



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 2, 2024

Schedule

9:30 am Service

10:45 am Annual Meeting

Agenda

Opening Prayer

Call to Order

Report of the Tellers (Quorum is 30 voting members)

Adoption of the Agenda

Approval of the Minutes January 28, 2024

Annual Reports

 Report of the President

 Report of Pastor Amy Gillespie

 Reports of the Committees

Elections (Candidates are listed in the Nominating Committee Report)

Affirmations

Adjournment

Closing Prayer



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Minutes of the Annual Financial Meeting January 28, 2024

Call to Order - Ron Koepke

Prayer - Pastor Amy

Reporting of the Tellers - 60+ (Quorum)

Adoption of the Agenda - Ron Koepke

Ron asked if there were any additions and there were none. Motion to approve - Pete Clemens Second - Lisa Kollmorgan A vote was taken and all unanimously approved.

Approval of the Minutes from June 4, 2023 - Ron Koepke Ron asked if there were any corrections and there were none. Motion to approve - Liz Behring; Second - Don Bergsrud. A vote was taken and all unanimously approved.

Final 2023 Review - Ron Koepke Ron gave a brief review of Pastor Amy's first year with our congregation. He thanked Pastor Amy for her hard work this past year. Joan Krikau has done an outstanding job as office administrator and contributed significantly to the transition in office staff and keeping the church functioning smoothly. Laurie Whisler is handling Connections, the Livestream and the website and he appreciated her help. Pete Clemens has been very hard at work on Property and he thanked him. Rachel Emken is the new bookkeeper and has really helped Mark Wanda with her insights and with this financial report. We have just extended an offer to a Nursery Attendant and we hope to have the nursery staffed very soon. He appreciates all of the volunteers who have put in countless hours and particularly Sue Thomas for her expertise in HR and her time and effort on the church's behalf. He thanked the Church Council and the Executive Committee for their time and wanted to point out that we have 2 new committees: Health and Safety as well as the Financial Oversight committees. We are poised to embark on a strategic plan in the next few months and he is looking forward to the process and bringing St. James Lutheran into the future. He thanked Mark Wanda for his time and work he has done as treasurer and preparing this budget and presentation.

Presentation of the 2024 General Fund Budget - Mark Wanda 2023 closes very strong with a net surplus of \$72,000. That was not budgeted for but gives us a strong position going into 2024. This is due in part to the generosity of the SJLC congregation and our committees adhering to their budgets. Our stewardship campaign was very successful and he recognized Dave Moore and the Stewardship Committee for their efforts. Our pledged giving is the highest it has ever been at \$584,000. A significant percentage of families increased their giving by more than 10%. Each of the 9 new families that joined this year pledged. We were able to accept all budget requests

submitted for 2024. Our investment performance rebounded and our investment income was very strong. We are targeting a small budget deficit of \$3,200. We gave all employees a 3.7% cost of living raise based on Synod recommendations and established a bonus pool. The LEAD strategic planning has been added to the budget and the Health and Safety committee is a new line in the budget. Mark noted that the number of pledge families has dropped from 100 to 81 over the last 10 years and a significant portion of giving comes from a few families. He would like to see giving stratified over a broader base in the future and make sure we are prepared.

2023 overview...the surplus was \$72,000. He noted that in 2023 Pastor Holmer paid off a \$16,000 loan and we also had a reduction of \$32,000 in staff salaries. Actual giving exceeded the budget by \$17,000 and there was unbudgeted special benevolence of \$8,904. The Financial Oversight Committee is going to investigate how to handle the surplus and possibly invest some of that cash on hand, avoid complacency and be good stewards. He discussed the budget process.

2024 Pledges 81 families pledged \$584,606 which is overall increased from 2023.

2024 Budget 20% of SJLC budgeted expenses are for operating the church. 60% of the budget is personnel expenses such as staff and our internal programs. Benevolence comprises 15.5%. We tithe 10% to the ELCA. We have local community benevolence: PADS, Sagrado Corazon. He also noted that our benevolence giving is always distributed to our recipients at the beginning of the year to help with their own planning. That does leave us in a position with these funds leaving our accounts before they are realized through planned giving.

Discussion and Adoption of the 2024 General Fund Budget

- Mark Wanda and Ron Koepke

A brief discussion was held regarding the budget. It was discussed that there are funds available for a media/communication coordinator since it is no longer a line item on the budget. Mark reported as the need arises the budget can be adjusted to add headcount. There was a discussion regarding how the ELCA chooses to spend the tithe and how it is in line with the congregation's beliefs. There was a discussion on the need to hire more staff as Joan Krikau is currently doing the office roles of 2.5 people. Mark reported the staffing situation is fluid and is undergoing evaluation. He pointed out that change is an opportunity to implement more efficient processes. Motion to adopt the 2024 budget - Paul Moss; Second - Dave Moore. Ron asked for any other discussion and there was none. A vote was taken and the motion to approve the budget passed unanimously. Ron thanked Mark for all his hard work. Mark thanked the congregation, the financial oversight committee, council, the executive committee and most particularly to Joan for all her hard work.

Election of Synod Assembly Voting Members - Ron Koepke

Ron asked for volunteers to be our church representative to the Synod. Annie Moss and Madeline Jorgensen volunteered. Shelly Holmstrom was volunteered in absentia pending confirmation with her. A motion was made to elect the aforementioned individuals by Alane Wanda; Second - Pete Clemens the volunteers were unanimously approved. Ron asked if there was interest in LEAD strategic planning discussion. Pastor Amy gave a brief overview on the process. It is a listening process and will help us find gifts we have that we may not be aware of. The council has chosen to work with LEAD and was pending approval of the budget. A communication audit is part of the process and will help us with best practices.

Ron asked for any other questions and there were none.

Alane Wanda thanked Mark for his tireless work with this budget and presentation.

Adjournment - Ron Koepke Motion to Adjourn - Joe Voelcker Second - Bob Kenehan all unanimously agreed

Closing Prayer - Pastor Amy Gillespie

Minutes - respectfully submitted by Laurie Whisler

Report of the President

During the past year, St. James has continued to strive to fulfill its mission of proclaiming the love of Christ to our fellow members, our community and the world. We have benefited from the leadership, the energy and the enthusiasm of Pastor Amy Gillespie for the past 18 months. Our worship services are meaningful and inspiring with thoughtful sermons and great music. We are grateful for everyone who participates in various worship servant roles and for our faithful congregants. Special events such as baptisms, first communion, Bible presentations and welcoming of new members inspire us all and remind us of our own faith journeys. And the fellowship reception after the worship service gives us the opportunity to share our faith and deepen our relationships with other members. We should strive to be “Invitational Christians” and invite family and friends to experience worship at St. James. A personal invitation from a member is the primary reason visitors come to church. God calls us to extend personal invitations to people we know or meet so that our community can experience how God is at work at St. James.

