and beautiful music!

Blessings,

Heidi Bischmann, Handbell Choir Director

Kids of the Kingdom (KOTK)

submitted by Lisa Weiss-Cornelius

2024-2025 was an exciting year for children's music and singing. We rehearsed on Wednesday evenings followed by a meal which was prepared by each of the families involved. A "Sign Up Genius" was used to give families a list of weeks that needed dinners. There was no cost for families to be part of KOTK, they just prepared a dinner contribution. The families did a wonderful job of covering meals. KOTK sang one or two times a month from October to May. This year we continued to include the preschool aged members so that we could work on growing our ensemble. Lana DeCoto worked with the younger preschool participants. It was wonderful to have such a nice size group of kids from age 3 to 10. We grew to the size of 17 members who participated regularly. It was such a joy to see the musical growth weekly. KOTK became a supportive musical family in every way. Looking forward to this next year!

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

Preschool KOTK

- This year, the KOTK continued to include preschool children ages 3-5
- There were eight children who joined.
- The children had time for singing with the older children.
- They then went and did some singing, a story, and some time to play instruments and playtime.
- They were able to join the older children in singing at worship.

Praise Band

submitted by Kenn Anderson, Contemporary Music Director

- Researching ways to improve quality of sound in the worship area
 - Worked with KOTK and others to provide cooperating worship opportunities
 - Worked with Music Director for special services
 - Worked with Music Director for Holiday services and joint services (outdoor too)
 - Added piano player to band (when available)
 - Continued using in-ear monitors to reduce volume in worship area
 - Use of electric drums aiding in less volume as well
 - Seeking out new material for service as well as continuing to use familiar songs
 - Mindful of budget for band, supplies, and equipment
 - Employing outside agency to enhance band's sound and enable easier "mixing"
 - Continue female vocalist
 - Worked with Pastor to ensure cohesive worship experience (flow)
 - Led worship outdoors in the summer
 - Selected appropriate music for all contemporary services
 - Provide special bluegrass services (quarterly or so)
 - Provided special "pedal steel guitar services"
 - Learn new music upon request (if appropriate)
-

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

SERVICE AT ST. JOHN'S

Garden Team

submitted by Jennifer Cranfill

St. John's has a beautiful onsite vegetable garden just south of the parking lot. 2024 was the last season for the current garden team leadership. The field shall go fallow until the next ministry sprouts up!

This past year we grew vegetables for distribution to St. John's congregation on Sunday mornings and we also shared with our community partner the Waukesha Food Pantry. This past year we planted Butternut and acorn squash, tomatoes, and several varieties of onions. Our monster tomato cages allowed our plants to reach even higher and improve our harvests.

Hospitality Ministry

submitted by Barb Lange

The **Hospitality Ministry** is twofold: The Sunday Morning Coffee Committee and The Welcoming Committee. The purpose of both groups is to continue the welcoming and supportive environment at St. John's for both members and visitors.

Sunday Morning Coffee Committee

Currently the committee is made up of four individuals/couples that volunteer their time on a rotating basis. Faithful Dick Gennerman is the weekly "coffee brewmaster" and the rest of the team serves coffee and treats (when available) and cleans up after the services.

During the program year coffee is available between services in both the Gathering Space and Fellowship Hall, and treats are available in the Fellowship Hall between services. Generous donations offset the cost of the coffee and treats are donated by signing up on Sign-Up Genius. More volunteers are needed for the weekly coffee serving/clean up and for providing the weekly treats enjoyed by both adults and children.

Coffee Committee

Sara and Gregg Everts

Dick Gennerman

Barb Lange

Kyle and Jeff Weyer

Vicki and Mark Latus

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

Welcoming Committee

Always looking for additional volunteers to join the team, this committee was restarted in the fall of 2023. Each Sunday morning during the program year there are two greeters that welcome people at the East Entrance. One of the volunteers stays for part of the education hour to be available to visitors who might have questions, and for new families who are looking to connect with the Sunday School program. In the summer months one volunteer is available for the 8:30 indoor service. Currently there are not sufficient volunteers to be located at both church entrances. This would be possible as more volunteers become available.

Welcoming Committee

Darlene Bahr	Linda Brazin
Linda Gugel	Phil Peters
Klaudia Hollander	Barb Reed
Sue Keith	Carol Wasemiller
Barb Lange	Penny Holt
Patrice Krimpelbein	

Offering Counters

submitted by Mickey Fank

The Offering Counting Team is responsible for recording all offerings received by mail, the drop boxes, special events, & the Sunday offering. We have four teams of 2 or 3 counters, and each team counts about once each month on Monday mornings.

