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PASTOR GREG BUSBOOM, LEAD PASTOR

“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love” (Ephesians 4:15-16).

How does one capture the extensive depth and breadth of ministry that has taken place in and through our congregation of St. John’s during 2012? It is a daunting task, especially when one has the privilege of serving with such an active, alive, dynamic, Spirit-led and Spirit-filled congregation as I do.

A couple months ago, I asked our congregation council to work in small groups of 3-4 to come up with a top ten list of ministry accomplishments here at St. John’s over the past 12 month. Their responses were humorous, encouraging, and humbling all at the same time, ranging from “the maturing of Pastor Ladd” (an accomplishment that made every list!!!) to “we got rid of 2100 members and gained 2100 disciples of Jesus!”

In the style of David Letterman, I offer to you as my annual report this year two Top Ten lists - first, my Top 10 List of Ministry Accomplishments during the past year and, second, my Top 10 List of Ministry Challenges/Opportunities for us to consider and address during the coming year. Remember, these are my lists, written from my perspective. They are not all-inclusive and your lists may be different. However, I hope that these two Top 10 Lists will prompt and even provoke some thoughtful reflection and conversation as we move forward together, “growing up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”

Top 10 Ministry Accomplishments during 2012
(Not in any particular order.)

#1 - Stephen Ministry - Over the past year, our Stephen Ministry, a ministry of Christian care giving by trained laity, has continued to gain strength and momentum. Nearly all of our active Stephen Ministers are in active care-giving relationships and six disciples of Jesus are nearing completion of their 50 hours of training to become commissioned Stephen Ministers in our congregation.

#2 - Encounter! - If you haven’t yet had the opportunity to stop by the PLC on a Sunday evening to see what Encounter! is all about, I encourage you to do so. This high energy faith-building experience for Junior and Senior High Youth takes place two Sunday evenings each month, including food, games, live music, Bible Study, and Small Group Discussion, and we have experienced growing participation and involvement of our youth through it.

#3 - Children and Family Ministry - Our Children and Family Ministries experienced several “boosts” throughout the year, including the addition of Kathy Lasley to our ministry staff in late summer as our Full-Time Director of Children and Family Ministry. In the fall, we revamped our Children’s Music Ministry, including the change in roles of Rachel Gamble and Melissa Roselle to Children’s Music Co-Directors and the incorporation of our Children’s Music Ministry into all aspects of our Children’s and Family Ministries. Vacation Bible School and our Sunday School Christmas Program were both “new and improved” this past year thanks to the strong leadership provided by both staff and lay leaders in the congregation!

#4 - Summer Trips - Three summer trips in 2012 provided meaningful, faith-building, life-changing experiences for folks here at St. John’s. 34 of our confirmation students enjoyed a week at our Annual Crossways Confirmation Camp at Augustana College in Rock Island in early June. 24 disciples of Jesus from here at St. John’s enjoyed our 5th Annual Mission Trip to Marion, Virginia in late June for a week of serving, worshiping, and laughing together. Our 6th Annual Trip is planned for June 23-29, 2013. In July, Christie Lazarides led a group of our high school youth to the Triennial ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

#5 - New Disciples’ Class - 2012 saw the development of a new format of New Disciples’ Classes here at St. John’s. Instead of a one afternoon 5-hour session, we introduced a five-week series of Sunday evening New Disciples’ classes offered twice each year, one in the season of Lent and one in the fall. Each session includes a
delicious meal prepared and served by our congregation council and allows New Disciples’ to more effectively and more intimately grow in their connectedness with Christ, with one another, and with our congregation.

**#6 - Pastor Ladd** - In good humor the council celebrated “the maturing of Pastor Ladd” during 2012 and, let’s face it, he did take some “getting used to!” That being said, Pastor Ladd has grown and continues to grow into a very fine and valuable pastoral leader in our congregation, challenging us (myself included!) in ways that we need to be challenged and helping us grow in our mission to be and make disciples of Christ. His compassionate pastoral care, missional perspectives, and joy-filled spirit have indeed been a blessing. I greatly treasure the pastoral team that has developed between the two of us and look forward to many years of working together. And ... hey ... we got rid of the sideburns for a while anyway!

**#6 - Grief Ministry** - 2012 was a year of deep and often tragic grief in the congregation. Many of our sisters and brothers in Christ, both young and old, entered eternal life during this past year, leaving their families, friends, and church family with sad and heavy hearts. In the midst of the sometimes inexpressible grief that was felt, our congregation provided profound ministry through the pastoral care of our staff, the loving food that was prepared and the delicious meals that were served, the many cards that were sent, the prayers that were offered up, and the ongoing relationships that continue to provide support and encouragement along the way. Thank you for the care you give to one another in your times of need!

