

*To know Christ
and to Make Christ Known*



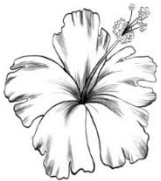
The Annual Report

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
142 Market Street
Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701

May 20, 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Report of the Council President	2
From the Parish Register <i>(no report submitted)</i>	
Synopsis of Assembly Minutes	2
Report of the Archives & Website	2
Report of the Chair of the Call Committee	3
Report of the Chair Christian Education	10
Report of the Director of Music <i>(no report submitted)</i>	
Report of the Finance Committee	3
Report of the Fine Arts Committee	3
Report of the Liaison Committee	4
Report of the Memorials Committee	4
Report of the Nominating Committee.....	4
Report of Outreach Committee	4
Report of the Parish Life Committee.....	5
Report of the Pastor <i>(no report submitted)</i>	
Report of the Personnel Committee	5
Report of the Property Committee	6
Report of the Publicity Committee	6
Report of Stephen Ministry	7
Report of the Stewardship Committee.....	7
Report of the Women of ELCA.....	7
Report of Worship and Music Committee.....	8
Report of Youth and Family Ministry.....	8
Congregational Financial Statements.....	11



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

~ Harold Hershberger, Council President

Elsewhere in this document you will find the reports of the various committees describing their work through the year. I will not repeat that – just want to make a few comments about this past year.

This year has been an unusual one – a year of transition! We moved from Pastor's Elkin's long years of service to a period of transition to later a call process. The transition committee spent most of the past summer working on the congregational profile which had to be completed before the call process would begin. Several well attended cluster meetings determined the pulse of the congregation and what they were hoping for in a new Pastor.

Another big step was called for with the resignation of Junghwa Kim as organist and choir director. We were blessed to bring Christian Humcke as the replacement. Christian is a very talented musician, vocalist and composer and he has been a wonderful addition.

The Outreach committee continues to serve multiple human service needs in our congregation and in the community – a partial list includes a Christmas party for the ladies of the Selinsgrove Center, Christmas caroling to special needs folks, organizing Christmas and other

greeting cards to shut-ins, sponsoring a Bloodmobile, Family Promise, meal packaging and on and on. Those folks have amazing energy!

Vicki Haussmann and Becky Miller Pryor have organized a cleanup and sorting project – all part of getting our building ready for a new Pastor.

Property and Fine Arts are doing their part in that direction. The Middle Lounge has had new carpet installed and the Front Lounge has new furniture, new paint and new carpeting. Other work will be undertaken as needed.

In addition, the property committee takes care of maintenance needs and offers their help in special areas – Some special volunteers including Dr. Carl Albright, Ed Gair, and Tim Maggs are frequently taking on special projects.

These are only some of the things that has been done by our wonderful volunteers this year. Additionally, our staff has done a great deal to keep the wheels running in an uncertain time. Thanks also to Pastor West for bringing his own special caring to members of the congregation.

I have personally enjoyed this year and feel confident that our buildings and our congregation will be ready to welcome a new pastor- and will join with him with making St. Mark's a real force in our community! My prayers are with you all as we go forward!



SYNOPSIS of ASSEMBLY MINUTES

~ Karen Boone, Council Secretary

-Annual Congregational Assembly of December 17, 2017

A congregational meeting was held in two sessions, one following each service, on Sunday, December 17, 2017.

The budget was unanimously approved.

-Special Congregational Assembly of March 11, 2018

A congregational meeting was held in two sessions, one following each service, on Sunday, March 11, 2018.

The updated constitution was unanimously approved.



ARCHIVES & ST. MARK'S WEBSITE

It is the purpose of the Archives Committee to keep and protect the heritage of the St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

~ Gary Weber, Archivist

These yearly reports have looked much the same for the past few years. That is because the collection of archival material of the Church continues to grow, most particularly by way of the preservation of the memory of events through photographs and articles on our Website, www.stmarkswilliamsport.org. Each year adds to the collection, and the old material is not removed.

The *Lion* newsletter, is likewise preserved online for all years beginning with 2005. Older newsletters have

been preserved for many past years in paper form, they are not as accessible. Last year, the Publicity Committee began issuing an email newsletter, that works hand-in-hand with the website and *Lion*. If you are not getting the emails, contact the office to add your name to the email list.