One person on each team enters the donor's name, the amount, & the specific fund, if identified, on an Excel spreadsheet/form on the computer. The other person/people on the team count offerings given in weekly envelopes, any loose cash, and cash from specific groups/funds (Sunday School, Coffee & Donuts, etc). Once this all balances, we turn it over to the office for recording, and one of us takes the checks, cash, and deposit slip to the bank.

We would love to have a few more people join the team. Prior to scheduling, I ask for each member's availability, so I can work around everyone's schedules. Also, other team members are always very willing to sub for each other when conflicts arise.

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

Property Team

submitted by Bill Stace, Building Supervisor

As Building Supervisor at St John's Lutheran, I have the pleasure of working with the hard-working group of dedicated men and women that make up the Property Team. The Property Team meets every Tuesday morning to go over future projects and delegate tasks to be completed that day, of which there are many. Our goal is to keep everything running smoothly, from heating and cooling systems to changing light bulbs! Along with our custodial team of Debra and Ethan we keep the building clean and inviting to all that enter.

The Property Team has been hard at work doing routine projects replacing light bulbs, ceiling tiles and fixing plumbing and electrical issues. We have also started the prep work for much-needed upgrades to our boiler system and Sanctuary lighting controls. There are many other improvements on the horizon to look forward to. So far, we have saved around \$6,000 that would have been spent on outside services. Being part of such a talented group is a pleasure and I look forward to making St John's a beautiful and welcoming house of worship!

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

PARTNERSHIP AND OUTREACH

SJLC outreach and partnership ministries continue to run strong in both commitment by members and impact of the lives of people. Our budget and designated gifts were used to support our three parish partnerships and several local and global ministries and programs throughout the ELCA and in our community. On behalf of the committee and the whole congregation, thank you for your offerings and special gifts that make this amazing level of support for the care of others possible!

Below are reports of the many ministry activities supported by SJLC:

LOCAL SERVICE/OUTREACH

Our ministries at St. John's provide us many opportunities to "outreach" in the name of Jesus Christ to those less fortunate. Folks of all ages help out in numerous ways, through the many ministries for which we advocate.

Christmas Food Drive

submitted by Brian Cranfill, Outreach Chair

This was our 40th year for the Christmas Food drive. We delivered 120 bags of groceries, plus over 70 main dish items including hams turkeys, ribs, and pork loins, as well as 40 bags of oranges, and 10 bags of apples. Our delivery teams transported the donated food items to All Peoples and the Waukesha Food Pantry. We continue to enjoy assistance from our high school youth group with shopping duties for apples, oranges, and many extra main dish items. This year's youth shopping excursion was funded by two very generous anonymous donations. Thanks also to our loaders and delivery drivers.

Food Pantries

submitted by Brian Cranfill, Outreach Chair

Waukesha – St. John's continues to support the Waukesha Food Pantry through continuous ongoing donation by members to the collection bin in Fellowship Hall. We are on a regular pickup route by the Food Pantry for pickup. Bring your donations when you come to worship to save yourself an extra trip to the food pantry!

All Peoples – New this year, we are also supporting All Peoples Church food pantry. They have an ever-increasing need. We also collect donated items in the Fellowship Hall that volunteers transport to APC.

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

Hope Center

submitted by Carole Lewis

Hope Center has been a valuable partner in the community, providing basic needs ... food, shelter, and clothing ... to anyone who needs a helping hand. Our special relationship with Hope Center continues, thanks to your generosity and caring hearts!

Over the years, St. John's members have donated clothing, hygiene items and furniture, as well as volunteering their time and giving financial support to this very worthy program. Thank you for your support, and for making a difference to all those who benefit from the Hope Center!

Hope Center Lunch

submitted by Brian Cranfill, Outreach Chair

Every Monday since December 2020, one of our dedicated volunteers shops for and delivers food to Hope Center to allow them to make 50 or more lunches. We have a very dedicated core of volunteers who participate each month to support this ministry. St. John's general budget pays for the food served each week. This year the ministry was fortunate to gain two new volunteers to help strengthen an already robust program.

Loaves and Fishes

submitted by Dawn Williams

St. John's continues to support Loaves and Fishes, serving an afternoon meal two to four times a year at the Hope Center for about 40-60 guests. Loaves and Fishes was started many years ago and was funded by the Cooperative Congregations of Waukesha. This program provides a nutritious meal for families and individuals who are in a variety of difficult situations.

