



Dear Members and Friends of Spirit of Joy,



Summer's definitely here! Jennifer and I will be joining many of you who are away or traveling as we journey to be with our two children back east during July and August. My heart is filled with Joy in many ways as I look back at the five months I've had the privilege of being your part-time Interim Pastor. I look forward to working with you in the fall as well.

**I have nothing but gratitude:** for the leadership of Kellie Sanders, Laura Stransky and the other members of your Council, for the staff partnership of Nancy Bright and Rosie West, for the partnership of WELCA and the Men's Breakfast crew; for the projects of Joy Packs, Lutheran World Relief quilts, Green Bags, and kid's shoes; **gratitude** for the many people who are stepping up to help re-energize various ministries of our congregation: Property Care, Inreach/Outreach, Pastoral Caring, Worship, Finances, and Faith Formation. While all this has been going on, your Council has begun steps that will lead to commissioning a Call Committee in September.

During the coming months you will hear more about a "*Congregational Vitality Survey*" and a "*Time and Talent Worksheet*". I hope that each one of you will take the time to respond to these two initiatives. Wouldn't it be wonderful to brag (to ourselves, anyway) that we had 100% participation – all done in a Spirit of Joy! These are two important steps in our journey to calling a new pastor. Another, perhaps boldest, step is showing to ourselves that we can financially support a new pastoral page in our life together – and that's up to all of us.

Congregations are learning communities. Our grounding in the scriptures and an understanding of our Christian witness in these times are the foundations for everything else we do. To this end I will be working with a newly formed "*Faith Foundations Ministry*" group during the time I am away to prepare a menu of learning opportunities at Spirit of Joy for the fall months. I pray that we come up with a learning vision that will encourage every member to take his or her 'growth in faith' seriously.

Finally, I want to thank Pastor Brandfass and Pastor Gerrish, along with other members of Christ Lutheran Church, for their extraordinary support of the Covenant that now exists between our two congregations. Pastors Brandfass and Gerrish will be leading worship at Spirit of Joy for seven Sundays during July and August, preaching on a lectionary series entitled "*Revelation for our Times*". The last two Sundays in August will be led by Naomi Barcanic and Tom Berlage. Please keep them in your prayers.

In Peace, and with love,

Pastor Braaten



Steve Franklin	2
Mark Goodwin	3
Mary Davis	12
John Diets	12
Mel'O'Dee Gaber	13
Patti Bays	17
Linda Ren	23
Doug Swenson	25
Chelsea Huber	31

*If your special day is missing from our list, please call or email the church office to let us know.*



Richard & Barbara Huber	11
Tom Berlage & Cindy Hendrickson	21

# Spirit of Joy LUTHERAN CHURCH

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www.sojaz.net

Send prayer requests to:  
prayer@sojaz.net

Visit us at:  
www.facebook.com/sojaz

## Deaths

Please pray for the families of these members and former members who have passed into eternal life:

Marilyn Howisey, Nancy Sowarby,  
Carolyn Ward, George Wells, Yona Ash

## Recurring Offerings

Want to give a recurring offering to SOJ without writing a check every time? Most banks have a free "bill pay" feature that you can utilize to have a check mailed directly to SOJ or directly deposited. Contact your bank for more information.

## REWARD PROGRAM

Spirit of Joy is the recipient of donations from the Fry's Community Rewards program. You do nothing, other than register, and a percentage of your purchases will be sent to Spirit of Joy to be used by the Altar Guild. Call the office for more details on enrolling.



## Communion Ministry



Please see Pastor or Bob Dickson if you are interested in taking communion and/or visiting with homebound members.

# SUMMER BREAKS

The following groups continue to be on summer break. See you in September!

- ♦ Daytime Book Group
- ♦ Gather Bible Study
- ♦ WELCA will not have their regularly scheduled meeting during the summer months but will meet informally for breakfast at Denny's, same day and time.



## FOOD BANK SUNDAY!

Non-perishable food items will be collected next weekend, July 5/6 for our local food bank. Leave your food items in the grocery cart in the narthex.  
(Please remember to check the expiration dates on food before donating.)