The website still contains historical material: construction history, pastor biographies, annual reports, pictorial directories and much more.

We are always willing to post articles or photographs on the Website, concerning St. Mark's member activities or Church events. Give or email items to Gary Weber, gweber@stmarkswilliamsport.org.

Anyone interested in working with the History Committee, please contact me. The physical collection of archival material is located in the Archives Room, but it is not well organized. Your Archivist would like to schedule meetings of the History Committee, if sufficient interest in working on our paper archives is expressed.



CALL COMMITTEE

~ *Joyce Hershberger, Chair*

In January of 2017 the call committee was elected by the congregation council and included Mel Wentzel, Matt Fortin, Karen Boone, Gary Weber, Walt Haussmann and Joyce Hershberger with Lorraine Barone as alternate.

We were asked to wait until May to begin our search so in May we met with Bishop Collins and later assistant to the bishop Craig Miller to discuss our plan of work.

The first project was the completion of the Congregational Profile which would be submitted to potential candidates. We organized and held cluster meetings with various groups of members in different locales and at different times of day. We were pleased with the large number of folks who took part, giving us a good picture of what they were hoping for in a new pastor. We gathered lots of other data from church records and from community sources. That was a big job and took most of the summer to complete. In October we submitted it to the bishop for approval.

With the approval in hand we waited eagerly for our first candidates. Pastor Miller had hoped to send us at least three and hopefully four for our consideration.

One of the four took another position before we had a chance to talk with her. We did interviews via skype with three others. A second person decided to stay in her present position.

Of the two remaining we were very excited about one whom we thought would be a great person to fit into our congregation. We were sad to learn that he decided to select another church where his wife, also an ordained pastor, could serve with him in team ministry. We wish them both God's blessings.

Now we wait – the assistant to the bishop has promised us more candidates but as he reports the process is slow (we can testify to that) and the system works through the bishop's office - so as I said --- Now we wait!

I am impressed by the dedication of this committee – we are committed to finding a pastor for St. Mark's who will lead us into the future – but it is a tough job!

Please continue to keep us in your prayers – you can be sure we will move ahead as soon as we get a signal!



FINANCE ANNUAL REPORT

The purpose of the finance Committee is to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and to all the world by managing the financial resources of the congregation.

~ *Jackie Kinney, Treasurer*

Finance Committee handled the following items in the course of the year:

1. Reviewed and evaluated the monthly financial reports.
2. Met with our portfolio managers from M & T Bank in February and August to review our Investments.
3. Prepared the 2018 Budget for action by Council and the Congregation.
4. Handled many small regular management matters beyond those budgeted then made recommendations to the Council for final action.

Thanks to Harold and Joyce Hershberger, Gary Weber, Barb Thomas and Pastor West for all their help with the financial matters.

We could use a few more members on our committee so if you are interested, please contact me.

(the FINANCIAL STATEMENT is on page 11)



FINE ARTS COMMITTEE

It is the task of the Fine Arts Committee to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and to the world by searching out what is good, true and beautiful to serve as aids in the proclamation of the Gospel.

~ *Joyce Hershberger, Chair*

This year we consulted briefly on the middle lounge project and then spent most of our time working on the front lounge. Through the generosity of a church member we were able to purchase new leather furniture at a greatly reduced price. We searched rug samples and selected a matching carpet – Mike Kinney was available to paint the room and all the pieces are coming together to make a huge improvement in the room.

Thanks to the committee – Bob Miller, Audrey Comerford and Jane Larson for their inspiration and assistance.



LIAISON COMMITTEE

It is the task of the Liaison Committee to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and to all the world by maintaining the connection between the Little Lambs Pre-school and the congregation.

~ Joyce Hershberger, Chair

Our committee meets quarterly to discuss dates of mutual interest, consider rental costs for the rooms used by the school and deal with concerns before they become a problem in the shared arrangement.

We enjoy a very good working relationship with Little Lambs and feel having them at St. Mark's is mutually beneficial.

