



*Spirit of Joy*  
LUTHERAN CHURCH



Dear People, who make Spirit of Joy so vibrant!

As I write this message I'm beginning to pack for the trip Jennifer and I will take from the Appalachian Mountains of southeast Virginia to Sedona and Clarkdale. I look forward to worshipping with you the first Sunday in September. It has been a special treat to listen in on the sermons shared this summer by Pastor Brandfass and Pastor Julie on "Revelation for our Times." I am with their words all the way, and hope that they have been challenging and stimulating to you who were able to hear their sermons in person. Thanks to Pr. Naomi and Tom for their worship leadership these last few Sundays. We are blessed!

Lots of things are cooking, and a few boiling over. The In-Reach/Outreach people are preparing for an active fall season with activities and projects that I hope will interest many of you. I've been pressing on the Spiritual Growth agenda at Spirit of Joy and so appreciate the work done by the planning group for our Learning Ministry at Spirit of Joy. It is my hope and prayer that all of you will think of participating in this important ministry at SOJ – if it becomes important for us who are here now, it will be even more important for people who stop in to see what's going on at Spirit of Joy! Thanks so much to Micah Swensen for promoting this Spiritual Growth agenda a few weeks ago at a "Faith in Motion"!!

And thanks for taking our "Vitality Survey" seriously. I'm looking forward to seeing the results of your response to the survey. Remember – we were hoping for 100% participation by SOJ members. Your Caring Ministry team has been doing a wonderful job of keeping up with prayers, concerns and visits during these past two months, and I am anxious to be brought up to date with their work.

We continue "on our way" as a congregation to achieve the goals of vitality, purpose and financial support of our congregation as we put prayer energy and passionate commitment into the Transition and Call Process this fall. We are blessed by wonderful and caring leadership. May we continue to be led with a Spirit of Joy!!!!

In Peace,

*Pastor Braaten*



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

Barbara Huber	02
Jason Lemke	07
Rick Alley	09
Lisa Simpson	14
Marge Gerhardt	15
Janice Knoblauch	21
Audrey Tavaschi	23
Elizabeth Tavaschi	23
Lucy Acheson	24
Rita Dunn	25
Pat Brown	26

Kaminski, Ray & Rozanne	09
Musil, Ian & Jennifer	11
Shanahan, Mick & Marcia	20
Goodwin, Mark & McGrew, Kristen	23



## 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.



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LUTHERAN CHURCH



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Rev. Conrad Braaten  
Interim Pastor  
prbraaten@gmail.com

Rosie West, Office Manager  
officesoj@sojaz.net

Website:  
www.sojaz.net

Send prayer requests to:  
prayer@sojaz.net

Visit us at:  
www.facebook.com/sojaz

## Communion Ministry



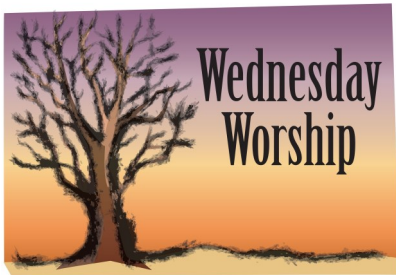
Please see Bob Dickson if you are interested in taking communion and/or visiting with homebound members.

# WELCOME BACK, PASTOR BRAATEN!

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH GROUPS—Sign Up Now!

With Spiritual Growth Groups, we are continuing a journey to equip the congregation of Spirit of Joy as a Learning Community. Beginning September 18th, the first two groups will meet on Thursdays in Bible Study 1 for a six-week commitment of 1½ hours per week to work with prayer, listening to Scripture (Galatians) and to one another. Pastor Braaten will be leading these first two groups, while he is equipping others to be group facilitators for Spiritual Growth Groups in the future. One group will meet at 10:00 am and another group at 5:00 pm on Thursdays, with a maximum of 10 people in each group. So, you are invited to reserve your spot by emailing Pastor Braaten at [prbraaten@gmail.com](mailto:prbraaten@gmail.com) as soon as possible, or by contacting Pastor personally. Spiritual Growth is a key component of being part of a congregation; it is Holy Time in our faith life. See you there!

