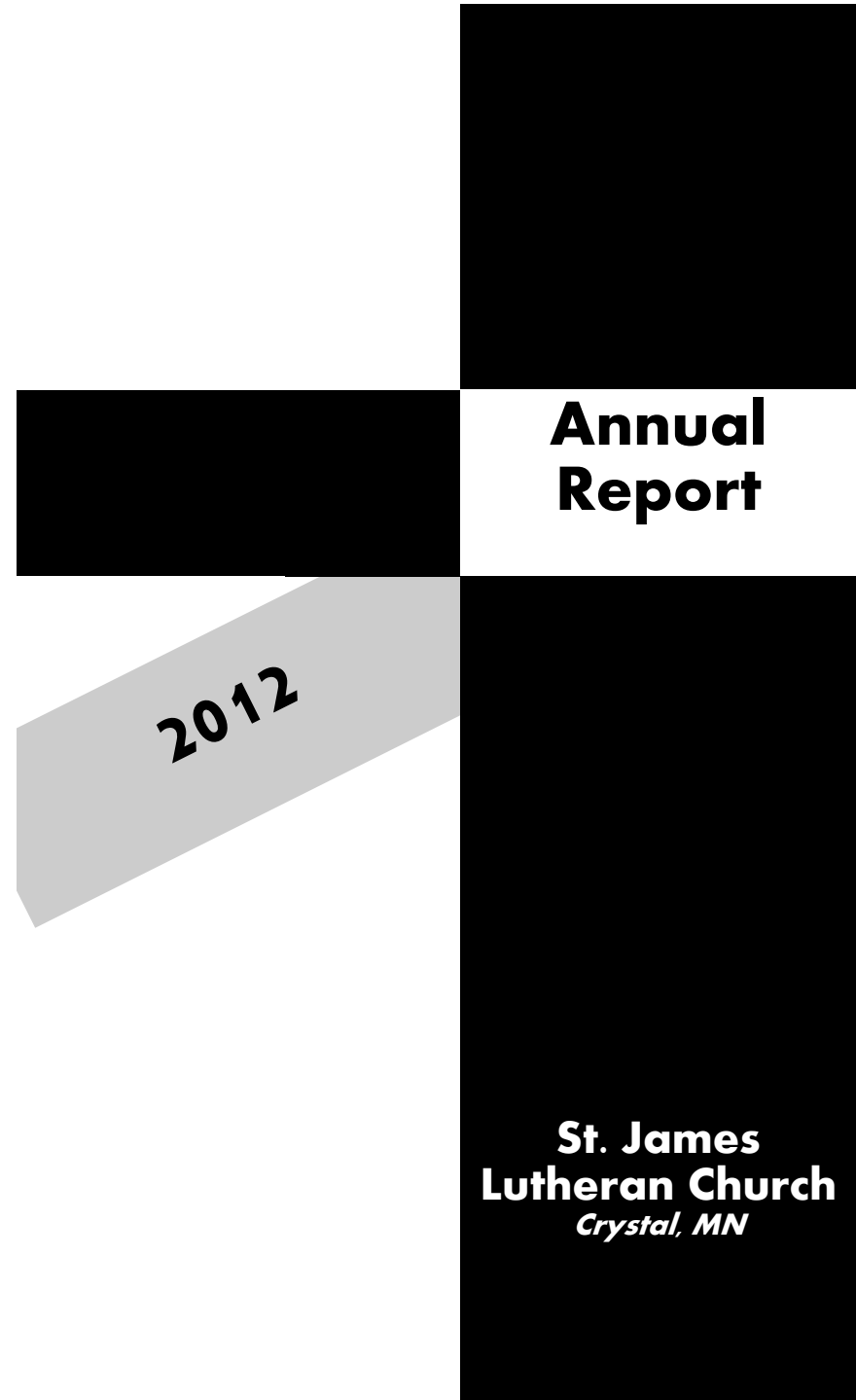


Reflecting the Light of Christ in Crystal

St. James Lutheran Church

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David Lechelt, Pastor
Jill Bergman, Pastor



**Annual
Report**

2012

**St. James
Lutheran Church**
Crystal, MN

A Note from Sr. Pastor David Lechelt

Save the Dates for 2013

St. James 2012 Staff

Pastor David Lechelt
Senior Pastor

Pastor Jill Bergman
Pastor

Shayna Anderson
Director of Family Ministry

Lana Teigen
Financial Coordinator

Amanda Burns
Director of Communications

Ryan Walesch
Youth Director

Mary Brown
*Ringing Praise Director
and Organist*

Deanna Loken
Choir Director

Ron Skalicky
Custodian

Amy & Scott Jermstad
Sunday Morning Custodians

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (John 1:5). That was the report of the first disciples. It’s been the report of the Church the last two millennia, encompassing all generations and seasons of life. And it’s our report of our life together in Jesus Christ in the year of our Lord 2012.

It’s popular for cultural analysts of all walks of life at year’s end to look back and make a list for us to ponder, an ascending order speaking to what’s been most important, significant, and life-impacting for the world. We know what’s still #1 and we are inspired to reflect that truth here at St. James and in all the neighborhoods and relationships in which we are planted. Yes, “all things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being” (verse 3). Resurrected in Jesus Christ, we get to reflect the light of God for the life of the world. “Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace among those whom God favors” (Luke 2: 14)!