This is a special year for Little Lambs as they celebrate their thirty years of service to young folks and their families – we congratulate them on this special event.

Pastor West, Holly Tillman, Debbie Neubold, Bernadette Jones, Lou DeSeau and I meet regularly with consultations as needed with property and finance committees of the church.



MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Memorials Committee is to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and to the whole world through the thoughtful use of Special gifts given to the congregation in memory of members and friends of the parish.

~ Carl and Beverly Hieber,

Co-Chairs

Gifts have been received in memory of the following members of the parish in the past year:

HENRIETTA TYSON

LARUE DIETER

WILLIAM WALDEISEN

LUCILLE WEAVER

THEODORE LARSON

ARTHUR DECKER



NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to identify and nominate candidates for the Congregation Council. The committee also chooses two representatives to Synod.

~ Pam Jensen, Chair

The committee met on March 4 and 18 to brainstorm candidates for the Congregation Council. During the past month, committee members contacted nine potential candidates, three of whom agreed to serve.

The terms to be filled, and those who did agree to serve as Congregation Council members, are as follows:

Lou Kolb, completing his second term in 2018 and therefore not eligible for another term. Carl

Albright has agreed to fill this term, beginning in June 2018.

Becky Miller Pryor is eligible for another term, and has agreed to serve a second term.

Harold Hershberger, completing the first year of his first term, but not wishing to serve the remainder of his term. Pam Jensen has agreed to serve the remainder of this term.

Audrey Comerford and Phil Thomas are both eligible for a second term, but both have declined to serve at this time. This leaves two terms unfilled, although Devin Owen is interested in serving if his work schedule changes in the near future.

The Nominating Committee, comprising Pam Jensen, Chair; Gregg Dancho; Vicki Haussmann; Lou Kolb; and Shelby Weber, discussed this situation at length and have a few suggestions for the Congregation Council. One is to consider reducing the number of Council members, perhaps to 9 from the current 12. As our congregation is becoming smaller, so we may not need as many as 12 Council members to govern effectively. We also recommend filling one of the available terms in future with a youth representative.

Our other task was to choose two representatives to Synod, and we nominated Walt and Ben Haussmann.



OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Outreach Committee is to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and to the entire world by sharing Christian love through social, emotional and material support. To this end the committee will pray that the Holy Spirit points out the needy, provides the will to serve them and leads the congregation in extending Christian compassion and helpfulness to the ill, aged and people in need.

~ Becky Miller Pryor, Chair

Our outreach within the congregation included:

1. Sending greeting cards to our Special Concern folks and others we do not see as often as we wish. Cards were sent at Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter.
2. Created an opportunity for congregation members to deliver cheery crafts and cards in fall and spring to the folks listed above. These craft times were in collaboration with the Christian Education Committee. This year also saw the delivery of a box of candy during the week of Valentine's Day.
3. Facilitated the annual Christmas Caroling Visit to Special Concern Folks and others we do not see as often as we wish. We were assisted by Bernadette

Jones and others with the baking of dozens of cookies for our visits.

4. Provided for extra cheer to be sent to individuals experiencing serious illness by providing cards and posters for congregation members to sign along with other items in a cheery basket.
5. Visited congregation members with a small bouquet of altar flowers. Priority was given to folks experiencing an illness or hospitalization.
6. Delivered soup and bread throughout 2017 to those who enjoyed receiving it. The committee will restructure this ministry later in 2018.

Our outreach to the community included:

7. Hosted our second meal packaging event that yielded 20,088 pasta meals. The meals were distributed free of charge to local food banks and pantries for distribution to people experiencing food insecurity.
8. Hosted two blood drives in Fellowship Hall with the American Red Cross.
9. Assisted with the hosting of families enrolled in Family Promise of Lycoming County.
10. Hosted our annual July Fourth Celebration on the front lawn with considerable help from the congregation.
11. Provided food and monetary donations to St. Anthony's Center.
12. Facilitated the ongoing collecting of non-perishable food items for the United Churches Food Pantry and hygiene items for the Shepherd of the Streets.
13. Collaborated with the Christian Education Committee in collecting items and packing Operation Christmas Child boxes.
14. Entertained the ladies of CM-6 at the Selinsgrove Center during Advent. Small gifts provided by the congregation were given to the ladies and their caregivers.
15. Facilitated the collecting of small stocking stuffer gifts for the residents of the Danville State Hospital.
16. Provided monthly support with clothing, food and our presence at Daniel's Closet and Redeemer Lutheran's free community dinner each month.
17. Assisted the Parish Life Committee with providing a free monthly luncheon open to the community in conjunction with Lunch 'N Fellowship.
18. Facilitated the collecting of hygiene items and clothing for the Newberry Branch of NGA (Needlework Guild of America) who in turn assisted needy individuals in schools and other non-profit agencies with the donated items.