Due to the faithful generosity of our members, the financial status of St. James remains in good condition. This year a Financial Oversight Committee was initiated and includes the Financial Secretary, Endowment Chair, Stewardship Chair, Finance Committee Chair, Treasurer and Council President. It is chaired by our Treasurer, Mark Wanda, and meets monthly to provide a forum to discuss all aspects of the church’s finances. One major expenditure this summer is replacing the church parking lot which has cracked due to water drainage issues. We also plan to refinish the wooden altar platforms and communion rails with a financial gift from a generous church member. It also has been proposed that St. James establish a Special Projects Fund which would be invested in the ELCA Mission Investment Fund. This would be comprised of our current endowment proceeds as well as special donations from memorials or legacy gifts. It is our intent to bring these ideas to the yearly financial meeting next January.

At this time, St. James appears to be a healthy congregation. However, complacency can be a perilous mindset. After considerable discussion, the Church Council decided that 2024 would be a favorable time to initiate a strategic planning process and review our mission as a congregation. As most of our members know, we have contracted with the LEAD consulting group. LEAD is a nonprofit organization that grew out of the ELCA in Texas, and now guides congregations across the country in self-evaluation and planning for the future. The St. James LEAD committee members were commissioned during a recent worship service and will coordinate the planning process over the next year (members are listed at the end of this document).

St. James is heavily dependent on volunteers to carry out its mission. The Church Council is the ultimate governing body of our congregation, and this responsibility results in Council members contributing a significant amount of time as they work to discern how St James' policies and programs can reflect our Mission and be implemented. Sincere thanks to all of our Council Members. The reports of the various committee Chairpersons are part of this annual document and enumerate the activities and programs their committees have contributed to of the life of St. James this past year. In addition to their committee work, the chairs also attended quarterly Joint Committee Chairs meetings to exchange ideas and coordinate programs. St. James Church is truly grateful for the time, effort and expertise generously donated by the Chairs and the other members of their committees.

Members of the Church Council's Executive Committee also have put in considerable time and effort this year. Laurie Whisler was our remarkably efficient Council Secretary who also assumed responsibility for St. James' communications, including the weekly Connections Newsletter and updating the St. James Website. Shelly Holmstrom, served as Vice President and is now incoming Church Council President. She has functioned as Council liaison and assistant to Pastor Amy providing institutional knowledge, coordinating special events and helping with visitor and new member communications. She also assumed the roles of coordinating the Fellowship Committee and Altar Guild.

Other dedicated members include Mark Wanda who served as both Treasurer and Interim Bookkeeper. He is evaluating and reorganizing our financial operations to include quarterly contribution statements and a proposed church audit for 2025. Sue Thomas has graciously donated considerable time as our HR expert. As our church members know, there have been numerous staff changes this year, and Sue has been involved with interviews, job descriptions, and negotiations throughout this process. She was also instrumental in hiring our new nursery attendant. Sue's assistance is greatly appreciated. Finally, we thank all who used their gifts to work with and teach our youth, work that is so important to the growth of God's church.

This past year, St. James' staff members have worked hard to make our church an inviting place to meet and to worship. Pastor Amy Gillespie has provided St. James with theological leadership and new ideas for liturgical worship. Her work leading our congregation consistently reflects her enthusiasm, commitment, friendliness, and empathy. Joan Krikau has brought friendliness and efficiency to the position of Office Coordinator. Pete Clemens has managed the church facility, the grounds, and operations very effectively. Many longtime members have observed that the building and grounds have "never looked so good." Our music leaders and their ensembles continue to provide inspiration during worship. For all these contributions to the life of our congregation, we are extremely grateful.

In closing, I thank the members of St. James for the opportunity to serve this past year. I look forward to the coming year as St. James works to discern how God will use us to serve Him and grow his Kingdom.

Ronald Koepke, President
St. James Church Council

Report of Senior Pastor Amy Gillespie

*The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God...
Psalm 92:12-13*

With Gratitude

I was on the phone with a parishioner's daughter the other day and she stated that her mom loves watching the worship service online. Now that her mom can't come to church easily on her own, it makes all the difference for her to attend church in this way. I responded saying, it is an honor to be with this congregation and to serve in ways I don't always even realize.

It is with these moments in mind, that I am filled with gratitude towards all of you. It is truly a blessing to get to do the work of the Lord with you. I am reminded by many of you on a regular basis, that despite challenges which naturally come along with transitions, we are doing wonderful things together at St. James through the Holy Spirit.

Thank you for all the ways you step into roles of leadership and take risks to try new things for the sake of the congregation and community. Thank you especially to the faithful and dedicated Church Council, especially the Executive Council of Ron Koepke, Shelly Holmstrom, Laurie Whisler and Mark Wanda. Thank you to the office staff who have weathered changes like champs with me, Joan Krikau and Pete Clemens. It has been a pleasure working with you all this year as we embarked on new faith based adventures.

We have had a year of change on the church staff. We said goodbye to Carol Bennett, who retired from her administrative position and served as volunteer Bookkeeper up until late fall. Kristin Haverkamp left her administrative and communications positions in early July of last year as well. Debbie MacAyeal retired from her long time Children's Ministry Coordinator position at the end of May in 2023. We're grateful for all the time, energy and faithfulness these sisters in Christ have given the church over the years.

Our Office Coordinator, Joan Krikau stepped into the administrative position in June of 2023 and has been a gift and an asset to the staff since. We hired a lovely nursery coordinator, Ronke Daramola in early 2024. We also hired a Bookkeeper, Rachel Emken, who was with us for a handful of months.

Mark Wanda has stepped in as our Interim Bookkeeper and is paving the way for who takes the reigns next and what that position can look like. This year we will see another big change as our beloved, longtime Youth Ministries Coordinator, Doug Dusthimer will retire after this summer. We look forward to celebrating him and all his 18 years of ministry with the youth and families of St. James.

With all these changes in mind, we are in a good position as a congregation to examine our ministries and watch for the Spirit's nudging in new directions.

What's the Spirit up to yesterday and today?

I chose the verse at the top to reflect the rootedness I have felt in the worship services with all of you here at St. James. I love the image of 'being planted in the house of the Lord.' I believe this is what we do in worship every week together. We refresh ourselves with the waters of baptism to go forth and do the same for others in need of a cool drink.

In worship we have been blessed to celebrate many faith milestones this year, as you'll see reflected in the Faith Milestones and Life Passages section at the end of my report. I have appreciated experiencing the ebb and flow of the church seasons with all of you. As I write this, we are approaching Pentecost Sunday. This is a day when we see the Holy Spirit flowing freely, expanding the circle of God's love to include all people. I feel this mirrors what we are striving to do here at St. James.