**#7 - Flowers Galore!!!** - The Springfield Botanical Gardens had nothing on us this past year!!! The flowers of St. John’s were the talk of the town and rightly so! Almost daily, people stopped by to take pictures of the colorful array of God’s creation on display around our facility. Through the dedicated volunteer ministry of many, and led by Lyle Wind, Vern Dennison, and Tom Ryan, our grounds looked absolutely beautiful! In addition to the beautiful landscaping, we completed major structural repairs to the masonry work on the exterior of the west, south, and east sides of the sanctuary. Thanks to all who worked so diligently throughout the past year to make these projects possible!

**#8 - Strong Stewardship** - Our financial stewardship during 2012 was the strongest it has been in recent memory, with our General Operating Fund ending the year in the black by more than $20,000! The Congregation Council has decided to invest 75% of this surplus in our Major Maintenance Reserve Fund to help pay for needed maintenance repairs and improvements to our facility in the coming years and to share 25% of this surplus as a gift of thanksgiving with Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). Thank you for your faith-filled sharing of your Time, Talents, Treasure, and Touch during 2012!

**#9 - Caring for One Another** - One of the greatest joys of ministry for me is when I enter a hospital room of one of our disciples, only to find that another one of our disciples is already there visiting and ministering with the one who is hospitalized. This has happened over and over and over again for me in 2012. Whenever I experience this, I describe it as “the church being what it is supposed to be.” In many ways, including through our growing Small Groups Ministry, you are caring for one another and, for that, I give God thanks!

**#10 - Reaching Out** - One of the greatest and most visible strengths of St. John’s is the way that we continue to reach out in many and tangible ways to those in need both in our own community, across our state, and around the world. Through our ongoing support of the Grace Food Pantry, Contact Ministries, Washington Street Mission, an ELCA Missionary Family in Tanzania, LSSI, Foods Resource Bank, Lutheran Disaster Response, Story Book Project, our St. John’s Preschool, our strong benevolence support of the larger church, and so many, many more worthwhile ministries, we are being the hands and feet of Christ in the world!

As you can see from the above Top 10 List, Christ’s mission and ministry is alive and well in and through St. John’s! However, as a large congregation (2000+ disciples, 510+ average weekly worship attendance, 4 weekly worship services, $1 million+ annual budget, and a pre-school that serves 200 students and their families!), in many ways, we are still a congregation that is structured and organized for the congregation of St. John’s that once was rather than the congregation of St. John’s that now is and the congregation of St. John’s that I believe
God is calling us to become. In many ways, we are a congregation experiencing the growing pains that accompany a congregation transitioning from a mid-sized multi-celled congregation to a large professional congregation. As such, I am proposing a second list - a Top 10 List of Ministry Challenges/Opportunities facing us in 2013. Many of the items on this list are drawn from Susan Beaumont’s recent book Inside the Large Congregation, a book that the leadership of our congregation will be using in the year ahead to lead and guide our conversation.

Top 10 List of Ministry Challenges/Opportunities
(Not in any particular order.)

#1 - Communication - The larger and more complex a congregation becomes, the harder that congregation needs to work at good communication in all levels of a congregation’s work and ministry. Good communication among the staff, among the council, with the congregation, and into the community are essential to the healthy functioning of a large congregation. Communicating both the small details of ministry that make the ministry happen, as well as communicating the overall mission and vision of the congregation, are key.

#2 - Staff, Staff, Staff - After a year and a half as Lead Pastor of St. John’s, I am giving up the illusion that there will ever be a time where we won’t be experiencing one sort of staff transition or another. Indeed, Beaumont writes that in large congregation, staff transitions are a constant and require a lot of energy on the part of the leadership team. Currently, we are searching for a part-time Nursery Assistant and a full-time Director of Youth Ministries. In a large, professional church, staff are absolutely essential to the mission and ministry of the congregation. If we are going to continue to grow in our mission and ministry, we must continue to invest time, energy, and money into developing and growing the most effective staff team possible. The goal of increased staff is not to decrease the involvement of the laity, but rather to equip, train, and empower the laity for increased ministry in the world!

#3 - Leadership - Leadership development needs to continue to happen at all levels of congregational life, including the development of those in the congregation willing and trained to lead classes and small groups that help others grow in their discipleship to Jesus.

#4 - Restructuring the Governance of the Congregation to Fit our Size - One of the key rules of leading large congregations is that the larger a congregation becomes, the smaller its leadership team needs to become. At first, this rule might seem just opposite of the way it should be, but as an organization grows, the key decision-making team needs to become smaller and more stream-lined in order to make better, quicker, and more effective decisions for the sake of that organization’s mission. Currently, our congregation council is quite large, comprised of 22 members (18 elected, the Preschool Board Chair, an appointed treasurer, and the two called pastors). While we have been blessed with an extremely faithful and unified council over the past years, it is time to begin looking at a restructuring of our constitution and our governance structure that will allow for a more missional approach to ministry here at St. John’s.