I invite you to delight in this annual report of our year together, to revel in the warmth and brightness of our mission and ministry with Christ. Our love of neighbor and especially the children of our neighborhood continue to be multiplied through the nurture of community partnerships and our most vibrant Bonfire collaboration. In just a year and a half we have shepherded Kid Pack, weekend snacks for hungry kids, to a present distribution of 2,600 packs per month with widespread support totaling \$50,000 annually.

Additionally, we have joined with our Bonfire partners in providing top-notch parish nursing and respite care, marriage wellness, confirmation and youth discipleship, and men’s gatherings. The good news is that we can anticipate

much more to come!

St. James has been a most inspired leader in all these partnerships, leading from a bedrock tradition of love of neighbor and a calling to reflect the light of Christ across the generations. I am incredibly grateful to share this calling with

- January 25: Family Move Night, 6:30 p.m.
- January 27: Annual Meeting & Potluck, noon
- February 10: Hymn Fest, 3:30 p.m.
- February 13: Ash Wednesday Worship, 11:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
- February 24: Family Sledding/Skating Party, noon
- March 23: First Communion Class, 9:00 a.m.
- March 28: Maundy Thursday Worship
- March 29: Joint Bonfire Good Friday Worship
- March 31: Easter Sunday Worship
- April 20: Craft Retreat
- April 28: Youth Recital, 3:30 p.m.
- April 30: Service Event at Feed My Starving Children, 6:00 p.m.
- May 19: Teacher Appreciation / Pentecost Sunday
- May 26: Summer Worship Begins, 9:30 a.m.
- July 8-11: Day Camp
- September 8: Rally Sunday / Fall Worship Times begin
- November 23: Lutefisk Dinner
- November 27: Joint Bonfire Thanksgiving Eve Worship
- December 7: Women’s Christmas Brunch
- December 24: Christmas Eve Worship, 4:30 & 10:00 p.m.

Joint Worship & Celebrations

Joint worship and celebrations continued through 2012, including a first-ever benefit performance from the National Lutheran Choir in honor of KidPack. Bonfire congregations continue to participate in partner collaborations like Wildfire and the ever-growing Men's Group. The embers of collaboration continue to be fueled, honoring the inter-connected and social beings we are all born to be.

Youth Development/Youth Employment:

New Emphasis during 2012 included beginning dialogues on supporting our 15-17 year old youth through youth development programming with employment opportunities that provide constructive opportunities during high risk hours of the day, a deeper sense of commitment to community and skill development for post-secondary education and work readiness. Watch for more developments in this area during 2013.

Hebrews 10:24-25 states: *"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another..."*

Bonfire is certainly siring up one another to love and do good works! We invite you to join us in expanding our Bonfire outreach.

John Swartchick, Bonfire Council President

you; *you* inspire me again and again through your faithfulness and love. Thank you, too, for your generous and dedicated prayers and financial support of St. James and our staff. We are blessed with an incredible staff, gifted lay leaders, a growing inspiration, and great shared hope for the future that clearly flows out of our doors again and again. I look forward to 2013 with you and can only say, "Thanks be to God!"

Pr. David C. Lechelt

Highlights of 2012

National Lutheran Choir Benefit Concert

Summer Worship

Youth Trip to New Orleans

Guest Preachers & Potluck Picnics

during the summer

Neighborhood Dance

Lutefisk Dinner

Craft Retreats & Sale

Bonfire Collaborations

Little Christmas Eve Worship

A Note from Council President Melodie Hanson

Reflecting on this past year, I am reminded of our 2012 annual meeting, where the 2012 council was voted in and our outgoing president, John Lindstrom, spoke about movement from the *"year of the cookie to the year of the rookie."* At that moment, I wondered...what would 2012 be remembered for?

As I look back on the past year, there are so many words that come to mind: The year of grace, extending within these walls, outside these walls ... across great bodies of water to our neighbors afar and also across our neighborhood streets (*thank you, Lorraine, for always hand delivering my mail that went to your house two blocks down!*) I think about our neighbor fund which was depleted more than once over this past year for a neighbor in need...only to be raised back up again and again through those able to give and who understand the benefit of this gift.

2012 could be the year of learning ... learning about our abundance and land of plenty, feeding children in our back yards and raising funds for not one

but three family farms across the world. Some could call it the year of the calendar...that Bonfire fundraiser with good intentions. Others might remember it as the year of Isaiah, where we reclaimed our commitment to finding a prophetic voice within and among us. Some (*Pastor David*) have reflected already it was the year of “zany” ice breakers from our congregational president (*to which I am inclined to respond, “Zany? Really?”*).

I might recall it as the year of youth...where we not only laughed with our congregational youth but we also learned from and were led by them, from the national youth summit to their representation on council, to our retreat at LSS Center for Change where John Lindstrom rolled on the floor to try and interpret a theme picked by Corey (*I am still apologizing for this, John*). We learned from our youth the important role faith and their St. James’ family has played in their lives. And talk about intergenerational fun during the tennis tournament to raise funds for KidPack. We all were cold just looking at Pastor David’s bare legs that day! One day . . . \$15,000 for hungry children. Thank you, Corey!

Then there is that men’s group. Extending arms wide, opening up opportunity for fun and fellowship to men across this community—expanding participation to more and more men of all ages--deepening the opportunity for fun and fellowship in God’s word. It’s okay, ladies—we have our circles. Thanks for the fun opportunities to learn and laugh together and share in the beauty of being women of faith.