Even if folks are unable to attend worship in person at this time, we are still connected in faith and love. The creative energy of the Spirit can and does use technology to further the gospel. What a time we live in! We are also exploring various ways to strengthen those connections with one another, particularly with those who are unable to come to the church building in person.

One of the avenues through which we are asking questions and mining the needs of our congregation and community, is through our brand new strategic planning process. During the financial meeting at the end of January 2024, the congregation approved a line item budget to work with the organization LEAD, which stands for "living every day as disciples." LEAD is working with our congregation to develop a faith based strategic plan.

Throughout this process we will be listening to the congregation through surveys and listening groups. Then we will transition to listening in the community. Once all the listening has been completed, we will gather the information we've learned and discern a plan to propose for implementation by the Council.

This is a prayerful, intentional process we are embarking on for a year in order to discern what God is calling St. James to be and do in the next 2-3 years. We will be assessing the ministries, our leadership and structural models, our communications efforts and much more. Thank you to the LEAD Team, to Deacon Peggy Hahn from LEAD, to the council, and the congregation for trusting the Spirit's movement to show us the way forward as a congregation.

As we look toward the future of St. James I am confident and hopeful. We are discerning the best questions to ask in order to listen most intently to the Spirit's leading. Through trusting our triune God and one another we will be able to align our ministries with our mission, vision and values and take thoughtful risks for the sake of the gospel.

Thank you for all the ways we are opening ourselves to "being planted in the house of the Lord" so we can "flourish in the courts of our God." In doing so, we learn what it looks like to take care of each other and bring that love and life to all we meet—lifting each other up to the sun to thrive in Jesus' name.

God's peace and blessings,
-P. Amy Gillespie

Faith Milestones and Life Passages

These persons were welcomed into the body of Christ through Holy Baptism:

- Brody Philip Verch-12/17/23
- Charlie Paul-4/21/24
- Gwendolen Freya Bohac-5/12/24
- Zoe Jo LaLa-5/26/24

On March 17th, 2024 these persons were welcomed to the Lord's table to share in Holy Communion:

- Anna Arazan
- Eva Larson
- Vivian Larson
- Charlie Paul

On April 21st, 2024, these persons received their Holy Bibles in worship:

- Anna Arazan
- Jocelyn Duncombe
- Eva Larson
- Vivian Larson
- Graham Marsch (6/2/24)
- Charlie Paul

On September 24th, 2023 these persons affirmed their baptism and were confirmed in worship:

- Logan Marsch
- Morgan Hornaday
- Sophia Voelcker
- Hallie Bodine
- Clio Stresser (confirmed on 9/18/23)

New Members welcomed into this body of Christ through Affirmation of Baptism in 2023:

- 10/15/23 The Lala family, Lisa Hilgenberg (reinstated), Joan Stevenson
- 11/19/23 Terry and Ruth Udenberg, Larry and Judy Mosner

New Members welcomed into this body of Christ through Affirmation of Baptism in 2024:

- 4/28/24 The Knudten family

Funerals/Memorials and Interments for 2023-2024

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

- Donald Koski 4/22/23
- Judy Grodt 6/21/23
- Wolf Kollacks 11/26/23
- Walter Hamester 12/27/23
- Art Stunard 1/6/24
- Barbara Kollacks 5/11/24 (Family member of Linda Kollacks)
- Caryl Barbknecht 5/26/24

Report of the Social Ministry Outreach Committee

Committee Members: Dee Buckowich, Shelly Holmstrom, Ron Koepke, Alane Wanda, 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.

Budgeted Financial Support & Volunteer Support

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

Budgeted Financial Support

- **Bethel New Life**
- **ELCA Benevolence**
- **Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI)**
- **Sagrado Corazón**
- **Samara Care Counseling (Grief Group)**

Financial and/or Volunteer Support (as needs present)

- **Fill-A-Heart for Kids (via Faith in Action)**
- **Lutheran Disaster Response**
- **Lutheran World Relief**
- **Migrant Support in Lake County**
- **Northern Illinois Food Bank**

Planting the seed of **service and volunteerism** is the overarching goal of Social Ministry Outreach. We continually assess our efforts to find ways to make them more meaningful and open to more members. We see so many hearts for service at St. James! A new initiative to harness that enthusiasm for service and offer participation in our own building has begun! “God’s Work Our Hands Thursdays” are the second Thursday each month at 10 am. These get-togethers provide social interaction, lively discussion of current and potential outreach opportunities, and hands-on service projects. We are hopeful that this format will be of interest to many members. Please join us!

We are also attempting to quantify our service and outreach initiatives by estimating the service hours for each project. We have learned this from watching our partner, North Chicago Community Partners (NCCP). We tend to emphasize the finished product but often overlook the sweat equity that goes into it! As an example, the 9 blankets and 500 teacher kits we assembled in February represented 60 service hours. WOW, we do BIG things!!

We are blessed to continue our vital outreach programs, including many that we share with other area congregations. The Waukegan to College shower for first generation college bound students, which we co-host with St. Paul's in Waukegan; the hygiene products we collect monthly for the Family Care Closet (NCCP) which we share with Grace United Methodist in Lake Bluff; the Faith in Action service camp, which we co-sponsor with Grace as well; our PADS food collections are part of a larger network of area churches, but especially First Presbyterian in Libertyville; The Northern Illinois Food Bank also encourages our participation with other churches and individuals in the Lake Forest area. These synergistic relationships offer support and shared vision for our goal of supporting organizations that make a difference in Lake County.

We are pleased to have started back at the Family Care Closet on the third Thursday each month to stock the shelves for North Chicago families who count on this pantry. We are amazed at what 3 or 4 people can do in a few hours! We continue our faithful service to PADS, by supplying ready-to-eat food for clients being housed in hotels year-round (with the goal of a fixed shelter site in the future). We continue to support the efforts of LCU as they locate and develop affordable housing in Lake County. We will also be blessed to work on another Habitat Faith Build in Waukegan this August (mark your calendar for August 17).

We are hopeful as we have gained many volunteers to help with our Soup Ministry. Many thanks to all who have made, delivered, or received soup (and the assorted goodies that accompany it). We now look to expand this in-reach ministry to include other vital activities of care and concern. These simple touchpoints are important to nurture our St James family and we invite all to learn about these efforts as they emerge and develop.

Last Summer we took "planting the seed" to heart and grew vegetables in several plots in the back yard garden. We were able to use the vegetables in soup for our Soup Ministry as well as our luncheon during Faith in Action. Many thanks to Ron Koepke for taking this on for us and the support from Pete Clemens and Sue Ebert. This Summer we hope to expand the reach as COOL food pantry is looking for any fresh vegetables to include in their monthly boxes as their clients do not receive many fresh foods. If you have a garden, please consider bringing your extra harvest for COOL. We hope our garden will yield some veggies too!

