



Spirit of Joy

Annual Report

SPIRIT OF JOY LUTHERAN CHURCH February 2012

A Review of 2011 + A Prelude to 2012

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Pastor Ed's Report

On a recent Wednesday, one of the people in my Bible Study said ...

I loved last week's sermon!

(I think it was because I wasn't preaching that day!)

It was, instead, the Mission Team which was sharing the story of their ministry in Belize. And this Bible Study member – a new member of the church and a person relatively new to faith – said ...

Their sermon made me so proud to be a member of this church. Look at all that we do, and the difference we make in people's lives.

It's amazing what this little church does.

I loved her use of the word, "we."

It was "we" who went to Belize.

It was "we" who built a home for the Belle family.

I didn't hop on that particular plane. Like most of you, I didn't get go on this particular trip. But as the Apostle Paul taught us, "we" are one body. When Alexa is pounding nails in Belize, I am pounding nails with her. And when Kelly is praying for Mr. Belle's crushing pain, we all are praying too!

Something wonderful is happening at Spirit of Joy right now.

Half of it is because of our passion for **Reaching More**.

Joining Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ has absolutely propelled us farther and faster into Mission.

(When you read the Annual Report from Missions, you'll be cheering with the woman in my Bible Study: *It's amazing what this little church does.*)

The other half of our strength is because of our focus on **Deeper Faith**.

This church loves God, and we are passionate in our pursuit of God's Word and God's truth. This is producing new Bible Studies, more Discipleship Groups, and a bounty of wonderful fruit.

Our Sunday School Hour is the most recent symbol of our spiritual vitality. Several weeks ago, Kristen asked all of our Adult Sunday School teachers to announce the new semester of their classes in worship. One of the long-time leaders said, "There were so many great new classes that I thought my class would shrink. It grew!"

And so did all the others.

The Spirit is stirring!

You can feel it in worship too – the choir leads, the congregation sings, the piano shakes, the Word is proclaimed, and God is honored.

The final piece of our congregational vision – **Joyful Community** -- is a fruit of the vibrancy of our first two emphases.

When a church is focused on the right things – deep faith and generous service – joy is the inevitable result!

I love Spirit of Joy.

+ I give thanks for our people – for our committee chairs, for all our volunteers, and for all our teachers who joyfully pass on the faith.

+ I give thanks for our staff. Kristen, Rhonda, and Ian bless us with Deeper Faith. Karen's been my right hand for years. Tracy is a new gift in the office. Vickie is faithful with finances. Kathy loves our little ones.

And to Pastor Fran, I say a special word of thanks. As she partially retires, I praise God for her wisdom, compassion, abiding faith, treasured friendship, and awesome storytelling. Even better, I'm glad she'll be sticking around!

+ I give thanks for our council. I hope you realize what a treasure it is to have leaders who truly pray together.

+ Finally, I give thanks for your generosity. At a time when jobs are scarce, stresses are mounting, and families are hurting, your generosity helps *us all* make a daily difference in the lives of others. As I said earlier, "we" are one body. If one of us hurts, we all limp. And when one of us gives, it makes a difference for us all.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Ed Thomas

Annual Treasurer's Report For the Calendar Year 2011

Dear Members and Friends of Spirit of Joy,

Once again we entered 2011 trusting that God would provide for our needs. Matthew 6:33 "And he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern."

And once again GOD was faithful and provided for us at Spirit of Joy. We stayed conservative with our expenses and generous in our outreach.

We received income from general fund contributions, facility use donations and interest income of **\$471,226** and we incurred operating expenses of **\$471,144**. We did not thank God have any major unexpected expenditure this year.

We ended the year with assets of **\$2,711,065** and liabilities of **\$1,237,096**. As a congregation, we tithed 10% of all our general fund receipts for a total of **\$46,528** to our Missions/Outreach Fund. We also made additional charitable contributions of **\$42,391** to our local, national and international Missions activities, Soup Kitchen, Haiti Disaster Relief, China Orphanage, Japan and individuals in need. In addition, the G.U.Y.S. group gave **\$5,082** to seminary students, Community Crossing, Wycliffe Bible Translators and many individuals in need. WELCA gave **\$1,249** to Turning Point, Thanksgiving bags, individuals in need and gift certificates for college students.

