

Outreach Team Report

by Russell Brown

The vision of the Spirit of Joy Outreach team is: *To provide compelling opportunities that clearly express the identity and core values of Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church. And to equip the people of Spirit of Joy to serve as agents of welcome and invitation, both to those inside and outside the church.*

In keeping with this vision, the Outreach team sees itself serving both external and internal constituencies. When focusing internally, we want to continue exploring ways to remind the Spirit of Joy congregation of the mission, vision, and values of this church.

That was accomplished in two ways during 2023. First by adding printed statements of the church's vision and values to the walls of the church foyer. We also worked on stating each of the Spirit of Joy values (Worship, Inclusion, Community, and Service) as short, descriptive sentences that can be displayed on the electronic signboard on Harmony. For example, the value of COMMUNITY is stated as, "*Doing Life Together.*" These messages rotate on the signboard on a continuing basis.

We decided that one of the most effective ways to serve the church's external constituencies will be through special events. We have designated one major special event per quarter, including *Beer and Carols* in the winter, *Trunk or Treat* in the fall, an *Easter Egg Hunt* in the spring, and an as-yet-to-be-determined event for the summer. The purpose of these events is to draw in participants who are not currently part of the Spirit of Joy congregation.

One option we are entertaining as a summer event is a *Blessing of the Pets*.

The first of these – the *Trunk or Treat* event – was held on Sunday, October 29, 2023, at the church. It was intended to be an outdoor event with people decorating car trunks and parking around the perimeter of the parking lot.

Inclement weather forced the event indoors. And yet, attendance from people previously unaffiliated with SoJ was significant.

The *Beer and Carols* event was held at Avogadro's Number in downtown Fort Collins on Sunday, December 17, 2023. It was hard to estimate the number of "previously unaffiliated" people who attended that event, but a good time was had by all.

Plans are currently underway for the *Easter Egg Hunt* event which will be held at the church on March 30, 2024, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. This will be promoted through flyers distributed throughout the Courtney Park apartment complex as well as through various social media outlets.

One area in which the outreach team fell short of its objectives was in the area of direct, intentional outreach to the LGBTQ+ community of Fort Collins. We explored the possibilities of marching in the local PRIDE parade or of having a display table at a local PRIDE event. Neither of these took place during 2023, but will be attempted again in 2024.

Respectfully submitted;

- Russell Brown, Chair