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 and coordinating our involvement in Foodstock, the annual plant sale, the golf tournament, and delivering our donations to the pantry whenever needed.

The support and input provided by Pastor Amy Gillespie is vital and 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 Joan Krikau in the office and Pete Clemens keeping our “stuff” organized and (when possible) out of sight; our dedicated PADS donators, who have kept our food donations consistent and substantial – several thousand dollars’ worth; Shelly Holmstrom and Susie Narlock for management of and assistance with two NCCP luncheons for 100 people each; Bob Narlock, Susie Narlock, Shelly Holmstrom, Bruce Hamming, Ann Anderson and Susan Olsen for serving at the Family Care Closet (NCCP); Doug Dusthimer for his support with Confirmation and Faith in Action; the dozen plus volunteers who showed up to help us make (9) blankets for migrant families and 500 care kits for North Chicago teachers – a total of 60 volunteer hours!; and a special shout out to Linda Berner for collaborating on projects between Social Ministry and Christian Education, including much time and coordination on Faith in Action. We appreciate every member who contributes time and or resources to support our outreach efforts. This is who we are!

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

Respectfully submitted,
Alane Wanda, Chairperson

Report of the Worship and Music Committee

Altar guild volunteers continue the important work of preparing the altar for communion, for special festivals of the church year including decorating for Christmas and Easter. Thank you to our faithful team members including new volunteers Fabiola Arazan and Mary Anne Larson! Please contact Shelly Holmstrom to explore this area of service.

Under the guidance of Pastor Amy, the Worship and Music Committee undertook a review of our weekly worship bulletin format this year. We incorporated feedback we gathered from congregation members and revised the bulletin to be larger and more comprehensive. This has been generally received as a positive development by the congregation.

Our many musical groups continued their monthly support of worship services during the church year, with the St. James Brass Ensemble and Damascus Road continuing throughout the summer months as well. Damascus Road also was able to upgrade their electronic drum kit with new equipment this year.

We are always looking for musicians to lend their talents to these fine groups – please contact Music Director Rae-Myra Hilliard if you would like to try singing with the Voices of St. James or ringing with the Handbells of St. James. Get in touch with either Melinda Voelcker or Greg Macayéal if you are interested in participating in Damascus Road. If you are a brass player and would like to play with the St. James Brass, talk with director Ryan Ringnalda. And if you have a young person who would like to sing with the Children’s Choir, please contact director Wendy Wieggers.

The worship life of our congregation requires the participation of many volunteers in the form of assisting ministers, readers, communion ministers, greeters, ushers, coffee hosts, and other important roles. Currently our volunteer lists for these roles are somewhat short, resulting in the people having to volunteer more frequently. We would like to encourage more members of the congregation to consider volunteering for one or more of our worship minister opportunities.

Faithfully submitted,
Mark A. Taylor
Chair, Worship and Music Committee

Report of the Christian Education Committee

Committee members: Linda Berner (acting chair), Sue Ebert (Youth Board representative), Kathy Lowell, Amy Marsch (Council Liaison), Jack Musser (Council Liaison), Wendy Wiegers (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

During the summer of 2023 this committee, along with Pastor Amy Gillespie and Council Executive members, had discussions about how and when religious education opportunities would be offered. Listening meetings with parents were held on July 25 and July 30 to explore what their needs were, including what they liked about previous experiences, what they wanted to see changed and what their expectations were for their children’s learning. With this input the Sunday morning schedule and curriculum were determined.

Another significant decision was made in September. We decided to present different Bibles to students of different ages. Frolic First Bibles were ordered to have in the sanctuary for preschool children to look at during worship. Kindergarten children will be given Whirl Kids Story Bible. Third graders will be given Whirl Kids Study Bible, classroom addition, and students beginning confirmation will be given Lutheran Study Bible, which contains Luther’s Small Catechism.

Please consider how you can become involved in the important ministry of Christian Education. When the committee continues its exploration of new curricula this summer and when planning begins for the fall education programs, please give prayerful consideration to being a participant on the committee, in a class, or as a leader of a class.

Faith-In-Action week 2023

This week was successful with much fun and laughter as well as learning about working together to help others. We were thrilled that, following the first day, we had requests from friends of participants to enroll in the program. The feedback from parents and from the non-profits we worked with was all positive. Faith-In-Action week 2024 will be held August 5-9 at Grace United Methodist Church in Lake Bluff. The schedule will be similar to last year and the planning team is working diligently on the details! We need adult volunteers to make this week as meaningful as possible for the students.

Sunday School

Kick-Off Sunday was September 10, 2023. Parents met with Pastor Amy Gillespie that morning while Linda Berner had activities for the children and the traditional group picture was taken.

This past year we have had a Preschool class (beginning in January) taught by Melinda Voelcker, a Sunday school class taught by Linda Berner and Jack Gerber, and Sunday morning confirmation taught by Doug Gerber. The Sunday school children studied the miracles of Jesus and the church seasons. The Sunday morning confirmation class studied Created in Christ, part of the Junior High Bible Study Collection from Concordia.

Youth Education

Campconfirmation for the eighth graders took place June 25-30, 2023.

The Rite of Confirmation was held on September 24, 2023. The following students were confirmed:

Hallie Bodine/ Clio Stresser / Morgan Hornaday/ Sophia Voelcker / Logan Marsch

Tuesday evening confirmation classes, taught by Pastor Amy Gillespie and Doug Dusthimer, began on September 26 with an orientation session.

This year's Christmas pageant was a play in three parts. Pastor Amy Gillespie and Wendy Wieggers worked together on the scripts. On December 3, Wendy Wieggers interviewed Mary, Elizabeth and John the Baptist. On December 24 we experienced the Nativity, including the Holy family, angels, shepherds and sheep. On January 7, 2024 we witnessed the Wise Men's arrival to meet Jesus.

Four children received their First Communion on March 17, 2024:

Anna Arazan / Vivian Larson / Eva Larson / Charlie Paul

The following children received the Whirl Kids Study Bible on April 21, 2024. Their parents had chosen a Bible verse and written a message to be placed in the front of their child's Bible.

Anna Arazan / Vivian Larson / Eva Larson / Charlie Paul / Jocelyn Duncombe / Graham Marsch (received in May)

The Children's Choir sang throughout the year, ending with Mothers' Day. They had a very successful time joining Damascus Road in April.

The Youth service was held on June 2, 2023. During this service graduating High School seniors were recognized and presented with a book of blessings.