From a stewardship perspective, individual families who pledged to the General Fund gave **\$280,663** against their pledges of **\$292,688**. In addition, members gave **\$130,726** against their 2011 pledges of **\$319,632** for the Capital Campaign and Building/Property Fund. The congregation also provided **\$1,570** to the Awana Program, **\$314** to Audio/Visual Fund, **\$871** to CE/Vacation Bible School, **\$2,282** to fund our music ministries, **\$1,396** for Youth Activities and **\$1,568** for Flowers.

2012 will be another year of blessings. We are confident in God's sufficiency. Our 2012 weekly need is **\$9,525**. We need to trust God's plan for this church and the many ministries it provides for the congregation and the surrounding community. After much prayer I am submitting the 2012 budget which is based on our 2011 expenses and the giving that is needed to support them. I am certain that Spirit of Joy will once again be obedient to His call on our lives and our church family. Thank you for the privilege of serving you as treasurer for the past three years. To God be the glory.

Your Friend and Sister in Christ,

Michele Bender

Spirit of Joy Congregation Treasurer

Faith Development & Counseling

More and more, I'm seeing that faith development and life transformation happen in community. God can certainly grow us in our one-on-one relationship with Him as we spend time with Him. However, when we live out what He's teaching us in the context of our relationships with others, that's where true life-change happens... and especially so in a community where individuals are committed to and truly love one another.

As Proverbs 27:17 says: "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."

In small groups and Sunday School classes, we can

allow this process of sharpening to happen by both listening to others' experiences and insights and sharing our own experiences and insights. Particularly as God's Word is brought into our conversations, His Truth brings life, sharpens our minds and realigns our hearts as we allow it to.

When Jesus raised his friend Lazarus from the dead, a beautiful thing happened. God's glory shined through this miracle, and Jesus also spoke powerful words to the community around Lazarus: "[Lazarus] came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, 'Take off the grave clothes and let him go'" (John 11:44, emphasis mine). Jesus asked the community to take off Lazarus' grave clothes. In the same way, He's given us the opportunity to play a part in bringing each other to a place of new life and wholeness, as we minister to one another through our interactions.

Consistent, authentic community with other believers is truly powerful and transformational. I am privileged to be a part of seeing God's glory shine through counseling and overseeing various aspects of faith development at Spirit of Joy, including leading a few small groups.

In Christ,

Kristen Sigmon

Music Ministry

Thank you God for a wonderful year! You have blessed and multiplied our music ministry here at Spirit of Joy greatly. We saw the beginning of some new branches of music ministry as well as an increase in participation in all of them. We were fortunate enough to find a good deal on an electric drum set this year which will be used for Youth praise band, Praise Band, cantatas, choir anthems, etc. This will enhance our musical offerings as well as offer volume control, unlike a traditional drum set. God has been so good. What a privilege to help lead worship in this manner.

¹³ it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised Jehovah, saying, For He is good; for His loving kindness endureth forever; that then...^{14b} the glory of Jehovah filled the house of God.

2 Chron 5:12-14

First Decade Choir

Spirit of Joy is so blessed to have Janie Owens and Fran Whelan leading our First Decade choir. This

choir includes children up to 10 years of age who have a desire to serve God by praising His name in song. They offer an anthem once a month as well as a Christmas Cantata. The kids also joined the adult choir for their cantata. In the summer they went to a local assisted living facility to offer up some of their favorite anthems as an outreach.

Sing aloud unto God our strength: Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

Psalm 81:1

Youth Praise Band

Thank you to Theresa Cogar for facilitating our Youth Praise Band. Under the leadership of our Youth, Robbie Thomas and Alexa Roseman, we have had a spirit-filled year. They offer up a youth lead service three to four times a year. They meet weekly to practice, praise God and fellowship. This is a great way for the kids to learn how to evangelize through music. Also a wonderful opportunity to increase their confidence and draw closer to God and each other.

I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the peoples:

I will sing praises unto Thee among the nations.

