



St. James Lutheran Church

God calls us to follow Christ, make disciples, and live the Gospel

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONGREGATION ANNUAL GOVERNANCE MEETING 10:45 a.m. June 4, 2023

Schedule

9:30 am Service

10:45 am Annual Meeting

Agenda

Opening Prayer

Call to Order

Report of the Tellers (Quorum is 29 voting members)

Adoption of the Agenda

Approval of the Minutes, September 25, 2022 & January 30, 2023

Annual Reports

 Report of the President

 Report of Pastor Amy Gillespie

 Reports of the Committees

Elections

Resolutions

Adjournment

Closing Prayer



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Minutes of the Special Congregation Meeting September 25, 2022

Council President Dave Moore called the duly called special congregational meeting to order at and asked that Interim Pastor Mark Sundberg lead in prayer.

Interim Pastor Mark provided an opening prayer.

Dave announced that the purpose of the meeting was to vote upon extending a call to the Reverend Amy Louise Gillespie as Senior Pastor at St. James Lutheran Church. He defined voting members as follows in the constitution of St. James Lutheran Church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Chapter 8, Section C8.02.c states: "Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members shall have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year." Further, Section C8.02.b states: "Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith." Section 9.01 states: "Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of members present and voting at a meeting regularly called for that purpose."

He confirmed that a quorum is defined as 10% of voting members. As of this date, St. James has 294 voting members. A quorum is 30 members.

Tellers for the meeting announced a quorum was present.

Council Secretary, Shelly Holmstrom read the following resolution:

This is the resolution approved by the church council at its special August 2022 meeting:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the church council of St. James Lutheran Church in Lake Forest, Illinois, call a meeting of the congregation to be held on Sunday, September 25, 2022, at 11:15am, to vote on extending a call to The Reverend Amy Louise Gillespie to serve the congregation as Senior Pastor.

Shelly made a motion that the congregation of St. James Lutheran Church extend a call to the

Reverend Amy Louise Gillespie to serve the congregation as Senior Pastor.

Mark Taylor provided a second to the motion.

Dave Moore stated that it was moved and seconded that St. James Lutheran Church extend a call to The Reverend Amy Louise Gillespie to serve the congregation as Senior Pastor. He asked that Andrea Taylor present the report of the call committee on the nominee before opening the floor for discussion.

Call Committee Chair, Andrea Taylor, provided a report of the Committee.

Prior to the membership vote, Call Committee Member, Mike Bennett, lead the group in prayer.

Appointed tellers for the voting were Liz Behring, Josh Hornaday, and Melinda Voelcker.

The vote was taken by secret ballot, with members marking YES in favor of the nominee, or NO if opposed to the nominee. Ballots were folded in half and placed in the offering plates.

After the tally was taken, teller Melinda Voelcker reported that there were a sufficient number of yes votes.

Dave announced that there were a sufficient number of votes for the nominee and declared the Reverend Amy Louise Gillespie elected to be called as Senior Pastor at St. James Lutheran Church.

Spontaneous applause erupted.

Members of the call committee were asked to stand to be recognized as their names were read aloud: Mike Bennett, Linda Berner, Hans Bodine, Doug Gerber, Gail Morgan, Andrea Taylor, and Mark Wanda.

Dave thanked the Call Committee, on behalf of St. James Lutheran Church, and asked that Interim Pastor Mark lead the group in prayer.

Interim Pastor Mark provided the closing prayer.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Holmstrom, Secretary

Minutes of the Annual Financial Meeting January 29, 2023

Opening prayer: Pastor Amy

Call to order: 11:15am, Dave Moore, Council President

Report of the Tellers: Quorum

Motion to approve agenda: Joe Voelcker. Motion seconded: Don Bergsrud Motion Approved: Unanimous

Motion to Approve minutes of June 5, 2022

Governance meeting: Doug Gerber. Motion seconded: Joe Voelcker Motion Approved: Unanimous

Final 2022 review of Financial report: Mike Bennett

2022 Investment funds lost value consistent with the general equity markets. Funds are managed by Wintrust with an approximate mix of 65% stocks and 35% bonds. Mike showed a 65/35 benchmark fund which had a negative performance of 13% in 2022. He then showed that same benchmark from 2015 to 2022 increased by 48.7%. It was emphasized that we are investing for the long term with these funds.

Jim Davoux added that Wintrust provides the Endowment board 3 benchmarks – two decreased by 18%, one decreased by 13% in 2022. Our return for 2022 was better than all three of their benchmarks.

General Fund operations resulted in a \$48,219 loss in 2019. However, three unusual and non-recurring items related to the retirement of the previous Senior Pastor and call of the present Senior Pastor unfavorably affected General Fund operations by \$76,560. Without those three items, General Fund operations for 2022 would have produced a \$28,341 surplus. One of the three unusual items resulted from a St. James equity share in the Pastor Gillespie residence. That equity totals \$96,000, not all of which came from the General Fund. More complete description of all of this is on page 7 of the January 29, 2023 Annual Financial Report of the Congregation.

Jon Paul asked a question regarding how the equity balance in Pastor Holmer's residence will get closed out from the St. James books. \$56,650 of the equity balance will be repaid by Pastor Holmer. The last \$16,560 of the repayment is expected in 2023. The remaining \$60,000 is being forgiven as approved by the Congregation at its January 2022 meeting. In accordance with a

deferred compensation agreement between St. James and Pastor Holmer, the amounts are being forgiven at a rate of \$12,000 per year over 5 years. The entire \$60,000 was recorded by St James as deferred compensation expense in its 2022 General Fund operations.

2023 Budget

- No salary increases occurred over the last 3 years. Employees received bonuses in 2021 and 2022.
- In 2023, the budget for pay increases for paid St. James employees is 8%, which is the Consumer Price Index (CPI) cost of living increase for urban wage earners (Doug, Debbie, Music directors); 4% pay increase for Pete Clemens (Property manager) due to his prorated time as an employee in 2022.
- Pastor Gillespie pay increase is in line with Metro Synod Guidelines

2023 Pledges

86 families pledged a total of \$567,924. The total number of families who pledged was down, but the pledges increased by \$32,774 from the previous year. A number of families choose not to pledge, but are anticipated to give generously over the course of the year. It was noted that the more families that can pledge, the better the church can plan financially.

Motion to approve 2023 budget as presented: Susan Thomas .Motion seconded: Pete Clemens Motion Approved: Unanimous

Election of Synod Assembly Voting members: Two nominees who volunteered to attend are Denise Norberg-Johnson and Greg MacAyeal.

Motion to approve candidates as nominated: Bob Kenehan. Motion seconded: Don Bergrud Motion Approved: Unanimous

Dave Moore expressed his thanks to Mike Bennett, Carol Bennett, the call committee, council, Pastor Amy, staff, and congregation for their faith and generosity.

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Jim Davoux. Motion seconded: Ron Koepke Motion Approved: Unanimous

Closed with Pastor Gillespie leading prayer at 11:52am

Recorded by Barb Davoux

Report of the President

What a busy and rewarding past year at St. James. While it was another year of transition, we continued to do God's work, recognized our blessings, and came together to face our challenges. As we approach the Annual Governance meeting there are so many reasons to be excited about the future, continually being aware of God's unchanging love as a foundation on which the church was built.

