

monthly connections

a publication of joy! lutheran church

Joy! Highs and Lows

- ↑ 28 chefs in the Soup/Chili Challenge; amazing time had by all!
- ↑ Record breaking collection for COOL Food Pantry at Soup/Chili Challenge
- ↑ 50+ kids on Youth Winter Retreats
- ↑ 10 participants in New Exodus Bible Study
- ↑ 25 people attended Slovakian dinner
- ↑ 11 new Meal Ministry members
- ↓ Ran out of parking at Soup/Chili Challenge
- ↓ \$1000 needed to get Children's Message on screen for all to see



February 10 7:00p.m.

re-treat /rə'trēt/

I'd like to extend an invitation to the upcoming Joy! Faithful Journey Retreat, but before I do, allow me to reminisce for a moment.

I remember my 8th grade retreat when Fr. Stephen Gross first planted the seed that I may be called to a life of ministry. During one of our breaks he jotted a note in my binder, "Have you ever thought about being a priest?" Little did I know that was the first step in a journey that would lead to Joy!

I remember my high school retreat staring into the flickering light of a candle and hearing God whisper, "Welcome home!" My faith grew so much that day. Up until that point I had felt alone and far from God. But in an instant, I felt welcomed. The God I left had never left me.

I remember the retreat I attended at Good Shepherd Church in Naperville watching literally dozens of volunteers joyfully and enthusiastically working to make my weekend special. Remembering that weekend and all those volunteers giving up their time for someone like me still brings me to tears.

I lead a retreat at my previous congregation and remember seeing men find a sense of purpose and meaning to life. To this day, the men on that retreat form the core of the men's ministry at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. One Saturday a month you'll find them in the

by Mark Brogetti, Lead Pastor



kitchen at church making breakfast for the 40+ men, who will show up for the Men's Breakfast.

Ironically, Google the word retreat and the definitions you find are a far cry from the pictures I just painted:

- *movement by soldiers away from an enemy because the enemy is winning or has won a battle*
- *movement away from a place or situation especially because it is dangerous, unpleasant, etc.*
- *the act of changing your opinion or position on something because it is unpopular*

Although each definition is different, they seem to agree that a retreat withdraws someone from the dangerous, the unpleasant, or from situations where you just can't win. I believe every personal and positive retreat experience I described was because I took the time to retreat from the unpleasant, the harmful, and the situations where I continued to fail. And in retreating, I created the space for God to grow me spiritually.

So I invite you to join us on Joy's **Faithful Journey Retreat March 4th-6th** at the Sienna Retreat Center.

Visit joylutheran.org/faithful-journey-registration.html for all the details. Come and witness firsthand what God can do when a congregation retreat together.

Amen?



In the Spirit of Giving

On Dec 19th a Joy! Men's Small Group, Godfellas, shopped & delivered food to Cool Food Pantry and helped stock their shelves for the winter months. Godfellas raised \$1,120 during their Christmas Party specifically for Cool Food Pantry including \$250 in matching funds from Thrivent. ! Well done faithful servants!

COOL Ministries

COOL Food Pantry was founded by six Lutheran churches in Waukegan and North Chicago back in 1982, and officially opened its doors as a food pantry in January 1983. The housing program begun in 1988 and eventually the official name for COOL was changed to COOL Ministries.

In addition to the pantry located in Waukegan, there is also a pantry in Ingleside. During 2015, the pantries served an average 6000 each month. The housing program now has 10 units to provide housing for families in need.

Joy! has been supporting COOL for many years now! Thanks again to all of you at Joy! for this continuing support.

DivorceCare Provides Healing

Healing from divorce is not easy. At DivorceCare, people in separation and divorce find tools, teaching and support to help them deal with their pain and give them hope for the future. After attending a session someone noted, ***"it helped my healing process and helped me move closer to being whole again."***

Most people will say separation and divorce are the most painful and stressful experiences they've ever had. If you are facing this, you know it's a confusing time when you feel isolated and have lots of questions about issues you've never encountered before.

