



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

Randall Romsdahl, Pastor

Kristen Brechler, Pastor

2014

A Note from Pastor Randy Romsdahl

Dear Beloved in Christ,

“Reflecting the Light of Christ in Crystal, from generation to generation.”
What does our congregation’s mission statement mean to you? As I reflect

St. James 2014 Staff

Pastor Dave Valen
Interim Senior Pastor
(through July 2014)

Pastor Randall Romsdahl
Senior Pastor
(beginning July 2014)

Pastor Kristen Brechler
Associate Pastor

Shayna Anderson
Director of Family Ministry
(through May 2014)

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
and
Sunday School Coordinator
(beginning September 2014)

upon our mission statement, many shining examples come to mind. My annual report to you centers on our mission statement because it expresses our commitment to living together as the Body of Christ at St. James Lutheran in Crystal in this, our congregation’s 60th anniversary year.

In scripture, we find many passages which bring us light; for example, in Ephesians 5:8b, we are encouraged to "Live as children of light - for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true." Could it be that our Creator God has given us life so that we may live the best possible life, a life which glorifies God by reflecting the light of Christ?

Through our visitation ministry to the homebound in our congregation, I have encountered faithful, courageous people who have built up our church during the past 60 years. These people continue to give generously, as they have throughout their lives, because they believe that the ministries of our church make a difference in the lives of both the members of St. James and in the lives of those blessed by our ministries. Despite the trials and difficulties of aging, our elders do indeed reflect the light of Christ in Crystal and in the other communities in which they now live.

We also are blessed with a strong cohort of long-standing members who are working or very actively retired and contribute generously to our congregation’s ministries both financially and with their time, wisdom and skills. Many of these folks are actively engaged in maintaining our property, helping to host our annual lutefisk dinner, leading Mary Circle, supporting our quilting ministry, participating in our NEAR food-shelf ministry, joining on Sunday mornings for adult Bible study, helping

- **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 2014, seven prayer shawls were delivered to those in need of comfort and solace, and for some occasions of celebration.
- **Quilters.** The quilters continued to meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m.
- **Second Sunday Singers.** The second Sunday of each month, a pick-up choir gathered before worship to practice something to sing that week.
- **Worship.** Worship was held each week at 8:45 & 11:00 a.m. through the end of May, with one service during the summer at 9:30. Worship continued in the fall with one service at 9:00 a.m.

Average Weekly Worship Attendance in 2014

January	127
February	127
March	132
April	188
May	154
June	136
July	136
August	149
September	165
October	171
November	160
December	<i>(unknown at time of printing)</i>

Recurring in 2014

- **Adult Ed.** The adult ed group continued to meet each Sunday for Bible study.
- **Altar Guild** continued meeting during the program year at 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 provided 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 through the end of May.
- **Choir.** The choir continued to provide wonderful music.
- **Church Council** continued to meet the third Monday of each month, with special meetings as needed.
- **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 is 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. School supplies were collected in July to help students get ready for the new school year. St. James members also helped with the toy distribution in December.

deliver meals to the home-bound in our community, participating in our Bonfire KidPack ministry; leading and supporting our funeral lunch ministry, and are engaged in virtually every other ministry of our church.

Our congregation is also growing with new members joining and children born into the families of our members. Our youth also represent a growing edge for our congregation both through what they are learning and through what they are sharing with the congregation through Sunday School, confirmation, and senior high youth group. Their participation and leadership in worship on Sunday morning and the many ministries in which they lead or participate encourage and invite us to imagine, plan for and implement the future which God is creating through our mission of Reflecting the Light of Christ in Crystal, from generation to generation.

During January and February, our congregation is joining in a series of eleven Discovery Gatherings for the purpose of becoming better acquainted and engaging in conversation about God's mission for us. Our theme Bible verse is: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, *in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*" 1 Peter 2:9-10.

What an amazing promise and identity we have received from God! What a beautiful place and time we now enjoy! What a wonderful future we can expect! Yes, even in times of darkness, of suffering and trial, God is faithful, and God is light. Psalm 18: "The Lord, my God, lights up my darkness."

Sisters and brothers in Christ at St. James Lutheran in Crystal, you are my joy and blessing. I am grateful to God to serve as your senior pastor and thank God for the life we share in Jesus Christ.

*Love in Christ,
Pastor Randy*

A Note from Council President John Lindstrom

As I sat down to write this report I tried to put together a list of all that has been happening at St. James during the past year. Then I realized that I don't have enough space to fit it all into my report, so I will try to touch upon the highlights for me this year.