#5 - Stewardship Growth - Beaumont writes, “Pastors of large congregations are continually trying to figure out how to raise money to support the growth initiatives of the church without robbing the operating budget needed to sustain payroll and existing ministries.” It is a given that as a congregation grows, that congregation’s stewardship ministry must also grow in order to fund its increasing mission and ministries. While our financial stewardship in 2012 was extremely strong, we cannot risk becoming stagnant or satisfied in our giving. Stewardship education and growth for the sake of mission will continue to remain a high priority here at St. John’s.

#6 - Change in Pastoral Roles - The role of the pastors, particularly the Lead Pastor, in a large congregation must change from a more pastoral, relational role to a more visionary, managerial, teaching/preaching role. I have really felt the tension of this transition over the past year. As I am an extremely relational leader, it has become more and more difficult for me to foster the relationships that I would like and still to effectively lead the congregation in all of its many aspects. During the coming year, I will be working hard to creatively restructure my work week to allow for more intentional time for visioning, staff development, preaching and teaching preparation, and mission
development. Don’t worry. Pastoral care will continue to be a ministry priority for me, but the reality is that we must work to grow and develop our lay care-giving ministries in the congregation as it becomes more and more difficult for both Pastor Ladd and myself to provide one-on-one pastoral care to the 2000+ disciples of Jesus in our congregation.

#7 - Increased Lay Care-Giving Ministries - Flowing forth from the change in pastoral roles described above, we will need to continue to grow and develop our lay-led care-giving ministries in order to most effectively care for our growing congregation. The addition of a Parish Nurse Ministry is one possibility we might consider in order to lead this charge.

#8 - Small Groups - Several times over the past year, I have been invited to be a guest at several of our small groups. All I can say is, WOW!!! These small groups are doing amazing ministry together, both in caring for one another and in reaching out to others. Growing our Small Group Ministry and encouraging all disciples at St. John’s to be connected with a Small Group is the best way to encourage and foster individual spiritual growth and discipleship within the congregation. I will be asking Pastor Ladd, as Pastor of Faith Connections, to continue to make this a top priority in his ministry in the year ahead.

#9 - Spiritual Gifts - Our 2013 theme is Empowered by God’s Spirit as we celebrate that, in baptism, each of us was empowered by God’s Spirit with unique spiritual gifts and abilities for ministry in the world. Our Lenten theme, “Can You Hear Me Now?: Discerning God’s Call” will kick off this emphasis on Spiritual Gifts Ministry. Pastor Ladd and I are working on developing several Spiritual Gifts Retreats throughout the coming year to help people discover and apply their unique, God-given Spiritual Gifts in ministry.

#10 - Missional Imagination - Doing Christian ministry in this 21st-first century requires of us that we “think outside of the box” like never before. Reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ will mean “doing church” like we’ve never even thought of doing it. It will require of us a Spirit-led “Missional Imagination.” It will require us to try new things (Jesus turning water into wine comes to mind!) and to stop trying to cram new wine into old wineskins (another one of Jesus’ images!). I invite you to open up your Missional Imaginations as we continue to live into our Christ-centered mission to be and make disciples of Christ, in response to God’s grace! It won’t be easy, but Jesus never called us to easy. Jesus called us to faithfulness.

Since my first annual report to a congregation in 2000, I have closed each one with one or two stanzas of a particular hymn that seems to communicate my hopes and dreams for the congregation in the coming year. As we enter 2013, may the words of the final stanza of The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve send us with confidence into God’s world with the good news of Jesus:

Then let us go to serve in peace,
the gospel to proclaim.
God’s Spirit has empowered us:
we go in Jesus’ name. (ELW #551).

With thanksgiving for our partnership in ministry,

Pastor Greg Busboom
Lead Pastor
This year has been one of great transition and great excitement. In August 2012, we welcomed Kathy Lasley to the staff as the Director of Children and Family Ministry. She has done a great job and has some amazing ideas about Children and Family Ministries. Then in December 2012, with sadness we said goodbye to Christie Lazarides in her position as the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Meanwhile, the Youth and Young Adult Committee alongside the Search Committee have already begun to plan for a new director. Both committees are outlining characteristics, skill traits, and experience that we would like in a new Director of Youth Ministries, as well as plan programming for the upcoming year for the Youth and College Ministries.

My first full year at St. John’s has included performing multiple weddings and funeral services as well as baptismal services. It has been wonderful getting to know people through both the joyous times and the hard times of life. I also went with a group from St. John’s Lutheran Church to the Holy Lands in the Spring. This was a great trip where we had the opportunity to see and learn a lot.