Adult Education:

The Sunday morning class began on October 1, 2023. Pastor Amy Gillespie led this class through a study of Grace Alone. In April they began a new course of study based on Matthew Skinner's book Acts - Catching up with the Spirit. Come, Emmanuel, devotions for Advent and Christmas and Gathered Into One, devotions for Lent were provided to the congregation. Wednesday evening studies followed dinner during both Advent and Lent. A lay-led group meets on Friday mornings.

Nursery:

In the fall of 2023 we continued to staff the nursery with adult volunteers. The new nursery coordinator, Ibronke Daramola, began on February 11, 2024.

Respectfully submitted, Linda Berner

Report of the Youth Ministry Team

Members: Susan Ebert, Doug Dusthimer

Last summer's mission trip to Nashville was a success. Four of our youth joined in with St. Johns Church to do service projects throughout the Nashville region. Some of the projects included packing food, working at homeless shelters, working at a local garden picking weeds as well as other activities. This year we will be doing a local mission trip with planned activities similar to those that were done in Nashville. One of our youths will be joining with St. Johns for a trip to San Diego. One of our 8th graders will also join Grace Lutheran Libertyville to attend the ELCA Youth Gathering.

Confirmation classes have been held every other Tuesday evening, throughout the school year, with a consistent 4 to 6 youth in attendance.

We had monthly events scheduled for the 5th-8th grade youth. We had good participation in the fall events but have seen a drop in participation since. No youth attended events held in February, March, or April. The high school monthly check-ins have also seen a drop in attendance.

Our Youth Service is scheduled for June 2.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Ebert, Acting Chair

Report of the Stewardship Committee



The 2024 theme for the Stewardship Celebration, introduced in October of 2023, was GENERATIONS OF FAITH.

The theme was to remind us of how generations of faith are drawn together and formed into the body of Christ. And that is what is so special about a church community. As Pastor Amy shared with us in her letter to the congregation: *In our baptism, we are grafted into God's family and given the gift of new life. Being an active participant in a church community provides the opportunity to walk with Jesus and each other throughout all our stages of life. at St. James, we are blessed to find everyone from babies to older adults worshipping together, over snacks in fellowship time and supporting one another. It is this intergenerational and multigenerational learning, living, and serving that creates a rich tapestry of the imago dei, the image of God.*

The Stewardship Committee communicated and reinforced the GENERATIONS OF FAITH message through mailings, posters in the narthex, banner in Sanctuary, the Stewardship page on the website, and Connections. There were also thoughtful and compelling temple talks given by Teresa Miller and Mindy Lindholm, Executive Director of COOL Ministries. Many congregation members shared stories of how their faith was influenced by the generations that came before and after them.

We are blessed to have a congregation who continues to practice stewardship in ways that glorify God and responded enthusiastically and generously on Commitment Sunday. The financial pledges enable us to support the work of our various ministries, compensate our staff, and maintain our fabulous facilities. *"For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations."* (Psalm 100:5)

Much appreciation for the work of the Stewardship Committee Members: Tom Bohac, Shelly Holmstrom, Ron Koepke, Michael Montalbano, Marty Morgan, Joe Voelcker, and Mark Wanda – along with support from Joan Krikau.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Moore

Report of the Endowment Fund Board

Members: Jim Davoux, Hans Bodine, Dee Buckowich, Mary Hamming, Dave Van Singel, Diane Nieman

The Endowment fund began 2023 with a balance of \$333,135 and ended 2023 with a balance of \$376,131. This includes the “Endowment Benevolence” funds that are currently co-invested with the other endowment funds. In August of 2023, a disbursement of \$6,667 was made from the Danielson Fund to provide financial support to Eric Holmer as he continues his third year of seminary education at Duke University. This was the final disbursement to Eric Holmer totaling \$20,000 in scholarship funding over three years. 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. The first portion of the loan was paid in 2023 and the second portion was paid in 2024.

The Land Fund began 2023 with a balance of \$1,106,798 and ended 2023 with a balance of \$1,181,625. The full 4% disbursement of \$47,430 was made from the Land Fund in July of 2023. Those funds were made available to the church council for major maintenance and benevolence. The investment performance of the Land Fund was moderate in 2023, but significantly increased in Q1 of 2024. We are on track to be able to take the full 4% disbursement here in July of 2024. The committee will continue to monitor the markets 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

The financial position of St. James continues to be strong and provides us with the means to manage our operations, meet our current stewardship goals and strategically plan for the future. We are continually blessed by our generous congregation, which is the heart of St. James. In the past year we successfully transitioned the Treasurer role to Mark Wanda. We have also formed a Financial Oversight Committee which is tasked with looking at how we manage some of our financial activities to document processes and improve efficiency.

Respectfully submitted,
Teresa Miller

Report of the Property Committee

Property Committee: Peter Clemens, John Tanner, Josh Hornaday (Acting Chair/Figure Head), Doug Gerber, Doug Dustimer, Ronald Koepke, Dave Stresser, Robert Narlock (council Liaison).

Pete and member crew(s) addressed so many things that we converted them to bullet points for this year's report. See property concerns/projects addressed below:

- Cause of periodic sewer odor in narthex restrooms repaired.
- Spring member workday spread 27 yards of mulch.
- 12 dead poplars next to parking lot removed.
- Leaky flat latex roof covering repaired.
- Additional security lights installed in Memorial Garden and back walk.
- Improved sanctuary sound system installed.
- Multiple outside security cameras were installed around the church.
- New hardwired Dinger Pro doorbell installed on backdoor.
- New 23 sq ft SS refrigerator w/ ice maker installed.
- 3 hot water heater wireless leak alarms installed.
- Four larger 1st Aid Kits distributed throughout the church,
- A new humidifier was installed for the office area.
- Leaking cracked knee wall capstones patched.
- Memorial Garden bluestone courtyard cleaned and leveled.
- Additional public Wi-Fi routers were installed throughout the church.
- The nursery ceiling tile replaced, plus walls and carpets cleaned.
- 6 Sanctuary floodlights replaced by member crew.
- The Altar platform cleaned and sealed.
- Parking lot lights upgraded to much brighter LED bulbs.
- Four additional fire extinguishers were installed.
- Additional indoor signage installed for restrooms, AED and fire extinguishers.
- Open outside gaps in sanctuary between roof & brick sealed.

Parking lot water drainage issues will be addressed this summer and then the lot will be repaved and stripped.

We will schedule a clean up day (get ready to Mulch!) in May sometime.

Respectfully Submitted,
Josh Hornaday

Report of the Health and Safety Committee

The committee's primary focus is to ensure that we are doing all that we can to keep our congregation healthy and safe. If an emergency situation occurs, such as a health emergency, fire, natural hazard event (tornado, winter Storm), or extreme event (armed intruder), that we are as prepared as possible to deal with the crisis to achieve the best outcome.