Let me begin with the departure of Pastor Dave Valen, whom I felt was a blessing to our congregation during a period of great turmoil and concern. With the departure of both our senior and associate pastor, Dave stepped into a

very difficult situation. Not to mention the need for him to be a strong swimmer (due to the roof leaking into his office). His kind nature and great sense of humor made my role as President much easier. In many ways I was very sad when we found his replacement. But if ever a man deserved to be rewarded for his service, I believe it was true of Dave. I wish him well in his retirement.

I would also like to say that it was difficult to accept the resignation of Shayna Anderson. I have known her for many years and her bright smile and cheerful disposition have always been appreciated. She continues to be an active member of the congregation and serves as a wonderful example of someone placing the importance of her family above her career.

Pastor Kristen has brought new energy into our church. She has taken a greater role in our youth and family ministries. I have worked with Kristen for two years in our confirmation education ministry and have seen many of our young people become more active in the life of the church. Kristen has been introducing fresh new education programs to stimulate our confirmation students and get them to engage in meaningful discussion of their beliefs and their faith.

Regarding the work of the church council, I could not be more impressed by those people who were elected to serve this year. They have

all shown a genuine concern for the future of our church. Not only for the physical property in which we gather, but in the visions they have for our future. I sincerely want to thank the other members of the executive board [Roland Smith; Troy Loken; Orla McClure] for their involvement in the

2014 St. James Church Council

John Lindstrom
President

Roland Smith
Vice President

Troy Loken
Secretary

Orla McClure
Treasurer

Joyce Held

Bonnie Jacobson

Kelly (Colleen) Linaman

Kristine Nymoen

Margaret Thomsen

Emily Valentine

Corey Loken
Youth Representative

November

- **Lutefisk Dinner.** The 22nd annual Lutefisk Dinner was held on November 22. Approximately 500 happy lutefisk lovers enjoyed a traditional lutefisk dinner.
- **All Saints Day**
- **Bonfire Women's Retreat**
- **Craft Sale.** Over 30 crafters offered up for sale their homemade items.
- **Thanksgiving Eve Worship.** First Lutheran, along with St. James and House of Hope, held a joint Thanksgiving Eve worship service and pie social.
- **Quilts filled the worship center.** The quilters decorated the worship center with over 150 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 Care Center, and Good Samaritan Ambassador Care Center.
- **Advent Family Fair** was held for all families the first Sunday of Advent.
- **Blessing of the Keys.** The keys of St. James youth were blessed.
- **Commitment Sunday.** We celebrated our pledges for the mission and ministry of St. James in 2015.
- **Craft Retreat.** The youth hosted an all day craft retreat as a fundraiser.

December

- **Women's Christmas Brunch.** The Mary Circle hosted the annual brunch on December 6, where they were entertained by the *Norwegian Glee Club of Minneapolis*
- **Alternative Worship Brunch.** A group interested in creating an alternative worship service at St. James held a brunch to get feedback from the congregation on some of the options they are considering.
- **Christmas Program.** The Children's Christmas program was held during the 9:00 a.m. worship service on December 21.
- **Youth Lock-In**
- **Christmas Eve Worship.** Worship was held at 4:30 & 10:00 p.m.

September

- **Fall Programming Resumed.** St. James kicked off all fall programming.
- **Rally Day** included a ministry fair, a bounce house and Sunday School orientation. It was a busy and fun morning!
- **One Worship Service.** After much debate the council approved continuing with one worship service for the fall. Worship would be held at 9:00 a.m., with education beginning at 10:10 a.m. Reusable bulletins were helpful during the summer, so they will continue by the month or season as the worship planning team sees fit.
- **9:57 gets a new name.** What was formerly known as 9:57 was renamed Lighthouse Sunday School. Amy Jermstad and Pastor Kristen Brechler took over as the leaders of the program.
- **Tennis Tournament.** Corey Loken hosted a very successful tennis tournament to raise funds for KidPack.
- **Car Care Saturday**
- **3rd Grade Bibles**

October

- **Blessing of the Animals**
- **Fall Work Day**
- **Lefse and Meatball Making for the Lutefisk Dinner**
- **Confirmation Sunday.** Four students confirmed their faith on Confirmation Sunday.
- **Ordination.** St. James' own Kaitlyn Ferguson had her ordination service at St. James.

pastoral call process and the other matters regarding the church staff this year.

I would be negligent if I did not mention the transition to a single Sunday worship service. The proposal was brought forward by the worship committee based upon the positive experiences that were being reported from the church members in regard to the combined worship services during the summer months. A great deal of discussion and listening was involved in making the decision to continue into the fall season with a single worship service.

It would be an understatement to say that the most obvious 'happening' this year has been the arrival of Pastor Randy Romsdahl and his wife Diana. I must commend the members of the call committee for their time, their devoted efforts and their talents. They have truly blessed our congregation by bringing Pastor Randy into our church family.

