

ANNUAL REPORT

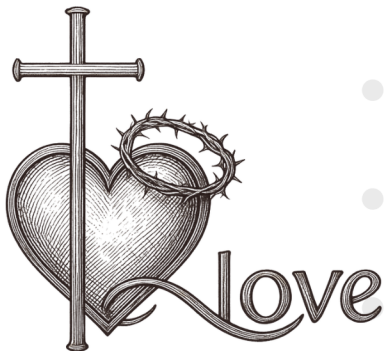
Fiscal Year 2025-2026

The Annual Report of the Congregation of St. Mary's Lutheran Church
& St. Mary's Lutheran Church Endowment Foundation

July 26, 2026

Inside this issue:

- Agenda
- Minutes from Previous Annual Meeting of St. Mary's Endowment Foundation & St. Mary's Congregation
- Staff & Ministry Reports
 - Lead Pastor
 - President
 - Children's Ministry
 - Spiritual Wellness Ministry
 - Youth Ministry
 - Stewardship
 - Worship, Music, Arts Committee
 - Administrative Assistant
 - The Friendly Center
 - Church in Society Committee
 - Property Committee
 - Women of the ELCA
- Endowment Foundation Distribution & Financials
- Church Council Nominees
- CHURCH STAFF & LEADERSHIP
- AGENDA



MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS ANNUAL MEETING

July 27, 2025 - Hollie DeFranco, Secretary

Call to Order/Quorum Count

There were 76 members present. The Annual Meeting of the Congregation was called to order at 10:15 AM in the sanctuary by Council President Keith Richter.

Endowment Foundation Report

The Endowment Foundation Annual Report was presented by Neil Guttormsen. The meeting opened with an overview of the Endowment Foundation. With over \$2 million in retained assets, and charitable contributions totaling \$2.34 million over 45 years, Neil shared gratitude for faithful financial stewardship. Richard Sjoerdsma made a motion to approve Neil Guttormsen, John Basler and Kay Manderfeld for re-election for a three year term; Andrea Beer seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

Opening Devotion - Adam Fonk, Vice-President

Adam shared a moving reflection centered on Jeremiah 29:11, emphasizing hope and gratitude. He highlighted major transitions, including the successful call of two pastors and installation of a digital sign as a beacon of presence and promise. His words, delivered during his final meeting as a Council member, served as a powerful sendoff: "The best chapters are not behind us. They are still being written."

Approval of 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes - Hollie DeFranco, Secretary

Copies of the 2024 Annual Report, including the minutes from the July 21, 2024, Annual Meeting were distributed prior to the meeting and made available via email. A motion to approve the 2024 Annual Meeting minutes was made by Julie Schmit and seconded by Alice Schwalbe. There were no objections and the motion was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Steve Hartfield presented highlights from the Treasurer's Report, available in the Annual Report, along with supplementary financial information. Highlights included:

Total assets: \$487,732, with a budget surplus of \$7,665 reinvested into designated accounts. Mortgage balance stands at \$289,462. Strategic CD investments ensure both liquidity and growth. Notably, the church received \$28,000 in Employee Retention Tax Credits, thanks to proactive action by the Finance Committee during COVID recovery. Treasurer and Finance Chair praised for responsible and visionary fiscal leadership.

Council Recognition

Outgoing members Adam Fonk (6 years) and Lana Woller (3 years) were honored with certificates for their service, dedication, and leadership throughout their terms on Council by Keith Richter, President.

Council Election and Term Structure

Three candidates were presented for election or re-election to Church Council by Alice Schwalbe, Chair of the Nominating Committee:

- Lisa Rasmussen Zanin (Incumbent) - serving another 3-year term. Has been a lifelong and active member of the church. She is involved with The Friendly Center and currently serving on Church Council. She has previously been a Sunday School teacher, Bible Study teacher, Reader, Communion Assistant, and currently on the Stewardship, Reconnections and Care Committees.



MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS ANNUAL MEETING

[CONT'D]

- Patricia Mason (Incumbent)- serving another 3-year term. She is very active in the church and participates as Assisting Minister, Reader, Adult Choir, Sunday School teacher, Greeter, Communion Server and Front Desk Volunteer to name a few committees and positions.
- Andrea Beer (Nominee) - previously served on Council from 2011-2017, as President her last two terms. Has also served on Youth and Planning Committees, MET team and Call Committee. Currently a member of the Finance and Technology Committees.