I have also been very busy with the restructuring of the Children, Youth and Adult Ministries Programs and working alongside the various committees. Each programming committee has transitioned from an all action-based committee to a dreaming and equipping committee, allowing them to be more active in developing new events and outreach for the church. With a new Adult Ministries Committee that began running full steam in 2012, multiple programs like Adults’ Dinner Night Out, Trivia Night, Dance class and many other great events and classes have been added to the regular church schedule. The Children’s Ministry has now incorporated music into all their programs, including dedicated music time during Sprout and Sunday School, which has had a great impact on the children as they continue to learn about the Love God has for them. We now have two Children’s Music co-directors, Rachel Gamble and Melissa Roselle who took the initiative to introduce music into the children’s program in the fall. For the first time ever, the children performed the Christmas musical as a group during the combined 10:30 am worship service. All of the children who attend Sunday School participated in the program and did a wonderful job.

The Youth Committee took a huge step of faith by creating a Youth Gathering twice a month called “Encounter,” which has gone over amazingly well. The Young Adult Ministry continues to meet monthly for social events as well as weekly for conversation and bible study.

In 2012 the Fellowship Committee has worked very hard focusing on events and gatherings for the whole church to promote intergenerational ministry opportunities as well as improving Sunday Morning Fellowship Hour. None of these things would be possible without the dedication of the faith-filled disciples of St. John’s, and for that I want to say thank you for all their hard work, prayers, and time they continue dedicate to make St. John’s a church that continues to strive to, “Be and Make Disciples of Christ.”

Sincerely,

Ladd Sonnenberg
Pastor of Faith Connections

LEE UDEN, VISITATION PASTOR
Brothers and Sisters in Christ, permit me to share with you one of the most influential scripture passages for my life. It is written as Matthew 28: 19-20. “Go and make Disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. ------I am with you always to the close of the ages.”
As called Visitation Pastor to St. John’s Lutheran much of my time and energy is directed to the senior saints of our congregation in Hospitals, Care Centers, and in their homes. Visits, prayer, and Holy Communion shared; Funeral and Committal Service conducted, with faith that Jesus will be with us to the end of all ages.

The privilege to lead worship, to assist, to preach have all been God given gifts. As we mature, I believe we understand even more clearly the significance of Jesus’ promises.

Being a part of Group Loyal and teaching and being taught, praying, sharing, and studying with our Congregation’s staff bring joy and balance to life. Even the Children’s sermons provide insight because as Art Linkletter wrote, “They say the darnst things.” (most honest, too)

To God be all glory and honor as we serve in 2013.

Sincerely,

Leland Uden
Visitiation Pastor

LINDA STRADER, SEMINARIAN, LUTHER SEMINARY

Luther Seminary has a contextual learning requirement which includes four semesters in a teaching congregation. The Distributed Learning program in which I am enrolled requires that I spend at least 3-5 hours per week in my assigned “home” congregation. I have been blessed to be assigned to St. John’s with Pastor Busboom as my mentor pastor. I have completed my first semester and wish to express my gratitude for the warm welcome and hospitality that has been extended to me by the disciples of St. John’s Lutheran Church.

Each semester, Pastor Busboom and I are required to submit a learning agreement which includes at least three goals. This past semester, my goals, which were designed to help me become acclimated to the congregation, included the following: attending weekly staff meetings, as well as monthly church council and finance committee meetings; serving as assisting minister during worship each week, and preaching twice. In addition, I attended Group LOYAL meetings twice, attended a Deborah Circle meeting at Concordia Village, served as a small group leader at Encounter, and spent a couple of afternoons shadowing Pastor Busboom on hospital/home visits and board meetings. I also enjoyed getting acquainted with a number of disciples during the Sunday morning coffee fellowship.

Another aspect of my contextual learning is to incorporate my experiences at St. John’s into my coursework. This past semester, I completed a congregational and community care analysis of St. John’s Lutheran Church for my pastoral care class. I wish to extend my thanks to those who served as members of the “focus group” interview for that project: Evelyn Lageman, Christie Lazarides Purdy, Pastor Uden, and Suzie Weissberg. Please feel free to ask me about the project—St. John’s is doing a great job of connecting discipleship with care of each other as well as the larger community.

I look forward to continued growth and learning at St. John’s, and again, thank you for your warm welcome and encouragement.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Strader
CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY
St. John’s Lutheran Church showed a strong commitment to shepherding its families and children in 2012. Children and Family Ministries worked to provide stability, enthusiasm and opportunities for our children and families to grow in their faith and grow together.