At one point in the year I thought I had it...it would be the year of “fabric”--the fabric that weaves us together. There is the prayer shawl group who personally gave our family something to tangibly hold onto during difficult times and times of thanksgiving. The quilts—wrapped around each child in our hands, draped over our pews in a wonderful display of congregational love. I have a unique new year’s resolution for me this year ... *take up quilting*.

2012 also was a year of storytelling – going deeper into our sharing of personal faith stories – through our Lenten services and through our latest St. James Legacy stories. Thank you to our finance and endowment committee for casting the net wide for the stories that keep us woven together.

Then I remembered how lively and fun adult education hour has been this year. Fun, wrestling with our growth in interpreting the written words from biblical messages and stories and learning more about how to live a life knowing that someone else doesn’t always have to be wrong for me to be right or that there is “Enough” in the world.

Wait... we cannot forget the warmth and glow of Bonfire ...the year of collaboration and commitment to the Bonfire vision of “*what can be instead of what is.*” What a year for Bonfire ...parish nursing, KidPack, National Lutheran Choir, joint services where music abounded and brought many of us nearly to tears through the beautiful musical performances. And, of course, 2012 held a focus on health through the Bonfire health education nights. We learned about impacts of technology on the brain, how to improve your health

Bonfire Ministry...igniting our faith in action during 2012

While Bonfire Ministry certainly caught fire in 2011, it was ablaze in warmth, generosity and abundant growth during 2012. Bonfire continued clarification on defining mission, goals and organizational development, all while sparking community networks and additional partners. 2012 showed continued focus on the following priorities:

Responding to Weekend Childhood Hunger

- Providing weekend snacks to children in high poverty Robbinsdale Area Schools Meadow Lake and Forest, the Families Learning to Earn program was also added, serving an additional 50+ children who are first time United States citizens and who are all living in poverty.
- Bonfire’s involvement in KidPack expanded from monthly to bi-monthly distributions to KidPack recipients.
- Over 13,800 KidPacks were delivered to students during 2012 school year.
- Robbinsdale Area Schools’ KidPack program and all partners receive 2012 Humphrey Institute Board of Innovation and Cooperation award! Thanks to all who make this program work to meet one of the most basic needs and rights of children.

Health and Wellness

- Parish nursing continues to reach out to individuals through home visiting services for our second year of Fairview Parish Nurse grant.. We remain grateful to the Fairview Foundation for support of this program.
- Monthly caregiver support groups continued throughout 2012, being held at House of Hope Lutheran Church and open to all individuals caring for loved ones with chronic disease
- Caregiver support groups expanded to include monthly respite programming, providing opportunities for individuals with chronic disease to experience structured time away from home, enjoying fellowship, activities and support from trained respite mentors.
- Through a grant from Allina, Bonfire added a fun focus on health and wellness through health fairs and exhibits, a summer pedometer challenge, educational offerings with experts on topics such as “Improving Your Health at Any Age,” and the “Impacts of Technology on the brain.”

Fine Arts Committee

In cooperation with the Bonfire Ministry, the famed National Lutheran Choir presented a concert at St. James in March of 2012 with proceeds of the free-will offering going to help fund the Kid Pack program.

Dr. David Cherwien, Artistic Director of the National Lutheran Choir, returned to St. James in April for a Festival of Hymns, with audience participation and hymn improvisations on the beautiful St. James organ. A member of the audience commented, “Thank you so much for such a celebration of pure worship and sacrifice of praise to our Great God”.

On Syttende Mai, the Norwegian Constitution Day, May 17, the Minneapolis Synod Senior Band presented a concert at St. James. Norwegian refreshments were served following the concert.

Along with other Bonfire churches, St. James cooperated in sponsoring the Imuka Singers, from Tanzania, East Africa, for a lively concert at House of Hope Lutheran Church in October.

Community Gathering to Meet Local Political Candidates

St. James, along with ISALAH, held a community gathering to allow area residents to meet their local political candidates (of all parties) in September. It was well attended by both residents and candidates.

Communication in Marriage Gathering

Bonfire Ministry hosted a *Communication as Movement* marriage enrichment session at St. James in November. While the attendance was low at the first in a series of sessions, it was warmly received by those in attendance.

New Member Sundays

St. James welcomed new members in both May and October. A warm reception was held for all 11 new members who joined.

Fairview Association Congregation

St. James became a part of the Fairview Association, bringing the number of association congregational members up to 76. The

at any age...and, yes, 2012 really could be the year of pedometers!

2012 for me could be the year of herring. Thanks, Sultvedts for the experience with the Lutefisk dinner. Who knew, herring was such a hot commodity? Les and Ozzie, I couldn't have done it without you!

So how could I pick just one word to sum up our year together? It finally came to me as I sat down to write this article—2012 for me was the year of “**community**.” The walls of St. James are here to provide a foundation for us, a place to call home, where we grow, learn and replenish ourselves so that we can embrace and open our arms to the larger community outside St. James' walls. The fabrics that weave us together inside these St. James walls also allow us to cast our net wide to the larger community outside the walls of St. James Lutheran Church in Crystal—something I am so happy to be a part of with each of you, as we reflect the Light of Christ in Crystal and in the world.

