



St. James Lutheran Church
Annual Report

St. James Lutheran Church

Reflecting the Light of Christ in Crystal

6700 46th Place North

Crystal MN 55428

Phone: 763-537-3653

Fax: 763-537-3828

Email: office@stjamesincrystal.org

Website: www.stjamesincrystal.org

Dave Valen, Pastor

Kristen Brechler, Pastor

2013

A Note from Pastor Dave Valen

Dear Partners in Ministry,

Looking back on the five months I have been your pastor I am filled with gratitude for this great privilege. I have not the slightest doubt that God was involved in your decision to call me. And I trust that God will continue to bless and strengthen us for whatever the future holds. The support and friendship I have experienced from the entire congregation, not least from a staff that is second to none, have made every day here a happy and satisfying one. Thank you!

Now, what of our future? The January issue of The Lutheran contains articles that merit sober attention. In describing the present state of the ELCA, and some prevailing trends, it points out some bad news and some good news. Here is some of what you would read: "Mainline churches (that's us) are no longer in the mainline and find themselves struggling with declining membership and worship attendance." And this: "As attendance decreases enthusiasm dwindles. The pool of volunteers is drying up." The good news is that this is a perfect time for renovation. "The central part of a renewing church is renewing our spiritual life first, then mission work second, vibrancy third, and maybe then growth. It's not a numbers game, it's spiritual belief and passion."

I believe St. James has a bright future. Here's why: the morale here is high; I see volunteers happily at work every day; you are reaching out in multiple ways to minister in the community; worship is vital. So, pray, work, trust. And God will lead you to where God wants you to be and what God wants you to do.

Pastor Dave

Average Weekly Worship Attendance in 2013

January	143
February	147
March	187
April	169
May	135
June	133
July	103
August	112
September	142
October	162
November	157
December	157

St. James 2013 Staff

Pastor David Lechelt
Senior Pastor
(through June 2013)

Pastor Jill Bergman
Pastor
(through September 2013)

Pastor Dave Valen
Interim Senior Pastor
(began August 2013)

Pastor Kristen Brechler
Associate Pastor
(began September 2013)

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 Jermstad
Sunday Morning Custodian

- **Dinner at Your Door.** St. James furnished up to 15 drivers each month to deliver hot noon meals to those who are homebound. Barbara Parsons took over for Judy Olsen as the contact person for this program in December.
- **Finance Committee** continued to meet the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
- **Global Health Ministry.** St. James continued to support GHM's mission financially and through the assembly of newborn kits and rolled bandages.
- **Library.** The library continued to enlarge the DVD collection through donations. They also collected books twice this year to distribute to the parents and children at Car Care Saturday. The library also hosted a story time for the 2-3 year-old Sunday School class this fall.
- **Mary Circle.** The Mary Circle continued to meet each month at 10:00 a.m. (except June, July & August) for pastor-led Bible study, fellowship and coffee.
- **Men's Group.** The men's group continued to have breakfast at Fat Nat's in New Hope the third Saturday of each month. Quarterly dinner gatherings with the Wildfire congregations also were well received.
- **NEAR Food Shelf.** St. James continued to be active in the local food shelf. St. James helped provide food for the 266 new families added in 2013. School supplies were collected in July to help supply 432 students. A total of 16 St. James members helped with the toy distribution in December where 199 families with over 500 children were assisted.
- **Power of One.** The Power of One volunteers who work with students at Forest Elementary had another great year full of lots of smiling students.
- **Prayer Shawls.** During 2013, 16 prayer shawls were delivered to those in need of comfort and solace, and for some occasions of celebration. This included 6 shawls sent to the women's shelter, Home Free.
- **Quilters.** The quilters continued to meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m.
- **Second/Summer Sunday Singers.** The second Sunday of each month, and every Sunday during the summer, a pick-up choir gathered before worship to practice something to sing that week.
- **Thrivent Choice Dollars.** Thrivent Choice Dollars (a program from Thrivent Financial for Lutheran members) donated \$1,531 as of November 15, 2013.
- **Worship.** Worship was held each week at 8:45 & 11:00 a.m., with one service during the summer at 9:30.

A Note from Pastor Kristen Brechler

I have been in your midst as your Interim Associate Pastor since September 9, 2013. During this time I have been intentional with learning names, asking a lot of questions about your lives of faith and the ministries we do, and of course doing a lot of listening. In the coming months, and throughout this year, I plan to continue to ask a lot of questions, do a lot of listening, and continue to learn a lot of names.