## Back to School Shoe Drive

**This year marks Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church's 5<sup>th</sup> annual "Back to School Shoe Drive!"** This event will take place during the **month of July 2025**. The goal is to collect NEW shoes to assist K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students in our community who cannot afford proper shoes for school. Last year, we collected over 100 pairs of shoes! We aim is to meet or exceed last year's success.

***Please consider sharing our "Back to School Shoe Drive" with neighbors and friends. It's easy.***

*Option 1: Pick up a shoe size list, purchase a pair of shoes, and bring them to the church by July 27th.*

*Option 2: Give a donation and we'll shop for you. The more shoes we purchase, the more students we help!!!*

Pastor will pray over the shoes before they are dispersed to Clarkdale-Jerome, Beaver Creek and the four Cottonwood Schools' nurses in August so they can give them to the children in need. It is an incredible way to "kick off" the school year!

Sizes that we need are:

Girls - 10 Children, 11C, 12C, 13C, 1 Youth, 2Y, 3Y, 4Y, 5Y, 6Y

Boys - 10 Children, 11C, 12C, 13C, 1 Youth, 2Y, 3Y, 4Y, 5Y, 6Y



**Update:** On Tuesday, June 24th, Mary Stelpstra and Jeff & Becky Keck went to Big 5 Sporting Goods in Cottonwood and purchased 86 pairs of shoes at a average price of \$20 per pair. Big 5's manager, upon learning about SOJ's shoe drive, offered us the opportunity to purchase these shoes at this deeply discounted price. We are very appreciative of this gesture by the manager and encourage you to thank her when you shop at Big 5. You can also help by donating towards this purchase.

Thank you, for helping us spread joy and shoes to the children in our community!

# Reflections from a New Member of the Finance Ministry

by Andrea Meyer

When I was 4, I became aware that I was a Lutheran. I liked being one. I liked the blue v-neck robes the choir wore at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Tucson. I sniffed deeply the scent of graham crackers in the old children's nursery building and loved its squeaky wood floors and its cabinets thick with layers of paint. But I loved especially the bright row of blue foil stars lined up by my name for perfect attendance. One Sunday when my line of shiny attendance stars stretched to 10 or 12 inches long, my father announced that he was sick. No church. I was irked and begrudged him that blank space for weeks... maybe until I turned 20, honestly speaking.

So, despite being a faithful childhood and teenaged worshipper, I can't quote you many verses-- not any, in fact, except the biggies, the "thou shalts" and the "thou shalt nots." Plus, I don't know if you've noticed, but an awful lot of baby lambs are killed in the Good Book, which offended my over-developed sense of justice. It just didn't seem fair.

So, I spent my childhood in the pews at Our Saviour's doing other things, for example, watching my brother, Eric, surreptitiously read a MAD Magazine folded into his hymnal. (What foresight!) I, on the other hand, was stuck with reading over and over again, "I am the way the truth and the life," stamped in gold and blue enamel over the altar. Again, not fair. Much to my satisfaction, my father caught Eric with his magazine one Sunday when my brother's interest in the words of "Beautiful Savior" seemed to last far beyond the last notes of the organ. I also had leisure to observe critically the curiosities and deficiencies in the way Lutherans dressed, the sensible shoes tipped inward by swollen ankles; the way that head usher Bruce Mallory's red tie lay against his white shirt every Sunday (You don't need a lot of clothes and humbug to be Lutheran; what you wore last week will do just fine.); I caught the smell of ammonia from a fresh perm wafting off the head of the woman in front of me. Rarely, but deliciously, there was high drama like the time Dorothy Lundgren was making her way down the side aisle after communion and caught her beads on a pew railing. At the same instant that her beads were set free and bouncing across the sanctuary floor while the organ played solemnly in the background, Dorothy let loose a bar room profanity which mentioned the Lord by name and the Lord's father and the Bad Place in quick succession. We three Meyer children snorted and bucked in suppressed laughter while the last of the Lundgren beads bounced merrily away. What Sunday could be better?

All of these things one has time to notice if one is not busy memorizing Bible verses and the perambulations of Jesus in the New Testament.