Our outreach going forward includes:

19. Continuing with those projects that serve members of the congregation and the community. We await new opportunities to reach out in Christian love to

our church family and community. We encourage you to pray and answer Christ's call to serve.



PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Parish Life Committee is to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and to all the world by encouraging mutual care and fellowship within the congregation and presenting to the public a Christian image, which will reflect favorably on the work of Christ through this congregation.

~ Janet Jones, Chairperson

1. Small additions to the kitchen and dining inventories were made by way of gifts or purchases.
2. Funeral meals were marked
3. Helped with Milestone Celebration luncheons
4. Prepared and served breakfast for the Sunday School kick off
5. Prepared and served the meals for Consecration Sunday
6. Prepared and served Advent Luncheon
7. Prepared and served Lenten Lunches and Suppers
8. Prepared and served monthly lunch and fellowship meals to the public
9. Prepared and served meals for VBS
10. Helped with meals for fundraisers throughout the year
11. Participated with the cookie bake during Christmas
12. Prepared and served snacks and lunch for Healthy Congregation
13. Prepared and served snacks and hot dogs to meal packers
14. Prepared and served the monthly lunch to the Pastors of Williamsport

Our goal for this year is to continue to work with all committees and persons who would need our assistance with ay food service for the church. We would also like to encourage the youth of our church who have an interest in cooking or serving to join our committee or volunteer to help with any of our events.

We thank all committees and persons that have helped us achieve our goals throughout the year. We welcome anyone who would like to "Serve God by Serving Others." If you would like to join us you can always find us in the kitchen!



PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

~ Mel Wentzel, Chair

Over the course of 2017-2018 the Personnel Committee met monthly and throughout the year. Multiple discussions ensued sharing thoughts regarding job descriptions and performances of staff.

There were also meetings with the Pastor airing concerns of staff and Council. These concerns were addressed directly and appropriate actions taken by the parties involved.

Additionally, several Council members attended staff meetings offering support to staff and their concerns. At those meetings it was suggested that there be better and more open communication among the staff. Some solutions were agreed to and implemented.

Goals setting meetings were held with all staff members and later during the year meetings were held to determine goal progress.

It was also determined that two more people were needed to be appointed to the Personnel Committee. One vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the Pastor and one by the Council President. To date only one of those vacancies have been filled.

While Lou DeSeau was disabled Devin Owen helped fill in along with several volunteers. Lou DeSeau has now returned to full duty. We thank God for his healing as we all breathe a collective sigh of relief.

The Personnel committee will continue to review the changing needs of the congregation and ways to support these programs through our paid staff.

On behalf of the committee, I want to thank all of you for your prayers and support throughout this year of transition. I look forward to the future that God is preparing for us as we continue to work together in Christ's Church.



PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Property Committee is to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and all the world by promoting the use of the congregation's physical resources in the support of our Christian Mission. To this end the committee arranged for the promotion, protection, maintenance, repair and expansion of church properties. The Committee supervises the use of the same by the congregation and other organizations so that the facilities are adequate for the functions assigned by the congregation.