Here are some highlights from this past year and some thoughts as we look forward:

- Easily at the top of the list of highlights was the calling of the Reverend Amy Gillespie as our Senior Pastor. I cannot express enough appreciation to the Call Committee led by Andrea Taylor and including Mike Bennett, Linda Berner, Hans Bodine, Doug Gerber, Gail Morgan, and Mark Wanda for their exceptional work in bringing Pastor Amy to us. The congregation welcomed her on November 13 during a special brunch at the Deer Path Inn and she was officially installed on February 12. Pastor Amy's warm and empathetic communication style, thought-provoking sermons and teachings, and infectious "positivity" have immediately made a difference. And, she is just getting started! I also want to acknowledge Pastor Mark Sundberg for being such a blessing to St. James while serving as interim pastor during the call process.
- The Council's focus this past year, as we were returning to "normal" times coming off the pandemic, was to: a) engage the congregation and b) attract visitors and potential new members. The initiatives for increasing in-person worship service attendance and for energizing the committees and ministries were largely successful. Worship service numbers, while not quite back to pre-pandemic levels, have continued to grow. Socializing and service projects that occur both before and after service have provided a happy "buzz" of conversations in the narthex. The fellowship events have been both fun and educational and have also grown in participation. The number and frequency of visitors has steadily increased, particularly in the past few months, and we were thrilled to welcome new members and more classes are being scheduled. Name tags, which Annie Moss persistently advocated for, have greatly helped connect members and visitors. Many thanks to the committee chairpersons, committee members, council members, and all volunteers for their faithful contributions.
- The financial condition of St. James continues to be sound. Due to the generosity of our congregation, we are able to provide benevolence support to many outside ministries, maintain our beautiful house of worship, and support our talented staff. We have been blessed by highly-competent financial management and oversight by our Treasurer Mike Bennett over the past three years. At our Annual Financial Meeting in January, Mike pointed out that while the financial situation is overall positive, it is overly reliant on a small number of families. He offered a challenge to the congregation to achieve a more balanced contribution profile in 2024 and the years to follow. This goal will be a priority for the Stewardship Committee and new treasurer as Mike is stepping aside at the end of this term. I thank him for his steadfast management of the church's finances.

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- Our staff also experienced change over this past year starting with the retirement of Chris Meyer as Business Manager. As a result, the Personnel Committee made recommendations for organizational changes that resulted in Carol Bennett graciously assuming the role of Bookkeeper in addition to her Administrative Manager responsibilities. Kristin Haverkampf became Communications Manager after initially stepping in on an interim basis, along with continuing as an Administrative Manager. We greatly appreciate their willingness to take on additional responsibilities during this time of transition. Pete Clemens joined the staff as Facilities Manager and his impact has been immediate with the overall church property looking and functioning in pristine condition. The very talented music staff has stayed relatively unchanged and along with volunteers continues to be a major strength of St. James. Finally, Sunday School Director Debbie MacAyeal recently announced her retirement after 18 years of using her time and talents to positively impact the youth of the congregation and a search will be forthcoming for her successor. We are very thankful for the work of our staff. And I want to especially thank Sue Thomas for her leadership of the Personnel Committee and her on-going support of the church's personnel and staffing needs.
- Last and certainly not least, I want to acknowledge the overall faithful work of the Council over this past year. It was an extraordinary year of transition that required more of a time commitment than many had expected with late and additional meetings

with difficult, prayerful deliberations. While there was not always immediate agreement and often candid discussions, it always resulted in better decisions for the good of the congregation. I am pleased that Ron Koepke will be leading the Council next year. Ron has tirelessly worked to learn about and contribute to nearly every ministry, committee, and function at St. James and I am confident he will be an excellent leader for this next year ahead. I also want to give a special "thank you" to Shelly Holmstrom for being such a driving force for progress and always exuding a "can do" attitude that goes well beyond her great work as Council Secretary.

Looking ahead, I see a bright future for St. James and cannot help but think there many individuals and families in our surrounding communities who can find spiritual growth and enrichment in our congregation. I highly encourage members to raise their hands or say "yes" to opportunities to work with Pastor Amy, the Council, committees, and staff on making it a reality. All will be happy you did.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Moore

Report of Senior Pastor Amy Gillespie

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:3-6

Thank yous

It is a joy and a privilege to serve as your Senior Pastor. We have not quite rounded a year together yet, but it has been a wonderful and rich time. My family and I have felt welcomed to St. James with open arms. Thank you for your generous spirit and hospitality, especially toward our daughter, Maya. She enjoys worshipping with all of you and your acceptance of her is soaking into her person. She loves church! Thank you for the kindness you have shown all of us.

Thank you also to the impeccable call committee led by Andrea Taylor. They were a joy to work with and generous with their time and energy, even to the point of taking us around to see the area. Thank you to the Church Council for trusting me as your Senior Pastor and supporting my leadership all the way. I'm especially grateful for the care and thoughtfulness shown both to me, and to the congregation, in this time of transition by the executive council: Dave Moore, Ron Koepke, Mike Bennett and Shelly Holmstrom. I have also been supported fully daily by the office staff: Kristin Haverkamp, Carol Bennett and Pete Clemens.

What's happened so far

A lot can happen in seven months and of course, there is much more to come. My first Sunday was Christ the King Sunday. Then we jumped into Advent together. We celebrated with mid week Vespers services in anticipation of our Lord's birth on Christmas. Not long after that, we walked into Lent together during a stormy Ash Wednesday service. Holy Week with St. James was meaningful and poignant and Easter was one for the books. I thoroughly enjoyed retelling Matthew's story of Jesus' resurrection with the kids *and* adults flash mob style.

We continue to witness the Spirit's movement in this time of transition. It is so good to be together in our worship services, in times of fellowship, learning and service together. I have enjoyed getting to know so many of you. I also realize there are still people I have yet to meet. I pray we can make those connections soon. We have seen folks coming back to worship who have been away for a number of reasons. The grace and dedication with which this congregation lives out

faith on Sundays and every day, is inspiring.

We have also experienced a number of deaths in the congregation, since I began. I have poured time and energy into supporting the families and crafting services that honor and celebrate their loved ones. I find deep meaning in this work and I'm grateful to walk alongside all of you in times of joy as well as times of grief and mourning, offering the love of Jesus Christ that has no end.

Since arriving at St. James, I've been privileged to get to know all of you and work with the various committees to learn what is happening and hear your hopes for the future of the congregation. I have worked alongside our Music Director, Rae-Myra Hilliard and the Worship and Music committee to craft meaningful, cohesive worship services. We will enter the time after Pentecost soon and I'll get to see the joy of summer worship. I look forward to the periodic outdoor services over the summer and the pace the summer brings to worship and programming.

One of the elements that drew me to this church is the excellent music ministry. I have thoroughly enjoyed the variety of music styles and instruments St. James offers in worship. Damascus Road, the Brass ensemble, Bell Choir, the Children's Choir, Voices of St. James and all the special talent found in this church—it is astounding and a great strength we have to offer as a congregation.

I have enjoyed leading the children's sermon time in worship. I did not have a lot of time to work alongside our Sunday School Director, Debbie MacAyeal, since she announced her retirement, but I know she has been a huge influence on many of the children throughout her 18 years of ministry at St. James. I will continue to be in conversation with Debbie and tap her wisdom and input as we assess our children's and youth ministries in this season of transition.