As there were three open Church Council positions and three nominees, no ballot was necessary. With no nominations from the floor, a motion was made by Neil Guttormsen and seconded by Cari Richter, to approve the slate of nominees. The motion passed unanimously. Keith also reiterated the reduction in Council size (from 12 to 9 members), to better reflect current congregational size.

Nominating Committee Elections

Alice Schwalbe, chair of the committee, reviewed the composition of the Nominating Committee, noting that herself and Chris Johnson would be serving the second year of their two-year term. Nominations for new two-year terms were presented: Joyce Froemming & Lana Woller.

A motion was made by Richard Sjoerdsma and seconded by Sandy Bear to approve Joyce and Lana to the Nominating Committee. The motion passed unanimously. Dana Larson will continue serving as the Council Liaison to the committee. Appreciation was extended to all members for their willingness to serve and support the church's discernment process in the year ahead.

President's Report

Keith Richter, expressed profound appreciation for the congregation's perseverance through 6–8 years of instability. He emphasized that the call to Pastor Jordan marks the beginning of a new, steady era.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Jordan Miller-Stubbendick delivered a heartfelt message on God's ever-present faithfulness and asked, "What matters to us—and where do we go from here?" She envisions a more inclusive, justice-oriented, and intergenerational community, grounded in spiritual depth and partnership with outreach ministries.

Mission & Ministry Resource Plan 2025-2026

The budget was presented with an increase of ~\$85,000, largely in personnel and building-related expenses. Steve Hartfield, stepping in for Dan Neururer, Finance Chair, described the budget as both conservative and hopeful, reflecting a renewed confidence in congregational stability. No questions were asked regarding the budget. Andrea Beer made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 MMRP budget as presented, Patti Mason seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

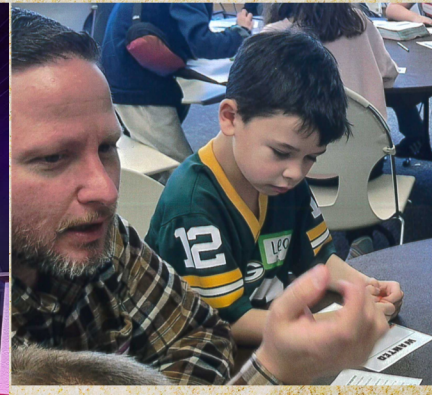
Closing Remarks & Adjournment

The meeting concluded with the congregation joining in the Lord's Prayer and adjourned at 11:03 AM.

C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Chapter 12 CONGREGATION COUNCIL
pg. 15 SMLC Constitution