Our committee's current and most recently completed initiatives are as follows:

- Created 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.
- We have created a team of volunteer emergency responders. We have 16 St. James' members that have been certified as **Designated Emergency Leaders (D.E.L.s)**. In the event of an emergency event, these people have been trained to assist the congregation in any way that they can to bring the event to a successful conclusion. They have all completed CPR & AED training and certification. Beginning in the summer of '24, there will be at least one D.E.L. at each church service.
- Offered annual Flu and COVID vaccinations during two "**Vaccine Sundays**".
- Held an all-day **CPR/AED & First Aid Training** session conducted by the National Safety Council, where 16 St. James members were certified in CPR/AED, Narcan (Naloxone), EpiPen and General First Aid.
- Updated the building's "First Aid, Fire and Disaster **Evacuation Map**" and posted it in various places throughout the church.
- Added **fire extinguishers** and improved **first aid kits** with better location signage.
- Installed hi-res external **security cameras** to each side of the church acting as a deterrent to crime as well as storing any video that might be helpful in solving a crime.
- In the process of installing the RAVE "**panic button**" smart phone app on each of the D.E.L.'s phones. When pushed, will instantly communicate the specific type of emergency with 9-1-1.
- In the process of **upgrading the building's locks**, keycard and code access systems as well as managing tighter control of people & organizations that may access the building.

Many thanks to our dedicated and 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), Carmen Montalbano, Dave Moore, Melinda Voelcker (Chair), Mark Wanda.

It has been an exciting year for Evangelism as we explored different opportunities for members to engage with each other, build awareness in the community about activities at St. James and welcome others to St. James including:

- Created new Welcome area in the Narthex with information about St. James and upcoming events
- Joined the Lake Forest/ Lake Bluff Chamber of Commerce and began participation in their Welcome Kits (over 200 distributed by end of April 2024), created business page on Chamber site with links to St. James website and events pages and placed a St. James ad in the LF/LB annual community guide released in May and distributed to 16,000.
- Hosted Family Fun Fest / Fill-a-Backpack event (August 5) – invited community with community sign boards and postings in local businesses (approx. 50 attendees – including all our many amazing St. James volunteers). Filled backpacks were then provided to COOL Ministries during Faith-in-Action week so they could distribute to families they serve
- Sent event cards to families regarding upcoming events
- Coordinated Sunday snacks to encourage building connections with others and offering a reason to stay and get to know St. James members better. Some ministries/committees also hosted a ministry table to build awareness of their activities and events and volunteer opportunities
- Presented free Damascus Road concert open to the community in December 2023.
- Promoted events / activities at St. James via sandwich board signs & community boards in LB and LF for special events and services with an emphasis on “All are Welcome”. Our focus in the year ahead will be on hospitality with many wonderful things planned for 2024 including:
 - Continuing Sunday snacks and periodic Ministry Tables featuring specific ministry opportunities
 - God’s Work, Our Hands Sunday (*formerly Kick-Off Sunday*) – Sept 8th with activities and service projects planned for all ages.

- Free St. James Brass Concert open to the Community - Scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 14th
- Continue community outreach inviting others to participate in St. James service activities, events and worship through events cards in community welcome kits, mailings to members re: upcoming events, community board signage in LB & LF for special events, signs and banners on church property, including upcoming event information in Chamber welcome kits, etc.

We are so grateful to all the volunteers and committee/ministry chairs who offered their time, talent and energy to make these events go so smoothly this past year. We especially thank Pastor Amy, Ron Koepke, Shelly Holmstrom and Alane Wanda for contributing and guiding our team along the way. If you enjoy welcoming others, working with a group to shape ways St. James can engage and nurture stronger connections within our church community and with all those who walk through our doors, or have an interest in volunteering to help with special events or projects like those listed above, please reach out to Melinda Voelcker (Text #847-275-7519 / email Mel.Voelcker@gmail.com) or any member of this ministry. Would love to hear from you!

Respectfully submitted,
Melinda Voelcker, Ministry Chair

Report of the Sewing Group

The sewing group meets on the first Thursday of the month. This year we have welcomed several new members. Some of us cut squares, stuff teddy bears, tie quilts, knit hats, and sew bears or quilts.

In October, Terri Gens from LSSI came and collected over 50 bears. She told us that they use the bears when they first meet children who are going into foster care. At Christmas time we donated bears to Cool.

In May the new group that meets on the 2nd Thursday will get the quilts and bears ready to distribute to the different needs in Lake County.

We have good socialization and feel we are helping those in need.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Anderson

Report of the Fellowship Committee*

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

The Committee handled the development and coordination of events, inviting others from within the St. James community to assist as needed. Your ideas, help and attendance at gatherings during the year create an avenue for deepening relationships with each other. Guests are welcomed with open arms.

Fellowship Events that were sponsored by the Committee included:

6/18 Pancake Breakfast - celebrated father figures present and in our hearts by eating a delicious breakfast before worship. A fun event for all members and guests!

9/30 Progressive Dinner - a lovely evening attended by 45 guests began at the home of Ron & Marilyn Koepke. The group enjoyed appetizers and live music performed by a harpist! Thank you to the Ebert, Krikau, Peters, Tanner and Taylor households who offered their homes for dinner. Special thanks to Marge Triplett and Madeleine Jorgensen who designed the menu!

12/9 Christmas Caroling - special thanks to Annie Moss for encouraging this event and reserving the limo bus for our illustrious group! After being chauffeured to seven member family homes to spread holiday cheer, the group returned to St. James for a gourmet sandwich and chili dinner provided by Marty and Gail Morgan. (Marty was the 2023 Chili Award Grand Champ at the recent Chili competition and dinner event held at St. James earlier last year!)

February 21-March 20 - as a prelude to the weekly Lenten Vespers service, five **Wednesday evening suppers** were coordinated by volunteers. A brief video and devotion was led by Pastor Amy regarding ELCA World Hunger during the meal. Thank you to the hands that prepared and served the dinners.

April 18 - Detlef Koska provided an informative presentation regarding restoration progress on the 5th anniversary of the Notre Dame fire. The group that attended, want to invite Detlef back to explore this or another subject!

In addition, “Fellowship” assisted with:

August 5, 2023 Family Fun Fest refreshments

September 10, 2023 - coordinated the luncheon held on “Gods Work Our Hands” kick-off Sunday

Beginning late 2023, Fellowship has provided snacks once a month after worship!

Mark your calendars for:

June 16 - Hope everyone comes hungry to the traditional breakfast before worship on Fathers Day! For your dining pleasure, serving from 8:30-9:15am.