To that effect, we plan to seek out a new Interim Sunday School Director who can carry us through the next year while we listen to the needs of the families in the congregation and re-vision our children's and youth ministries. I am also grateful to support the Faith in Action week of service camp later this summer—an inaugural shared ministry with Grace United Methodist Church in Lake Bluff. I have also enjoyed opportunities to serve alongside people of all ages with St. James at the Northern Illinois Food Bank and get to know our partners in ministry in this community and beyond. I believe another great

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strength of St. James is our generosity in service to God and our neighbors.

I have also enjoyed working with Doug Dusthimer, our Youth Ministry Coordinator, in leading the confirmation ministry this year using Dan Erlander’s *Manna and Mercy* workbooks. It’s been nourishing to be in person and have meals together too. We rounded out our Confirmation classes with a bonfire and burned the palms from Palm Sunday for next year’s ashes for Ash Wednesday. I look forward to taking three confirmands to Campfirmation at the end of June as we return to Augustana College for the week. Doug, myself and the kids will join together with a handful of other ELCA Lutheran churches and bond over this shared experience, deepening our ministry partnerships in the process.

Leadership and Future Directions

As I reflect, I recognize we have all benefited from the pastors and leaders who have come before us. Pastor Holmer established so many rich traditions and provided faithful service to the people of this congregation for many years. Pastor Sundberg did a wonderful job taking care of the people and providing stable leadership as the interim Pastor between myself and Pastor Holmer. What a variety of leadership styles the congregation has witnessed in the span of a few years!

My approach to leadership, both in worship and in management, is one of intentional listening and collaboration. I enjoy lifting up and encouraging others to grow their gifts and talents. I have especially loved watching the children, confirmands and youth internalizing their faith and living their values.

It can feel a little strange having a year of “firsts” with the congregation and stepping into the shoes of a seasoned Senior Pastor, but I have been constantly encouraged and felt free to make this position my own; to try new things with all of you and to be myself.

FAITH MILESTONES AND LIFE PASSAGES

This person was welcomed into the Body of Christ through Holy Baptism:

Christian Brooks Musser

On June 5, 2022, these persons were welcomed to the Lord’s table to share in Holy Communion by Interim Pastor Mark Sundberg:

Elijah Duncombe Connor Dunford
Luke Husemoller

On Sept. 25, 2022, these persons were confirmed in Christ:

Bella Bosau Colton Dunford
Grady Strothman Julia Davoux
Ernie Matkov Kallan Bodine
Madison VanderJeugd

Though it is my first year at St. James, I’m thankful this is my second call and not my first time doing these things altogether. I look forward to the wonderful ministry we will do in the next half of this year and many years to come.

My hope is we as a congregation can take a little time in this moment of transition between pandemic and post pandemic life, between a long time Pastor and a brand new one, and we can intentionally examine our ministries, our structures, and ask the questions: ‘why do we do what we do?’ And, ‘what is God calling us to be and do in this time and place—rooted in this community in Lake Forest II—here and now?’ I am exploring some avenues to best ask and answer these questions together with the congregation. This may take the form of a strategic planning process or something like it. I have full confidence in this congregation and in our leadership, to take some steps together, to listen closely to the Spirit and act boldly to fully live into God’s call for us as disciples of Christ.

I am so grateful for your love, your trust, your support, your enthusiasm, your leadership, your joy—all of it makes up this congregation and I feel beyond blessed to be a part of this talented, strong, service oriented, loving congregation. It is true as the verse from Philippians states: “I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you...” I know God who has begun a good work in you will continue to walk with us and guide us towards the next steps in our congregation’s life and ministry. Thank you for all your dedication to the ministries of St. James and for being the life-blood, the body of Christ in this time and place.

God’s blessings,
-Pastor Amy Gillespie

No Bibles were presented last year. This will happen in the fall of 2023.

These persons have gone on to glory to be with their Lord and Savior and claim their baptismal promises:

Hugh Triplett 7/19/22 with interment 6/5/23
Faye Holm 12/13/22 with interment 5/6/23
Sandy Neagle 1/11/23
Armina Kazarian 2/3/23
Shirley Norberg 4/11/23
Emerson Bodell 5/14/23

Report of the Nominating Committee

The following individuals have expressed their willingness and commitment to serve. Other members of the Congregation who wish to be considered for election to any of the positions below may have their names placed in nomination at the Annual Governance Meeting.

CHURCH COUNCIL - Nominations for three year terms from June 2023 to June 2026:

Dee Buckowich

I'm thrilled to be asked to serve on Council again. It has been a number of years, so thank you nominating committee. My earliest memories of St. James are a bunch of us little ones running around the gym (in the basement of one of the Lake Bluff schools) while our parents set up chairs and rolled the piano out of a closet. St. James has been a part of my life since then. In the past, I've been able to help with PADS meals, both serving and contributing. I was a member of the Youth Ministry Team when it began. I most recently helped with the North Chicago Teachers' lunches. I've had various experiences in healthcare and a corporate career and hope to put some of those skills to use in a new capacity. Since I'm now retired, I've discovered new activities (Curling, Pickleball, and RV'ing), and I spend more time reading and traveling. Thank you again for the opportunity to serve our congregation.

Jack Musser

I am honored and humbled to accept the nomination to serve on the St. James Church Council. My wife Margaret and I became members at Saint James one year ago, and both of our sons were baptized here (James in February 2022 and Christian in May of this year). I work in corporate finance. Growing up I worked at my church in Naperville in janitorial service. I am very blessed to have Margaret as my wife and partner, and we love raising our two boys together. Since finding St. James we have been so warmly welcomed and are truly grateful for the community of Christians here.

Marty Morgan

Gail and I joined St. James almost 20 years ago. Both our children, Connor and Zack, were confirmed at St. James and grew up in the church. Gail has served on Altar Guild, Church Council and was on the Call Committee for Paster Amy Gillespie. Both of us serve as Ushers. I also serve on a couple boards at my alma mater Eastern Illinois University and currently am the VP of the Alumni Association. I have worked for Carl Zeiss the past 17 years and at present am a Business Sales Manager in charge of sales management for half the US and Canada. I am winding down my career and looking forward to retirement in about 4 years. Looking forward to serving on the Church Council.

Laura Whisler

My Lutheran heritage has always been a very important part of my life. I grew up at Wilmette Lutheran Church with Christmas smorgäsboards, youth weekend retreats at Stronghold and summer church camps. I was introduced to St. James as a teenager through my church's youth group, but it wasn't until my husband Tom and I moved to Lake Bluff in 2001 that we began to come to St. James. We became members when my older son Gus began Sunday school and both my sons Gus (19) and Ernie (15) were confirmed here. I am a part-time practicing Otolaryngologist and a committed community volunteer. I have served on numerous boards including the District 67 Spirit of 67 Foundation where I was in charge of special events and worked on PR/Marketing. I currently serve on the Lake Forest Civic Orchestra and Horns for Hope boards and am in my last year of running the Boy Scout Troop 46 Yard and Garden fundraising sale. As part of my service to the church I play horn with the brass group as does my son Gus when he is home from college.