I am thankful to partner in ministry with Pastor Dave Valen. His preaching, presence in the office, leadership at council meetings, and overall leadership are great blessings for St. James. I personally enjoy working with him in the team ministry we share. Together with preaching, leading worship, baptisms, home/hospital visits, funerals, council and team meetings and community events (i.e. lutefisk dinner) we are connecting with and serving the community of St. James.

I also want to acknowledge the work of Shayna Anderson and Ryan Walesch for the love and care they give to children and youth here at St. James and the many volunteers, teachers and leaders that serve in the numerous ministries.

Confirmation - John Lindstrom has stepped up and organized and led the confirmation ministries. It's a pleasure to partner with him in working with the 6-8th grade students in our community. A big shout out to the confirmation guides, Sue, Kristine, Darlene, and the Sunday morning leadership of Margaret & James this fall and winter. This October three ninth grade students Maddie Claire, Erin Nelson & Duncan Petrie were confirmed.

120 Days of Prayer - In November a team of people began calling members of St. James asking for ways we could pray with and for them. The purpose is to come together and build a sense of connection and community during this interim time. Calls will be made between now and March. I give thanks for this team and the impact they are having here at St. James.

I am thankful to be surrounded by a wonderful church staff, ministry teams, and many gifted members of our community. I am humbled and blessed to be in ministry together here at St. James. God is definitely at work here, I look forward to watching God work throughout this next year.

*Your Partner in Ministry,
Pastor Kristen*

A Note from Council President Jerry Anderson

The year 2013 was a year of surprises. We lost both our pastors. The roof started leaking. And the fire alarm needed to be updated. What is not surprising is the people of St. James. The property committee worked hard to find solutions to these structural problems. The finance committee worked hard to come up with a plan to fund the repairs.

But I think most important is the people of our congregation. When asked

2013 St. James Church Council

Jerry Anderson
President

Roland Smith
Vice President

Amy Jermstad
Secretary

Joel Anderson
Treasurer

Joseph Davies

Nancy Horberg

Junior Kautz

Kelly (Colleen) Linaman

John Lindstrom

Kristine Nymoen

Anna Becker
Youth Representative

Corey Loken
Youth Representative

to form a call committee, we had more volunteers than positions. When asked to help with a capital fund to finance our projects, we came very close to our goal.

The council worked hard to find pastors to help us through our transition period. I don't think we could have found any better leadership in transition than we did with Pastor Dave and Pastor Kristen. With all this going on, we were still able to increase our giving to ELCA and help Joseph Davies bring his family to America.

So though 2013 had its surprises, one thing has remained constant, the people of St. James. We have accomplished much. But there is still much to do.

Thank you for your confidence in letting me serve as your council president.

May the Lord Be With You
Jerry Anderson

Care Center, Good Samaritan Ambassador Care Center, and families from the December gift tree.

- **New Roof.** After considerable leaking in the office areas, the roof in that area of the building was replaced.

December

- **Women's Christmas Brunch.** The Mary Circle hosted the annual brunch on December 7, where they were entertained by the energetic *Glitzy Chicks*.
- **Christmas Program.** The Children's Christmas program was held during the 11:00 a.m. worship service on December 15.
- **Christmas Eve Worship.** Worship was held at 4:30 & 10:00 p.m.
- **Lessons & Carols Service.** One worship service was held at 9:30 a.m. on December 29
- **Gift Tree.** St. James collected gift cards to give to a family in need.

Recurring in 2013

- **Adult Ed.** The adult ed group continued to meet each Sunday for Bible study.
- **Altar Guild** moved their meetings during the program year to 6:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month.
- **Bell Choir.** The bell choir continued to rehearse each Tuesday during the program year and provide music at least once a month in worship.
- **Book Club.** The book club continued to meet the first Tuesday of each month (except July & August) in the Peter & Paul room at 7:00 p.m.
- **Bulletin Stuffers.** The faithful group on Friday mornings assembled bulletins of all kinds each week, while taking the summer off since St. James was using a reusable bulletin during that time.
- **Choir.** The choir continued to provide wonderful music for the first worship service.
- **Church Council** continued to meet the third Monday of each month, with special meetings as needed.

October

- **Craft Retreat.** The youth hosted a second all day craft retreat as a fundraiser.
- **Celebrating Creative Crafts.** Twenty St. James crafters/bakers displayed, demonstrated, and offered hands-on participation in a wide variety of crafts. A few even sold some of the results. (*Oct. 6*)
- **Fall Work Day**
- **Confirmation Sunday.** Three students confirmed their faith on Confirmation Sunday.
- **Fire Alarm System.** The fire alarm system was updated.
- **Scream Town.** The youth spent the an evening at Scream Town as a fun social event.