Melodie Hanson

2012 St. James Church Council

Melodie Hanson
President

John Lindstrom
Vice President

Amy Jermstad
Secretary

Penny Janowicz
Treasurer

Nancy Horberg

Tom Janowicz

Junior Kautz

Roland Smith

Brad Teale

Maria Weiland

Anna Becker
Youth Representative

Corey Loken
Youth Representative

*Thank you all for your
commitment to St. James
in 2012.*

Children & Family Ministry

Highlights for 2012

9:57 – SPARK! Sunday school for age 3 through 5th grade

Another year is behind us. Hard to believe! It has gone so fast, the kids have learned and grown so much in their faith this year. In May of 2012, we wrapped up the Bible Song lessons of the Old Testament. After much research and careful consideration, we made the jump to the Augsburg Fortress “Spark!” Bible curriculum. It is fantastic. The kids are learning Bible truths in different ways each week: through games, art, singing, scavenger hunts, cooking and more. It taps into the creativity of many volunteers who share their faith with the kids. The kids love it, and we (leaders) love seeing them so excited about coming to church! The volunteers who are giving their time each week to the kids are phenomenal and committed to the faith lives of these kids. I’m overwhelmed with gratitude for their leadership and commitment!

Day Camp – at Becker Park!

St. James partnered with House of Hope Children’s Ministry to bring day camp to the church and community once again. The final week of June was spent in the hot (HOT!!) summer sun learning more about what it means to live as children of faith in our world. The Luther Park staff did a wonderful job leading the children in song, games, crafts and Bible studies. Thanks to generous donations, camp was offered to families free of charge. Mark your calendars for Day Camp 2013: July 8-11 at Becker Park!

Nursery

In February, the nursery made a staffing transition from being a paid position to a volunteer position. While the change was nerve-wracking we have had no shortage of wonderful, caring people of all ages offer their time to the children who need a little room to run during the worship services. What a blessing to be able to offer a safe place for kids to play while their parents worship!

CPR Trainings

Bonfire Ministry’s Health & Wellness Team started holding quarterly CPR and AED training sessions during 2012. With a variety of days, times and locations, they hope to get as many people trained as possible.

Craft Sale

The annual craft sale was held again in November, with over 30 vendors in attendance. Funds raised from the purchase of table space benefited the youth program.

Neighborhood Dance

Our sixth Annual Neighborhood Dance was held in September. Fun, food, fellowship, Silent Auction, BINGO, and raffles were available for all. There was something for everybody to do. Thanks to all who donated their time, ideas, talents, and prizes to make this event possible.

Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner

Held on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Coming November 23, 2013 - the 20th year; seatings are 4:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.)

The mission of the Lutefisk and Meatball Dinner is to get to know others better while working on a fun project, and form a stronger church community. This is a great opportunity to open St. James to non-members and serve a Heritage dinner. About 80% attending are non-members invited by friends and members of St. James. Many have commented that St. James' Lutefisk dinner is the best they have attended (and some have attended many!) Profits are used to support kitchen and Wold Hall improvements and for supplies such as coffee.

From the humble beginnings of serving 100 people the first year, more than 520 hungry lutefisk and meatball lovers enjoyed the dinner in 2012. To prepare and serve this great meal, many different groups of volunteers are needed. Preparations begin in mid-October. Volunteer opportunities include: preparing meatballs, white sauce, rice pudding, coleslaw and dressing, sauces and peeling potatoes. Then there's the homemade lefse- requiring 250 pounds of potatoes to make 650 rounds of lefse. That's not even getting close to the preparation of the lutefisk! Other jobs are setting up, serving and clean-up during and after the meal.

Through all of this, there is a lot of fun and laughter to be shared, building friendships. A committee of 6-8 begins planning in September and would welcome new members and new ideas.

For Fun and the Good of the Order

Library

The library is fortunate to have a faithful committee to catalog books and staff the library throughout the whole year. Many thanks to the volunteers. The Library Board would also like to acknowledge the passing of Joanne Palmquist – a long-time volunteer.

In the spring of 2012 the library held a very successful Book Sale, thanks to donations from St. James members. This is the major source of library monies and is used to buy new books and DVDs.

2012 was the year that a decision was made to discontinue (with a few exceptions) the Video tape collection.

Twice a year the library participates in Car Care Saturday by collecting and distributing books to the parents and children of the participants. This is an ongoing outreach ministry of the library. Book donations for Car Care are welcome at any time throughout the year.

Since the library is not currently a part of the Sunday School program, parents are encouraged to bring their children to the library before and/or after Sunday School. Children are especially welcome in the library and there is an extensive collection of children's books.

The library continually enlarges the DVD collection. Please consider donating family friendly DVDs – either new or “previously viewed.”

Every effort is made to follow up on requests. The library offers on-line access to the library catalog through the St. James Home Page “Get Involved” icon. You can use this feature to see if a book is available.

Mary Roening

Murder Mystery Night

St. James youth hosted a murder mystery night in March, with a circus theme. It was a great time and fundraiser for the youth!

Craft Retreats

St. James held two all-day craft retreats, one in May and another in October, to allow crafters a place to gather and work on their projects. It was so successful that more are being planned in 2013. Funds raised benefited the St. James youth.

Children's Christmas Program

Instead of presenting a traditional “program” this year to the congregation, we let the kids lead worship on December 23! They did a wonderful job. They were ushers, prayer leaders, sermon-givers, actors (angels, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, animals, Innkeeper!), bell ringers and singers. Everyone who wanted to participate could do so in their own way. It was a wonderful way to involve all the kids and tap into their gifts – and boy, do we have a gifted bunch at St. James!

I tell people all the time that we really do have the best kids and families at St. James. I'm so thankful that God has brought us all together! I'm looking forward to another year full of faith, blessings and laughter with you and your family!