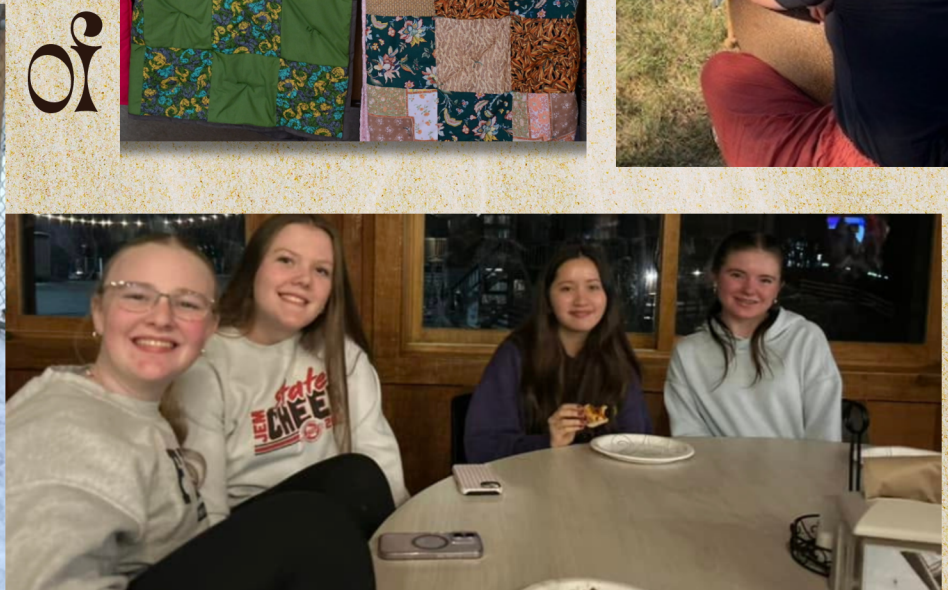




Beloved



Children



GOOD

ANNUAL REPORT - LEAD PASTOR

THE REV. DR. JORDAN MILLER-STUBBENDICK

Dear ones of St. Mary's,

When my friend, Pastor Fursan Zu'mot visited St. Mary's last month, he spoke of the very small, Arab Christian community he is part of. Christians make up less than one percent of the population of the Holy Land. The church in which Pastor Fursan leads his congregation is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). It is the people of the ELCJHL that a group of 14, including myself and my husband, Adam, from the Greater Milwaukee Synod accompanied during our trip to Palestine late in June and early in July of this year.

The people of the ELCJHL are descendants of the indigenous Christians of the world—those who have lived in Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, and surrounding towns for two thousand years. It is because of these indigenous Christians that Christians in other parts of the world exist. Arab Christians have been walking in the way of Christ and lighting the candles at the holy sites for millennia. They have kept the faith alive during times of struggle. St. Mary's Lutheran Church exists because of the *sumud* (Arabic for 'steadfastness') of our Arab Christian siblings.

In a very different context, but with the same spirit of *sumud*, St. Mary's has been keeping the faith in Kenosha for over 150 years, through good times and hard times, through changing locations and church buildings, through members and pastors coming and going, through conflict and growth of various kinds.



This past year, we said goodbye to Pastor Debbie Hartfield and surrounded her with prayer upon her retirement. We welcomed new members through baptisms and transfers, and commended beloved members and friends of St. Mary's to God's eternal care through funerals and memorial services. We supported our youth ministry through prayer, presence, and fundraisers.

We tried new things, including the blessing of the animals service in October, learning about the Muslim holy month of Ramadan with community member Narmeen Salem, and combined worship services between St. Mary's, Trinity/Lakeside, and Spirit Alive Lutheran Churches around Christmas Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day.

During this year, I have enjoyed settling in and getting to know you and the rhythms and routines of life at St. Mary's. At the same time, I look toward the future with hope and expectation. I am very grateful we are taking part in the Adventures in Renewal process that is offered by the Greater Milwaukee Synod. With a small team of people from St. Mary's and a coach provided by the synod, we will take about a year to slow down and listen for the leading of God's Holy Spirit in the life of St. Mary's and our community in an intentional, focused way. This deep listening to God and our neighbors will help us to practice discerning where the Holy Spirit is calling us at this point in the story of St. Mary's Lutheran Church.



Along the way, I encourage us to consider:

- Who is God calling St. Mary's Lutheran Church to be in the Kenosha community in 2026-2027 and beyond?
- How can we practice becoming more welcoming to those around us?
- How can we open ourselves to ideas we perhaps had not previously considered?
- In what ways can we work together with other Kenosha ELCA churches?

There is much to look forward to, wonder about, and trust in God for in these days, weeks, and months.

I look forward to listening for God's leading alongside of you, and practicing familiar and new ways to live out God's love in our corner of Kenosha.

***Thank you for this year together,
Pastor Jordan***

ANNUAL REPORT - PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Andy Schroeder, Church Council President

Hello fellow worshipers of Jesus Christ and of St. Mary's Lutheran Church,

I am beyond humble and honored to have served in this manner for St. Mary's Lutheran Church for the past year. As I look back on the year, I see and feel that changes, challenges, and wrestling with what God has in store for St. Mary's Lutheran Church is before us. Although, I also see opportunities to adjust, preserve, grow in our faith in Christ in our surroundings, and to get us out of our comfort zone; to do even more than what we have done or think we can do. Thus, let us continue to be committed to "A Future with Hope."

I cannot thank you enough for all you have done for our church and the community. We could not be here without all of the voluntary hours many of you have given in many different ministries and services. Please know that we appreciate it and appreciate each and every one of you.

So, now I will share with you what has been recorded or what I can remember through the last year. I will give you a disclaimer that I will try not to share what other ministries will share in their reports.