November

- **Lutefisk Dinner.** The 21st annual Lutefisk Dinner was held on November 23. Approximately 500 happy lutefisk lovers enjoyed a traditional lutefisk dinner. Start planning for next year on November 22.
- **All Saints Day**
- **Call Committee Sessions** The sr. pastor call committee held listening sessions with the congregation to get a feel for what characteristics St. James thinks are important in a future sr. pastor.
- **Veterans Day Concert.** Gary Heil, Vietnam vet and former worship leader at St. James, presented sacred and secular songs, sing-alongs and instrumentals in a casual coffee-house setting in Wold Hall. Sponsored by the fine arts committee.
- **Davies Family Potluck.** This fall St. James collected money to help bring Joseph Davies' family to America. Helena, Scholastica and Success arrived in early November and a potluck was held to welcome them to their new home. St. James also collected items to help them furnish an apartment.
- **Thanksgiving Eve Worship.** St. James hosted the Bonfire congregations in a joint Thanksgiving Eve worship service and pie social. Over 125 were in attendance.
- **Quilts filled the worship center.** The quilters decorated the worship center with over 190 quilts, lap robes and Christmas table runners. The remaining quilts that were not purchased were donated to NEAR, Loaves & Fishes, Home Free, Global Health Ministries, North Ridge Masonic

Children & Family Ministry Highlights

9:57 and Family Ministry Events

We have enjoyed a great year together, growing in faith on Sunday mornings. The Spark curriculum has been instrumental in bringing the stories of the Bible to our kids in new and fresh ways. It is my hope that what the kids learn on Sunday mornings, spills over into their daily family life.

A few special Sundays and activities we've offered:

- **October Outreach – Global Health Ministries.** Children, their families and members of St. James put together 230 Newborn Kits for Global Health. Outstanding!
- **Family Advent Fair.** December 1 marked the first Sunday in Advent and families had the opportunity to come together and engage in some fun activities: decorating an Advent log to help encourage family devotional time, making celebration candle jars, and coloring books centered on the season and Sundays of Advent.
- **Movie Night – *Finding Nemo***
- **Sledding at Lions Valley Place Park**

Day Camp at Becker Park

St. James partnered with House of Hope and Faith Lilac-Way this summer to bring day camp to 27 kids. Counselors from Luther Park in Danbury, WI were on hand to lead games, activities and songs. Six adults and two junior high volunteers helped to make the week a success. It was a fun week in the sun!

Camp Onomia

In August of 2013, seven girls packed their bags and headed to Camp Onomia in Onamia, MN. Of them, five had never been to camp before! Camp Onomia has some roots among members here, and staff decided to check it out and see if it would be a good fit for our kids who wanted a Bible camp experience. It's safe to say, it was a great fit!

Camp costs can sometimes be a determining factor in attendance. Jim Schmidt, the camp director, generously gave our families a discount on the camp fees, and St. James gave each child \$100 towards their camp fees. In addition, the girls raised money through the Butterbraids and Flower Fund-raiser last spring, reducing their total cost to attend camp. They worked hard and had a great week together!

Plans are underway to offer the camp experience to our congregation again. Stay tuned for details for Summer of 2014!

Children's Christmas Program

This year's program was entitled "Light A Candle." Children blessed the congregation with song, music, scripture readings and silly antics. Pastor Kristen helped the congregation and children to understand the meaning behind each of the Advent candles. Many thanks to all of the parents and adults who helped see this program/worship service through to the end – you are all a blessing to St. James!

*God's blessings to all in the upcoming year,
Shayna Anderson, Director of Children & Family Ministry*

A Note from Bonfire Ministry Executive Director

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we reflect back on 2013 and look forward to 2014 we have much for which to be thankful. God has blessed us richly this last year and has given us the opportunity to look forward with excitement and optimism into the New Year. We are called by God to work together in God's fields, in God's vineyards and to bring in the harvest that God has cultivated. You are doing that ministry as you work together with one another. Bonfire Ministry is a collaborative ministry of First Lutheran Church of Crystal, House of Hope Lutheran Church and St. James Lutheran Church of Crystal. This means that you have covenanted together (agreed) to work collaboratively (together) toward the common goal of being the hands, the feet and the heart of God in this time and place. This means you are willing to work collaboratively (together) in caring for the least among us, all to the Glory of God.