As a church, we have been part of the Loaves and Fishes for over 20 years! For the past couple of years, Joanna and many of our youth have also committed to preparing and serving a few meals as well. Although our traditional meal has been spaghetti, garlic bread, and tossed salad (with cookies for dessert), any group willing to take a spot on the roster can prepare any meal they would like.

We'd love to have more groups sign up since there are always more weeks in the year than the number of volunteer groups serving Loaves and Fishes. If you are part of a group at St. John's and would like to be a part of this vital mission, please contact Dawn Williams for more information.

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

Monthly Outreach Focus

submitted by Brian Cranfill, Outreach Chair

Each month we focus our in-kind giving to one of our local or global partners. Many of these efforts have a long history of support at St. John's. Our collections include:

- Backpacks and school supplies for All Peoples
- Mission of Healing for Heroes of Faith in El Salvador
- Coats/gloves/scarves for All Peoples
- Socks & undies for Hope Center
- Women's Center donations
- Newborn Kits
- Personal care items for Hope Center
- All Peoples Food Pantry

Thank you to all our leaders and contributors who help make a difference in the lives of many each month.

Outreach Support

submitted by Brian Cranfill, Outreach Chair

St. John's continues to dedicate a percentage of budget to several ministries outside the church, including our partners at All Peoples, Akeri, and Heroes of Faith as well as LSS (Lutheran Social Services), Hope Center, Women's Center, Oaks Indian Center, and Lutherdale.

Project Move

submitted by Chris Klink

Project Move is a branch of ministry through the Hope Center where three Saturdays per month groups from various churches pick up donated furniture - such as beds, dressers, tables, chairs and couches, and appliances such as refrigerators, stoves, and washers and dryers - that is then available at no charge for people in need. St. John's in one of nine churches who rotate through the assigned dates. We currently have a team of four members and are always looking for new members to our team. If you would like to find out more, please contact Chris Klink at klinklink@sbcglobal.net.

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

The Women's Center (TWC)

submitted by Mary Almasi, TWC liaison for St. John's congregation

St. John's presented two opportunities for donating to The Women's Center whose mission is to provide safety, shelter, and counseling to all women and children impacted by domestic abuse and trafficking.

The opportunities for giving were:

1. In December, requests for gift cards for groceries, gasoline, and shopping are displayed on the Christmas Giving Tree in the narthex. St. John's members respond generously.
2. In February, the monthly emphasis for the Outreach Offering in the shopping carts was items suggested by TWC as being most needed by their clients. Once again, St. John's members responded very generously. There is a labeled

GLOBAL SERVICE AND OUTREACH

ELCA Hunger Appeal

submitted by Brian Cranfill, Outreach Chair

St. John's has a very long history of supporting ELCA World Hunger Appeal and ELCA Disaster Relief in a big way. Hunger issues were highlighted in September 2024 through announcements and sermons. We donated over \$10,000 from direct giving, which helped us get recognized as a top giving congregation.

Newborn Kits

submitted by Mickey Fank

In 2024, St. John's assembled and donated 650 Newborn Kits. Over the past 26 years, St. John's has donated a total of 13,717 Newborn Kits! We partner with Global Health Ministries in Minnesota. They ship the kits to various developing nations in Africa, Asia, and Central America. Newborn Kits are gifts that help a new mom celebrate her baby and help her clothe and care for her child. Importantly, the kits are also used by overseas partners to encourage young women to seek prenatal care during pregnancy, greatly improving their chances for a healthy, happy outcome. Once that connection is made, they can also encourage postnatal care, including vaccinations and well-baby checks that can help a newborn thrive. Simple access to a skilled nurse or midwife during pregnancy can mean the difference between life and death for a mom and her baby.

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

Our goal for 2025 is 600 kits. Newborn Kits will be assembled Tuesday, July 22, with a fellowship meal prior to assembling the kits. Each kit contains a towel, wash cloth, receiving blanket, onesie/shirt, baby hat, Ivory Soap (bath bar), two cloth diapers, two diaper pins, & a pillowcase. The receiving blankets, onesie/shirt, hats, towels, washcloths, & pillowcases can be new or gently used. Hats can be sewn, knitted, crocheted, or purchased. Blankets can be sewn or purchased (must be all cotton – flannel).