But if my Bible recall is thin, what I do know something about is tennis, which gets short shrift in the Bible, but nevertheless is surprisingly relevant, at least to me and perhaps, after I explain, to you. What I mean is that at this point in Spirit of Joy's ministry, I think we are being asked to behave like a tennis player who feels confident of his position, so confident that he or she performs with abandon, with limbs free of constraint and with the heart open to the next good serve or act of service. In my own case, when I am on a tennis court I enjoy myself much more when I feel assured enough to

*(continued on next page)*

## Reflections from a New Member of the Finance Ministry

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be generous, when I can concede without hesitation a point close to the line, when I can applaud an opponent's ace rather than resent it.

Generosity of spirit, of outlook, of heart, and of action is a trustworthy companion to have in a tight sports contest and also at Spirit of Joy. And I will suggest that right now, as our church grapples with the challenge -- some of it financial, of attracting a permanent pastor, let us feel the strength of a capacious heart—Let us be at full blood volume. Our finance committee estimates that our monthly income must be about \$17,000 to hire a full time pastor. As a congregation we will need to raise our level of giving. We all know the depths of our own pocketbooks. (I knew that my grandmother's pocketbook smelled like lilacs when she opened hers.)

Maybe you can increase your giving by a small percent -- or not, but maybe someone else in our congregation can give more than that small percent. Together, let's aim for greater good.

What I know is true on a tennis court is that it is often the times when I am behind, when I am not headed toward a win that I profit the most by opening my little can of generosity rather than what I thought I brought with me, a family-sized can of you-know-what.

Please look with alacrity and an open heart at what you can do to help our church meet not only its mundane but necessary administrative costs like paying our worthy secretary and the water bill and the salary of a new pastor. But also, let's regard our mission to serve with our talents, our time, our sharing of what God has delivered so abundantly into our court.

"To whom much is given, much is required." "Generosity begets generosity." As an adult I am adding these two verses from Luke to my own list of Bible biggies, the "thou shalts." They will fit in my purse and my racquet bag, both.

Andrea Meyer

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### WELCOME PASTOR DAVID BRANDFASS AND PASTOR JULIE GERRISH



We are so fortunate this summer to host Pastor Brandfass and Pastor Gerrish to Spirit of Joy as they lead worship services while Pr. Braaten is away. They will be preaching on the theme: *'Revelation for our Times'*, leading us through this often misinterpreted and misused book in our Bible and connecting it to our contemporary life. You will not want to miss this series! They are sharing this theme in their preaching at Christ Lutheran Church, where it will be available through the Christ Lutheran website on the following Sunday. (i.e. The sermon at SOJ on July 6 will be available on Sunday, July 13th – usually in the afternoon.)

Christ Lutheran's website: [www.christsedona.org](http://www.christsedona.org)





## COUNCIL NEWS



We are inviting 100% participation in completing our Vitality Survey, which is a vital step in our call process as we seek a new pastor. This survey gives us a clear picture of who we are as a congregation and helps guide the synod and our leadership in finding the right pastoral match for Spirit of Joy. Every voice matters, and your honest feedback will help shape our future. We will be sending an email at the beginning of July that will have a link that takes you directly to the survey. If you are unable to use technology in this manner, we will have hard copies in the narthex and near Rosie's desk in the office.

Also, we're excited to share that we're planning to bring brand new chairs into our sanctuary! A special thank you to WELCA who has donated to the bulk of this expense. These new chairs will improve our worship space, and you can support this endeavor by sponsoring a chair. Each chair is approximately \$50.00. We invite you to prayerfully consider contributing and if you do choose to sponsor a chair, please write the word "chair" in the memo section of your check and put it in the collection basket or drop it off in the office.



### WELCA's Pancake Breakfast!

The ladies of WELCA will be serving up pancakes during fellowship on Sunday, July 6th. All are invited to come on over and enjoy some flap jacks!

## DAYTIME BOOK CLUB

The Daytime Book Club will not be meeting in July. The list below is for possible discussions in the fall. If not already a participant, join this lively group in the fall. Watch the August newsletter for a book choice and time of meeting.