We all need to be very clear about this. Bonfire Ministry is your ministry. Bonfire Ministry is not Pr. Dan Babine's ministry. Bonfire Ministry is not anyone else's ministry, it is your ministry, and, the good news is you are doing it well. God's children are being served and cared for with love through you and by you.

Currently we have three primary ministries that are ongoing. Debbie Haney is our Parish Nurse, and is available at each of our church buildings on a regular basis and is available by phone at other times. We have a Respite Care Ministry at House of Hope Lutheran Church, with care for those who are homebound and care for their caregivers as well. And, we have our KidPack ministry. This school year, September –May, we will pack and distribute almost 40,000 KidPack bags to Forest and Meadow Lake Elementary School students.

These are all wonderful and we need to make sure we continue and even expand these ministries. However, as we move into 2014 Bonfire Ministry needs to look for new ways to serve God in this time and place. Toward that

August

- **Camp Onomia.** St. James sent seven kids to summer camp at Camp Onomia in Onamia, MN.
- **Forest Teacher Lunch.** The Power of One volunteers welcomed the Forest Elementary School teachers back with a luncheon in Wold Hall. They also gave the teachers all the supplies that were collected during the month of August.
- **Dave Valen Begins Interim.** Pastor Dave Valen began his interim ministry at St. James as the interim sr. pastor.
- **Loaves & Fishes Ends.** With a lack of volunteers from St. James, we had to withdraw from our sponsored day each month at Loaves & Fishes. St. James continues to support this program financially, and volunteers are welcome to help out anytime.

September

- **Jill Bergman Resigns.** We said goodbye to Pastor Jill Bergman the first Sunday in September as she took a call at First Lutheran Church in Columbia Heights.
- **Fall Program and Worship Resumed.** St. James went back to two worship services and all fall programming kicked off.
- **Kristen Brechler Begins Interim.** Pastor Kristen Brechler began as our Interim Associate Pastor in mid-September.
- **Tennis Tournament.** Corey Loken hosted a very successful tennis tournament to raise funds for KidPack.
- **Car Care Saturday**
- **3rd Grade Bibles**
- **Bonfire Sing-a-Long.** St. James hosted members of other Bonfire Ministry congregations for a sing-a-long and bonfire.
- **Neighborhood Dance.** St. James took 2013 off from the annual neighborhood dance to regroup and consider the options for 2014.

May

- **Craft Retreat.** The youth hosted an all day craft retreat as a fundraiser.
- **Teacher Appreciation.** The year ended with an appreciation for the teachers and volunteers that made the year possible.
- **Spring Work Day**
- **Bake Sale.** The Sr. High youth held a bake sale to raise money for their mission trip.
- **Ice Cream Social.** St. James kicked off the summer with an ice cream social following worship Memorial Day weekend.
- **Summer Worship.** Made the switch to one worship service at 9:30 a.m. on Memorial Day weekend and continued throughout the summer. Adult Ed was held at 10:45 a.m.
- **Saved on paper products.** A new paper product vendor, Buckeye Cleaning Center, was chosen creating a 30-40% savings.

June

- **Garage Sale.** Another successful St. James garage sale was held the first weekend in June at Tim & Becki Smith's home. The youth sold cookies as a fundraiser at the garage sale.
- **Car Care Saturday**
- **David Lechelt Resigns.** We said goodbye to Pastor David Lechelt the last Sunday of June as he left for a call at Lord of Life in Ramsey.
- **Elevator.** The elevator passed inspection!

July

- **Mission Trip.** The Sr. High youth traveled with Youth Works to West Virginia.
- **Over 55's** The Over 55's attended a pops concert and the Plymouth Playhouse during July.
- **AED / CPR Training**
- **Al Negstad Preached and Potluck Picnic** Pastor Emeritus Al Negstad preached and a potluck picnic was held the last Sunday of July.
- **Thrivent Builds.** Volunteers from St. James worked on building a Habitat for Humanity house through Thrivent Builds for a week in July.

end I suggest the following goals for 2014. I'll list them in no particular order and trust that you will see the need and listen to the Holy Spirit as we are guided, together, to accomplish these goals.

The first is to develop a plan for **sustainable funding** for Bonfire Ministry. We are ever so grateful to the congregations for their ongoing support. Thank you!! However, we need to consider how to encourage individuals to make significant and ongoing contributions to these ministries.

Second; is to continue the conversation between the congregations on what collaboration means and where it can lead us in ministry. By the time you read this we will already have hosted a **Forum and Conversation with all three Church Councils** about our future together and what that future might look like. This needs to be an ongoing conversation as we move forward in mission and ministry, together.