*To God be the Glory,
Shayna Anderson*

A Note from Pastor Jill Bergman

We have experienced spiritual growth in many ways this year at St. James. Here are some of the ways I've seen us grow:

Confirmation

In 2012 our Confirmation students had two opportunities to lead worship, one at each service. In their worship leadership they demonstrated their own faith development and growing sense of confidence in expressing that faith. We met most Sundays and Wednesdays during the school year. Once per month we attended an event with our Wildfire Confirmation churches, which grew to eight in the fall of 2012. Some of our events included a concert by Agape, Moonlight Madness, education on bullying and malaria prevention, and volunteering at Feed My Starving Children. Our Confirmation students have been blessed by having John Lindstrom as a dedicated representative from our church council who has committed to meeting regularly with our students. We have also been graced with faith stories from various members of our congregation, including John Lindstrom and Junior Kautz. This fall we introduced new curricula from Sparkhouse called Re:form which we are using both on Sundays and Wednesdays.

Worship

Worship is always a meaningful time to connect with our Creator but there were some extra special events this year that encouraged our growth. I worked with our Bonfire churches to prepare our Good Friday service called "Sounds of Good Friday" in which volunteers from all three of our congregations gave short messages and sounds that represented the day. We celebrated Compassion Sunday again this year, adding to the number of families who sponsor children through this global ministry. This fall, in consideration of the divisive presidential and state elections, we made peace a focus of worship for six weeks. During that time we gathered a peace offering which went to support the refugees from Syria. During the season of Advent we took a stand against consumerism in what we called the "Advent Uprising". Instead of purchasing all our gifts, we chose to make more time for loved ones and donate the money we saved to the purchase of a family farm to give as a gift from St. James. We raised enough money to purchase more than three farms. Our children presented worship for us during the last Sunday in Advent in a service we titled "Little Christmas Eve." This was a first for the children and a blessing to the congregation.

Car Care Saturday

The semi-annual Car Care Saturdays went off well in both May and September of 2012. The clients who needed service work were very appreciative of maintenance work done and of other needs brought to their attention. Some of the people did receive more follow-up repairs afterwards. This is a great program and we will continue with it in the future. More volunteers of all ages are welcome to make this program better.

Global Health Ministries

Global Health Ministries are truly the "helping hands that heal." GHM provides a gift of life, both spiritual and physical, through Lutheran health care work across the world. St. James has eight volunteers who donate their time to sort and pack medical supplies every Thursday. St. James has also contributed with newborn kits, aids/hospice kits, quilts, school supplies, rolled bandages and funds. To learn more about Global Health Ministries go to www.ghm.org.

Home Free

Home Free Shelter for battered women and children is an outreach partner for St. James. Money was collected during the month of December to go to this cause. Diapers, toiletries, winter gear, clothes, toys and used cell phones were also collected for them during 2012.

Outreach Committee

A newly formed Outreach Committee met in December to formulate a comprehensive plan for the Outreach Partners supported each month in 2013.

Thrivent Funding Has Helped St. James Fund Great Programs in Our Community

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has provided St. James with \$400 for quilting, \$1,600 for Kid Packs (via the Neighborhood Dance), \$1,250 for Loaves & Fishes, and \$1,600 for NEAR (via the Lutefisk Dinner). Thank you Thrivent and St. James for supporting these important outreach programs!

Dinner At Your Door

St James furnishes up to 12 drivers a month to deliver hot noon meals to the homebound. They spend approximately 144 hours of their time in this outreach ministry delivering 675 meals. New drivers are always needed. It takes 90 minutes once a month to drive and deliver one route. We retired more drivers this year and have many who are snowbirds down south. If you have a spare 90 minutes in a month perhaps you could drive for DAYD. You are needed.

Power of One

Volunteers from St. James who truly care about children volunteer on a one-on-one basis or work in the classroom helping students at our neighborhood Forest School. The assignments are given by the teachers and the volunteers help the student or students for an hour or more. Scheduling the day, time and teacher the volunteers help, is coordinated by the Power Of One liaison, Shayna Anderson, and the staff at Forest Elementary School. No special education is needed, just love for children and the desire to help! Anyone, young or older, can volunteer. There are many children in need of some help, so please consider becoming a volunteer. Your reward is in the eyes and smiles of students when they accomplish another step toward success.

Call the church office (763-537-3653) and talk with Shayna Anderson if you are interested in becoming a volunteer or for further information.

St. James Quilters

Quilters meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. More than 200 large quilts and baby quilts are made each year. In addition many lap robes are made for hospice and nursing homes. They are donated to Global Health Services, Loaves and Fishes, N.E.A.R. food shelf, Home Free battered women's shelter, North Ridge Masonic Care Center, and North Memorial Hospice.

Quilts are for sale at any time by contacting the church office. They are on display in church in November, for the Lutefisk Dinner and Christmas Brunch. Proceeds go toward buying supplies for more quilts.

Fabric is available for volunteers to use to sew and donate tops, which the quilters will complete and distribute. Donations of fabric, yarn, sheets (new and used), blankets, and antique satin drapes are welcome.

If you can thread a needle and tie a knot please consider joining us. We have a lot of fun and treats with coffee each time.

Outreach

Beyond the outreach that St. James already participates in, some new venues included supporting the celebration of the Hmong New Year at a local charter school, Noble Academy. Volunteers from St. James helped serve the children in lunch and in classrooms to show our support for these neighbors of ours. Once again I participated in the New Hope Mayor's Prayer Breakfast. I have joined a new ministerium encompassing District 281. The first meeting was with the superintendent of Robbinsdale schools. This ministerium has the potential to have a great impact on our neighborhoods.