1. ***The Frozen River***, Ariel Lawhon, YLN—Audio on CD, Regular and large print, ebook, Kindle, playaway
2. ***The Magic Hour***, Kristin Hannah, YLN Regular and Large Print, Audiobook on CD, ebook, Kindle
3. ***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime***, Mark Haddon, YLN—Reg Print, e-audio book, ebook, Kindle, Audio book on CD
4. ***James***, Perceval Everett—YLN Reg & Large Print, e-book, Kindle, playaway
5. ***Beyond Tuesday Morning***, Karen Kingsbury, YLN, Reg Print, e-book and Kindle
6. ***Flying Angels***, Danielle Steel, YLN, Reg, Lrg Prn, e-book
7. ***When We Meet Again***, Kristin Harmel, YLN Reg Print
8. ***Notorious RGB: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsberg***, Irwin Carmon, YLN copies: Regular Print, e-audio, e-audio on CD

## NEW CHAIRS ARE HERE!

Our new chairs for the sanctuary have arrived! Next week we will be removing the old chairs, having the carpet cleaned and placing the new chairs once they are put together. How exciting!

### THANK YOU...

to WELCA for their very generous gift to start the purchase of the chairs. Thanks to each and every one of you who have contributed to the additional cost (\$50/ea) of these new chairs. We could not have replaced them if it weren't for your generosity.

If you would like to contribute to this purchase, please place your donation in the collection basket making sure to note "Chairs" on the memo line. And look for a fresh, new sanctuary next Sunday!



## QUARTERLY STATEMENTS

In an effort to save on printing costs, quarterly contribution statements are now being printed or emailed on-demand. If you would like to receive your latest statement of giving, please contact Rosie in the office.

## MEMORIALS, HONORS AND GIFTS

**June 2025**

### JOY PACKS

Anita Young

### IN MEMORY OF

George Wells from Lucy Acheson  
Carolyn Ward from Ruth Tasa

### IN HONOR OF

Anita and Jon Young from  
Kip and Laura Stransky

### GIFTS

Pr. Conrad and Jennifer Braaten  
Bill Taylor



## WORSHIP SCRIPTURE READINGS

July 6: Isaiah 66:10-14; Psalm 66:1-9; Luke 10:1-11, 16-20; Revelation 1:1-20

July 13: Deuteronomy 30:9-14; Psalm 25:1-10; Luke 10:25-37; Revelation 13:1-18; 17:1-6

July 20: Genesis 18:1-10a; Psalm 15; Luke 10:38-42; Revelation 5:1-11

July 27: Genesis 18:20-32; Psalm 138; Luke 11:1-13; Revelation 2:1-7; 3:1-22

## 2025 SPIRIT OF JOY CHURCH COUNCIL

### Officers

**Kellie Sanders—President**  
ksanders0410@gmail.com, 815-751-1133

**Laura Stransky—Vice President**  
klstransky@gmail.com; 970-749-2270

**Pam Moody—Secretary**  
SOJCCPAM@gmail.com, 802-503-2598

**Rich Alley—Finance Officer**  
norgerich@aol.com; 928-713-2961

### Liaisons

**Bill Taylor—Property**  
j\_and\_btay@outlook.com;  
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**Mick Shanahan—Faith Formation**  
mobilrrtaz@gmail.com, 402-679-7990

**Sue Bro—In-Reach/Outreach**  
npsbro@outlook.com, 928-254-7029

### *Ex Officio*

Pr. Conrad Braaten  
prbraaten@gmail.com, 202-213-4235

# 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY

## WORD SEARCH

T M N W Q J E T A R B E L E C D Y  
 I M T Q H H Y M Q R Q U D U E I A  
 O Q T A W Q M Z Y E X U C C N T D  
 I N D E P E N D E N C E L C J A I  
 A S I O U O R H A M U A A T U Q L  
 N K S A M E R I C A R P P S O S O  
 U R P U F U B E E A Y S T R U B H  
 P O A Y D L D W T O E C I N C I P  
 K W R W E A A I L P O E A U E O N  
 F E K H T F O G I A D E U S D I H  
 Y R L I I N T R B E M D T N A T L  
 L I E T N P T Z E U R A E T R S C  
 U F R E U S L Q R R R U I U A A E  
 J V S O D L K V T S L R O K P J B  
 W I T O E O M O Y B B F I U P J L  
 I A S V Y E M R E D R E M M U S E

America

Blue

Britain

Celebrate

Declaration

Fireworks

Flag

Fourth

Freedom

Holiday

Independence

July

Liberty

Parade

Picnic

Red

Sparklers

Stars

Stripes

Summer

United

White



## FINANCIAL REPORT—May 2025



## EXPRESSIONS OF FAITH

If you know of someone that needs/wants help, fill out this form and put it in the "Peace" box.