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Current Congregation Council:

Term Expiring June 2023

Barb Davoux
Sue Ebert
Michael Montalbano
Dave Moore

Term Expiring June 2024

Shelly Holmstrom
Ron Koepke
Greg MacAyeal
Amy Marsch

Term Expiring 2025

Robert Kenehan
Annie Moss
Bob Narlock
Denise Norberg-Johnson

TREASURER Michael Bennett (term expires June 2023)

Nominee for a 3-year term expiring June 2026: Mark Wanda

ST. JAMES MEMORIAL GARDEN BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Current members: Carole Tanner (term expires June 2023)
Randy Daniel (term expires June 2024)
Detlef Koska (term expires June 2025)
Bud Lowell (term expires June 2026)

Nominee for a 4-year term, expiring June 2027: Liz Behring

ST. JAMES ENDOWMENT FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Current members: Anna Verch (term expires June 2023)
Mark Wanda (term expires June 2023)
Hans Bodine (term expires June 2024)
Jim Davoux (term expires June 2024)
Dee Buckowich (June 2025—Church council Candidate)

Nominee for a 2 year term expiring June 2025: Dave Van Singel (replacing Dee Buckowich)

Nominees for a 3-year term expiring June 2026: Mary Hamming and Diane Nieman

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Current members: Linda Berner (term expires June 2023)
Carol Bettendorf (2 year term expiring June 2024)
Emerson Bodell (2 year term expiring June 2025)

Nominee for a 2-year term, expiring June 2025: Steve Thornberry (replacing Emerson Bodell)

Nominee for a 3-year term, expiring June 2026: Craig Linn

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Current members: Tom Ebert (term expires June 2023)
Kathy Lowell (term expires June 2023)
Tom Meyer (outgoing council term expires 2023)
Alane Wanda (outgoing council term expires 2023) *
Josh Hornaday (term expires June 2024)
Susan Olsen (term expires June 2024)

Nominees for a 1-year term expiring June 2024: Dave Moore & Barb Davoux (Outgoing Council)

Nominees for a 2-year term expiring June 2025: Don Bergsrud and Jenn Bodine

* Alane Wanda recused herself from the nomination process for the Treasurer position.

I thank those on the Nominating Committee for their amazing help. For all those whose term expires in June of 2023, thank you for your devoted service that allows us to follow Christ, make disciples, and live the Gospel. May the Lord bless our nominees and our ongoing members.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Ebert

Report of the Social Ministry Outreach Committee

Committee Members: Shelly Holmstrom, Ron Koepke, Alane Wanda, Interim Pastor Mark Sundberg and Pastor Amy Gillespie

The purpose of the committee is to promote and support activities of various agencies and programs serving the needs of the local community and the ELCA.

Volunteer & Financial Support

- **COOL Ministries**
- **Habitat for Humanity**
- **Help Within the Family**
- **Lake County United (LCU)**
- **North Chicago Community Partners (NCCP)**
- **Providing Advocacy, Dignity & Shelter (PADS)**
- **Sagrado Corazón**
- **Waukegan to College**

Financial Support Only

- **Bethel New Life**
- **Career Resource Center**
- **ELCA Benevolence**
- **Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI)**
- **Samara Care Counseling (Grief Group)**
- **Lake Forest Hospital Chaplaincy**

During Summer 2022, the Committee continued to offer Focus Sundays for outreach and extended fellowship following worship. In June we welcomed Aaron Arnold, Executive Director of Waukegan to College, who preached the sermon. We then assembled the items we collected for the college shower to be held later in the month. In July we assembled household kits for NCCP and in August we made sandwiches for the PADS Day Center. These events bring our outreach efforts into focus and exemplify the heart of service that is part of the fabric of St. James. We also did several in the Fall and Winter, including hygiene and baking kits for the Family Care Closet at NCCP.

We are blessed to continue many of our vital outreach programs, including the Waukegan to College shower for college bound students, two months of staff lunches and two months of treats for the staff of North Chicago High School through NCCP, and seven months of PADS meals. We continue to support the efforts of LCU as they locate and develop affordable housing in

Waukegan and hopefully, Libertyville. This is a much-needed and complicated process that we are hopeful will continue to progress in 2023/24. We were also blessed to work on the much-anticipated Habitat Faith Build in Waukegan last Summer!

We were also pleased to be able to disburse benevolence funds beyond our budget from the annual Land Sale benevolence disbursement. Coupled with funds from the Viola Long Fund, \$5,960.00 was donated to the Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB). This organization supplies many food pantries in Lake County, including several of our ministry partners, COOL and the NCCP Family Care Closet at Waukegan High School. Food pantries have experienced large increases in demand beyond the pandemic as inflation has drastically affected food prices.

NIFB recently relocated their Lake County warehouse to Lake Forest, and after a Faith Leaders introduction in November, Social Ministry was educated about their reach and impact – every dollar donated becomes EIGHT dollars in groceries. Their close proximity to our church makes them an ideal partner and we are pleased that we had our first food packing experience at their Bradley Road facility on April 26. We expect many opportunities for engagement going forward, as they accept volunteers from age 8-100 and can accommodate any level of participation.

The committee is sad to report that the Career Resource Center in Lake Forest closed in April, 2023. They returned our annual donation of \$1,650 and the committee recommended to Council that it be redirected to Lutheran Disaster Response for support after the recent tornadoes in the Midwest and South.

Planting the seed of service and assisting our key agency partners is our overarching goal. To this end, in 2023 we are taking “planting the seed” to heart and will be planting a garden in several plots in the back yard. The harvest will be used for the Soup Ministry! This inreach has been a vital connection to those who need extra support. We

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welcome any members with an interest in gardening to join us as we establish this branch of an existing program! Look for sign up opportunities to make soup, dessert or deliveries, which are essential to the success of this program.

Thank you to the congregation and Council for emphasizing outreach and service as a key focus of our ministry together and the Committee for their commitment and leadership. We are grateful to Mark Wanda for being our representative on the COOL Board of Directors. The support provided by Pastor Amy Gillespie is greatly appreciated. It is a blessing to assist with the direction of Council and alongside members to live out this important aspect of our mission. Finally, without our member volunteers and dedicated office staff we would not be able to get any of our programs done! Sincere thanks for their service and support to Carol Bennett and Kristin Haverkamp in the office; our gardeners, Pete Clemens, Ron Koepke, Sue Ebert and John Tanner for their help and expertise as we launch our garden; our dedicated PADS volunteers: Brooke Davis, Alison Graf, Bruce

Hamming, Ron Koepke and Marilyn Koepke, for keeping it all humming smoothly during the season; Dee Buckowich and Susie Narlock for their NCCP luncheon management; Shelly Holmstrom and Joan Krikau for their help with Waukegan to College; Doug Dusthimer for his support with Confirmation and Faith in Action; Kevin Taylor for working at Habitat; Dave Van Singel and Tom and Chris Meyer for making deliveries to numerous agencies on our behalf, and Linda Berner for collaborating on projects between Social Ministry and Christian Education. We appreciate every member who contributes time and or resources to support our outreach efforts.

Please contact a committee member with questions and to explore how to engage in service. This is a vital and important activity that gives us purpose and keeps us connected! It is a joy to give and serve as a congregation family. God is Good!

Alane Wanda, Chairperson

Report of the Worship and Music Committee

As is the case in most areas for our congregation, this has been a year of transition. It has been a joy to welcome Pastor Amy to St. James and to plan and deliver worship services for our church community under her guidance and leadership.