In my first meetings with Randy I knew that he was a man of strong faith with a great sense of family. His beliefs in supporting young families have already born fruit, as we seem to see our children more and more in the Sunday services and around the church. Like Pastor Randy, I see a promising future for our youth and families.

So, where do I go from here? In keeping with a personal commitment, I am seeking another term as your congregation president. It is my hope that I can continue to work alongside our pastors to complete our staffing transition. I plan to continue to be involved with our middle-school confirmation students in the hope that we can see them become active adult members of the congregation. I also envision some new ministry opportunities for myself.

I look forward to seeing even more involvement of St. James within our community through the Bonfire and Wildfire Ministries. I am excited about the prospect of St. James becoming a host church for the Families Moving Forward program. I believe that, as we share our gifts and our talents, we become much more than just a single congregation. We are truly reflecting the Light of Christ in our Community.

God Bless You All.

*John Lindstrom
Congregation President*

A Note from Pastor Kristen Brechler

I am thankful to be part of the St. James community; this is a great congregation. My role as interim is to help serve in the midst of transition carrying on ministry in the midst of change, as well as assisting with the next direction or the future of St. James.

It is a pleasure to partner with Pr. Randy Romsdahl. I am thankful for his leadership, collaboration and vision for this congregation. He is a great blessing to St. James. I personally enjoy working with him and the entire staff. It is a true team ministry that we share as we seek to connect with and serve the community surrounding St. James.

Also a big thanks to all those who volunteer in Children, Youth & Family Ministries. A big shout out to Amy Jermstad and all the Sunday School leaders. We've had some changes this fall in Children's Ministry, a new format and lectionary based curriculum, and have heard positive comments about them. Amy (with a crew of helpers) has worked tirelessly getting things arranged, ready and set up. Great work!

Sue Petrie, Darlene Bey, Melissa King and John Lindstrom are our core leaders of our Confirmation/Middle School ministries at St. James. These volunteers are dedicated and really care about helping teens through challenging transitions. Hats off to all of you!

Also to Ryan Walesch and other volunteers who serve with the Youth ministries at St. James. This crew works hard to build relationships, strengthen community and serve together. A group of Sr. High students and leaders will be attending the National Youth Gathering in Detroit this summer. Please support our youth as they raise money to attend this awesome, but expensive, event.

I am thankful to be surrounded by a wonderful church staff, ministry teams, and many gifted members of our community. I am blessed to be in ministry at St. James. God is definitely at work here, I look forward to watching God work through each and every one of you.

*Your Partner in Ministry,
Pastor Kristen*

Key events:

Children's Ministry Highlights

Family Events – Frozen Movie Night, Sledding, Splash Palooza
Camp Onomia
Christmas Program

Youth

Lock-in
Youth Mission Trip

June

- **Congregational Meeting** was held June 1 to call Pastor Randall Romsdahl as the next Senior Pastor at St. James.
- **Pentecost Sunday.** The worship center was filled with beautiful red geraniums.
- **Graduate Recognition Sunday**
- **Summer Potluck after worship on the 22nd.**
- **Day Camp was canceled due to low enrollment.**
- **Bonfire Ministry Bonfire** held at First Lutheran.

July

- **AED / CPR Training**
- **Pastor David Valen** celebrated his last Sunday at St. James on July 20 with a potluck picnic following worship.
- **Pastor Randy Romsdal** began as the new Senior Pastor at St. James on July 21.
- **Photos were taken for the new church directory.**
- **Bonfire Ministry Bonfire** held at St. James.

August

- **Pastor Randy was installed as the Sr. Pastor at St. James.**
- **Mission Trip.** The Sr. High youth traveled to Grand Marais.
- **Camp Onomia.** St. James sent twelve kids to summer camp at Camp Onomia in Onamia, MN.
- **Polling place.** St. James was a polling place during the primary election.
- **Listening Sessions.** A number of listening sessions were held to determine if the energy of one worship service during the summer would carry over to the fall schedule.
- **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.
- **Bonfire Ministry Bonfire** was held at House of Hope.
- **Grief Support Group** begins each Sunday afternoon and continued through mid-December.