Worship News/opportunities

- Saturday services seem to be going well.
- We have had a few pulpit supply pastors, especially when Pastor Jordan is out of town and we appreciate their efforts.
- For the 2nd year in a row our Lay Led Service was done for our Thanksgiving Eve service, and I thank all those who participated and worshiped with us that day.
- Many St. Mary's members attended the Good Friday worship service at St. Paul's on April 3.
- As well as many St. Mary's members attended the Easter Vigil at Carthage on April 4th.

- This year we are participating in a combined worship service with Lakeside Lutheran Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, and Spirit Alive Lutheran Church. These have taken place on Dec. 25, 2025 at Lakeside Lutheran Church (offering went to Women's and Children's Horizons), May 24, 2026 at Trinity Lutheran Church (offering went to Breaking the Chains Church), July 5, 2026 at Spirit Alive Lutheran Church (offering went to Lutherdale Camp), and will take place here at St. Mary's Lutheran Church on September 6, 2026, at 9am, with offering going to Walkin' in My Shoes).
- We had an outdoor service on July 12.
- We have designated once a quarter to have a special offering for the Good Samaritan Funds and those dates were: in 2025, Oct. 25/26; in 2026, Feb. 14/15, May 9/10, and today July 26.

Church Events

- The produce stand was up and running again last fall and hopefully will be happening again this fall. The money collected was donated to the Outreach Center.
- Many of St. Mary's members attended Cush's annual banquet celebration on Oct. 23, 2025 and their soup supper on March 19, 2026 at St. Mary's.
- Christmas in July.
- Kingfish game July 12.
- Rally Day
- Outreach for Hope Family Ride/Run/Walk where Ralph and Andy participated.
- Oktoberfest was another success and many people enjoyed the evening of German food and music.
- High tea did not disappoint.



ANNUAL REPORT - PRESIDENT'S REPORT

[cont'd]

- The Handbell Festival occurred on April 18 and it was a joyous music celebration, performed by the handbell choirs from Mt. Pleasant, St. Mary's, St. Paul's, Holy Communion and Christ Lutheran Churches.
- Food on the First is an ongoing event that gathers food given to the Kenosha Welcome Center.
- Friendly Center continues to minister to the older members of not only our congregation but others in our community.
- Book studies continued during the non-summer months.
- Supper groups have continued to be present as well.
- Grief share groups are also available.

As you can see there have been many events going on, and I probably have missed a few.

- We have also had some endings/closures that have resulted in adjustments and challenges, and some are ongoing.
- Nov. 9 was the last Contemporary Service (although the door is not closed).
- April 12, pastor Debbie Hartfield had her last Sunday before she retired from the pastoral ministry. We have been truly blessed to have her as our part-time Assistant Minister for about three years.
- May 17, Grace Lutheran Church closed their doors and because of that we have seen some of their members visiting St. Mary's Lutheran Church to see if it is a fit for them. We welcome them with open arms.

We have continued to pursue "Adventures in Renewal" and on Oct. 16, 2025 had Danette Brown and Sonja Wolfe present and have discussions with the church council encouraging us to see if it is a fit. More on that will be forthcoming. This will be another opportunity for us to maybe step out of our comfort zone and see if we adventure in growth in our faith in Christ Jesus, each other, and our community.

We are also truly blessed to have had Pastor Jordan be our pastor for one and a half years. With her strong faith in Christ Jesus, her interesting, comforting, and motivating messages, inviting members of different beliefs, culture, and backgrounds to share their stories, her gentle lovingness, and desire to help lead St. Mary's Lutheran Church forward into what God has in store for us; we are truly grateful and look forward to finding ways to support her with this ministry, called St. Mary's Lutheran Church, in the years ahead.

As we look forward to the 2026-2027 year, continuing to have "A Future with Hope," we will have challenges ahead of us. But through the challenges we will grow in our faith by listening to each other, sharing with each other, stepping up when we can (sometimes more than we think we can), encouraging each other, and believing with the active Hope and faith that God's grace and mercy will guide us forward.

We are followers of Jesus Christ, gifted by the Spirit to Go Pray, Go Love, Go Serve and to have the desire and commitment to live our Core Practices of:

Becoming Inclusive - Becoming the congregation that builds bridges, not walls, and opens doors to all of God's beloved people.

Growing Disciples - Teaching, experiencing, and encouraging faith in Christ Jesus for adults, youth, and children for a life of transformation and service.

Connecting People - Building small groups for mission, prayer, fellowship, travel, and support.