Psalm 57:9

God's Girls

What a delightful addition this year, thanks to Allison Jones, of our God's Girls liturgical dance troupe. This is open to girls (kindergarten- teen) who want to praise God with the "Dance". We can worship God with our hearts, our hands, our minds, our voices and our bodies!!! Thank you girls for enhancing our worship with your special offerings. This group meets seasonally.

Let them praise His name in the dance: Let them sing praises unto Him with timbrel and harp. --- Psalm 149:3

Handbells

Our handbell ministry has been allowed to flourish this year! We are grateful for the leadership of Janie Owens and Mary Louise Thomas. This has been a year of transition and of growth. God has blessed us with a full bell choir and even some of our youth wanted to join in. This choir meets weekly and prepares special pieces for Easter, Christmas season and Sunday morning worship.

Make a joyful noise unto God, all the earth: --- Psalm 66:1

Praise Band

Thanks again to our faithful folks who help us to lead worship on Sunday mornings and for our special music, services and cantatas. This group adds depth and beauty to our musical offerings. They meet weekly through most of the year. A special treat that we get every year is the praise band led outdoor services through the summer. What a bless-

ing! Thanks for the hard work.

Thanks so much to our own, Ian Faires! Worship would not be the same without his enthusiastic and joyful arrangements every Sunday leading us in praise to our King. He gladly gives us his time and talents, and usually goes above and beyond the call of duty! Thanks for all your hours of preparation and for allowing us to worship unrestrained.

I would be remiss not to include Robbie Thomas and his sound/tech team in this group. The sound makes as much of a difference to our offerings as the people and instruments that create it. Thank you all for your expertise and your ministry.

Praise Him with timbrel and dance:

Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe.

Psalm 150:4

Jehovah is ready to save me: Therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments All the days of our life in the house of Jehovah. --- Isaiah 38:20

Worship Choir

What a blessing my dear choir has been to me this season. Each year they step up to new challenges with enthusiasm and a song in their hearts. These people truly have a heart for God and give up their time and their talents in a sacrifice of praise. Each year we offer weekly anthems at alternating services with weekly rehearsals, special music at Easter, Reformation, All Saints and through the summer. Our favorite opportunity to praise must be our annual Christmas cantata, which we start preparing at our yearly choir retreat in the fall. The choir also enjoys outreach opportunities by offering our cantata and some of our favorite anthems to local nursing homes and assisted living facilities at Christmas and in the summer.

"Go Ye into the world and make disciples of all the nations.."

Matt. 28:19

This year the choir stepped up to do some fund raising to help defray costs for worship, anthems, cantatas, instrument repairs (piano and bells), sound needs and the new drum set. We started a "Treats for music" offering and are selling tote bags to help in this area. We want to be able to continually offer our best in praise to the Lord. Thanks so much to those faithful friends who have given love offerings to support the music ministry needs.

¹⁸ ... be filled with the Spirit; ¹⁹ speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

Ephesians 5:18-20

It has been a blessing, an honor and a privilege to worship the Father alongside all the folks that have

stepped up to be a part of the music ministry this year! It is not just one person that makes this happen. It takes all of us working together as the body of Christ. Thank You, Lord, for pouring out Your love and generosity on this ministry this year! We continue to strive to point to YOU, to serve YOU, and to glorify and worship YOU ALONE in the year to come!!! Amen.

Rhonda Mauney
Spirit of Joy Music Director

Volunteer Ministry

Each New Year brings joy to me. It makes me reflect on the past year and set goals for the upcoming year. **It is good to evaluate our lives periodically and try to keep or reestablish balance.** No matter where we're at on our faith journey, letting God direct our steps in His path for us will always be beneficial, not just to us but also to others.

One way God may be directing your steps this year is in service to others. We have many volunteer opportunities at Spirit of Joy. This serves not only to bless others, but also to bless you as you deepen your relationship with Christ.

God made you special. God loves you. God needs you! God has a plan just for YOU! It might even be a new plan this year, something different than it was last year.

*"God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to **use them to help each other**, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessings." 1 Peter 4:10*

This past year, more members filled out their Time and Talent Forms than in previous years! This helps staff, teams and groups with scheduling, training and communication, and primarily get YOU connected into our various ministries.