DivorceCare meets weekly to help you face these challenges and move toward rebuilding your life. One person, who attended said ***"I don't feel so alone in the process and I learned that what I'm going through is normal."*** Another added, ***"it helped me to laugh again and have the companionship of others going through the same thing."***

This 13-week Christ-centered ***"very helpful & practical"*** program includes three main parts—video, group discussion and personal Bible study, which is ***"relevant to what I needed to learn."***

The DivorceCare sessions address relevant concerns, such as how long is this pain going to last? Will I survive? Are these feelings I'm having normal? Where is God in all this? You'll gain insights on how to handle tough emotions, such as anger, depression and loneliness. "

Other DivorceCare session topics include:

- How to get out of debt
- What the Bible says about your situation
- How to know if you're ready for a new relationship
- How to lessen the impact of divorce on your children

The videos feature teaching from over 50 leading Christian counselors, teachers and pastors, who speak on topics important to people in separation or divorce. The videos also contain real-life stories of people who've been through a marital breakup, as they share their pain, challenges and path to healing. One recent attendee ***"liked the testimonies from the people on the videos."***

During the discussion time, the group will

by Mary Jo Thorson

discuss the concepts presented in the videos and share what is going on in everyone's lives. Each participant receives a workbook that contains a daily Bible study for personal reflection and application.

Although a new session started January 25, its not too late to join us on Monday nights at 6:30-8:30p.m. All are welcome, anytime!

You're also invited to a special event on February 8:

Let God Be Your Valentine!

If you are separated, divorced or going through a divorce, this event is for you. Key note speaker, Bruce Berlin, will be discussing how God shows up in incredible ways and in difficult circumstances.

Join us: Monday, February 8, 2016
6:30-8:30p.m. (light dinner will be provided)

Joy! Lutheran Church
749 S. Hunt Club Road
Gurnee, IL

Register on the Joy! web page.

Free will offering accepted at time of check in. All donations will go toward the DivorceCare Ministry at Joy! Lutheran Church.

"How precious are your thoughts about me, O God... they outnumber the grains of sand!" Psalm 139:17-18



Achieving Financial Goals and God's Plan for Your Life

by Cheryl McCumber

Financial Peace University (FPU) is a 9-week life-changing program that empowers and teaches you how to make the right money decisions to achieve your financial goals and God's plan for your life. The course includes practical lessons on eliminating debt, building wealth, giving like never before, and much, much more!

Classes will meet weekly starting Sunday, February 14—April 17 6:30-8pm. Someone, who has taken the class commented, "This class has opened up communication between my husband and I about our finances, where we are now and where we want to be in the future. Creating a budget has been very helpful for our family." You will not be required to share any personal information. Class materials cost \$102. Scholarships are available.

Many from Joy! have taken this life-changing class. Here are some of the things that they had to say about it:

- * "Started to have a "game plan" on how to pay off debt"
- * "Saved \$1000 for emergency fund"
- * "Learning to budget better"
- * "Got rid of first two debts using debt snowball"
- * "Will create a legacy "drawer" goal to have complete in 2016"
- * "More open and honest communication with my spouse about where money should go"
- * "Learned how to say 'no, it's not in the budget'"
- * "I learned not to buy things that I really don't need"

If you are interested in taking a class to learn "how to control money without it controlling me" or learning more about FPU, visit <http://www.daveramsey.com> or contact Cheryl McCumber @ badgerfamily5@comcas.net.

Pastor's Discretionary Fund

by Pastor Mark Borgetti

Nobody wakes up one day and says, "I sure hope there's not enough money in our bank account to pay the bills." But sometimes it happens. People sit down with the checkbook in one hand and the bills in the other and find themselves asking, "How are we going to pay the bills?" Sometimes the money we need is less than what we have.

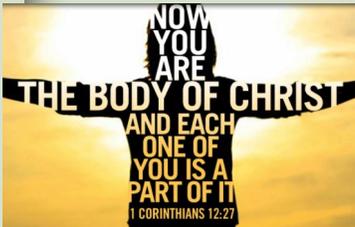
There was once a community that helped people who found themselves in this predicament: *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need"*

Acts 2:42-45 (NIV)

At Joy!, we realize there will be times when a congregation member is in need. When that happens, let me know. Joy! has a Pastor's Discretionary Account set up for to help meet needs. It's funded by congregation members living out the Acts 2 vision of being a church that cares for one another.