Youth on Council

One development that clearly shows our commitment to our youth is the creation of two positions on church council for youth. This was our first year having two youth representatives on council. They added tremendous insight and energy to our meetings. We are being blessed by their voices even as we watch them grow into our leaders.

We're on a roll St. James! God is clearly stretching us. May we continue to grow with vigor!

*In Christ,
Pastor Jill*

Senior High Youth & Young Adult Ministry

Another great year of youth has come and gone. It seems that only yesterday the graduating seniors were the kids who were not even in middle school yet. I can't be happier to be the Senior High Youth Leader at St. James. Every year I get to watch and help young people grow to be contributing members of society. I get to see the changes in all of them from the time they enter 9th grade to graduation. The amount of change and maturing is unbelievable.

2012 had many of the usual youth events that we all love. Events like tubing in Wisconsin, Grand Slam, lock-ins and Valley Scare. These are events that are familiar to us. These events are the staple of senior high youth. These events are what middle school youth want to do when they are in senior high. But 2012 also brought us to an event that not only has not happened at St. James in quite a while, but really took everybody by surprise. In July of 2012 St. James Lutheran Church sent 12 youth and 3 adults to the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana. A trip that only one person had ever been on and it had been 15 years for him. The first memorable thing to talk about is the church support we received. We raised approximately \$16,000 to go to New Orleans! The trip would not have been even remotely possible without the support from parents, pastors and the entire church congregation. To that I (we) owe the people of St. James an enormous Thank You! The next thing to talk about is how blown away I was by my firsthand witness of the transformation of our youth during the trip. Our youth went from "A belief in our God" to "Our God is with us, in us and here for us!" "Our God is the reason for it all!" "Our God put us on this earth and we owe it to him to be the best people we can be not only to others, but to ourselves!" There was a specific moment on the third night of the gathering where I saw our youth go from "Being nice kids who are involved because they are encouraged to be" to "Being engaged kids who are involved because they *want* to be!" I literally saw a switch go on that night as we sat in the hotel room to recount our day and share what we learned. Whether they would want to admit it or not, I feel deep down that they all developed a new and better understanding of their relationship with each other, the world and their God. In the end, the rest of the trip was gravy. We had a blast seeing and doing all the things we did on the way down, while there and on the way back. We were proud of all the things that were accomplished for the people of New Orleans and people around the world. It truly was a trip of a lifetime, a trip to remember forever!

2012 also marked an increase in the older youth coming to church on Sundays at 9:57 to get together for fellowship and movie watching. Wednesday night youth has also seen an increase of youth participation. I am truly blessed that you all allow me to be a part of your youth's lives. To witness all the transformations, good and bad, that happen over the course of four years of high school. To put in my two cents in the hope that someday down the road it will come in handy. I hope that everyone involved in my youth

Outreach

Loaves and Fishes

St. James, in partnership with House of Hope Lutheran, has served at River of Life Lutheran Church (22nd and Fremont Ave. N.) since 1984. The guests are provided a hot meal prepared and served with loving, caring hands. The meal consists of: au gratin potatoes/ground beef, green beans, wheat bread/butter, fruit cup, bars, and milk. More members are needed to prepare the meal at 2:00, needed are some men who can lift heavy pans.

Loaves & Fishes guests have their basic needs for food, dignity, and respect met by the team. House of Hope brings a dozen members to serve the meal with St. James members at 5:00. Serving time is from 5:30 to 6:30 and clean-up by 7:00 p.m.

There are eight other serving sites in the metro area. In August 211 clients were served. Other months some 55 clients receive seconds. There are 50 homeless men and boys sleeping in the gym. They are happy for these hot meals. The meals are made for under \$1.00 each. The yearly budget is just under \$1,000. Each church also donates quilts at Christmas time.

NEAR

NEAR stands for Northwest Suburban Emergency Assistance Response. The food shelf was created and named in May 1974 by the pastors of: First Lutheran, St. James, Faith Lilac Way, and St. Raphael's. From those early days the need has continually risen. In 2012 an average of 390 client families were served each month. In 2012, 288 new families were added. Clients may come once every 30 days. Deliveries are made to clients who are handicapped with a doctor's letter.

The food shelf has six-plus volunteers each morning and five each afternoon. There are also volunteers answering the phones at home. Appointments are made for 1:30-4:30 each day. Many other volunteers help with Easter Baskets, School Supplies (182 families), and Toy Distributions (400 children).

Extra boxes of food are handed out during the summer months, and Thanksgiving and Christmas months.

NEAR boundaries are 42nd on the south, 62nd on the north, Hwy.#169 on the west and Victory Memorial Drive on the east. NEAR has one half-time paid coordinator with all the rest of the staff volunteers. St. James has about eight volunteers who work each week and many more for special projects. Thanks for your support.

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is a wonderful group of women who prepare the worship center for every worship service. We are dedicated to serving God by caring for God's house.

Members are: Audrey Nelson, Eunice Kistner, Kathleen Clemens, Margaret Thomsen, Maria Weiland, Nancy Dahlquist, Ruth Stanchfield, Sharon Stromback, and Sonya Lodahl.

Our group meets the second Tuesday of every month for devotions, to discuss upcoming events and enjoy very delicious treats. We truly enjoy the work we do for St. James and look forward to 2013.