Sunday School and Sprout provided quality Bible instruction, activities and music for all children. The FaithWeavers Curriculum gave our families a great outline for Bible Study and discussion for home use. Incorporating music throughout all programming is helping us see that music is a many varied medium to express our praise. The Children’s Christmas Program was a great example of drama and music, with every speaking part taken by a child who had auditioned.

Youth Group was a once a month vehicle for family activities or service projects and response was good. Our nursery had a planned Bible lesson for every SS and Sprout time. Families of St. John’s Preschool responded favorably to various programming options. VBS and Wacky Wednesdays provided a continuity to ministry in the summer with good attendance by a wide range of ages. Finally, technology was incorporated in communication methods with families through the church website, Facebook and emails. Ministry is ready to move ahead in 2013 building on these strengths and looking to new opportunities.

YOUTH MINISTRY
Youth Ministry covers those students from 7th-12th grades. Youth Ministry extended this year to connect with college students through a new mentoring program. Youth Ministry covers education, social activities, and service for the youth of our congregation.

One of the highlights for several of our high school students this past year was the attendance at the ELCA National Youth Gathering held in New Orleans in July. The students worked together for months raising money and preparing together to attend this life-changing event. After many planning meetings comprised of Junior High and High School students, adults, our youth director, and Pastor Ladd, we organized our new Encounter Worship experience which kicked off in September. Encounter meets two Sunday evenings per month. During this time, the students experience worship and small group sessions, games and activities, snacks and a coffee bar, along with St. John’s live band consisting of leader, Andy Lazarides, and Junior and Senior High students.

There were many educational and service opportunities in 2012, including Confirmation, Confirmation camp, Junior and Senior High Sunday School, High School Bible Study, visits and caroling at Concordia Village, Leadership Lab, summer intergenerational mission trip, serving Lenten soup suppers, UCP shopping and wrapping, raising money for charities through a bowling event, and serving meals, to name a few. Social activities included game nights, a wiener roast, summer Wacky Wednesday’s, a Super Bowl party, a lock in, an intergenerational ski trip, a graduation reception for our high school seniors, and many other opportunities to bond with other Christian students.

Our goal for 2013 is to continue to grow our Youth Ministry, giving our students many opportunities to mature in their faith. The Youth Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Christie Lazarides-Purdy for her leadership of St. John’s Youth Program the past 4 ½ years.

Sharon Cassens, Youth Representative
St. John’s Church Council

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT
This was an exciting year for the Youth and Young Adult program of St. John’s. We saw spiritual growth, and new projects begin. The idea for our Junior and Senior High “Encounter” was born in the late spring, and the event was launched in the fall. Each Encounter event has reached 25-30 youth, and new people are trying it out each time. It has been awesome to see the excitement generated by this event, and it is exciting to see the growth that will occur with this special event over the next year. Another highlight with our youth program this year was...
the ELCA Youth Gathering that was held in New Orleans. Twelve youth and four adults from St. John’s fundraised and engaged in Bible Study for a year together, and then traveled together in July for a life-changing event at the Gathering. It was amazing to watch the youth grow both together and in their individual faith.

This was also a really great year for the young adults of our congregation. The young adults have continued to meet once a month over the past year at a different restaurant each month, for food and fellowship. This has been an awesome, laid back time for people to just spend time and get to know one another. A core group has started to develop, and we hope to continue getting more people active at these events. Another area of growth has occurred during our Wednesday night Sprout time. The young adults began studying the Rob Bell Nooma Video series, and it has been very successful! The study group continues to grow, and the group plans to continue into the New Year.

ADULT MINISTRY
This past year has been a great one for the Adult Ministry. While “adult ministry” is nothing new here at St. John’s, given the active participation in the men’s and women’s bible studies, adult forum, Group LOYAL, and the many small groups, the creation of an actual Adult Ministry Committee was new. The focus of the Adult Ministry Committee has been to offer fun, fellowship opportunities for adults to connect with others who share their stage of life, whether it is still having youth living at home, or being an empty nesters, still working, or being retired. One of the fellowship events the Adult Ministry Committee has started, which has been very popular, is a monthly Dinner Night Out at a different restaurant every month. This has been well attended, with new faces every month, and has been a great way for people to get to know each other better.

Another event that the Adult Ministry Committee hosted this past year was a trivia night, which over 40 people attended. It was a lot of fun as teams of people competed against each other to answer questions related to cooking, history, music, movies, and more.

A cooking class was another event that was held to demonstrate the making of holiday appetizers, treats, and beverages. Approximately 30 people watched and in some cases participated in this event. The class concluded with a tasting party as everyone sampled the delicious foods and drinks.

While the focus of the Adult Ministry Committee this past year has primarily been fellowship, we have participated in a couple of service projects also. One project that we, along with members of the Young Adult Committee, participated in was to provide and serve a meal to about 40 people at the Salvation Army facility. Another project involved offering gift wrapping services, of Christmas gifts, to the parents of children who attend the St. John’s Pre-school.