What is given to you from the Pastor's Discretionary fund is kept confidential. When it comes time to ask for assistance, I encourage you to "give me a nut to crack for a few months" (e.g. that annoying bill that keeps you up at night. Maybe it's the cell phone bill, or the electric bill, or the utility bill.) Allow Joy! to give you a few moments of peace each month as you work to get back on your feet.

In closing, please don't hesitate to ask for assistance. But also, please don't hesitate to give. If you find yourself in a season of abundance, consider contributing to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund so that we can give to anyone who had need.



News from Council

by Laura Shabat

Our finances are in good shape. Sue will soon begin working with staff on budget for next year.

Council approved a motion to use excess capital campaign (STLAC) dollars to pay down mortgage.

We continued to discuss plans to raze the Powerhouse. We revised original plan so the grounds won't be disrupted during VBS. The actual work is targeted to be done by the end of July.

Staff and council have been working together to improve communication by "Adopting a Staff Member." Each council member is assigned a staff member, whom they meet with occasionally, to get an update on work/projects and determine if the council can assist in any capacity.

The remainder of the January meeting was spent sharing our visioning/strategic planning ideas. Council is excited about this endeavor and it is our hope that this visioning will exemplify our mission and help us to continue to carry out our core values at JOY!

Just Being Kids

by Colin Cranmer, Youth Director



Student Ministries always gets busy in the winter! We went on two winter retreats in January with over 50 youth and leaders! We had a blast tubing, tobogganing, playing broomball, laughing till our sides hurt from watching karaoke and playing cards.

All super fun and silly, but what amazes me is how our students connected with each other and God. It always blows me away what God does with any amount of time we carve out for him. It's easy to get so stuck in our busyness and routines, that we run out of time for God.



Teens are no exception. The schedules these students juggle blows my mind. I get stressed out for them with their sports, jobs, friendships and school work. That's why I love watching them on retreats. They have a chance to just be kids. Fall off tubes, play uno, be silly together and have a minute to contemplate their relationship with God.



These retreats are often paradigm-shifting, life-altering events in the lives of youth because there is this tiny amount of space where God can whisper in their ears how loved, cherished, forgiven and important they are to Him. Priorities get straightened and realigned with Jesus and all of a sudden the pile of stress, school work and activities at home has a brand new perspective because God has reminded them that He has their back.

A huge thanks to Joy! for helping these retreats happen, for sponsoring student scholarships and, parents, for carving time in students schedules to make it possible for them to go!



Four Hundred Quilts

by Alice Kerwin

Are you a numbers person? Do you love statistics? If so, then you may be interested in knowing that Prayers & Squares recently celebrated a milestone. We have officially hit the 400 mark. Wow! 400 prayer quilts have been hung in worship. 400 quilts have gathered the prayers of friends, family and this congregation. 400 recipients around the world have been blessed by you and wrapped in your prayers. Thank you!

Prayers & Squares, Joy's prayer quilt ministry, provides hand-made quilts to special people who are in need of prayer due to illness, death or other difficult circumstances in life. Each knot on the quilt represents a prayer that has been offered specifically for the recipient during worship services here at Joy!

Our mission is not only to make and distribute quilts, but to also promote prayer through the giving of these beautiful quilts. Monthly workshops are held on Saturdays from 9am-1pm to share ideas, complete quilts and enjoy fellowship by sharing a meal with all that attend. Scheduled meeting dates for 2016:

FEB 20	MAR 19	APR 23	MAY 21
JUN 18	JUL 16	AUG 20	SEPT 24
OCT 15	NOV 12		

New in 2016 – we are offering a monthly class to teach sewing & quilting basics to beginners. Those with some experience may use these classes as a refresher.

Class dates for spring:

Thursday, Feb 25 12:30 to 2:30 pm

Wednesday, March 16 12:30 to 2:30 pm

Wednesday, April 13 12:30 to 2:30 pm

Monday, May 16 12:30 to 2:30 pm

Watch your bulletin for more information on monthly topics and how to sign up to participate in these learning opportunities. All are welcome – no experience necessary. If you'd like to learn more about this ministry, feel free to contact Alice Kerwin at 847-845-0452 (alice.m.kerwin@gamil.com) or Gail Schrader at 847-548-5735 (gschrader50@jlschrad.net). Looking forward to seeing new faces!