In other personnel news, Annie Moss has resigned as head of our Altar Guild; Shelly Holmstrom is coordinating the guild on an interim basis.

A new adjustment for all of us was the change of worship start time to 10:00 a.m., which was introduced in September, 2022.

We also offered Wednesday evening prayer services during Advent and Lent.

Our music groups met for in-person rehearsals and regular musical offerings in support of worship throughout the program year, with Damascus Road and the St. James Brass Ensemble continuing through the summer months.

Highlights of the year included the annual Lessons and Carols service, and the combined forces of the Brass Ensemble, Voices of St. James, and Damascus Road for Easter Sunday.

We have continued to live stream each week's worship service, which is also archived for later viewing on the church's YouTube channel.

We continue to integrate our new hymnals into the worship services on non-Damascus Road Sundays. The addition of ribbons (thank you Ron and Marilyn Koepke for spearheading the effort) in the hymnals helps our worshippers mark hymns and liturgical music for easier use.

A major focus of the committee's deliberations this year has centered around how best to support the congregation's active participation in the liturgy. We have received many helpful comments and critiques, and we continue to invite the congregation's ideas. We will continue to refine the format and useability of our worship bulletins in the year ahead, under Pastor Amy's direction.

We are blessed to be able to support the active and vibrant worship life of our congregation through the many offerings of time and talent by so many musicians and worship servants, for which we are most grateful.

Faithfully submitted,

Mark A. Taylor

Chair, Worship and Music Committee

Report of the Christian Education Committee

Committee members: Linda Berner (acting chair), Barb Davoux (Council Liaison), Amy Marsch (Council Liaison), Kathy Lowell, Debbie MacAyeal (Sunday School Superintendent), Wendy Wieggers (Youth Choir Director), Pastor Amy Gillespie.

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’” Matthew 19:1

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of age.” Matthew 28:19-20

This has been a transitional year for our education programs as well as the church as a whole. We began planning last July for more students to return to Sunday School classes. We took a survey and talked with parents of children of various ages. The executive committee of Council, as well as our Council liaisons, played an integral part in our work. We had insight from our interim Pastor Mark Sundberg and later from our new Pastor Amy Gillespie. Pastor Amy continues to guide this process as we evaluate what has been done and look forward to what will be. We are blessed to see families with young children, both returning and new to St. James, coming into the church.

Sunday School

Kick-Off Sunday was September 11, 2022. The committee had a table at the service fair and highlighted the upcoming activities. Debbie MacAyeal held a “meet your teacher” time in the Sunday School area. Unfortunately the planned outdoor bubble activity was rained out.

Sunday morning classes for both Sunday School and Confirmation students began at 9:00 a.m. on September 18, 2022. Confirmation students also began attending evening Confirmation classes every other Tuesday.

During our planning process a need was identified for children’s activities during the week. Families noted that they wanted their children more involved in service projects and, for some, Sunday morning was not the best time. We planned

monthly activities, called Faith in Action, as follows:

October 11, 2022: Packed staff treat bags for North Chicago Community Partners.

November 30, 2022: Stuffed Christmas stockings during the Elf project at Fill-A-Heart 4 Kids in Lake Forest.

December 17, 2022: Children’s activities were available during the tree trimming in the Sanctuary.

January 17, 2023: Packaged cooking-themed kits for families of North Chicago Community Partners including decorating a snowflake with stickers.

February 28, 2023: Packed boxes with treats and supplies for our college students.

March 14, 2023: Assembled self-care kits for Lutheran World Relief.

April 26, 2023: Northern Illinois Food Bank. This was a church-wide activity sponsored by Social Ministry for anyone eight years or older.

May 16, 2023: The planned end-of-year pot luck was postponed for a less busy time.

Participation in these groups varied. Finding days and times that worked for multiple families was difficult.

In May, Debbie MacAyeal announced that she would be retiring as Sunday School Superintendent at the end of the month. A celebration of her 18 years of service was held on May 14, 2023.

Youth Education

The Rite of Confirmation was held on on September 25, 2022 for Kallan Bodine, Bella Bosau, Julia Davoux, Colton Dunford, Ernie Matkov, Grady Strothman, and Madison Vander Jeugd.

The Christmas Pageant, planned and led by Wendy Wieggers, was presented during the worship service on December 11, 2022.

Tuesday confirmation classes were led by Interim

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(Christian Education Committee continued from page 13)

Pastor Mark Sundberg in the fall and by Pastor Amy Gillespie beginning in January, 2023.

The children's choirs sang during the Mothers' Day worship service.

Graduating High School seniors were recognized and presented with a book of blessings.

Planning and registration are underway for a child and youth program, Faith in Action Week, scheduled for August 7-11, 2023. The program will be a combination of traditional VBS activities and the Give 5/4 Need service program for older students. We are planning this event in conjunction with Grace United Methodist Church in Lake Bluff.

Adult Education

In the fall, the Sunday morning adult class, led by Pastor Mark Sundberg, studied Making Sense of the Christian Faith. Starting on January 8, 2023, Pastor Amy Gillespie led the group through a video series based on *Manna and Mercy*.

The Wednesday Zoom adult Bible study continued to discuss the readings for the coming Sunday.

Devotional booklets were available for adults and children for both Advent and Lent. During Lent, members of the congregation met for soup dinner and a study of the book, *Good Enough: 40ish Devotionals for a Life of Imperfection* by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie.

Nursery:

During December the nursery was emptied of its contents and cleaned. Toys were cleaned and returned to their places. We began to advertise for a paid Nursery Attendant. The nursery was opened for families in mid-April staffed by adult volunteers. We continue to pray for an Attendant who will be a constant adult for our youngest children to get to know.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Berner

Report of the Youth Ministry Team

We planned monthly events for the Junior High youth with attendance at Laser tag and Nerf wars. In addition to the Junior High events, Doug Dusthimer has been hosting monthly get togethers for the Senior High youth on Sunday mornings to chat and socialize. We will be doing a mission trip to Nashville this July with four participants signed up. We will be working alongside our "sister church" of St Johns from Joliet and also Grace Lutheran Church in Libertyville. Mission trips are a great way to serve

others and put our faith into action. It serves to get to know others in a deeper way and experience other areas of the country and their local culture. We will be hosted by a company called Serve Boldly who has been doing this for years, but it will be our first time participating in their program.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Ebert

Report of the Stewardship Committee



Our theme for the 2023 Stewardship Campaign, introduced in October of 2022, was “FAITH RESPONDS”.

This year’s theme is a reminder that we are to be stewards (managers) of everything God has given us. As Pastor Mark shared with us in his letter to the congregation: *We focus on God’s grace, as Lutheran Christians. Faith is the response to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. We respond to the three-way gifts God has offered us. 1) Creation is a magnificent gift to us all. The universe, the earth, and every living thing on earth is an amazing gift for humans to steward. 2) Redemption of the whole creation, which has been accomplished by the cross and resurrection of Jesus. By his death we have forgiveness of sins, and by his resurrection, we have the promise of eternal life – abundant life with God forever. 3) Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, God’s grace is communicated to us, in Holy Baptism, where we are marked with Christ’s cross, and Holy Communion, where Christ’s presence comes into our bodies in the form of bread and wine, and in the Word, the promise of God with us forever. The Holy Spirit also inspires the church to do the work of responding in faith: to love God by serving our neighbor in loving works.*

We shared our FAITH RESPONDS message with the congregation through various mailings, compelling temple talks by Annie Moss and Ron

Koepke, banners in the Sanctuary and on the parking lot light posts and via Connections. Additionally, in keeping with this committee’s desire to create and share a tangible reminder of our annual Stewardship theme, we distributed walnut Crosses to each congregation member.