All-in-all this past year has been a great one of learning and growth for the Adult Ministry Committee. We look forward to the New Year with many plans of fun events and opportunities for adults to connect with each other.

JEAN WELCH, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
The music ministry of St. John’s Lutheran Church lives out the message of spreading the Good News of God’s love to the world. For those who come to worship at one of four weekly services, there is always a message in the word and music to be taken out into the world. Our worship leaders provide the backdrop of music for these services from prelude through postlude. Prayerful consideration is given when planning for these services.

As Director of Music, I have the great privilege and opportunity to meet and work with those who want to share their love of music in serving Christ. This congregation’s use of talents and time are beyond measure here and for that, we are truly blessed.

The Concert Series continues to be an exceptional source of outreach for St. John’s. Highlighted are several events that occurred throughout 2012.
An ecumenical Taize’ service was observed in March during Lent. A combined choir led this most uplifting prayer service in the sanctuary.

The Lemonade in the Lobby Series presented in June, July and August served as a cool escape from the summer heat with The Capital Area Band, The Debbie Eddy Flute Choir and Ed Clark as our entertainment.

In 2012, St. John’s celebrated its 5th year of a joint effort with the local Boys and Girls Club with the Summer Music Camp. This ministry reaches out to a group of kids through music and art. There were over 40 kids this past year in the camp. Several congregation members were also instrumental in making the camp a success.

A Hymn Festival was presented as part of the Reformation Day weekend in October. Larry Peterson, Director of Music, Campus Ministries, Instructor of Organ, Music Department at Augustana College lead the congregation at the Saturday evening service.

During Advent, the Chancel Choir and orchestra presented the cantata “Behold the Star” under the direction of Jill Gum, Chancel Choir Director. The Chancel Choir also took a meal to the Salvation Army and sang the cantata at Villa East in Sherman where there are members of this congregation.

The Soup & Song luncheons held during Advent offered a bit of rest during the very hectic Christmas season. A combined total of well over 400 people came to enjoy the lunches and music.

Bells of Glory offered their talents in the community at White Oaks Mall in December as they rang Christmas music on the Center Court stage.

**WORSHIP AND MUSIC**

The St. John’s Worship and Music Committee was blessed with a very successful 2012 due in large part to the help of many volunteers and dedicated staff. The worship experience and music heard each week would not be as exceptional as it is without people willing to put their time and efforts into the services. St. John’s is truly blessed to have such dedicated and talented staff as well as members who are so willing to give their time and talents in support of the efforts of the Worship and Music Committee.

This past year the concert series showcased various groups during the summer months with the Lemonade in the Lobby performances while the Soup and Song performances showcased musicians throughout the fall. The King’s Brass returned to St. John’s once again to perform before a very large crowd.

St. John’s returned to the Springfield Boys and Girls Club once again during the summer of 2012 to teach young children about music. The week culminated with a concert and dinner held in the PLC. The Lenten services also enhanced the Easter season and provided additional worship opportunities for members. The Easter season also showcased the voices of St. John’s with the annual cantata. Lastly, various singers and musicians performed during the Christmas season for not only the Christmas cantata but during worship services as well.

Upgrades in technology were made in the PLC during 2012. A very successful Rally Day was held in September to kick off the start of Sunday school at St. John’s. The Sunday school Christmas program was held in the PLC during a combined 10:30 worship service showcasing the talents of the children at St. John’s. Overall, the music experience for children at St. John’s was enhanced due to the creation of the children’s music co-directions position. Lastly, youth at St. John’s have a new avenue to worship through the *Encounter* youth service.

**CHANCEL CHOIR**

The St John’s Chancel Choir has had an eventful and delightful 2012. It has been a year of growth, new beginnings, balance, and building blocks—much like the year at St John’s in general! The year began in January with a few weeks of music highlighting Epiphany that celebrated the light of God among us. In early March, we received the privilege of singing at the Taize Prayer Service that St John’s held with a choir of 25 and musicians
from other churches; it was indeed an beautiful evening of reflection and prayer. At that point, the choir was already one month into cantata rehearsals in preparation for the Good Friday Cantata, “The Weeping Tree”. Joseph Martin composed a beautiful and poignant Cantata that included a small chamber orchestra. The regular Chancel Choir was joined by other members for the performance of this Cantata, which happened at the conclusion of the other Lenten services. The choir enjoyed singing through Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday, and celebrated along on Easter Sunday: Christ is risen indeed! Jean Welch took over conducting at this point for the next 6 weeks while Jill, the regular director, was out on maternity leave after welcoming little Elijah Joseph into her family (and into the choir!).