About \$3500.00 is needed in monetary donations to purchase the diapers, diaper pins, towels, and wash cloths and to help offset the cost to deliver the kits to Minnesota. Additional cash donations are used to purchase blankets and onesies when I find a great sale. This year we received \$1500.00 from St. John's Endowment Fund, which is a huge help towards meeting our goal. Other items are purchased and donated by members/friends of our mission. Depending on sales/deals, each kit costs about \$10.00 - \$12.00, for a total cost of \$6000.00 - \$7200.00 each year! St. John's members are so generous! If there are any questions, please contact me.

PARTNERSHIPS

Akeri/Nguruma Parishes and School, Tanzania

Submitted by Deborah Petersen, Ministry Leader

PARTNERSHIP

We continue to build relationships with our Tanzanian brothers and sisters in Christ. Pastor Franael Issangya diligently keeps us abreast of current events via WhatsApp and Facebook. With great sorrow, Pastor Issangya and his wife suffered the loss of their one-month-old baby boy, Festus.

SCHOOL

Akeri Hope School continues to thrive. Enrollment steadily increased this year, Form 7 students were successful in passing their secondary school entrance exams, and a generous donation made it possible for the school to purchase new dining room tables and chairs.

THE FUTURE

Our objectives for the upcoming year include offering steadfast prayer and encouragement to our partners, maintaining regular communication, consistently sharing updates with St. John's, and ensuring our financial contributions are impactful.

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

DELEGATION

We have begun planning our next visit scheduled for Spring 2025. With every delegation, it is our goal to immerse ourselves in the community, gain insights into their daily lives, foster new connections, and spend time with students and educators at Akeri Hope English Medium School. We are fully engaged with the community, witnessing, and empathizing with their challenges, learning about successful projects, and embracing discomfort.

Karibu Sana! (You are very welcome!)



All Peoples Gathering Church, Milwaukee

Our partnership with All Peoples is 33 years old! We share a lot of history, life, and love together.

- **Pastor Evan** - All Peoples called a new pastor in 2024. We welcome Pastor Evan McVann and his family into our partnership and look forward to getting to know them.
- **Backpacks & School Supplies** – St. John’s continues to be a strong partner for this annual late-summer campaign which enabled All Peoples to give backpacks, filled with a complete supply of items required for their grade levels, to students in Kindergarten through High School.
- **Food Justice** - a faithful team from St. John’s delivers donations received at St. John’s to the All Peoples Food Pantry.
- **Christmas Food Baskets** – St. John’s provided grocery bags filled with items needed by families to create their Christmas feasts.
- **Winter Wear** – St. John’s collected new and gently used children/youth jackets and accessories in early fall. All Peoples created a gift bag with a coat, hat, scarf, and gloves in sizes newborn through Men's XXL and distributed them in early November.
- **Financial Support** – St. John’s continues to support All Peoples as one of three partnerships through benevolence giving.

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

Héroes of the Faith, El Salvador

Submitted by Mary Beth Gubbins – Ministry Leader

Heroes of Faith, El Salvador

Mary Beth Gubbins

Mid-Year 2025 Report

Better together and going on 27 years of partnership between Héroes of the Faith and St John's Lutheran Church!

The scholarship program, better known as Education for Life, continues to bond students from El Salvador with members of St John's, both past and current, together. Scholarships at all levels of education provide financial help to families of Los Héroes. Education continues to be a powerful way to help our brothers and sisters in El Salvador rise out of poverty. Five of our high school students graduated in 2024. These students graduating from high school is an amazing accomplishment! Some students will seek employment which will provide a steady income through good jobs that would not have been possible without going to school. Three high school graduates will be going on to the University! This year's program has a total of 59 students! Sponsors provide financial support, prayers, and encouragement. Sponsors have the opportunity to stay in contact with their student through letters and some even via the internet. The Program is run by Pastor Francisco, who is the administrator and is responsible for getting the scholarships to the students monthly and monitors their progress. We also provide annual school kits for all the students in the program. We are equipping them with everything that they need to be successful!

In addition to the scholarship program, we also support the Family Circle which is their preschool located at the church. The number of students vary but there are usually 10 students. Many of those children will roll into the scholarship program when they are older. Karla Vanessa Coto (also a graduate of the scholarship program) is the preschool teacher.