Name(s) of member \_\_\_\_\_

Type of help wanted \_\_\_\_\_

How often \_\_\_\_\_

Your name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

## EXPRESSIONS OF FAITH

Expressions of Faith has been serving the congregation of Spirit of Joy since October of 2023. Our group of wonderful volunteers have provided meals, visits, cards, and phone calls to those needing a little extra help.

There is a poster in the Fellowship Hall that identifies members who have been involved in this ministry. Our goal is to continue to identify members needing our assistance. By the poster there are forms to fill out if you need additional help or know of someone from the congregation that needs help. Please put the completed information in the box so that we can get back to you. If you have emergent needs, please contact the office who will convey this information to the team.

Look for cards for you to sign on the table in the Fellowship Hall.

Thank you for your continued support.

Trish Wood  
email: [sumlady3601@yahoo.com](mailto:sumlady3601@yahoo.com)

### Operating Fund—May

Operating Fund Income	Operating Fund Expenses	Pastoral Call Fund Adj.	Net Income
\$ 14,722.79	\$ 12,042.83	\$ 4,200.00	\$ (1,520.04)

### Year-to-Date (Jan-May)

Operating Fund Income	Operating Fund Expenses	Pastoral Call Fund Adj.	Net Income
\$ 92,677.03*	\$ 59,235.60	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 12,441.43

\*Fundraising Income \$ 775.95      Youth \$460.00      Shoe Drive \$738.00

### 5/31/2025 Ending Balance

General Fund	88,810.08	
Mortgage Fund	3,777.73	
Pastoral Call Fund	\$21,000.00	(Banking:current vs full-time Pastoral expenses)
Restricted Ministries	<u>16,759.15</u>	
Ending Balance	\$130,346.96	

### Board Restricted Fund—May

Board Restricted Income	Board Restricted Expenses	Net Income
\$ 58.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ (3,156.00)

### Year-to-Date (Jan-May)

Board Restricted Income	Board Restricted Expenses	Net Income
\$ 680.00*	\$16,610.73**	\$ (15,930.73)

\*Thrivent Choice Dollars \$ 622.00

\*\*Youth Camp Fee \$250.00  
Piano Tuning \$700.00  
Building HVAC \$9,145.73  
Parking Lot \$5,415.00  
Landscaping \$1,100.00

### 5/31/2025 Ending Balance

Building Fund	\$ 0.00
Landscaping Fund	811.02
Mortgage Principal	1,592.00
Organ/Piano Fund	2,300.87
Restricted Designated	2,290.70
Restricted Undesignated	<u>11,197.06</u>
	\$ 18,191.65

Bank 11 month CD	\$ 10,000.00
Mission Investment Fund Savings Balance	\$ 2,422.96
Mission Investment Fund Mortgage Owed	\$118,982.58

# *Spirit of Joy* LUTHERAN CHURCH

330 Scenic Drive  
Clarkdale, Arizona 86324  
[www.sojaz.net](http://www.sojaz.net)



## SOJ Summer Worship Schedule

Sunday Worship—9:30am  
Fellowship—following Sunday worship

### July Highlights

3—Men's Group @ Red Rooster Café, 8am  
4—Independence Day—Office Closed  
6—Food Bank Sunday  
WELCA Pancake Breakfast during Fellowship  
10—WELCA Breakfast at Denny's, 9:30am  
17—Men's Group @ Red Rooster Café, 8am  
18—Church Council Mtg (CR), 1pm  
19—Men's Group at Red Rooster Café, 8:00am



***HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!!***