St. James Choir

Being in the St. James Choir is a great chance for people to come together and be sociable, have fun, and make music together. We gained a few new singers this fall, and always look forward to having more people join us. While we strive to do our best to make the music beautiful and meaningful for the congregation on Sunday mornings, we often find that the fellowship we have together on Wednesday evenings is the best part of being in choir.

Here are some of the highlights of 2012:

- The Wildfire Choral Festival in February, where we combined all of the Wildfire church choirs to perform a concert at Holy Nativity Lutheran Church. This was the second year that we did this, and a great chance for us to sing in a big group under multiple directors.
- The St. James Hymn Festival with Dr. David Cherwien directing us from the organ. Many of our friends from the Wildfire concert joined us in the balcony at St. James. David is an amazing director, and led us on a choral anthem, hymns, and even taught us some improvisation!
- Working together with the Bonfire churches of First Lutheran and House of Hope to perform anthems at our Good Friday and Thanksgiving services. As always, it's fun to double and sometimes triple our numbers when we sing.

Second Sunday Singers/Summer Sunday Singers

On the second Sunday of every month, anyone who is interested can gather half an hour before the first worship service to prepare a song to sing with the Second Sunday Singers. This is a fluid group that changes every month and is a great opportunity for those who like to sing but have difficulty committing to the practice schedule of the St. James Choir. During the summer, we switch our name to the Summer Sunday Singers, and provide music every Sunday.

program, young and old, is affected even in some small way positively by it. Youth positively affects my life nearly every day. I learn from the youth and their families, from the pastors and the congregation. I learn and grow and am grateful.

But in the end, it's all about third night of the gathering...the night where the switch is turned on...the reason I am a youth leader!

Thank You and God bless you,

Ryan Walesch

Adult Ministry

Adult Education

Every Sunday you will find faithful seekers in the Peter and Paul room, ready to dig into God's Word, engaging speakers of the most relevant topics, presenters of Christian books with bite, and all of us simply asking the core questions of God's gift of faith. If you haven't checked out Adult Education on Sunday mornings at St. James, please do; it's always inspiring, full of laughter, and supportive of "growing with the questions."

Pr. David tended to the desire for a high emphasis upon studying upcoming Sunday texts together. It's a combination of historical/social, devotional, theological, and liturgical (relating to our worship) inquiry. Together, the group participates in Bible Study and robust contribution to the next week's sermon.

The summer study of Rabbi Brad Hirschfield's book You Don't Have to Be Wrong for Me to Be Right spoke to the painful polarized experience of many in the world today. We explored the author's invitation to practice both bold confession of our faith and radical openness to those who differ from us. Additionally, Randy Bergman led a three week series in August raising our awareness of the variety of Christian denominational theological responses to the question of engagement with our culture.

Our Adult Study group went on a road trip in November attending an afternoon event at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Excelsior with Rabbi Brad Hirschfield and other leaders of the world's great faith traditions. The panel discussion and reception of our questions allowed for a memorable engagement with the author of our summer study.

Long-time participant Floyd Florey continues to proclaim, "Adult Ed is the best part of Sunday morning and I never want to miss it." Please let Floyd's words be your invitation for 2013. Let's join him in seizing this opportunity to grow in Christ.

Book Club

"Books are a uniquely portable magic" (Stephen King). The Page Turners Book Club meets the first Tuesday of each month in the Peter and Paul room, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. It is an open book club, so book lovers of all ages -- middle school and up, men and women -- are welcome at any time, as well as one-time "drop-ins" for a certain book discussion. The book choices cover a wide range of interest, both fiction and nonfiction. Good books, good discussion, lots of laughs and great refreshments! Watch the Pews News and Herald for the current book choice each month.

Contact: Linda Judge (763-533-4081; judgelinda@msn.com)

Prayer Shawl Ministry

"Shawls...symbolic of an inclusive, unconditionally loving God." Have you ever wondered what a prayer shawl looks like? It is the soft, warm, loving embrace of a prayer shawl wrapped around a recipient's shoulders. St. James has been involved in the Prayer Shawl Ministry since December 2002. Faithful knitters, crocheters, and those delivering the shawls have been touching many lives through this loving ministry of craft and prayer. We meet the 1st Thursday at 10:00 a.m. and the 3rd Thursday at 7:00 p.m. in the Library. During 2012, 16 shawls were delivered to those in need of comfort and solace, and for some occasions of celebration. We welcome your suggestions if you know of anyone who would appreciate receiving a prayer shawl.

Contact: Linda Judge (763-533-4081; judgelinda@msn.com)

Prayer Line: *Caring for people by praying!*

Prayer requests are made by calling the church office (763-537-3653) during business hours, talking with our pastors or by calling Sandy Johnson (763-557-9858) in the evening and on weekends. Your prayer requests are given to dedicated pray-ers on the Prayer Line via telephone or email. The requests are then held in prayer by the Prayer Line pray-ers.

We have 40 compassionate pray-ers and welcome anyone who wishes to join.

There isn't any training, just love and concern for our neighbor and the belief in the power of prayer. For further information call the church office or Sandy Johnson.

We all can continually pray:

- For the ministries of St. James
- For the leadership of St. James
- That the people of St. James will seek out intercessory prayer and be comfortable using the prayer line
- That the Holy Spirit would stir up excitement and enthusiasm for prayer in our faith community.