In late 2024, the Los Héroes Community Health Center was completed! It is an addition added to the church. The health clinic will serve the community and offer medical services that are not currently available to them. Nurse Lorena Fuentes (a graduate of the Education for Life Program) is serving as the coordinator. She works about 20 hours per week. A licensed doctor is providing their services on 3 Saturdays per month, giving checkups. Becky Whelpley from St. John's attended the dedication and opening of the clinic in January of 2025. She also gave presentations to St John's on the amazing experiences that she had on her trip to El Salvador.

Another trip to El Salvador is planned for July of 2025.

Education and access to health care bless our brothers and sisters in El Salvador! We continue to give thanks for this special partnership and trust God to continue to bless it and show us how to walk in faith together.

INTEREST GROUPS

Men's Softball Team

submitted by Brian Harms

We have approximately 15 participants that play softball on Monday evenings throughout the summer from May to mid-August. Games are played against other churches in the area at Wirth Park in Brookfield or Village Park in Pewaukee. While we enjoy playing softball, at the heart of the team is just getting together to enjoy fellowship and friendship. Several of the members of the team have participated for many years together and we always welcome new players to the team. Last year, we even got a win in the playoffs against the top seed! We had an extended evening of fellowship after that one! If interested, please reach out to Brian Harms – (414) 651-2120.

Looking for something to do on a Monday evening? Come cheer for us!

Winter Farmers' Market

submitted by Joanna Salinas

Our Winter Market was a great success again this year. On November 24, 2024, we welcomed the Food, Faith, and Farming Network to St. John's. We hosted 10 area farmers and served a brunch made entirely of local products. We raised \$500 to donate to the Harvest of Hope Fund, an emergency resource for local farmers in crisis. Our next market will be held on November 23, 2025, at St. John's. Contact Sonja Beyerlein if you would like to join our planning team!

PAVE THE WAY

Pave the Way Report

Submitted by Carrie Peters, Treasurer

St. John’s saw exciting progress in 2024 with the completion of the circle drive paving project, new outdoor lighting, and beautification of the gathering space outside the sanctuary. The outdoor signage project has begun. The team is currently working with the Town of Brookfield on zoning processes that may allow for an electronic messaging center. Stay tuned!

\$303,242.36 has been given for Pave the Way as of April 30, 2025. Expenses have totaled \$183,055.60.

Expenses:

Rainbow Painting	\$27,863.48
Circle Drive (including core sampling, permitting, paving & striping, inspection, overhead lighting)	\$90,739.85
Narthex Refresh (including interior signage)	\$34,320.67
Tithes to Hope Center	\$14,963.35
Exterior Signage Deposit	\$15,168.25
	\$183,055.60

NEW BUSINESS

Audit Report

submitted by Dawn Williams

May 15, 2025

Audit report completed by Joe Schaefer, Jim Mathes and Dawn Williams. We used the Congregational Audit Guide as an audit procedure reference for areas to investigate or analyze during the audit. It should be noted that not every element of the audit guide was used.

1. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
 - a. Reviewed the congregation's procedures relating to the accounting, finance and treasury functions. All written procedures appear to be up-to-date with appropriate approval. These procedures are maintained by the Office Coordinator in conjunction with the Treasurer.
 - b. Reviewed procedures for document retention – most documents have been converted over to electronic storage with access limited to appropriate personal.
 - c. Reviewed access to bank information and proper authorization of such – only Treasurer and President have authorization to access and approve financial transactions with the bank.
 - d. Copies of all bank statements for checking/savings/investments are electronically stored via one drive which has limited access to appropriate personal.
 - e. Payroll is completed by outside vendor with input from Office Coordinator after signoff from ministry leaders for the individual staff members.
 - f. Appropriate Insurance has been approved and reviewed on an annual basis.
 - g. Records have been retained for several years and most have been converted electronically.
2. BANK AND INVESTMENT
 - a. A review of the bank statements and the information reported via PowerChurch indicates that all cash and investment balances are being reported correctly on a monthly basis.
3. BANK RECONCILIATIONS
 - a. WSB Bank and other investment account reconciliations are completed by member of a St. John's that is not able to modify any transactions. No discrepancies between the statements and the accounting system have been noted.
 - b. Reconciled (Endowment Fund), Computer Share, and Schwab account B/S and Committee Controlled totals to respective 12/31/24 statements from the various financial institutions.
 - c. All statements reviewed were reconciled and verified that transactions in the bank accounts match the date/account/value of the entries in the accounting system.
 - d. No transactions greater than 90 days exist.
 - e. Reconciliation is done by former treasurer who has no access to the general ledger and is not authorized for check signing. Reconciliations are completed and signed off within 10 days of month-end.
4. PETTY CASH (N/A)
5. INCOME: BENEVOLENCE
 - a. Verified that in 2024, \$65,747.24 General Funds were sent to the Greater Milwaukee Synod. Verified with the Office Coordinator that the synod sends monthly statements to confirm the monies received from SJLC. The last transfer to the World Hunger Appeal