### MID-WEEK WORSHIP



MIDWEEK EVENING WORSHIP resumes on Wednesday, Sept. 10th at 5:00 pm. This service provides an opportunity for people who want to worship in the evening, or who miss worship on Sunday. The worship service will include an abbreviated liturgy, a sermon-teaching by Rev. Dr. Craig Koester, Professor of New Testament at Luther Theological Seminary, hymns and Holy Communion. Through the coming months, Dr. Koester will be teaching the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.

### GATHER BIBLE STUDY

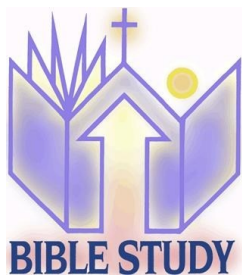
The Gather Bible Study will meet on Thursday, September 18th at 2pm in the Conference Room. We will be using the Gather magazine Study Guide for September. All are welcome to join us!



### SOJ's MEN'S GROUP



SOJ's Men's Group will meet at the Red Rooster Café in Old Town at 8am on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month. Our September meetings will be on **September 11th and September 25th**. All men are invited to come for fellowship and a discussion on the Bible readings for the upcoming Sunday. For more information, contact Bob Dickson, 480-532-5750.



## BIBLE STUDIES

Hope you're looking towards Fall as much as I am—heat wise that is! Yet it's also the time Spirit of Joy again starts its Bible studies. There are several that will be presented. I want to tell you about mine—the study of a man named Job that has a book of the Bible named after him. It's because Job is the main character in all of its 42 chapters. Once you get to know him, you'll never forget him!

We will begin the class on Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup> at 10am in Bible Study 1. It's the room directly across from our circular planter in our courtyard. The class will be on Tuesday mornings for six weeks ending on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Then there will be a 2 week break and hopefully a new Bible study will have been chosen by the group to start on November 4<sup>th</sup>. No obligation to stay with us however, but you are most welcome to do so.

There will be a sign-up sheet on the table in the narthex for our September 9<sup>th</sup> class.

I welcome back those who have journeyed with me in the past, and look forward to seeing some new biblical seekers. Absolutely no previous experience is required. We all learn from each other and together we learn more about our awesome God.

Peace! Pastor Naomi

### PSALMS FOR PRAYING AN INVITATION TO WHOLENESS by Nan C. Merrill

Psalms 8  
O Love, my Beloved,  
How powerful is your Name in all the earth!  
You whose glory is sung in heaven  
by the angels and saints,  
Who with the innocence and spontaneity of a child,  
Confound those who are mighty and proud,  
You comfort the unloving and fearful.  
When I look up at the heavens, at the work of Love's creation,  
at the infinite variety of your Plan,  
What is woman that you rejoice in her,  
And man that You do delight in him?  
You have made us in your image,  
You fill us with your Love;  
You have made us co-creators of the earth!  
Guardians of the planet!  
To care for all your creatures, to tend the land, the sea,  
and the air we breathe; all that you have made,  
You placed in our hands.  
O Love, my Beloved,  
How powerful is your Name in all the earth!