Once again, our congregation responded positively with a highly successful commitment Sunday! We are truly blessed and thankful for the continued grace that is shared by our St. James Family. The financial commitments that are made each year allow us to do so much of what we wish to accomplish with the various organizations that we support. In our serving and in our giving we can offer the kind of faithful and generous blessings that we have received. *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is a gift of God.* (Ephesians 2:8)

Many thanks to our Stewardship Committee Members: Craig Linn, Michael Montalbano, Dave Moore – along with exceptional support from staff members Kristin Haverkamp and Carol Bennett.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Montalbano

Report of the Endowment Fund Board

Members: Jim Davoux, Anna Verch, Mark Wanda, Hans Bodine, Dee Buckowich

The Endowment fund began 2022 with a balance of \$392,773 and ended 2022 with a balance of \$333,135. This includes the “Endowment Benevolence” funds that are currently co-invested with the other endowment funds. In August of 2022, a disbursement of \$6,667 was made from the Danielson Fund to provide financial support to Eric Holmer as he continues his second year of seminary education at Duke University. In 2022, additional disbursements totaling \$2,710 were made from the Viola Long fund for purchasing cranberry hymnals and matching benevolence. In late 2022, a temporary loan of \$16,560 was taken from the Viola Long fund as part of the effort to co-invest in the new Pastor’s Residence. This will be repaid across 2023/2024 as Pastor Holmer pays the final installments toward the congregation’s remaining equity in his home.

The Land Fund began 2022 with a balance of

\$1,274,802 and ended 2022 with a balance of \$1,106,789. The full 4% disbursement of \$46,052 was made from the Land Fund in July of 2022. Those funds were made available to the church council for major maintenance and benevolence. The investment performance of the Land Fund was down in 2022, but rebounded somewhat in Q1 of 2023. Losses were minimized due to the conservative nature of the investments. We are on track to be able to take the full 4% disbursement here in July of 2023. The committee will continue to monitor the markets during these uncertain times with the assistance of Wintrust as our investment advisors.

The congregation is always welcome and encouraged to submit ideas to the board for potential disbursements from the Endowment Fund. Contact any member of the board to discuss your thoughts.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Davoux

Report of the Finance Committee

Since our last Annual Meeting one year ago, St. James has continued to be blessed by a generous congregation, enabling us to assist our new Pastor in her family’s purchase of a home in our community, maintain our support for organizations who serve those in need, and enter 2023 with a balanced operating budget. At the same time, digging below the surface as illustrated by the Pledge Range table in the January Financial Reports book reveals that the congregation’s financial support depends heavily on a few particularly generous households,

which raises concerns for the future. While we are taught to not be anxious about tomorrow, we are also taught to be faithful servants with the resources we have been given. The Finance Committee always welcomes new ideas and new members to help with our financial faithfulness.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee,
Mike Bennett, Treasurer

Report of the Property Committee

Property Committee: Peter Clemens, John Tanner, Josh Hornaday (Acting Chair), Doug Gerber, Doug Dustimer, Hans Bodine, Ronald Koepke, Dave Stresser, Robert Narlock (Council Liaison).

We had our first few work days this year (yes days, plural). We moved and spread 40 yards of mulch; yes 40. Thank you to all who participated. It was an amazing effort, and the property looks great.

Other projects completed:

- Relevelled the Memorial Garden Bluestone Courtyard
- Repaired and repainted outdoor service altar platform
- Repaired, seal-coated and repainted parking lot
- Repaired/ Replaced outdoor accent lighting
- Repaired and Painted Community Garden Fence
- Extensive tree trimming on East and south sides of building
- Added new cabling to provide Wi-Fi thru the building
- Power washed atrium
- Power washed black mold on all north facing brick walls
- Professionally cleaned carpeting throughout the church
- Replaced ceiling tile in the nursery
- Sanitized all walls and surfaces in nursery
- Replaced and updated a dozen electrical fixtures inside the building

- Replaced all water-stained ceiling tiles throughout the building.
- Installed new speaker system in the Sanctuary
- Mulch Mulch Mulch

Special thanks to Pete Clemens who always keeps working away and keeps us organized.

Next project we are looking at is related to the parking lot. The resurfacing estimate for the parking lot we have currently is approximately \$125,000. We are potentially getting a quote for repair/replacement of the entire parking lot; stay tuned for that.

At the recent meeting of the committee chairs there was a discussion of putting a cap on the major maintenance fund. The idea is to potentially allow additional funds to go towards other causes while at the same time ensuring that the major maintenance fund is maintained at an appropriate amount. We are still discussing this and I am sure it will come before council at some point.

Respectfully Submitted,
Josh Hornaday

Report of the Health and Safety Committee

This newly formed committee began meeting in January of 2023. Its purpose is “to mitigate the risk of injury and illness to our St. James’ Members”. In order to accomplish this, we are creating a comprehensive Health & Safety Plan as well as an Emergency Response Plan. The crisis management guidelines contained in these plans are intended to ensure that the church reacts responsibly, rapidly, and systematically to potential crisis situations in compliance with any church guidelines and relevant laws.

The plans that we are creating will focus on these key areas:

1. Health
2. Fire
3. Extreme Event (Extreme Threat – Hazardous Material leak, Child Abduction, Active Shooter)

4. Natural Hazard Event (Severe Storm, Tornado, Winter Storm)
5. Youth Safety
6. Building, Staff, and Member Security

During the second half of 2023, we plan on holding events on several Sundays. These will include annual Flu and COVID vaccination drives as well as opportunities to participate in CPR/AED, Narcan (Naloxone), EpiPen and General First Aid Training.

Many thanks to our energetic Health & Safety committee members: Pete Clemens, Lisa Kollmorgen, Annie Moss, Paul Moss and Bob Narlock.

Respectfully submitted by Michael Montalbano

Report of the Evangelism Committee

Members: Denise Norberg-Johnson (Council Liaison), Melinda Voelcker (Co-chair), Mark Wanda (Co-chair), Emily & Tom Bohac (Special Projects)

The Evangelism Ministry's mission is to engage congregational members in continuous and focused methods to reawaken the member's spirituality, and to reach others, who are as yet unknown, with the Gospel and introduce them to Christ's Church.

This past year presented a wonderful opportunity to "reboot" Evangelism to help members re-engage and welcome others to St. James in various ways including:

- Kick-Off Sunday Activities – Evangelism partnered with Fellowship to coordinate the first ever Ministry Fair featuring all the ministries at St. James. With the help of a "Ministry Passport", members were encouraged to visit each Ministry Table to learn more about each ministry, ask any questions about the ministry, their plans for the year ahead and members were encouraged to become involved in and/or contribute their time/talents to the ministries. It created great energy to begin the new church year – energy we hope to build upon in the future.
- St. James Brass Concert - Evangelism contributed outreach to the community (schools, friends, etc.) for St. James Brass Concert in October on Reformation Sunday afternoon. It was well-attended with 71 in the audience and refreshments were available for a free-will donation with proceeds going to the COOL Food Pantry's Veteran's Program. Over \$400 was raised at the event.