Practicing Generosity - Giving of our time, talent, and treasure for God's mission not only in the world but also here at St. Mary's Lutheran Church.

Peace and blessings to each of you.

Andy Schroeder

***St. Mary's Lutheran Church -
Council President.***



ANNUAL REPORT - CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Joan Oehlberg, Coordinator of Children's Ministry

The 2025-2026 Sunday School year was another year with kid-focused faith experiences.

- Vacation Bible School July 28-31, 2025. 36 children attended. The True North theme was popular. We opened up VBS registration to Pre-K, minimum 3 years old, and then traditional entering Kindergarten through entering 5th grade. Five kids, three years old, joined VBS for the first time!
- Post VBS Sunday singing August 3. VBS kids sang a couple songs from VBS.
- Nursery - We were able to provide some youth coverage in the Nursery for families. THANK you youth! The coverage was not weekly, nor was it needed weekly. If there was volunteer coverage, the families were notified one month in advance. I would like to continue to provide this service with youth volunteers for the upcoming year as needed.
- Rally Day - September 7, 2025, began our year with activities outside continuing the theme of True North from July VBS. Kids could roast their own marshmallows for smores, eat cotton candy, have a hotdog, sing Karaoke, miniature golf, God Sightings tours, face painting, fishing, and a SS registration table including a raffle basket. Fifteen children registered for Sunday School.
- Trunk / Treat October 26, 2025. Over 70 families within our community were able to join. A QR code was available as well as hardcopy were available to families who wanted to show interest in our Sunday School and/or Youth programs.
- Greeters - Beginning October 2025 through May 2026, Sunday School kids were greeters the second Sunday of the month.
- Shop & Drop December 5, 2025 5p-8pm. Initially intended to be a youth supported evening, families can drop off their children for up to 3 hours so they could go shopping, out to dinner, or just to take a break. There is no cost to the families for this. If families wanted to make a donation, all proceeds would go to the youth group to support various events / activities.
- Christmas Program December 14, 2025 : "Mary said, YES!" The congregation said YES, too! Having parent involvement was lovely including a solo performance!
- P.J.s and a Movie day, January 11, 2026. A return from Christmas break was welcomed with traditional p.j.s and a movie.
- Sunday School Committee meeting with parents, January 11, 2026. SS separated from Youth meetings to adjust toward more SS parent input, and communication for the upcoming weeks.
- Lutherdale overnight. February 8-9. Seven children attended, two chaperones. Previous year three children attended with two chaperones.
- Saturday service February 28, 2026. Sing and serve at Kringle Mingle / fruit bar.
- Sunday School Committee meeting with parents, March 15, 2026.
- Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026. Procession with Palms.
- Shalom Center - PBJ service project. April 26, 2026. Made over 100 peanut butter / jelly sandwiches and delivered to the Shalom Center that same day
- Movie and a Pizza, May 3, 2026. After church kids stayed for a movie and pizza / snacks.
- Mothers Day, May 12, 2026. Greet, Sing, and Kringle Mingle.
- Game Day, May 17, 2026. Who wants to play Left, Center, Right, with candy? The kids had a blast during their last time together for the Sunday School Year.
- THANK YOU Sunday School Families and Youth families and our Congregation who helped create another successful year for Children's Ministries.





ANNUAL REPORT - SPIRITUAL CARE & WELLNESS MINISTRY

Nurse Sue, Faith Community Nurse and Care Ministry Coordinator

Mission

Promoting healthy living within the St. Mary's faith community.
Provide holistic nursing by ministering to the parishioners' physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Providing support

Because of Jesus...

We are an affirming and caring community.

- Connection, referral, support, medical information supplied, council, prayer and a listening ear to weekly St. Mary's members and community as needed and referred by the Pastor or other parishioners.
- Advises and manages the Good Samaritan Fund- providing financial support to those parishioners/community/members with agency referral that are enduring crisis with basic needs.
- Partnering with the Care Ministry Team - providing communion and spiritual care for the homebound...Thank you Pat Gallo, Lisa Zanin, Steve Hartfield, Carol Shadduck, Jacqie Vranak, Sondra Kuro, Mary Saarela, Christie Burmeister, Lynda Ryan, and Lana Woller for your loyal thoughtful attention to the needs of others.
- Thirteen-week Grief Share support classes offered to those that experienced a death of a loved one.
- Facilitated two Companionship workshop training for parishioners, the community and local Pastors.
- Partnered with Walgreens for a Pop-up flu clinic. Thank you, Tawny Vogel for your expertise!
- Organized and presented Surviving the Holidays support event.
- Facilitated a Better Brain Health presentation.