Decorating Committee

A dedicated group has outdone themselves again! This group ensures that St. James is decorated for each season including: Lent, Easter, Pentecost, All Saints, Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas.

The outside banners lining the driveway also change color with the seasons and add some welcome color to the long winter snowscape.

Worship Participation

There are many opportunities for St. James members to participate in the ministry of hospitality and worship. Every Sunday, lay leaders are involved in welcoming people to worship, facilitating the smooth running of the worship service, and participating in the worship service itself.

Greeters welcome each of us as we come on a Sunday morning. At the 8:45 service there is an assisting minister who is responsible for the prayers of the people and assisting with other aspects of the service, including serving communion. At both services there is a lector, a layperson who reads the Bible lessons for the day, and communion assistants who distribute the wine.

All members are encouraged to volunteer by signing on the bulletin board next to Pastor David's office.

I want to extend a heart felt thank you to everyone who is so willing to take an active part in the hospitality and worship of our congregation. Thank you for cheerfully saying yes when I call and for giving of your time and your talent.

*Connie Blom
Worship Coordinator*

Ringing Praise, St. James' Handbell Choir

Our faithful ringers had another enjoyable, active year in 2012. We provided special music and accompanied congregational hymns at the ELW worship service at least once a month from January through May and from September through December. Our highlights for 2012 included accompanying the St. James Choir throughout the year and joining with the other bell choirs of the Bonfire churches to perform pieces at the Good Friday and Thanksgiving Eve worship services.

More ringers are very welcome, since there are still many handbells in our 3-octave set that are not getting a chance to ring very often! (We've had some help this year from two of our ringing friends from First Lutheran plus a big thank you to the wonderful St. James substitute ringers!) Our weekly rehearsals are held Tuesday evenings at 6:30 in the balcony. Please contact Mary Brown (at 612-462-0729) to find out about the ringing opportunities and the tasty food and great fun at our parties!

Over 55's

St. James congregational members who are 55 years "young" meet the fourth Monday of each month. The members gather for fellowship, programs, entertainment, trips, potlucks, picnics, or plays. Individual members plan the monthly program. The entire group decides on which charity to donate monies to in the community. New members are very welcome. Please feel free to come once or each month.

Ideas for 2013 will be discussed at the January meeting at the Old Country Buffet. Interesting activities that were attended last year were: lunch at North Hennepin Tech, Minneapolis Pops Orchestra, Lord Fletchers, and the Old Log Theater.

There are presently some 30 members.

Men's Group

The men's group meets for breakfast and fellowship the 3rd Saturday of each month at Fat Nat's in New Hope. There is no agenda or program. It is a time to get to know each other better in a casual setting. All men of St. James and friends are invited to join us!

St. James is also involved in a collaboration with eight other churches in the area, which takes turns hosting a men's fellowship dinner. The last dinner was held at St. James with John Lindstrom speaking about his experiences as a firefighter. The next fellowship dinner will be May 5, 2013 at First Lutheran Church. The speaker will be Mpls Area Synod Bishop Ann Svennungsen.

The men's group also hosted the Easter breakfast to raise funds for camp scholarships.

Mary & Rebecca Circle

Both the Mary and Rebecca Circles continued to meet the first part of 2012. Rebecca Circle once again had a successful Spring Tea, *A Patchwork Quilt of Heartwarming Stories* by Patti Kachel, in April. Rebecca Circle took the summer off from their monthly meetings.

In October, Rebecca Circle joined with the Mary Circle because of diminishing numbers; they formed the new Mary Circle.

In December, Mary Circle put on their annual Christmas Brunch, *Christmas Is Coming*, which was very well attended. The entertainment by Flute Cocktails (balloons anyone?) and excellent food had those in attendance talking for days!

Mary Circle meets at 10:00 a.m. the third Wednesday of each month. New members are always welcomed.

Worship & Prayer

Worship

Worship continued at 8:45 a.m. with the Evangelical Lutheran Worship service and at 11:00 a.m. with the Now the Feast and Celebration service. Attendance remained fairly steady at both services in 2012. Beginning in the fall, the last Sunday of the month has been Donut Sunday, with donuts being served instead of cookies during fellowship time between services.

St. James also celebrated with worship at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday and continued throughout the Lenten season. A meal was served after morning worship and prior to evening worship. Maundy Thursday was celebrated along with First Communion; Good Friday worship was a joint effort at First Lutheran Church.

During the summer, St. James moved to one worship service at 9:30 a.m. The last Sundays of June, July and August, St. James welcomed back Chaplain Deb Ost, Pastor Al Negstad, and Pastor Michelene Verlantz to preach. A pot-luck picnic was held after worship these Sundays.

To celebrate Thanksgiving Eve, a joint Bonfire service was held at House of Hope Lutheran Church.

Christmas brought about a change as well. Little Christmas Eve, December 23, was a child-led worship with only one service at 9:30 a.m. Christmas Eve worship was held at 4:30 and 10:00 p.m. December 30 was also only one service at 9:30 a.m.

Worship Attendance

- Average 8:45 worship attendance: 188
- Average 11:00 worship attendance: 52
- Average Wednesday Lenten worship: 76
- Average summer worship (9:30 a.m. only): 136
- Easter worship total: 325
- Christmas Eve worship total: 336
- Average 2012 monthly worship:
 - January-159
 - February-192 (includes Ash Wednesday)
 - March-170
 - April-199
 - May-156
 - June-123
 - July-145
 - August-140
 - September-163
 - October-211
 - November-177
 - December-155