Third; we want to develop a **Women's Fellowship Ministry** similar to the current Men's Fellowship Ministry. This Fellowship Ministry will be designed to meet the needs of women for fellowship and interaction with other sisters in Christ.

Fourth; our congregations are aging and with it come deaths and funerals. This means there is a need for some type of **Grief Ministry** where people who have had losses can come together to heal from the hurt they experience. The Bonfire Health and Wellness Committee is working on this ministry with the goal to have it up and running as soon as possible in this New Year.

Fifth; we are so grateful to Corey Loken for the incredible work he has done in sponsoring the **Tennis Tournament and Fundraiser for KidPack**. We would be remiss to let this wonderful opportunity for fellowship and tennis fall by the wayside. We need to continue to support and encourage this ministry, so that it becomes an ongoing tradition in this community as money is raised to feed the children of the community.

And, sixth; over the summer of 2013 we held three **Bonfire Bonfires**. These were fellowship events at each church. We plan on continuing to plan fellowship events that will bring us together in 2014. Some of these events will revolve around worship and some will just be for fun (although worship can be fun). Please join us, even if the event is at a congregation other than your own. These are opportunities to grow in grace and love for one another, and they are opportunities to meet your sisters and brothers who make up our Bonfire Ministry.

For more information, check out the Bonfire web site at <http://www.bonfireministry.org>.

*Blessing to you in 2014,
Pr. Daniel Babine*

Bonfire Ministry – Executive Director

St. James Year In Review

January

- **Middle School Lock-in**
- **Family Movie Night**, *Finding Nemo*
- **AED / CPR Training**
- **Annual Meeting and potluck**
- **Light fixtures.** The property committee installed new energy light fixtures.
- **Worship service switch.** During Epiphany, the two worship service settings were switched to allow the 8:45 a.m. attendees a taste of the second service setting, and vice versa.

February

- **Youth Went Snow Tubing in Wisconsin**
- **Confirmation students packaged meals at Feed My Starving Children with other Wildfire confirmation groups.**
- **Hymn Fest** with David Cherwien and Susan Palo Cherwien. In spite of a snowstorm, 55 attended. Several choir members from Bonfire churches added their voices to the St. James Choir. (*Feb. 10*)
- **Hosted Bonfire Annual Meeting**
- **Ash Wednesday and Lenten** Worship services for Lent were held at 11:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. A soup lunch was held following the morning service.
- **Fall Prevention Event** The Bonfire Health & Wellness Committee hosted a seminar on preventing falls at St. James.
- **Family sledding/skating** A winter party was held at Lions Park.
- **Financial Peace University** Pastor Jill Bergman started a 10-week Financial Peace University seminar that was open to the general public.

March

- **David Lechelt on Sabbatical.** Pastor David Lechelt was on sabbatical during the entire month of March. Pastor Jill and guest preachers filled in as needed.
- **Confirmation Retreat at Gustavus.** The confirmation students traveled to Gustavus Adolphus in St. Peter for their retreat.
- **Butterbraid Sales.** The Sr. High youth sold Butterbraids as a fundraiser for the summer mission trip. The pastry dough was delivered right before Easter.
- **Sr. High Lock-in**
- **First Communion class.** A joint class was held with House of Hope.
- **Good Friday** A Joint Bonfire Ministry Good Friday service was held at First Lutheran Church.
- **New mirror.** The property committee installed a new mirror in the Peter & Paul room for wedding preparations.

April

- **Springtime Dessert Tea.** The Mary Circle held a dessert tea on April 13, where they got a chocolate overload. They were entertained by storyteller Pati Kachel, who looked amazingly like Corrie ten Boom, who told some inspirational stories of Corrie's life during World War II.
- **Children's Flower Sale** Children attending Camp Onomia sold flower hanging baskets and individual plants to raise money for their camp.
- **Compassion Sunday** Pastor Jill Bergman led the way with Compassion Sunday and helped others sponsor children through Compassion International.
- **Over 55's lunch at Hennepin Tech**
- **Council Retreat at Lutheran Social Service**
- **Community Youth Recital.** Fourteen individuals and small groups participated. This was an opportunity for high school youth to perform music which they had prepared for end-of-year contests. (*Apr. 28*)
- **Feed My Starving Children** The congregation gathered together for an intergenerational event at Feed My Starving Children. Money collected during the special offering during April was also presented to the FMSC staff.