Thank you, St. Mary's Lutheran community, for allowing me to journey with you as you encounter milestones, joy and sadness throughout the year! Your trust and confidence in our partnership is greatly appreciated. May the Lord bless and strengthen your mind, body, and spirit! May you be a beacon of hope and light in this world!



ANNUAL REPORT - YOUTH MINISTRY

Kendra Richter, Youth Director



Throughout this year, our middle and high school youth groups continued to learn and grow together. These youth remind me every day that we can never get enough or share enough of the love that is provided to us! When I think of the last year I can name so many moments where I was able to witness the love God has for us being shared, among youth, among our leaders, among parents and among our congregation.

The following are some highlights of what the youth did in the last 365 days!



- ★ ~30 youth met weekly on Monday for FISH(Middle School) and Wednesday for Fusion(High School)
- ★ 23 youth attended a hurricane relief Mission Trip in North Carolina through Mission Experience and were able to share highlights of their experience with the congregation in August
- ★ Hosted a multi-church Christmas Party
- ★ Continued our middle and high school youth choir (A Chord with the Lord)
- ★ Hosted the annual youth rummage sale
- ★ Attended both a Middle School and High School weekend for Winter Xtreme
- ★ Volunteered at the ELCA Outreach Center
- ★ Tied Blankets for children in the hospital
- ★ Served the Palm Sunday Breakfast
- ★ Led the congregation in worship for the Good Friday Service
- ★ Served Lenten Soup Suppers with the gracious help of Gretchen
- ★ Lended a helping hand with VBS
- ★ Confirmed two 8th graders into the Lutheran Faith
- ★ Journeyed through the Old Testament as part of our Confirmation curriculum
- ★ Celebrated 7 Seniors who graduated high school



- ★ Held our annual car wash fundraiser
- ★ Began a new fundraiser/community event of a morning of wellness and intentional grounding
- ★ Started a quarterly bingo night

These events were filled with fun, community, LOTS of snacks, service, and the youth of St. Mary's asking good questions to help them grow in their faith.

As the youth director, I get to see the world and the love and light that God brings to it through the eyes of our youth and I am grateful for St. Mary's and the way this congregation makes that possible. We could not do what we do without the support of our congregation. Thank you, St. Mary's for treating our young people like they are capable of leading, loving and having a BIG faith just how God intended it to be!

Two days before the annual meeting, 24 of us (4 adults and 20 youth) will be returning in 2 passenger vans from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania where we will pray, love and serve in their community. I cannot wait to see how God works in and through the lives of our youth! We have many exciting ideas for the next year and I am looking forward to seeing them come to life.

I can tell you first hand, these youth are worth investing in and if you want to know what God's love looks like, spend some time with our Middle and High Schoolers :)

Kendra Richter
St. Mary's Youth Director

ANNUAL REPORT - STEWARDSHIP

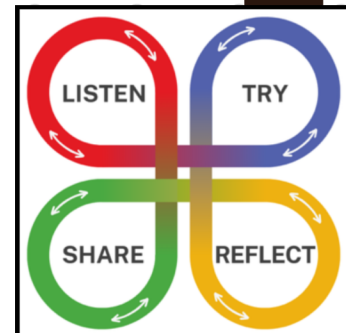
Stephanie Raszkiewicz, Council Liaison for Stewardship

Our work through Christ leads us in many directions in order to attend to God's flock. This year, St. Mary's Church Council reviewed a process to connect with our community called Adventures in Renewal. Our examination of this opportunity led us to work toward creating a team to create an Adventures in Renewal experience at St. Mary's. In April, church leadership comprised of council members and ministry chair people met to discuss how to do this. From this meeting, potential team members were identified. At this time, we are working on connecting with a coach and asking members of our congregation to be a part of this endeavor. A team and coach work together to invite a congregation into a cycle of listening, trying, reflecting, and sharing both within and beyond the church walls. This opportunity is grounded in the idea that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Even though the church and the world are always changing, we have an amazing opportunity to listen, learn, and experiment. By doing so, we can witness how the Spirit will connect us with what God is already doing in the lives of those outside of our congregation, and experience the renewal God desires for us all. This experience becomes a natural extension of our work with "Ask, Thank, Tell," by attending to how God comes down to us with amazing wisdom, love, and generosity, and examining the relationships St. Mary's has with our faith community, inside and outside of our four walls. This is an exciting time to be at St. Mary's Lutheran Church. The thought of the Holy Spirit guiding us on our faith journey is boundless and helps us approach each day and experience with a grateful heart.