Under the suggestion of the Christian Education Team, in 2011 we designed a separate form for our children and youth. In previous years, we only listed adult opportunities on our time and talent form. This was a successful change. We updated the Volunteer Narthex Rack. The new brochures effectively communicate opportunities to the congregation and save paper with the new format.

Our new members were given the opportunity to hear about the many volunteer roles at Spirit of Joy and were encouraged to serve where God has called them.

Christian Education suggested that we thank our Sunday School Teachers. During Worship Service we were able to recognize our Sunday School Teachers and helpers and give them special recognition gifts.

We also recognized several volunteers who have served with our Christian Education ministry for five,

ten and ten plus years.

We have many office volunteers we are thankful for and we were able to surprise them with a "SOJ Café" lunch and hand-made ornaments as a thank you gift.

Volunteer Ministry information was published in the monthly newsletter with information about volunteering at Spirit of Joy and encouraging members to volunteer.

It is a "Joy" helping many members "plug in" to Spirit of Joy and serve God and it is also a joy helping ministries organize their responsibilities and volunteers.

Our church would not be what it is today if it weren't for so many of you who graciously give of your time and resources for this church family and to reach outside the walls, as well. We are thankful for every one of you!

I, personally, enjoy serving God at Spirit of Joy and serving beside my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Your Sister in Christ,

Karen Weiner
Volunteer Coordinator

Council President

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It has been a great year for your 2011 Church Council! It has been an honor to work alongside such professional people doing God's work. As most of you know I started this year as your Vice President working on Communications. It was August when the Tomsovic family moved to Illinois leaving a vacancy in our Council. I was voted in as council president for the remainder of 2011. I have to say that working with this council has been nothing short of miraculous. I am in awe with what was accomplished in 2011. From our commitment to Missions near and abroad to planting our first Spirit Of Joy Garden. I want to thank the entire Spirit Of Joy family for your prayers and kind words during my time on council.

Yours in Christ,
Thomas A. Lieske, Jr.
SOJ Council President

Christian Education

Two thousand eleven was another full and blessed year in Christian Education. By God's grace, we've helped guide and develop the faith of our congregation's children, youth and adults. But none of this would have been possible without the many willing and dedicated volunteers who are the driving force behind Christian Education ministries at Spirit of Joy.

Children

Our children's ministry impacts include Sunday School, AWANA, and Vacation Bible School. Our Children's Sunday School program, which was successfully led for many years by Mary Hejka, is currently thriving under the new leadership of Adam and Elizabeth Batten. Approximately 35-40 children participate each week. Many teachers give their time every week to help train up the Spirit of Joy children in the Word of God. Many others have donated snacks to help keep bellies full during teaching. The children were able to participate in sharing Thanksgiving bags with local families as a way of Reaching More.

The **AWANA program** is in its fourth year and still thriving! Under the dedicated coordination of Janie Owens, children are excited about learning and memorizing Scripture every week. Many volunteers have given of their time both last year and this year to make this ministry successful. Volunteers include 15 youth and 18 adults. The children look up to their team leaders, and especially their youth role models, and love the time they get to spend together. AWANA has approximately 50 children in attendance every week.

Vacation Bible School in Summer 2011 was full of songs, games and Pandamania this year under the detailed and enthusiastic leadership of Theresa Cogar. Approximately 50 kids participated in the program held in the evenings. Integral to the program were the many youth and adult teachers, group leaders, and decorators, and the congregation was great about donating supplies, snacks and money to help cover the cost of attending.

Youth

Youth Sunday School wrapped up in the spring under John Hejka's faithful leadership and resumed in the fall with a modified Journey 2 Adulthood format. The classes are using a small group format with an increased focus on Bible study and intentional faith development. Leaders are investing more than just one morning a week; they are investing their lives in building relationships with the youth, as well. About 25-30 students are involved each week.