NEW BUSINESS

- was on 12/19/24 in the amount of \$353.25. Three subsequent contributions were received prior to the year end totaling \$180.25. This left a 12/31/24 World Hunger B/S Liability of \$180.25 which was transferred in 2025.
- b. At 12/31, FDIC insured checking and savings account balances exceeded the \$250,000 FDIC limitation by approximately \$203,000, earning very little interest. **We recommend** that the Finance Team consider investing additional portions of the WSB checking funds. The funds could be invested in a government focused short term ETF for +4% annual interest with transfers back to checking as needed.
 - c. No Endowment gifts were received in 2024. Stewardship maybe should use this as an opportunity for a promotion for additional giving. A pamphlet could be prepared for distribution.
 - d. Endowment Fund is invested at Vanguard outside of the established F/S Funds. For both 2023 & 2024 it seems there were no grants funded. This leads to the question of how can this funding source be grown to provide more support for in and outreach?
6. INCOME: OFFERINGS

We recommend sending letters to a few members confirming the accuracy of the amount and type of donation for random review of “non-general” gifts in addition to the “normal” year end tax letters.
 7. INCOME: RECEIPTING AND RECONCILING
 - a. 2024 tax letters were sent to all members with appropriate language to confirm donation amount and to contact the office with any questions.
 8. INCOME: OFFERING COUNTING
 - a. Checks are collected from the mail and outside drop boxes for contribution or fees for facility use. The Office Coordinator opens each envelope and adds notations related to purpose (no amount), initials as the person who opened. The checks are then placed in a secure safe. Per the Head Counter, all checks are deposited in SJLC’s WSB checking account and they are restrictively endorsed as part of the weekly counting process. **WE RECOMMEND** that the Office Coordinator restrictively endorse checks with the stamp pad used by Counters when they are received. The Counters would continue to stamp collection plate checks when counted.
 - b. There are 4 different count teams, parishioner record keeping individuals/secretaries, and the Treasurer all involved in the offering process. A strong mitigating control is that there are so many individuals involved in the process. Additionally, SJLC parishioners receive quarterly contribution statements which could be questioned if irregularities were noted. Also, there really is not that much cash received, as most income is derived from checks. There is a written outline of the counting and tally processes to ensure consistency, proper reconciliation, and carry forward of proper procedures as turnover of those involved occurs.
 9. INCOME: SPECIAL EVENTS/OTHER INCOME
 - a. Reviewed Farmers Market - all transactions appear to be reported correctly.
 - b. Prayer Shaw Ministry - all transactions appear to be reported correctly.
 10. INCOME: DESIGNATED
 - a. Council approves all designated funds for specific projects.
 11. DISBURSEMENTS: SIGNATURE CONTROL
 - a. Almost all checks are requested electronically through the bank’s check system to which the bookkeeper and treasurer have access.