The return of the choir in the fall was a happy one, and one that welcomed a few new members into the group. The choir spent the fall focusing on some classic hymns such as “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”, “Blessed Assurance”, and “Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus”, taking us back to some of our musical roots - how appropriate for St John’s fall theme, The Building Blocks of Faith! As we were studying this music, we began preparation for the Christmas Cantata, “Behold That Star”. Fifteen other church member singers and a 22 piece orchestra joined us as we presented Lloyd Larson’s Cantata over 3 services in early December. Bringing this offering to the congregation and to God was our highlight of the year! While in final preparations for the cantata, chancel choir members willingly gave of their time and served a dinner at the Salvation Army, and brought the Cantata to The Villa East Nursing Home in Sherman the following week. The year closed out with the chancel choir’s offerings at the Christmas Eve concert and service.

As we look into the coming year, we are praying as ever to continue to minister well to the congregation and be an integral part of God’s vision for St Johns. We are also hoping to welcome some new members with open arms. We are so thankful for the opportunity to be a part of God’s work in our church!

**CHILDREN’S MUSIC CLASSES**
We had a very exciting and productive year! During Spring 2012, music classes continued during Sprout! and the children sang once a month at various church services. Kids helped to lead the responsorial psalm on Easter Sunday and learned many great musical selections throughout the semester.

This fall, the children’s music program was re-vamped to include two co-directors and increase the amount of time spent in music classes. Kids now come to music on Wednesday evenings during Sprout! and again during part of their Sunday School time on Sunday mornings. The kids have learned many songs and continue to sing once a month at both the traditional and contemporary 10:30 Sunday church services.

The highlight of the year was the Christmas musical, The Christmas Cupcake, which was presented to the congregation during a combined 10:30 service on Sunday, December 16th. Children ages 2-6th grade participated in this musical that contained both traditional and non-traditional Christmas songs, as well as speaking parts. We are looking forward to an exciting 2013!

Rachel Gamble and Melissa Roselle
Children’s Music Co-Directors

**EVANGELISM COMMITTEE**
During the course of the year we established a temporary committee that included:

- Dave Lazarides
- Aaron Duncan
- Pastor Ladd
- Pastor Greg

We did allot of brain storming and soul searching to find a way to develop an identity for this committee. Thanks to all the groups feedback and some past experience from Pastor Ladd we were able to stat defining am
evangelizing vision and possible action plan for this committee. We did identify three main areas were our evangelizing mission can commence. Such areas in order of importance were:

• The apartments across our parking lot.
• Single family units surrounding our church in the south and west.
• And finally the more affluent neighborhood to the north of the church.

We believe that starting within our geographic proximity would make sense as it enables us to use the gifts of our members and our infrastructures.

Pastor Ladd did provide a very nice guide that we can use to start approach the communities mentioned. (See attached documents)

Also I want to take a moment and thank Pastor Greg and Ladd for considering me in leading this committee after some praying and searching I mentioned to them that I decided to step down and prefer to help the community in an other function.

God Bless,

Vatren Jurin

SOCIAL MINISTRY
The generosity of St. Johns members has allowed the Social Ministry committee to:

• Provide items for an Easter meal to those in need at Harvard Park Elementary School
• Provide gifts bags to Mothers at Mercy House at Mothers Day
• Provide book bags and school supplies to Harvard Park and Dubois Elementary Schools
• Provide mittens and coats to Harvard Park and Dubois Elementary Schools
• Provide approximately 225 bags of groceries to Grace Food Pantry (In addition to our ongoing collections)
• Donate $900 dollars to St. Johns Breadline through Bread Line Sunday

• St. Johns members serve as mentors and as reading mentors at Harvard Park.
• St. Johns members visit Lincoln, Logan and Taylorville Correctional Centers through Lutheran Social Services Storybook Project.
• St. Johns members provided a Spring lunch and a Fall brunch for teachers and staff of Harvard Park Elementary School
• St. Johns members also served meals to about 40 people at the Salvation Army the first Tuesday of every month.
• St. Johns provided Christmas for a family of 4 through Contact Ministries

These are some of the ways Social Ministry has reached out into our community. Reaching out to others is a very important part of the ministry here at St Johns and it is a privilege to serve as a member of this committee.

We are looking forward to a new year with an increased number of volunteers and new ways to reach out into the community.