Youth Group continues to meet on Sunday evenings under the leadership of Pastor Ed and assisted by Chris Kramer. In June, they wrapped up the Harry Potter series with an end-of-the-year party and in August started their Quest as Secret+Keepers. The theme verse is Mark 4:11, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you." Each week youth experience food, fellowship, fun and deeper faith, and are being instilled with the virtues of respect and manners. About 30-35 students participate each week. The group has "Reached More" by volunteering at Samaritan's Feet and shopping for the Union

County shelter. The Student Leadership Team, a handful of 10th-12th graders led by Angela Carlson, provides leadership for the younger students, plan various activities including Trunk or Treat and an Easter Egg Hunt for children, as well as youth lock-ins, Youth Sundays, Christmas and other parties, and have developed renovation plans for the youth rooms.

Adults

Our adult Christian Education ministries include Adult Sunday School and Small Groups. In 2011 Sunday School classes a strong emphasis was placed on studying the Bible. This includes studies on John, Paul's prison letters, and Bible in a Year. Other class studies include book studies, such as Wild at Heart by John Eldredge, Radical by David Platt and Bait of Satan by John Bevere, and topical studies, such as parenting and saving money. A class was also offered for 18 to 20-somethings. We average about 45-50 participants in Sunday morning classes. There are also numerous small groups that meet both at SOJ and in various homes. There are about 28 groups meeting with 140-145 participants. In addition to the regular small groups, in fall 2011, many groups in the congregation participated in Pastor Ed's 8-week study entitled Discovering Spirit, Uncovering Joy. This study has touched the lives of many both within and beyond our congregation.

The Christian Ed team also sponsored an intergenerational Sunday School Thanksgiving weekend, with the help of the Fellowship Team, to help kick-off the advent season and give families an opportunity to grow together in faith.

We are thankful for the dedicated teachers and leaders who have given their time to help train and grow our church on the journey of faith. We're also thankful for those who have worked behind-the-scenes and have donated their time, gifts, and resources this year to our Christian Education ministries. We also especially thank our Lord and Savior for guiding our Spirit of Joy family deeper in faith this past year.

In Christ's love,
The Christian Ed Team

Communications Committee

The communication team and evangelism team are now merged. Many good things have gone on this year with the communications. However, there is still much to do! Some of the work is very visible as you drive around the Weddington area with our new window clings for the car. This helps get the word on the street about our incredible family as we run errands, go to work and journey in our cars.

The narthex rack cards have also been streamlined and updated for all ministries and teams at Spirit of Joy. This is where visitors can grab brochures for ministries they are interested in learning more about. This has a more professional look and the cards actually use less paper than before. The narthex rack was moved around the corner from the office in case you want to go check it out.

The SOJ website was updated this fall and is the go-to for the current newsletter, announcements, blogs, and pictures. It is being updated regularly and the hope is that people will miss fewer opportunities due to "I didn't know that" syndrome.

In addition to the website update, SOJ has a facebook page that is frequently updated. Most recently, it was a source of sharing updates from the Belize Team. Facebook allows for more pictures to be uploaded and shared than on the website alone. The youthgroup has a facebook page that is used to communicate events and happenings as well as photos with subscribed youth.

Pastor Ed posts his daily devotions to his blog that is easy to subscribe to in order to receive this blessings in you inbox every day. Other blogs include the mission team, Kristen's encouragement, Pastor Fran's reflections and the music ministry. Some are being revamped. Links to the active and available blogs are on the website and facebook page.

There has also been some upgrading of the sound and projection system in preparation for recording the sermons to make into podcasts so all can hear the message - even on weeks you can't be there. One upgrade has been the addition of a television in the narthex that shows the announcement slides on a continuous loop. Another tool to combat "I didn't know that" syndrome.

The evangelism branch of the team send cards to visitors, takes jars of jam as a welcome present, and overall makes visitors know that Spirit of Joy is a warm and welcoming family.

Plans for 2012 include striving to continue to improve communication throughout all ministries at Spirit of Joy and as well as reaching out to visitors, regular attenders and members to share God's blessings with all.

In Christ's love and service,

Chris Kramer

and the entire Communications Team

Fellowship Committee

Committee Members: Becky Chambers, Theresa Cogar, Venita Cronk, Ursula Fick, Lynn Helmer, Erin Helms, Kim Hyland, Marilyn Peterson, Kathi Roberts, Pat Schell, Corinne Schroeder, Rose Anne Van

Leeuwen and honorary members-Sloan and Spencer Hyland **Council Liaison:** Mike Cogar

On January 23rd we hosted a **Chili Cook-Off** and we raised \$266 which went to the **Pastor's Discretionary Fund**.