*Submitted by Pr. Naomi Barcanic*



## IN-REACH / OUTREACH TEAM

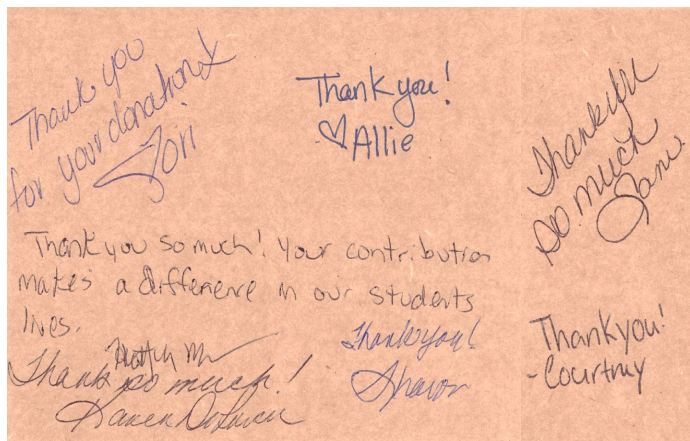
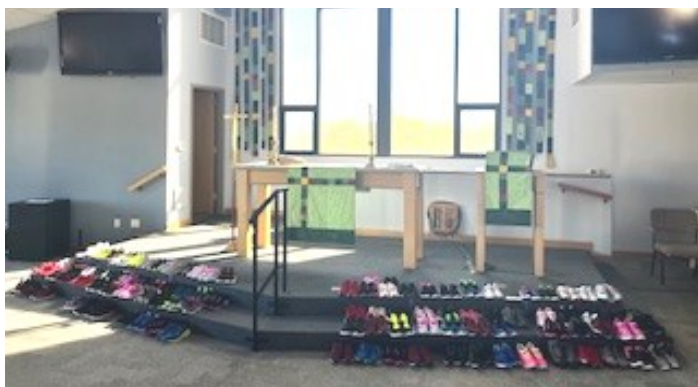
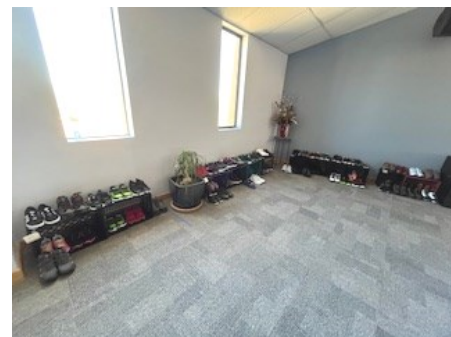
The In-Reach/Outreach Team will meet on Wednesday,  
September 3rd at 10am in the Conference Room.



## ANNUAL BACK TO SCHOOL SHOE DRIVE

On Sunday, August 3rd, Pr. David Brandfass blessed 161 pairs of shoes donated or purchased with your donations to our Annual Shoe Drive. This figure exceeds the 130 pairs we distributed last year! Schools benefitting from the drive are Cottonwood Community, Clarkdale-Jerome, Beaver-creek, Dr. Daniel Bright, Mountain View Prep, and Oak Creek School.

Thank you for your generosity and the staff at Big 5 Sporting Goods in Cottonwood and Prescott for their help in purchasing shoes!



Thank you note from Beaver Creek School in Rimrock.

On Tuesday, August 5, Kip & I delivered 27 pairs of shoes to Beaver Creek School here in Rimrock today. Heather McCallum, Student Support Services, (pictured above with Laura) was absolutely thrilled as the school had very few shoes left available, especially of the smaller sizes. She told us of one little boy who came to school in old plastic rain boots that "hurt my feet" because they were too small. It's all he had. Heather said he is SO happy with his new shoes!

Thanks to EVERYONE who helped with this project!

Laura & Kip Stransky

## JOYFUL MUSIC MAKERS

Join us as we Make a Joyful Noise every Sunday.

9:00am—Joyful Music Rehearsal

9:15am—Hymn Sing

11:00am—Joyful Music Rehearsal

All singers, instrumentalists and noise makers of all ages are welcome!





## FOOD BANK SUNDAY!

Non-perishable food items will be collected next weekend, September 7th, 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.)

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## DAYTIME BOOK CLUB

Title: **Magic Hour**

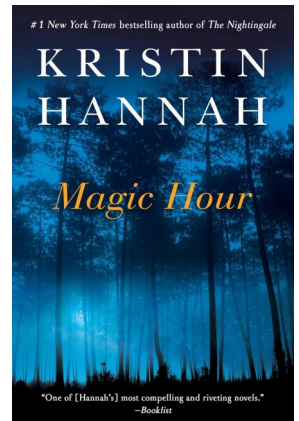
Author: **Kristin Hannah**

ISBN-13: 978-0-345-52218-4      416 pages

### *Summary:*

"Magic Hour" is a novel by Kristin Hannah, published in 2006, that tells the story of a child found in the woods and the psychologist who tries to help her. The story explores themes of trauma, healing, and the resilience of the human spirit, as well as the bonds that form between the characters.

Here's a more detailed look at the plot:



### **The Mystery:**

A young girl, seemingly feral, is found in the woods of the Pacific Northwest. She is mute and unable to communicate her past.

### **The Psychologist:**

Dr. Julia Cates, a child psychiatrist whose career was recently derailed by a scandal, is called in to help the girl.