NEW BUSINESS

- b. Any paper checks, which are kept in the office in a locked drawer, can be issued by the treasurer or president in the event that a check needs to be given directly to an individual or immediately sent out to a vendor.
 - c. A review of the checks indicates no blank checks have been signed in advance.
 - 12. DISBURSEMENTS: DOCUMENTATION AND PROCESS CONTROLS
 - a. A review of several transactions show proper documentation with correct amount recorded and approval signoff where necessary.
 - b. All invoices appeared to have been paid in a timely manner.
 - c. Transactions reviewed have been entered into the accounting system with the appropriate general ledger account number.
 - d. **We recommend** that a screen shot or copy of the itemized sales receipt be maintained for all credit card purchases at the time of purchase. This will assist the Treasurer and future auditors as well as being a point of reference for yearly expenditure.
 - 13. DISBURSEMENTS: DUPLICATE PAYMENT CONTROLS
 - a. Reviewed payments for all vendors to verify no duplicates via extract to Excel
 - 14. DISBURSEMENTS: VENDOR PAYMENT CONTROLS
 - a. All new vendors are approved by Treasurer prior to being set up in accounting system or funds being disbursed.
 - b. Copies of invoices are reviewed and approved by appropriate ministry leader.
 - 15. DISBURSEMENTS: PURCHASE ORDERS
 - a. Reviewed several purchase request for reimbursement – all had reimbursements forms completed.
 - b. Invoices matched the price and quantity – no anomalies found,
 - 16. DISBURSEMENTS: VENDOR PAYMENTS
 - a. Reviewed vender payments – all had invoices with corresponding payment amounts.
 - b. No recurring payments found for any unknown vendors.
 - 17. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
 - a. The Council's minutes were unavailable for review. It appears that there is no central filing system with the Church Office Assistant at this time.* The central filing system of Council minutes ended during COVID when meetings were held via Zoom.
- *Note: Office personnel are in the process of organizing online access for most documents.
- 18. NOTES PAYABLE (NA)
 - 19. PAYROLL
 - a. The payroll reports were reviewed, including payroll changes, to ensure that all employees' wages were consistent with HR's recommendations. The payroll change report summarizes all changes made to a particular payroll such as the addition of new employees and wage increases, etc. In addition, the 2024 SJLC Financial Statements Staff Salaries were reconciled to the 2024 W-2s. SJLC W-2s includes the wages for Pre-School employees. The Pre-School reimbursed SJLC for all their Wages, Employer Social Security and Medicare except for \$13,371.36 of Preschool Administrator's wages and \$1,022.91 of her Employer Social Security and Medicare taxes, which SJLC paid in 2024. A few of the Staff's Salary wages were divided between several different Staff Salary expense accounts. Furthermore, a few other Staff Salary accounts included two to four different employees. The Staff Salaries for Contemporary Musicians, Substitute Musicians, and KOTK Preschool Leader were issued either a W-2, or a Form 1099 or nothing (<\$600 income). SJLC W-4s (Employee's Withholding Certificate) and WT-4s

NEW BUSINESS

(Employee’s Wisconsin Withholding Exemption Certificate/New Hire Reporting) were also sampled and appear to be proper.

20.-22. PAYROLL

- a. SJLC Form 941s and W-2s were prepared by PAYCHEX, an outside service provider. The SJLC wages were reconciled to the 2024 Quarterly Form 941s. I could not reconcile the \$374,534.42 of Wages shown on (Line 2) of the Form 941s by PAYCHEX, but the Taxable Wages (Lines 5a +& 5c) tied directly to the W-2s issued.

Wages (Including Pre-School)	\$ 374,534.42
Federal Withholding	\$ 13,106.20
Taxable Social Security Wages X 12.4	\$ 42,682.39
Taxable Medicare Wages X 2.9%	\$ 9,982.17
Adjustments	<u>\$.12</u>
Total Quarterly Payments Form 941s	\$ 65,770.88

The payroll taxes were traced to accounts SJLC 01-2226-000 and PS 04-2220-475 Payroll Taxes Payable, which also included the State Withholding.

We Recommend that the SJLC HR team review IRS Publication 517 prior to the installation of a new Pastor.

23. BENEFITS

- a. Pension and medical benefits are paid and current.
- b. Benefit paperwork in good order, signed off by appropriate staff.

24. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

- a. Vendor’s are not set up unless W9 (when necessary) is on file and the form 1099’s are issued when appropriate.
- b. A sampling of vendors from PowerChurch did not show any anomalies of vendors that would require a Form 1099.

25. GOVERNMENT FILINGS (NA)

26. DATA SYSTEMS

- a. SJLC uses Go Tech to manage the computers/backups. All computers require user name and password to access.
- b. Access to the system/files is restricted based on users.
- c. Software and data files are backed up nightly with a 30 day recovery period.
- d. Go Tech manages virus software and updates when needed.
- e. Go Tech supports the congregation when hardware or software problems occur.
- f. No restoration of back up files needed in the past year.

27. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- a. We are currently following the Synods guidelines, however the process of records retention is currently in review and should be addressed in the next audit.
- b. HR has a Personnel Recordkeeping and Retention plan in place.

28 & 29. SAFEGUARDING OF ASSETS/DOCUMENTS SAFEGUARDING OF ASSETS/DOCUMENTS

- a. List of Access Fobs/Keys is maintained and reviewed periodically.
- b. Office Coordinator is currently in the process of upgrading the document storage.

30. FIXED ASSETS

- a. No current listing is available.

31. INSURANCE

- a. Insurance is reviewed on an annual basis.