St. Mary's Lutheran Church Leadership, comprised of council members and ministry chairs, continues to explore ways to grow and connect with our community – locally, nationally, and internationally. Feedback from each of you is valuable in this endeavor. Please reach out with ideas and comments about how we can continue to share the Light of the world with each other and all of our neighbors. Adventures in Renewal has introduced many in leadership to the idea that "We don't think our way into new behavior. We behave our way into new thinking" – Richard Rohr. We look forward to sharing the Good News with our neighbors near and far.

Yours in Faith and Peace,

Stephanie Raszkiewicz on behalf of the Stewardship Ministry



ANNUAL REPORT - WMA

Julie Schmit, Chairperson

St. Mary's Lutheran Worship, Music and Arts Committee

Annual Report 2025–2026



During the 2025–2026 program year, the Worship, Music and Arts Committee continued its work of supporting meaningful worship, encouraging faithful musical leadership, and enriching the life of St. Mary's Lutheran Church through the arts. The committee sought to help create worship experiences that were welcoming, reverent, creative and rooted in the Lutheran tradition.

Overview of the Year

- The committee met throughout the year to review worship practices, coordinate seasonal services, support music ministries, and consider ways the visual and performing arts could deepen congregational participation. Special attention was given to planning for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and other festival Sundays, as well as maintaining a strong rhythm of weekly worship.

Worship Planning and Support

- Worship planning remained the committee's central responsibility. Members worked with pastoral staff, musicians, worship leaders, altar guild, ushers, readers and other volunteers to support services that reflected the church year and invited the congregation into prayer, proclamation, song and sacrament.
- Seasonal worship services were planned with care, including opportunities for reflection, celebration and congregational participation. The committee also continued to evaluate worship flow, music selection, use of space, visual elements and volunteer coordination so that worship could remain both faithful and accessible.
- All of this would not be possible without our Administrative Assistant, Beth Kerscher, who seamlessly pieces all our ideas together in one form or another.
- During Lenten worship services, the congregation continued to use St. Mary's commissioned hymn, "Singing Promise on the Way", further familiarizing worshipers with the hymn and its place in the congregation's shared song.
- The Contemporary Worship service was paused during the year, and the committee recognized Bjorn Hanson and all those involved for their faithful leadership, creativity and service.
- On August 23, St. Mary's welcomed Pastor Becca Laabs to Saturday night Holden worship, where she would preside over the lay led services and occasionally preach.
- Along with the pastors and an ELCA combined worship committee, St. Mary's agreed to hold combined area Lutheran Church services on holiday weekends at Lakeside, Trinity, Spirit Alive and St. Mary's Lutheran Churches, with offerings dedicated to Women's and Children's Horizons, Breaking the Chains, Lutherdale Bible Camp and Walkin' in My Shoes.

Music Ministry

- Music continued to be a vital part of worship and congregational life at St. Mary's. The committee gives thanks for the leadership of musicians, vocalists, choir members, instrumentalists and all who shared their gifts in worship. Their preparation and dedication helped carry the congregation through the seasons of the church year with beauty, energy and faithfulness.
- Deb Black, our organist and pianist, and Willy Mueller, pianist and trumpeter, continued to play for most worship services throughout the year. St. Mary's is also looking for talented pianists who would be willing to play for worship when Deb or Willy cannot be here.
- In September 3, the choir welcomed Richard Sjoerdsma back to serve as choir director with a Ritual of Renewal that was led by Pastor Debbie Hartfield, gifted by the Holy Spirit and meaningful for all involved.
- The committee supported a variety of musical offerings, balancing familiar hymns, liturgical music and special selections appropriate to each season.

12 Music helped strengthen congregational singing, encourage prayerful reflection and celebrate the many gifts present within the St. Mary's community.