### **The Small Town:**

Julia returns to her small hometown of Rain Valley, where her estranged sister, Ellie, is the chief of police.

### **The Journey:**

Julia, with the help of Ellie and a local doctor named Max, works to unravel the mystery of the girl's past and help her heal.

### **Themes:**

The novel explores themes of trauma, healing, family, and the power of human connection. "Magic Hour" is a character-driven story that delves into the emotional complexities of its characters and the impact of trauma on their lives. It's a story about finding hope and healing in the face of adversity.

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## WELCA NEWS



The ladies of WELCA will have their first meeting of the 2025-2026 year on Thursday, September 11th at 9:30am in the Fellowship Hall. This will be an important meeting to attend as they begin to plan activities for the upcoming year. All ladies are invited and encouraged to attend!

## MEMORIALS, HONORS & GIFTS

### AUGUST 2025

#### JOY PACKS

Anne Berry  
Anita Young  
Mary Stelpstra  
Ruth Tasa

#### IN MEMORY OF

Carolyn Ward from Marie Nowak

#### SHOES

Anne Berry  
Rosemary Coleman  
Mary Davis  
Carole Jones  
Pat Ruese  
Mary Stelpstra  
Ken & Dee Suhr  
Elizabeth Tavasci  
Ann Torruellas  
Eric & Michelle Young

#### CHAIRS

Patti Bays

The office will be closed on  
Monday, September 1st  
in observance of Labor Day.



## WORSHIP SCRIPTURE READINGS

- Sept 7: Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 1;  
Phil 1-21; Luke 14:25-33
- Sept 14: Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 51:1-10;  
1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10
- Sept 21: Amos 8:4-7; Psalm 113; 1 Tim 2:1-7;  
Luke 16:1-13
- Sept 28: Amos 6:1a, 4-7; Psalm 146; 1 Tim: 6:  
6-19; Luke 16:19-31

## 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 the office.

## 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;  
928-202-3337 (h); 928-274-1321 (c)

**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

## FINANCIAL REPORT—July 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—July

Operating Fund Income	Operating Fund Expenses	Pastoral Call Fund Adj.	Net Income
\$ 15,525.40	\$ 13,403.15	\$ 4,200.00	\$ (2,077.75)

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

Operating Fund Income	Operating Fund Expenses	Pastoral Call Fund Adj.	Net Income
\$ 130,582.01*	\$ 87,068.49**	\$ 29,400.00	\$ 14,113.52

\*Fundraising Income— \$775.95; Youth—\$700.00; Shoe Drive—\$2,843.00; Joy Pack Grant—\$1,926.00

\*\*Youth \$800.00; Shoe Drive \$1,542.72

### 7/31/2025 Ending Balance

General Fund	88,210.88	
Mortgage Fund	4,871.41	
Pastoral Call Fund	\$29,400.00	(Banking: current vs full-time Pastoral expenses)
Restricted Ministries	<u>17,275.14</u>	
Ending Balance	\$139,757.43	

### Board Restricted Fund—July

Income	Expenses	Net Income
\$ 337.00	\$ 7,045.41	\$ (6,708.14)

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

Income	Expenses	Net Income
\$ 7,342.00*	\$23,656.14**	\$ (16,314.14)

*Thrivent Choice Dollars	\$ 742.00	**Youth Camp Fee	\$250.00	Landscaping	\$1,100.00
WELCA for Chairs	\$5,000.00	Piano Tuning	\$700.00	Chairs	\$7,045.41
Donation for Chairs	\$1,600.00	Building HVAC	\$9,145.73		
		Parking Lot	\$5,415.00		

### 7/31/2025 Ending Balance

Building Fund	\$ 0.00
Landscaping Fund	811.02
Mortgage Principal	1,654.00
Organ/Piano Fund	2,300.87
Restricted Designated	2,950.70
Restricted Undesignated	<u>10,751.65</u>
	\$18,468.24

Bank 11 month CD	\$ 10,000.00
Mission Investment Fund Savings Balance	\$ 2,424.58
Mission Investment Fund Mortgage Owed	\$115,562.24



## LEADERSHIP

*From Boundless Magazine  
Summer 2025*

## A Rural Revival

A few years ago, members of Nazareth Lutheran Church in rural Cogswell, N.D., faced a leadership crisis. After leaving a parish agreement with another church, they found themselves without a pastor. Council President Steve Ringdahl remembers the many ways they tried to figure out a way forward. They formed a discernment committee and bought a big, revolving whiteboard that they filled with ideas in the form of pictures, diagrams and scribbled notes. They got in touch with the synod office and attended meetings with other rural congregations that were struggling to fill their leadership vacuums.