We hosted the **annual congregational meeting** on February 6th.

On April 9th we hosted a **potluck for Pastor Michele and Pastor Josue from Haiti**.

We held our **2nd annual churchwide picnic** on May 1st at Colonel Beatty Park. It was well attended.

We hosted 3 summer fellowship events:

June 5th - Chocolate Sunday

July 3rd - Red, White and Blue Sunday

August 7th - Salad Sunday

On August 6th we hosted a **shower for Paul and Meredith Thomas**.

On August 28th we provided **refreshments for the children's Rally Day**.

We hosted **Ice Cream Sunday** on September 4th after the Blessings of the Animals.

We participated in the Adult Rally Day, displaying our activities and different opportunities for people to serve on the Fellowship Committee.

On October 8th we hosted **"The Fall Fiesta"**.

On **Commitment Sunday**, November 20th, we served cider and donuts.

We provided drinks and set up for the potluck on November 27th for the **Advent Gathering**.

We organized and hosted **several funeral receptions** throughout the year.

Thanks goes to Becky Chambers who heads the **care meal team**. She and her team provided many care meals to our members. Also, thanks to Tracy Baker who headed the team several years before stepping down this year.

Thanks to all the faithful members of the committee, our helpers, and for Mike, our liaison.

Our meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 in the library. Everyone is welcome.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Schell

Committee Chair

Generosity Team

"The Lord Jesus himself said: It is more blessed to give than to receive" Acts 20:35

We changed our name from Stewardship to GENEROSITY. It was felt that this new name would better communicate to all what our mission is at Spirit of Joy. We prayerfully continued to follow that mission

.....to encourage our church members to give of their time, talents, and treasures for God.

RALLYS

Coordinating with all of the "groups" in the church, Generosity members did the work to help plan and kick off the Youth and Teen Rally, and Adult Rally before the beginning of the church year in the Fall. Both Rallys were held on separate Sundays in August and helped to showcase the various groups in the church which support both our children and adults. Opportunities to gather information about the groups and sign up to join were available for all.

BI-LO BOOSTER PROGRAM

We encouraged our members to "give a gift" to Spirit of Joy by shopping at their local BI-LO Food Market which offers 1% of sales for churches and other charities. Three simple steps are needed: have your Bonuscard swiped each time at the register, have the enrollment card swiped once (available in the SOJ office) at the register, and then your purchases are eligible for a gift to Spirit of Joy. Some of our members used this opportunity to buy their Holiday gift cards at BI-LO and gave a Holiday gift to our church!

COMMITMENT TIME

This year, Karen Weiner suggested she gather the time and talent information from adults and children prior to the Fall in order to better coordinate getting that information from our members in conjunction with our Rallys.

NOVEMBER WAS COMMITMENT MONTH

We prepared to then focus on giving a portion of our TREASURE to the LORD. The Benders graciously agreed to present an overview of our church finances, Pastor preached on the power and joy of giving, "I Refuse" music spoke to us of giving, and all was culminated in a decorated sanctuary and Harvest of Faith Sunday as pledges were collected for 2012.

Blessings,

Janice Kother

GUYS Group

God Unites Yielded Servants

God Unites Yielding Servants (GUYS) met regularly on the second Saturday of each month.

We had physically-filling breakfasts and spirit-filling devotions. In addition to meeting monthly, GUYS financially supports several of the SOJ missionaries, completes service projects and go on mission trips.

Church centered service projects include setting up and tearing down the SOJ Christmas tree and HANDS flower cart and hosting a cutting party for the AWANA Grand Prix.

GUYS also hosted several meals for SOJ including the Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner, Sweetheart Banquet, Easter breakfast, and monthly breakfasts during the summer. We are extremely thankful to Deames Huffman for doing much of the cooking.

Mission trips consisted of the January trip to Community Crossing in McDowell County, WV. The GUYS travel up there to help with seasonal repairs over a long weekend. A group also went to Lutheridge in the spring to help get the camp ready for the summer season.