June 30 - Foodstock Concert, Village Green in Lake Bluff - *Promoting* this concert as an opportunity to gather for a picnic and enjoy the concert to benefit COOL Ministries!

July 16 - Waukegan Band Concert, 7:30pm, Stiner Pavilion, Waukegan (Mark Taylor conducts and several St. James members play instruments)

In addition, we hope to schedule a progressive dinner or other social event in the fall and set a date for Christmas Caroling in early December. Under consideration is a bocce ball event, Advent Dinner and tbd. **Please contact a committee member to share YOUR ideas.**

A goal over the next year - please think of neighbors or a friend you might bring with you to an event!

Shelly Holmstrom

Submitted on behalf of the Committee and volunteers

Report of the Women of St. James

The Women of St. James had an active schedule throughout the year. We sponsored Bluffinia in the summer, the Annual Cookie Exchange in December, and the Friendship Dinner in April.

Bluffinia

Women of St James sponsored a Sunday evening at Bluffinia on August 6th. We had a terrific turnout and listened to fabulous music. Everyone brought an appetizer or dessert to share...never a lack of food when it comes to members of St. James. We are planning on Bluffinia again this summer with information to be forthcoming.

Annual Cookie Exchange

St. James women gathered on Saturday, December 2nd 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 3rd, following the 10:00 AM service the St. James congregation actively supported the cookie bake sale by contributing \$1,000. The contributions were donated to the Northern Illinois Food Bank.

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

Friendship Dinner

The Friendship Dinner was held on April 14th. 20 women including Pastor Amy and her daughter, Maya, attended. We had a tremendous display of entrees, salads, and desserts. Sue Ebert ended the evening with an entertaining reading.

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 Joan Krikau for all of her tremendous assistance throughout the year.

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

Report of the Memorial Garden

Burials

We interred the ashes of four persons 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 needed to be engraved in the Garden. While promises were made, and the Memorial Garden made a requested down payment of \$1,467.50, Gast did not answer any phone calls, did not respond to registered letters, and no work was ever done. A new engraving company, Peter Troost, was contracted and the work was completed in November 2023.

Gast totally ignored our request for full reimbursement of the payment of \$1,467.50. The BBB reports there are over 60 other complaints about Gast for taking money but not delivering any products. Our legal council's advice was to write off this amount.

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 full and one double site were 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 checkbook balance amounts to \$4,481.

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/ name \$ 650
- Interment Service \$ 750

Memorial Garden Board Members

The current composition of the Board is as follows:

Liz Behring—thru June 2027

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 LEAD Team

At the Annual Financial Meeting on January 28th, 2024, the congregation discussed and approved the Council to embark on a partnership with the LEAD (Living Everyday As Disciples) organization in building our strategic plan for the next 2-3 years. LEAD's work is built on proven practices of adaptive discipleship which is made known through: the acts of the apostles, the work of the early church, and leading social science research. Utilizing the LEAD playbook and on-going support will enable us to involve the whole congregation in this process while also freeing up the Council to focus on the month-to-month work of the church.

The LEAD project kicked-off the weekend of March 8-10 with a launch seminar conducted by LEAD's Executive Director, Deacon Peggy Hahn, that included the members LEAD Team: Pastor Amy Gillespie (Spiritual Advisor), Steve Thornberry (Facilitator), Dave Moore (Communicator), Tom and Emily Bohac, Jim Davoux, Tom Ebert, Doug Gerber, Marilyn Koepke, Lisa Kollmorgen, and Susan Olsen. Deacon Hahn will be accompanying the team and congregation throughout the planning process. The team was officially installed at the May 19, 2024 worship service.

The LEAD Team will be meeting twice per month with every other meeting including Peggy Hahn. Initially, the team has been working to discern God's call, and to reflect on the shared commitment and expectations to each other and the congregation. Next, congregation members will be asked to share their thoughts and perspectives via "listening sessions" and survey responses. It is also likely that "sprinter goals" will emerge that can be acted upon prior to final recommendations.

Progress updates will be monthly, or as needed. However, congregation members are welcome to reach out to any LEAD Team members at any time with questions, comments, or suggestions.

Respectfully submitted, Dave Moore

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 2024 to June 2027:

Fred Arazan

I'm grateful and humbled by the opportunity to serve on the St. James Council. I was baptized at St. James and went to Campfirmation at Carthage College. I have fond memories of crowded candlelit Christmas Eve midnight services in the old Chapel, where the scent of molten wax hung heavy in the air, and the temperature seemed to rise with every carol sung. My favorite part was when Pastor Danielson trumpeted his way through Joy to the World, accompanied by the full-throated voices of my mom and the congregation. I rejoined St. James after moving back to the area and marrying Fabiola in 2010. It's been a surreal experience to witness our children Estevan and Anna grow up in St. James, thriving in its embrace. Estevan will be confirmed this year and Anna recently celebrated her First Communion. I'm currently working on my MBA at the University of Notre Dame and look forward to graduating in May 2025. Thank you for the opportunity to serve St. James!

Nancy Clemens

St. James has been our family church for over 3 decades. For nearly 10 years I enjoyed directing the Children's Christmas Programs, leading VBS and taught Sunday School. Also, it was fun organizing the progressive & Smorgasbord dinners! At the present, my service is on the Altar Guild, helping as a Communion Assistant & Ushering! Peter was formerly the Church Council President and currently Facilities Manager and our son Chase was baptized, confirmed & experienced the youth mission trips! My church participation started at an early age having been raised in a Lutheran parsonage, everything from the Children's Choir, Bible Camp & Luther League was with friends & family members! Three generations of my family attended Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, to become Preachers & Teachers. Once a Third-grade teacher, and a creative career in advertising has evolved into my new purpose, being the Visual Lead for Williams-Sonoma, at Market Square in Lake Forest. Volunteering for non-profit organizations and community involvement is another fulfilling part of my life. I'm on the Board of Governors for the Lake Forest Open Lands Association, Infant Welfare Society of Chicago – Lake Forest Chapter and The Junior Garden Club of Lake Forest, a member of The Garden Club of America. Feeling so Blessed to be a part of the St. James Faith Family & Fellowship.

Kelly Duncombe

I am humbled and grateful to embrace the nomination to join the St. James Lutheran Church Council. My husband, John, along with our children, Elijah and Jocelyn, and I joined St. James in 2015, following an extensive search after moving from the Lutheran church we attended in the city. Professionally, I work as a Registered Dietitian, and I find fulfillment in reading, spending time with family, and engaging in activities related to food and fitness. We deeply appreciate the supportive community at St. James, and I am excited about the opportunity to serve on Church Council.