They had no luck finding an ordained minister who would come to Cogswell, a town with fewer than 200 residents and no paved roads. So they turned their focus inward and began to rethink what a minister could look like.

As Nazareth members worked with staff from their geographical conference and the synod, they learned about different kinds of lay leadership such as synod-authorized ministers (SAMs). SAMs are trained to preach and administer sacraments such as Holy Communion to their communities when an ordained minister isn't available. SAM training sounded interesting to some, but the classes took place hours away, in Alexandria, Minn. Many community members, including Steve, are full-time farmers or ranchers and can't be away for that long. They wondered if the training could come to them.

With your support, that's exactly what happened. Community members worked with Deacon Erin Power, director for evangelical mission in the Eastern North Dakota Synod, to apply for a synod vitality grant, supported by your gifts to ELCA Where Needed Most. The grant allowed SAM instructors to travel to North Dakota at no cost to the students. Pastor Julie Johnson, who leads a three-point parish near Nazareth, organized the program. The classes were open to all, and 27 people attended the first session. Twelve people, including Steve, stepped forward to complete the full SAM training.

Brenda Schreiner, a member of Pastor Julie's parish, attended the class on visitation outside of a traditional church setting because she wanted to learn new ways to use her nursing skills. After that, she just kept coming. While training as an SAM, Brenda embraced Pastor Julie's vision for the parish: no one has to carry the burden of leadership alone, and the whole community helps sustain the church's ministry.

Together the SAM students learned about theology, Scripture, spiritual practices and preaching. The preaching class, which they took from Luther Seminary online, was especially eye-opening for Brenda. As she learned how to choose Scripture and build a sermon, she thought, "Oh, my gosh. We can really do this."

The 12 SAMs were commissioned in their home congregations in June but want to keep learning together. They plan to take a few more classes and to check in with each other regularly. These days, Steve likes to say that Nazareth is "pastor-poor but mission-rich." Its revolving whiteboard is now filled with the names of people who will supply the pulpit throughout the year. Without a regular pastor, they invite different preachers every week, including SAM students, representatives from local organizations and some visiting pastors. New energy flows through the congregation and into the surrounding community. In Brenda's parish, SAMs are supporting Pastor Julie by preaching at one of three services every week.

Your gifts will continue to multiply through these 12 new lay ministers. The original cohort wants to form a SAM "strike team" that can travel around the area, providing respite for pastors who need it. They want to keep offering classes and fostering more leaders, showing similar communities how they can train SAMs locally too. "We really believe this is the future," says Brenda. "These classes and the work that we're starting to do have been truly life-changing." This grassroots movement — powered by your generosity — has revived a community of faith.



*In rural North Dakota, your gifts to ELCA Where Needed Most enabled 12 laypeople to become the leaders their community needs.*



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## September Highlights

- 1—Labor Day—Office Closed
- 3—In-Reach/Outreach Team Meeting (CR), 10am
- 7—Food Bank Sunday
- 9—Bible Study—Book of Job begins (BS1), 10am
- 10—Wednesday Worship resumes, 5pm
- 11—Men's Group @ Red Rooster Café, 8am  
WELCA Meeting (FH), 9:30am
- 18—Bible Study—Galatians (BS1) begins. Classes  
at 10am & 5pm  
Gather Bible Study (CR), 2pm
- 21—Quilt Sunday. Blessing at 9:30am Worship.
- 24—Church Council Mtg (CR), 1pm
- 25—Men's Group at Red Rooster Café, 8:00am  
Daytime Book Group (CR), 2pm

**HAPPY LABOR DAY!**

## SOJ Weekly Worship Schedule

Mid-Week Worship—  
Wednesdays 5pm, starting Sept. 11

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