Other service projects included repairing a member's carport, yard work and home repairs for another member, roof repair for a neighbor in need, and assisting with multiple member and neighbor's moves. A group also helped with painting and carpentry work at Redeemer Lutheran in preparation for their after school tutoring program. We took a hiatus this year from the live nativity but hope to bring it back in December with a re-done set so we as a church family can bless our community.

2012 promises to hold more mission and service opportunities as well as meetings and meals. We hope to see more men join the monthly meetings on the second Saturday of the month at 8am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Kramer

H.A.N.D.S.

His ANointed Daughters Serving

"Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy." Psalm 126:2-3

January 2011 started out with several members volunteered to help the **Second Chance Boutique in Monroe**. The end of December is always a great month for donations and Second Chance Boutique was in need of assistance in order to process donations for sale in their shop.

February, Sharon Eichler hosted the **Secret Sister Party** in her home and fun was had by all who attended. Chocolate was the theme of the party in celebration of Valentine's Day. Every year the Secret Sisters are revealed at this party and new pairings are created for the new year.

In April, with the assistance of all members of Spirit of Joy, we collected about 45 **Easter baskets** for the

less fortunate and delivered them to Social Services. Also in April we sent much appreciated gift cards to the students attending college from our congregation.

We began May with our **fourth annual Mother's Day Flower Cart** where we sold roses to the children (and fathers!) between Sunday services. Then we packed up and headed to the beach for our **annual Women's Retreat** where the theme was "What's Love Got to do With It". The women in attendance learned about love and doing everything in love. It was a heart touching experience for many and a fun, relaxing weekend for all. Shortly after our stay at Isle of Palms we learned of the passing of the Herb Loadholt's wife. Herb is the coordinator for the retreat center at Isle of Palms, SC and has always been a great help in organizing our retreats. In memory of his wife (Becky Loadholt) we sent Herb a monetary contribution for him to use as he wished for the Center.

Our seventh annual **Mothers & Daughters Tea** was held in June. While snacking on tea sandwiches, cookies and other goodies, we had a great time with a "Hat Contest" and the Mother of the Year. We also celebrated the men of our congregation by providing breakfast for the GUYS group at their monthly meeting.

The end of summer had us participating in two events. August was **Rally Day** for adults. With the help of Desiree Ware, we were able to display a digital album of activities sponsored by H.A.N.D.S. throughout the year. In September, we provided a Sunday dinner of Chili and Corn Bread to 45 people at the **Union County Soup Kitchen**.

In October, we participated in the **Fall Fiesta**. We had an absolutely great time with our "Bake Walk." Thanks to everyone that donated a baked sweet (cakes, cookies, cake pops, brownies and the like) we were able to make a monetary donation to **Turning Point in Monroe**.

November brought about our annual **Thanksgiving dinner bag** event. With everyone's help we were able to provide Thanksgiving dinner to 65 families in through the Union County Department of Social Services.

The last month of the year was very busy. First we **decorated the Sanctuary** for Christmas. Next, the **Secret Sisters had their annual Christmas party** where gifts were exchanged anonymously. No names were revealed but boy was there lots of fun. Then, through the efforts of additional members of our church, we were able to send Dolls on Mission to Belize with our mission team. Finally, the **Angel Tree** provided toys, clothing and other gift items for children through the Union County Christmas Bureau. Of course, all of our efforts, such as the Easter Baskets, Thanksgiving bags & Angel Tree gifts, were aided by every member of Spirit of Joy and for that

we are truly thankful. We have been blessed by your generosity. In the coming year we plan to continue our efforts to serve our church, our community and the world and invite all of the women of our congregation to join us as we serve our Lord and Savior.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Richardson

Mission Outreach

God has blessed Spirit of Joy, and Spirit of Joy has responded. We are indeed a congregation who cares about the "least of these" (Mt 25:35-45). Just as God directs each of us to do, our church tithes (i.e., gives 10%) its income; that is, we designate \$48,000 for outreach.