Looking ahead we have many great projects and events planned for 2023 including:

- Creating a small Welcome area in the Narthex near the entrance ("passive" engagement - welcome banner with small table holding information about St. James)

- Ministry Tables – A "spin off" from the Ministry Fair last fall. One St. James ministry will be featured in the Narthex each week (if possible) to promote that ministry's events or projects, answer questions church members may have about that ministry and provide an opportunity for members to possibly volunteer or discover ways they can contribute their time to support that ministry.
- Fill-the-Backpack event August 5th – An event for all ages to assemble backpacks with school supplies which will be donated to COOL Ministries to offer to the families they serve. We will be asking St. James members to help either by providing supplies, monetary support or time/talent at the event in August which will have fun, carnival-like activities for kids on the front lawn (weather permitting). We encourage members to invite friends, family, playgroups, others in the community to join the fun - while helping others, too!
- St. James Concerts – Contemporary Originals by Damascus Road – Tentatively August 12 or 19 & 2nd Annual St. James Brass Concert – September 9th (Day before Kick-Off Sunday)
- Updating new member welcome gifts
- Community board signs in Lake Forest and Lake Bluff to promote St. James events.
- Join the LF/LB Chamber then create St. James item to insert in new homeowner welcome kits

If you enjoy working with a group to welcome others to the family at St. James or have an interest in supporting one of the events or projects listed above, please reach out to ministry co-chairs, Melinda Voelcker (Text #847-275-7519) or Mark Wanda (mjwanda61@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,
Melinda Voelcker, Co-Chair

Report of the Fellowship Committee*

Members of the committee included: Sue Ebert, Madeleine Jorgensen, Gail Morgan, Shelly Holmstrom, Annie Moss

The Fellowship Committee met twice with the Women of St. James to coordinate the calendar and activities. They also met twice with all the St. James Committee Chairpersons to coordinate the calendar and activities.

The Fellowship Committee sponsored several events during the year:

- September 11th 2022: Participated in Kick-Off Sunday with a table in the Narthex promoting our Ministry.
- November 13th 2022: A welcome brunch for Pastor Amy and family was planned and coordinated at the Deer Path Inn. A total of 134 people attended!
- December 8th 2022: Our committee got together and made luminarias for Christmas Eve. Unfortunately, due to bad weather we couldn't put them out, hopefully this year!
- January 21st: Hosted a Bocci Ball/Buffett dinner night. A total of 38 people attended. This proves to be a well-received event!
- February 11: Hosted a first time Chili Cook-Off. A total of 42 attendees and 5 brave challengers for the contest! After dinner various games were played. A huge success and will definitely be a repeat!
- March: 5 Lenten Soup suppers were coordinated with many gracious volunteers. Pastor Amy led a devotion during the meal.
- April 5th: An Educational Seder Dinner was provided by Paul & Annie Moss. A total of 44 people attended. A presentation was given by Paul and a full Seder dinner was enjoyed! Lots of great feedback.
- April 20th: Detlef Koska provided a presentation on the reconstruction of Notre Dame de Paris.
- June 18th: Looking forward to our Father's Day pancake breakfast! An enhanced menu will be served!!
- September 30th: Progressive Dinner, stay tuned!
- December 9th: Christmas Caroling, stay tuned!

Please contact a committee member with ideas for future events! We look forward to many more opportunities to be together. And, if you're so inclined to join our ministry or help in any way just let us know!

Annie Moss

Submitted on behalf of the Committee.

*** Includes OWLs (Older Wiser Lutherans) activities**

Report of the Women of St. James

The Women of St. James had an somewhat active schedule throughout the year. Usually, we have our Friendship Dinner in the winter or the spring; however, with the arrival of Pastor Amy there have been many additional activities we elected not to hold one this year.

Bluffinia

Women of St. James sponsored a Sunday evening at Bluffina last August. We had a terrific turnout and listened to a fabulous band. Everyone brought an appetizer or a dessert.....never a lack of food when it comes to members of St. James. We are planning on Bluffinia this summer! Information will be forthcoming.

Annual Cookie Exchange

St. James women gathered on Saturday, December 3rd for the annual cookie exchange. There was a great turnout for brunch, and we had two large tables of cookies for the exchange. Typical of St. James women, many donated cookies without even attending the event. On Sunday, December 4th following the 10:00 AM service the St. James congregation actively supported the cookie bake sale by contributing \$800. The contributions were used to support Cool Ministries for the benefit of the Veterans' Program. The Women of St James brought in

toiletries that were also supplied to the Cool Ministries Veterans' Program.

Women of St James delivered cookies to St James members not able to attend the Cookie Exchange. St James women also delivered soup to St James members as part of the Soup Ministry.

Women of St James are entertaining the idea of having a fall retreat. Look for more details to follow.

An Invitation

All women are invited to attend these programs throughout the year and guests are welcome. Meetings provide opportunities for sharing laughter and building friendships. Rides will gladly be arranged, and childcare is available upon request. We learn from each other and enjoy the blessings of abundant life that God has promised us when we gather in His name.

In Closing...

A very special thank you to Carol Bennett and Kristin Haverkamp for willingly assisting the Women of St. James in many ways.....Honestly, anything we ask they both have been there to support us. Thank you!

Submitted by Kathy Lowell
On behalf of the Women of St. James

Report of the Sewing Group

The sewing group meets on the first Thursday of the month. We have about 12 regular members but welcome others. Some cut squares, stuff teddy bears, tie quilts, knit hats, and sew bears or quilts.

In November, Terri Gens from LSSI came and talked with us about foster care.

We are the only Lutheran church that makes bears. We gave her 50 bears to be given to children as they come into foster care.

Pastor Amy blessed our quilts in March near the quilting Day.

In October, 15 quilts were packed and delivered to the Brethern Church in Elgin where they are loaded on a semi and taken with other donations to be sorted and shipped where needed.

We donated Bears to COOL where they will be offered in their pantry. Thanks Mark Wanda for helping us.

We all enjoy the time together and welcome new members.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Anderson

Report of the Call Committee

The call committee met with Pastor Amy Gillespie and recommended her to the Church Council, who voted to recommend her to the congregation. After the congregation met with Pastor Amy, they voted overwhelmingly to call her to St. James, where she started in November.

Michael Bennett
Hans Bodine
Linda Berner
Doug Gerber
Gail Morgan
Andrea Taylor
Mark Wanda

Report of the Memorial Garden

Burials

We interred the ashes of two persons (combined urn) within the last 12 months.

Engravings in Memorial Plaque and interment site plaques

With the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic the engraving company Gast Monuments encountered a huge backlog of engraving orders thus eight names need to be engraved in the Garden. At his point the work completion is promised by the end of June. There are no current plans to add new names to the plaque. There is still plenty of space to engrave more names on the Memorial Plaque. Please contact any of the trustees with your questions.

Sale of Burial Sites

One half site was sold during the year. A number of sites are still available, especially on the "outside" (north side) of the Garden. The "outside" is very attractive because one can enjoy a clear view of the Church as a background. On the "inside" (south side) two full and one half sites are still available.

Financials

The check book balance amounts to \$3,848. This amount includes pre-payments for engravings to be completed.

Outstanding loan amounts owed to the Endowment Fund remains at \$4,000 and to the General Fund \$1,000.