April

- **First Communion class.** A joint class was held with House of Hope.
- **Good Friday** A Joint Bonfire Ministry Good Friday service was held at House of Hope.
- **Easter Sunday** worship was held at 8:45 & 10:00 a.m.
- **Springtime Dessert Tea.** The Mary Circle held a dessert tea on April 5. They were entertained with a program titled *Hot Dishes, Hot Pads & Hot Flashes– Lutheran Style* by Janet Letnes Martin (author of *The Church Basement Ladies*).
- **Children's Flower Sale** Children attending Camp Onomia sold flower hanging baskets and individual plants to raise money for their camp.
- **Over 55's lunch at Hennepin Tech**

May

- **Craft Retreat.** The youth hosted an all day craft retreat as a fundraiser.
- **Teacher Appreciation.** The program year ended with an appreciation for the teachers and volunteers that made the 9:57 year possible.
- **Farewell to Director of Family Ministry Shayna Anderson**
- **Spring Work Day**
- **Power of One Coffee**
- **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. One reusable bulletin was used for the entire summer.
- **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**

A Note from Ryan Walesch, Youth Director

As a youth leader it can be hard splitting my time between family, work, church and youth. You need to be mindful of all the irons in the fire and make sure none of them are neglected. This past year time management was a challenge for me, balancing my time between everyone and everything. Thankfully and gratefully I really enjoy my second job. Being a senior high youth leader is not a job for everyone, but I like it and I think I have a knack for it. I enjoy and value the time I get to spend with the youth of St. James. I am blessed that the family of St. James believes in me and trusts me with their children. The “family” of St. James. Family...a term used lightly in almost every setting where people get together. My immediate family, my extended, my work family, my friends family, my social media family...my church family. I recently served on the call committee that called Pastor Randy. (By the way we get an “A” for that) I had no idea what that meant when I said yes, but I learned a lot and I learned it quickly. Being on a call committee is hard! We asked the congregation what they like the most about St. James and the response we got time and time again was “It is family here!” It didn't really sink in to me on how important this committee was until I started to think about my “families.” First, my immediate family; then my church family; and third my youth family. Yes, my youth family. I confused my coworkers for a long time because I always refer to the St. James senior high youth as “my kids.” “How many kids do you have?” one person asked me once, not knowing I was a youth leader. You see, as important as it is that this decision keeps the status quo in check, to me it is more important that this decision builds a foundation for a strong future. That this decision is the right decision for my kids as well as for my youth kids.

Let's talk about the annual report for a minute. Hmmmm, what did we do in 2014? I spend all of my time looking forward, running and planning. Things like Wednesday night youth, lock-ins, Sunday mornings, craft retreats, sledding, Mountain of Mudd, Caribou Coffee, Grand Slam, Valley Scare, Craft Sale, FMSC and Lutefisk to name a few. It is hard for me to look back and recount the year because the year never ends. There is always the next event around the corner, always the next youth night. Don't get me wrong I am not complaining, I love it, my wife would say too much sometimes. One major event in 2014 that I would like to point out was the summer mission trip to Grand Marais. I am not going to lie, I was a bit nervous this trip. Not because of the trip itself, but because this time a “Pastor” was coming along. Now I have had Pastors come on trips in the past, but those trips were Youth Works trips and you really can't mess those up. This trip was all mine. No one else to pass the buck on if things fell short, no one else to take the heat for any shortcomings. All me...Pass/Fail! In the end I think the trip went very well. Probably more of a challenge for Pastor Kristen than anyone else. I think my laid back style of planning challenged her more than a few times. But all in all

everyone had a good time and we did a great job on the service projects.

A couple other milestones this past year bring me back to family. Youth nights really have taken off again. Each Wednesday night we get together, we have on average 75% of our youth. That is a big deal to me. With school, sports, work and family, I am excited that the youth place it so high on their calendar. We have also witnessed youth who have drifted apart coming back together and making amends. Woohoo! I am grateful to God for making that happen. The 2014 St. James senior high youth group really is a family, a family we are all blessed to be a part of.

All in all, I am grateful to be a part of the St. James and senior high youth group families. I thank God every day for all of these things and I am lucky to be able to witness the youth grow personally and spiritually in the family of St. James and with God.

*Thank you for another wonderful year!
Gods Work – Our Hands
Gratefully yours,
Ryan Walesch
Senior High Youth Director*

St. James Year In Review

January

- **Buffalo Wild Wings** commercial was shot in the Senior Pastor's office for two days in early January for their March Madness online marketing campaign.
- **Middle School Lock-in**
- **Bishop Ann Svennungsen held a listening post**
- **Youth movie night**
- **AED / CPR Training**
- **Annual Meeting and potluck**

February

- **Youth Went Snow Tubing in Wisconsin**
- **Family sledding/skating** A winter party was held at Lions Park.
- **Men's Fellowship Dinner** was hosted by St. James.

March

- **Ash Wednesday and Lenten** Worship services for Lent were held at 12:30 & 7:00 p.m. A BYO lunch was held prior to the first service.
- **Council Retreat** was held offsite.
- **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 Aid Training**
- **CPR /AED Training**
- **Family Movie Night, *Frozen***