The first \$3,000 goes to LCMC for our affiliation fees. We then split the remaining \$45,000 equally between local needs and international/national/regional needs. This year, due to the generosity of individuals, a grant from Thrivent, and carryover from 2010, we actually were blessed with ~\$61,000 in outreach. Below is the breakdown of how those \$ were spent. And that does not begin to reflect the additional generosity you showed through Mission Trip fundraisers, Operation Christmas Child, Blood Drive, Loaves & Fishes groceries, Soup Kitchen meals, School Supplies, Coats, Angel Tree, Thanksgiving Dinners, Easter Baskets, Samaritan's Feet, and much more.

International, National & Regional Outreach

(Budget = 50% or \$22,500)

Ministry	Mission Fund \$
Missionary Support	\$5,400
Haiti (Eben-Ezer Mission)	\$10,995 ¹
International Mission Trip (Oasis Ministry in Belize)	\$8,161
Regional/Nat'l Mission Trip (McDowell County, WV)	\$6,500
Lutheran Disaster Response (tornado relief - AL + SC)	\$2,000 ¹
Voice of the Martyr (Bible parachutes)	\$67
Total	\$33,123¹

Local Outreach

(Budget = 50% or ~\$22,500)

Ministry	Mission Fund \$
Missionary Support	\$5,400
Christmas Love Envelopes	\$5,000
SOJ Vegetable Garden	\$3,551
Redeemer Lutheran After School	\$2,503
Living Water Lutheran Church	\$2,400
Turning Point	\$2,000
Community Culinary School of Charlotte	\$2,000
Child Evangelism Fellowship	\$1,500
Union County Loaves & Fishes	\$1,500
Union County Homeless Shelter & Soup Kitchen	\$1,432
Union County Social Services	\$500
Total	\$27,886¹

¹ Dollars vary from Budget due to designated contributions, grants, and/or 2010 carryover.

To learn more info about what each donation included, please see the Missions Bulletin Board in the hallway. We try to have both hands-on involvement (time and talent) in addition to financial contribution (treasure). As you can see, there are many places you can plug in and serve the less fortunate in His name. Please contact me, Karen Weiner, or anyone on the Missions team to find your place.

What an honor it is to be a part of such a caring and giving church family! Thank you for this opportunity to serve Him with you. May you be filled with joy as you serve Him.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Lashley

Property Committee

The property committee tries to ensure we have a safe, comfortable, attractive, well lighted place to worship God and to do God's work.

Some of the projects we completed last year:

1. Painted Narthex
2. Painted Pastor Ed and Kristen's offices
3. Changed the Family Life Center lights to high efficient blubs
4. Maintained and improved the outside appearance/landscaping
5. Put up bulletin boards in hallway and Narthex
6. Maintain battery upkeep in emergency lights
7. Coordinate church work days for inside and outside maintenance: care of grounds and facility

After the needs of our church family are met, we do all we can to maximize the facility use by reaching out to others. Venita Cronk has done a great job in scheduling all of the church activities and community groups during 2011.

Community Groups using Spirit of Joy, 2011:

- Shannan Elementary on Mondays using all the hallway classrooms.
- Shannan High School on Mondays using the Family Life Center.
- Weddington Classical Conversations on Thursdays using virtually all classrooms and the FLC. This is the largest group, and sometimes a little raucous; however they always try to adapt and do what they can to help out (in addition to financial support). Last summer they painted the hallway which included some repair to the walls.
- AA continues on Tuesday and Saturday nights.
- Alanon continues on Tuesday nights.
- NA continues on Monday and Thursday nights.

- SOJ continues as a voting precinct.
- Arborbrook this year used our facility for their graduation. They liked it so much they have already reserved for June 2012.
- The Lupus support group continues one evening a month.
- Eight Girl Scout troops are currently meeting at SOJ, generally twice a month.
- Girl Scout Leaders and Planning groups met quarterly.
- There were 9 special Girl Scout special events.
- Boy Scout/ Cub Scout crossover event; and Blue and Gold Banquet.
- 1 Boy Scout troop used our kitchen facility for a cooking class for several weeks. (They left it in much better condition than they found it.)
- Porter Ridge Band banquet.
- Teens Encounter Christ events
- 4 Charity fund raisers
- Democratic Precinct meeting
- Lifeline Screening
- Hunter's Point HOA
- 4 weddings
- Piano recital

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Drehs

*Keep following day by day
... more reports to come!*