Current Rate Structure

The current rate structure remains unchanged as follows:

- Full site for 6 urn interments \$2,200
- Quad site for 4 urn interments \$1,500
- Half site for 3 urn interments \$1,100
- Double site for 2 urn interments \$ 750
- Memorial Wall engraving per name \$ 650
- Interrment Service \$ 750

Board Members

The current composition of the Board is as follows:

Carole Tanner—thru June, 2023
Randy Daniel—thru June 2024
Detlef Koska, Chairman – thru June 2025
Bud Lowell—thru June 2026
Pastor Amy Gillespie—ex-officio member
Tom Meyer – Legal Counsel

Respectfully submitted,
Detlef K. Koska, Chairman

Report of the Administrative and Communications Services Team

What a rewarding opportunity it has been to serve St. James during this past year. Previously, Kristin and Carol divided the administrative duties between them. However, in 2022, Kristin took on additional responsibilities for media and communications, while Carol added bookkeeping to her workload after our business manager, Chris Meyer, retired in August. We welcomed Pete Clemens as our new facilities manager, and he has been an excellent addition to our team. In November, we welcomed Pastor Amy and facilitated a seamless transition by equipping her office with new furniture and upgraded technology.

As we navigate the ever-changing worlds of communication and administration, we remain steadfast in our dedication to the mission of the church. The staff is wholly committed to maximizing our productivity and resources by carefully analyzing and implementing the most successful techniques other thriving congregations use. Our future planning is directed by our unwavering devotion to our mission to follow Christ, make disciples, and live the gospel. Here are some of our achievements from the past year:

Improved Document Management: We set up a Google Drive for the Council in June, which helped with organization and document dissemination for meetings and projects.

Work Efficiency Improvements: We introduced a staff support request form to streamline daily operations, making event and communication planning more efficient.

Enhanced Data Security: We transitioned the member directory to a more secure system in March, where each household creates its password for access. We also established St. James emails for key roles, including President, Fellowship, Social Ministry, and

Summer Faith In Action, facilitating safe and effective communication.

Improved Live Stream Sound: We successfully improved the sound quality of our live streams, optimizing the spoken portions of the services, thanks to the collaborative efforts of Kristin Haverkamp, Pete Clemens, and Greg MacAyeal.

Effective Email Campaigns: We sent over 250 email campaigns to our 218 subscribers throughout the year, achieving an impressive open rate of approximately 65%, surpassing the average in our category by 20 percentage points.

In-House Design Initiatives: The Stewardship Committee decided to create their yearly campaign logo in-house, with Kristin successfully designing the Faith Responds logo, along with banners, posters, and cards for the olive wood crosses.

Increased Visibility: The Executive Committee wished to utilize the parking lot light poles for hanging banners to improve our visibility from the road. Kristin designed banners for Stewardship, Advent, Lent, and a generic evergreen campaign to be used in this manner.

Special thanks go to Bob Narlock, Pete Clemens, Ron Koepke, Dave Moore, and Abby Haverkamp, who assembled our pastor's new furniture. And to Dean Haverkamp for his outstanding photography skills and the extensive collection of images and videos that enrich our archives.

In His Service,
Kristin Haverkamp and Carol Bennett

Resolutions

WE, THE MEMBERS OF ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH, DO HEREBY RESOLVE THAT:

We thank God for the Gift of the Holy Spirit, alive and active in this congregation, and we pray that the power of the Spirit will bring about increased spiritual growth and commitment among our members, that Christ's work may truly be our own.

We express our thanks to Interim Pastor Sundberg and Senior Pastor Amy Gillespie, all our salaried staff and our many volunteers -- committee chairpersons and members, organizational leaders, church school staff, choir members and musicians, ushers, worship assistants, nursery attendants, altar guild, sewing group and all the dedicated individuals who have given service in 2022-2023.

We express our gratitude to all who serve on the Church Council, especially Barb Davoux, Sue Ebert, Michael Montalbano, and Dave Moore (President), who have completed their terms of office. In addition we acknowledge with great appreciation our other 2022-2023 officers: Ron Koepke, Vice President, Shelly Holmstrom, Secretary, Joe Voelcker, Financial Secretary and Treasurer, Mike Bennett.

We remember in our thoughts and prayers all who mourn the loss of loved ones through death; those who have been hospitalized or seriously ill at home due to the loss of good health; those who have known the fear and frustration of job loss; those who in any way have experienced the pain of great sacrifice. We pray that all may find comfort and help in the promises of our loving and merciful Lord, Jesus Christ, the Risen Savior.

We give thanks for all the blessings bestowed upon us individually and upon our congregation. We are particularly mindful of the material blessings that are ours to share with others and we are grateful for the ever increasing evidence of faithful stewardship of our resources.

We thank God for guiding and preserving us through the challenges of the pandemic and through the transition to a Senior Pastor. We express our gratitude to all those who put in extra time, effort and talents in so many ways, enabling us to continue to function as a vibrant church despite the obstacles. We share our hope that the Spirit will lead us in the process of returning to life together as a congregation and in the calling of a new full-time Pastor.

WE GIVE THANKS ALWAYS TO GOD THE CREATOR STILL CREATING, TO HIS OWN SON WHO LIVES TO SAVE, AND TO HIS SPIRIT EVER GUIDING AND PROTECTING.

**2022-2023 Officers of the
Congregation
and Church Council**

President

Dave Moore

Vice President

Ron Koepke

Secretary

Shelly Holmstrom

Treasurer

Mike Bennett

Financial Secretary

Joe Voelcker

Council Members

Barb Davoux

Sue Ebert

Shelly Holmstrom

Bob Kenehan

Ron Koepke

Greg MacAyeal

Amy Marsch

Michael Montalbano

Dave Moore

Annie Moss

Bob Narlock

Denise Norberg-Johnson

Senior Pastor

Amy L. Gillespie

Senior Pastor

Amy L. Gillespie

Church Staff

**Communications Manager &
Administrative Svcs.**

Kristin Haverkamp

**Interim Bookkeeper &
Administrative Svcs.**

Carol Bennett

Sunday School Director

Debbie MacAyeal

Youth Ministry Director

Doug Dusthimer

Facilities Manager

Pete Clemens

Director of Music

Rae-Myra Hilliard

Organist

Wendy Unrath

Damascus Road Directors

Greg MacAyeal & Melinda Voelcker

Director of

Children's Music

Wendy Wiegerts

Brass Ensemble Director

Ryan Ringnalda

**Standing Committee Chairs
and Other Leaders**

Christian Education

Acting Chair Linda Berner

Church Property

Josh Hornaday

Evangelism

Melinda Voelcker

Fellowship

Annie Moss

Finance

Teresa Miller

Social Ministry

Alane Wanda

Stewardship

Michael Montalbano

Health & Safety

Michael Montalbano

Worship & Music

Mark Taylor

Endowment

Board of Trustees

Jim Davoux

Memorial Garden

Board of Trustees

Detlef Koska

St. James Owls

Ann Anderson and
Madeleine Jorgensen

Sewing Group

Ann Anderson

Youth Ministry Team

Sue Ebert

Women of St. James

Kathy Lowell

Altar Guild

Shelly Holmstrom



For more information, including past years' reports, visit our website using the QR code at left or type our website in your browser:

www.stjameslutheran.org