NEW BUSINESS

32. FINANCIAL REPORTING

- a. The reports generated from PowerChurch reflect an accurate and complete picture of the congregation's finances at any given time.
- b. We believe these reports are helpful to the management, congregational committees and the council.
- c. The reports include the approved budget and a budget variance analysis.

33. THE FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR THE END OF THE YEAR

- a. We compared the income statement from 2023 to 2024. No major changes
- b. We compared the ending balance sheet from 2023 to 2024. No major changes
- c. Reviewed items listed on the statement of cash flows (Statement of Activities) from 2023 to 2024. No major changes.

NEW BUSINESS

Nominating Committee Report

submitted by Paul Bulgerin

The 2025 Nominating Committee, elected at the February 2, 2025, meeting is: Paul Bulgerin, Keith Paukner, Jim Morgan, Carrie Peters, Josh Werner, and Pastor Brian Halverson.

Council Members

Council positions are staggered two-year terms. The Nominating Team presents these individuals to the congregation for election to a first or second term on Council.

Vice President	Brittany Larson
Treasurer	Pauline Shoemaker
At Large Member	Patrice Krimpelbein
At Large Member	Gregg Everts

2024-25 Council Members

Paul Bulgerin - President
 Keith Paukner - Vice-President
 Carrie Peters - Treasurer
 Josh Werner - Secretary
 Jim Morgan - At Large #1
 Mark Latus - At Large #2
 Jack Shaffer - At Large #3
 Brittany Larson - At Large #4
 Elizabeth Roth - At Large #5

Proposed 2025-26 Council Members

Paul Bulgerin - President (1st term, 2nd year)
 Brittany Larson - Vice-President (1st term, 1st year)
 Pauline Shoemaker - Treasurer (1st term, 1st year)
 Josh Werner - Secretary (2nd term, 2nd year)
 Gregg Everts - At Large #1 (1st term, 1st year)
 Mark Latus - At Large #2 (2nd term, 2nd year)
 Jack Shaffer - At Large #3 (1st term, 2nd year) *
 Patrice Krimpelbein - At Large #4 (1st term, 1st year)
 Elizabeth Roth - At Large #5 (2nd term, 1st year)

* Jack was appointed to Council in September 2024, to fill the open youth/young adult position.

Endowment Committee Members

Endowment Committee positions are staggered three-year terms. The Nominating Team presents these individuals to the congregation for election to a first or second term on Council.

Nancy Kraus
 Linda Shaffer

2024-25 Endowment Members

Jennifer Cranfill (term expires May 2025)
 Angie Rose-Mueller (term expires May 2025)
 Phil Peters (term expires May 2026)
 Rich Warp (term expires May 2026)
 Curtis Templin (term expires May 2027)

Proposed 2025-26 Endowment Members

Nancy Kraus (term expires May 2028)
 Linda Shaffer (term expires May 2028)
 Phil Peters (term expires May 2026)
 Rich Warp (term expires May 2026)
 Curtis Templin (term expires May 2027)

NEW BUSINESS

When a Pastor Leaves a Congregation

It is important for all of us to know what happens when a pastor leaves a congregation, whether by taking a new call or, in the case of Pastor Brian, when a pastor retires.

Our ELCA has clear guidelines on these things. They may seem a bit strict to some, but these guidelines are for the best for both the congregation and the pastor who leaves.

Pastor Brian is leaving St. John's. He will no longer be a member of our congregation but will find a new church home. It is best to make such a clear break as this. This is what I did when I retired from Grace Lutheran in Grafton in 2021. It was hard for Karen and me to leave our church home of nearly twenty years, but such a clean break is necessary for the congregation, the new interim pastor and later, the pastor who is called to serve.

This means that Pastor Brian is not allowed to perform any pastoral duties for members of St. John's. This includes baptisms, hospital visits, weddings and funerals. Please do not ask him to consider doing any of these things for you as "a personal favor".

He won't be involved in any of the decisions that are made at St. John's following his retirement.

Should you run into him out in public, please feel free to chat with him but don't bring up any congregational matters with him. He is not to get involved in any of them and probably doesn't want to get involved.

Let him enjoy his retirement.

We are thankful to Pastor Carol Wasemiller who has agreed to be on call for any pastoral emergency needs during the period following Pastor Brian's retirement and the arrival of the interim pastor. Once the interim pastor is here, he or she will be our pastor until we call a new pastor to serve at St. John's.

If you have questions about any of these matters, please feel free to talk with me.

Paul Bulgerin
Church Council President