Shelly Holmstrom (Nomination for one-year term from June 2024-June 2025)

My husband Skip and I joined St. James in 1991 with our young children, Elise and Ben. Since then, major personal life events have happened at St. James: the funeral service for Skip, wedding for Elise and her husband, and baptisms for six of my granddaughters. What a blessing to have a faith family like this to share life with! It has been a privilege to serve on Council these last three years during the transition from Pastor Holmer, our interim Pastor Sundberg and now to Pastor Gillespie. I look forward to fulfilling a one year term on Council and have a renewed energy to see where the LEAD process takes our congregation. What will we learn about each other and our community? How will we listen to the Holy Spirit guide us into the future? I have participated and held leadership roles at St. James in areas of youth and women's ministry and was Council President (several decades ago). Currently, I serve as temporary chair of the Fellowship Committee and Altar Guild and am a member of the Social Ministry Outreach Committee. My heart is with the church and in serving - when not there, I am President of my condo association board, a member of P.E.O. (an organization that raises funds for scholarships/grants for women), an avid theater goer and traveler, and my car knows the way to Carmel, IN by heart where both of my children and their families live! God is good.

Scott Larson

Thank you for the nomination to serve on the Church Council. Mary Anne and I and our girls Eva and Vivian, started coming to St. James about five years ago, shortly after moving to the area. The congregation has been most welcoming, and our girls enjoy the fantastic Sunday School program. Growing up in my parent's Lutheran Church, I recall our youth group lessons, discussions, and fellowship being a meaningful part of my life, particularly during the high school years. My professional background is in architecture, and I look forward to the experience of serving on our congregation's Council.

Current Congregation Council:

Term Expiring June 2024

Ron Koepke
Greg MacAyeal
Amy Marsch
Shelly Holmstrom

Term Expiring June 2025

Bob Kenehan
Annie Moss
Bob Narlock
Denise Norberg-Johnson*

Term Expiring June 2026

Dee Buckowich
Martin Morgan
Jack Musser
Laura Whisler

*Denise Norberg-Johnson has requested she finish her term one year earlier, in June 2024. Shelly Holmstrom has been nominated for a 1-year term (expiring June 2025) replacing Denise.

TREASURER

Mark Wanda (term expires June 2026)

ST. JAMES MEMORIAL GARDEN BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Current Members: Randy Daniel (June 2024)
Detlef Koska (June 2025)
Bud Lowell (June 2026)
Liz Behring (June 2027)

Nominee for a 4-year term expiring June 2028: Mary Summers

ST. JAMES ENDOWMENT FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Current Members: Hans Bodine (June 2024)
Jim Davoux (June 2024)
Dave Van Singel (June 2025)
Mary Hamming (June 2026)
Diane Nieman (June 2026)

**Nominees for a 3-year term expiring June 2027:
Paul Moss and Jim Davoux (Jim nominated for a 2nd term)**

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Current Members: Carol Bettendorf (June 2024)
Steve Thornberry (June 2025)
Craig Linn (June 2026)

Nominee for a 3-year term expiring June 2027: Teresa Miller

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Current Members: Dave Moore (June 2024)
 Barb Davoux (June 2024)
 Josh Hornaday (June 2024)
 Susan Olsen (June 2024)
 Don Bergsrud (June 2025)
 Jenn Bodine (June 2025)**

**Jenn Bodine is unable to finish her term.

**Nominees for a 1-year term expiring June 2025:
Ron Koepke and Amy Marsch (Outgoing Council)**

**Nominee for a 1-year term expiring June 2025 (to finish out Jenn Bodine's term):
Mary Jane Wolter**

**Nominees for a 2-year term expiring June 2026:
Debbie Daniel and Michael Montalbano**

I thank those on the Nominating Committee for their amazing help. For all those whose term expires in June of 2024, 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,

Barb Davoux

AFFIRMATIONS

WE, THE MEMBERS OF ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH, DO HEREBY AFFIRM 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 Senior Pastor Amy Gillespie, all our salaried staff and our many volunteers -- committee chairpersons and members, organizational leaders, choir members and musicians, ushers, worship assistants, volunteer nursery attendants, altar guild, sewing group and all the dedicated individuals who have given service in 2023-2024.

We express our gratitude to all who serve on the Church Council, especially Greg MacAyael, Amy Marsch, and Ron Koepke (President), who have completed their terms of office. In addition, we acknowledge with great appreciation our other 2023-2024 officers: Shelly Holmstrom, Vice President, Laurie Whisler, Secretary, Joe Voelcker, Financial Secretary and Treasurer, Mark Wanda.

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 transition with new staff members. 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 GIVE THANKS ALWAYS TO GOD THE CREATOR STILL CREATING, TO GOD'S OWN SON JESUS CHRIST WHO LIVES TO SAVE, AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT EVER GUIDING AND PROTECTING.

Senior Pastor
Amy L. Gillespie

**2023-2024 Officers of the
Congregation**

President
Ron Koepke
Vice President
Shelly Holmstrom
Secretary
Laurie Whisler
Treasurer
Mark Wanda
Financial Secretary
Joe Voelcker

Church Council Members

Dee Buckowich
Shelly Holmstrom
Bob Kenehan
Ron Koepke
Greg MacAyeal
Amy Marsch
Marty Morgan
Annie Moss
Jack Musser
Bob Narlock
Denise Norberg-Johnson
Laurie Whisler

Church Staff
Office Coordinator
Joan Krikau

Interim Bookkeeper
Mark Wanda

**Interim Sunday School
Director**
Linda Berner

Youth Ministry Director
Doug Dusthimer

Operations Manager
Pete Clemens

Director of Music
Rae-Myra Hilliard

Organist
Wendy Unrath

Damascus Road Directors
Greg MacAyeal & Melinda
Voelcker

Director Children's Music
Wendy Wieggers

Brass Ensemble Director
Ryan Ringnalda

LEAD Team
Emily Bohac
Tom Bohac
Jim Davoux
Tom Ebert
Doug Gerber
Marilyn Koepke
Lisa Kollmorgen
Dave Moore
Susan Olsen
Steve Thornberry

Standing Committee Chairs

Christian Education
Acting Chair Linda Berner

Church Property
Josh Hornaday

Evangelism
Melinda Voelcker

Fellowship *

Finance
Teresa Miller

Social Ministry
Alane Wanda

Stewardship
Dave Moore

Health & Safety
Michael Montalbano

Worship & Music
Suzanne Gerber

**Endowment Board of
Trustees**
Jim Davoux

**Memorial Garden Board of
Trustees**
Detlef Koska

Sewing Group
Ann Anderson

Youth Ministry Team
Sue Ebert

Women of St. James
Kathy Lowell

Altar Guild *

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www.stjameslutheran.org

* **Committee Chair - vacant**