GLOBAL MISSION COMMITTEE
The Global Mission Committee had a busy year in 2012, guiding the disciples of St. John’s in God’s service. Meals were served to the hungry and homeless at the Salvation Army Shelter the first Tuesday of every month. Our annual Cookie Walk was a huge success. Thanks to our wonderful cookie bakers and buyers, over $3000 was
donated to the Springfield Committee for Children. God worked through His disciples in Marion, Virginia as they renovated homes for two families in need. Everyone shared in the fun of collecting 5000 bars of soap for Lutheran World Relief this year so they could watch Pastor Ladd have his sideburns shaved on Rally Day! Our partnership with the congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church in Carthage to support Foods Resource Bank programs grew as we expanded our reach through our “Land Owner” donors, raising over $5,000,000 to farm additional acreage to support growing projects around the world. We also shared the gifts God has given us by helping farmers in developing countries to get a fair price for their crops when we purchase and sell fair trade coffee, tea, and chocolate as well as handicrafts made by people that would otherwise not be able to make a living. Our 2011 support to build a playground at a Lutheran School in Palestine culminated this year with a group of St. John’s Disciples, led by Pastor Ladd, to Palestine and the Holy Land, to celebrate the dedication of the playground. In 2012 our missionary support went to the Stubbs family who serve at the Makumira University in Tanzania. And, as a congregation, we continue to generously support the ELCA in their efforts to provide food and sustenance to the hungry around the world.

FINANCE COMMITTEE
The Finance Committee had a somewhat quiet year in 2012 with the major task being one of crafting a 2013 budget plan that follows the Vision set forth by the Congregation. Besides the normal oversight of the Church’s financial operations, the Committee activities included: (1) providing input into the few staffing transitions that occurred during the year, (2) continued review and adjustments to the Church’s property and liability insurance program, (3) beginning a process to establish a formal investment and cash management policy, (4) overseeing the Church Administrator’s continued automation of accounting procedures to improve the efficiency of our finance operations, and (6) preparing the 2013 operating budget for presentation to Council.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE
St. John’s is blessed that our predecessors had the foresight and commitment to provide a beautiful facility for us to worship. As our commitment to present and future generations, the Property Committee continues to address the needs of St. John’s. Evans-Mason, Inc. was contracted to make repairs to the bell tower that included brick replacement, tuck-pointing, inserting weeps to drain water, repairing the I-beams, and washing and sealing the brick. Tom Hyde, Architect from Graham and Hyde, was contracted to assess the repairs needed and oversee the project. The furnace in the Blue/Orange Preschool Room was replaced and the security system was expanded to provide increased protection. Many light ballast were replaced throughout the 2004 addition including the PLC. St. John’s is fortunate to have a group of dedicated members who continue to serve by maintaining the building, HVAC systems, and caring for the flowerbeds, planters, and lawn to enhance the beauty of the campus. If you would like to assist please contact a member of the property committee or give your name to Linda Toro, Church Administrator.

The revised organizational structure of employing a full time custodian (Kenny Barnes) and a part time custodian (Brian Yokem) under the supervision of Facility Manager (Linda Toro) has been very effective. We continue to follow a maintenance schedule for monthly and annual tasks to be completed. Routine maintenance and repairs this year include but were not limited to carpet and ceramic tile cleaning the in the PLC, painting, preventive HVAC maintenance, and addressing the many minor repairs to maintain the building and grounds. Short and long-range repairs and improvements related to building and grounds continue to be identified to assist in planning for needed revenue. Items on the horizon include repair and sealing the existing parking lot, replacement of HVAC units as needed, re-caulking flashing on the 1982 building, ongoing sealing of bricks, new signage along Washington Street, and expanding parking lot as needed.

A Building Use Policy was developed by members of the property committee and will presented to the Council for approval. Thank you to the individuals who participated in the Spring and Fall workdays and assisted in maintaining and making improvements to the building and grounds at St. John’s. Your service often times goes without recognition but is appreciated and makes St. John’s a special place to worship.
Submitted by Lyle Wind and Gary Corrigan
If you have ever been at St. John’s during drop-off or pick-up, then you are well aware that St. John’s Lutheran Preschool continues to grow and thrive. Now in our 22nd year of service, the Preschool proudly continues it’s mission to provide a Christian environment that will enhance and encourage growth in all parts of a child’s developmental process, including the moral, spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical aspects.

This year we have 200 (yes, 200!) fabulous children enrolled in our preschool, and 16 staff members who lovingly lead them. In addition to the educational component of our preschool, the children are taught the value of service to others with monthly mission outreach projects that aid Sojourn Shelter, Asbury Children’s Supper Hour, Mini O’Brien Crisis Nursery, the Boys and Girls Club, and many other worthy organizations.

In addition to addressing the needs of our children, this year the Preschool started a Parent’s of Preschooler’s group to provide parents with an opportunity to learn from one another and find mutual support as they face the challenges of raising children. Finally, we host Family Nights throughout the school year such as a Fall Festival, Reading Night, Ethnic Festival, and our spring Zoo Night to name a few.

As always, the preschool is thankful for the support we receive from the congregation as we continue to fulfill our mission!