~ Lou DeSeau, Chair

Completed projects:

1. Men's restroom in Parish House East - Carl Abright
2. Library HAVC on roof, Parish House repaired by Billtown.
3. Repaired wiring in Narthex center ceiling light.
4. Planted window boxes on Parish House South.- Lou
5. Planters by Little Lambs playground cleaned and planted.
- 6, New led lights installed in Narthex. Bob Miller and Lou Installed new bulletin board in Narthex S.W. corner - Bob Miller
7. Repaired A/C for Chapel, also new ignitor - Billtown Repaired fan-motor for HVAC for Fellowship Hall - Billtown
8. Replaced fountain pump in courtyard – Carl Albright, Lou
9. Applies 5 more scoops of mulch to courtyard and front of church - Carl Albright/Tim Maggs
10. Purchased paint for Little Lambs SE stairwell – Little Lambs

11. Repaired stand for Christ Candle – Bob Miller & Lou
12. Resurfaced flooring in narthex restrooms - Lou
13. Purchased new 8 oz. glasses for Parish Life
14. S.E. stairwell entrance stairs painted - Little Lambs
15. Little Lambs floors refinished - Lou
16. Lights for Jesus window, main entrance, now in use - Bob Miller, Lou
17. L.E.D. lighting purchased
18. Diaper changing stations purchased – Bob Miller
19. Motion sensor light switches installed in all restrooms – Lou
20. Sink faucet installed in women's restroom East Hallway (Lou)
21. Chapel furnace repaired by Billtown
22. Kitchen dishwasher repaired, relocate sw. and added spring to door (Lou and Bob)
23. Having ceiling tile in Narthex checked for asbestos (Ed Gair)
24. Snow contract to same contractor approved (Janet Jones)
25. New LED bulbs/dimmer switch (Ed Gair)
26. Repair anchors for door (Bob Miller)



PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Publicity Committee is to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and to our community by using every available and prudent means of communication to invite, encourage and inform persons both inside and outside the congregation, and to promote the congregation's activities.

~ Pam Jensen, Chair

The St. Mark's Publicity Committee continues to work on publicity efforts as part of our mission to know Christ and to make Christ known. After last year's effort to update our member database, we have sent our e-mail newsletter at regular intervals to those who have shared an e-mail address. The newsletter has received a very positive response.

We have also regularized St. Mark's advertising schedule, in response to concerns that we have not been represented in the holiday service listings in the Williamsport Sun-Gazette. We have placed ads in the Easter and Christmas editions, and may expand this advertising as circumstances require.

Going forward, the committee will continue the email outreach, and our efforts to have our activities advertised in local print, radio, and electronic media. We hope to be able to have a feature article in the religious section of the Progress edition of the Sun-Gazette in March of next year, highlighting the arrival of our new Pastor (keep your fingers crossed!).

We encourage all St. Mark's members to get involved with publicity efforts by attending events and by

alerting committee members to public outreach opportunities.



STEPHEN MINISTRY

The purpose of Stephen Ministry is to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and to all the world by providing a process in which Stephen Leaders train, organize, and supervise lay persons known as Stephen Ministers to provide distinctively Christian care to others.

~ **Kathy Eshelman, Stephen Ministry Coordinator**

St. Mark's enrolled in the Stephen Series in December of 1997. Stephen Ministers continue to be linked in one-to-one relationships with care receivers. Our dedicated St. Mark's Stephen Ministers meet once a month for guidance, support and relevant continuing education. Currently we are studying the book *Cancer...Now What? Taking Action, Finding Hope and Navigating the Journey Ahead.*

With the assistance of the congregation, Stephen Ministry will continue to identify potential care receivers and will provide support to those in need.

The following individuals are currently Stephen Ministers:

Connie Shaible, Catherine Lundy, Gladys Knauss, Lou DeSeau, Barb Thomas, Matt Fortin and Ed Barone.



STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Stewardship Committee is to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and to all the world by initiating programs for the development of good stewardship attitudes in the members of the congregation

concerning our time, talents, spiritual gifts, money, and other resources.

~ **Cindy and Ray Huff, Chairs**

Our mission statement contains many elements that are crucial to our ministry:

To Know Christ, and to make Christ known.

Through Stewardship we share what God has first given us so that our service and love may be shared with the community and the world. Our sharing of the Word of God with our time, talent, and possessions give us an opportunity to serve God

Consecration Sunday was on October 22, 2017. Prior to that Mel Wentzel, Kathy Dancho, and Lou Kolb gave Temple Talks. Pastor West delivered an excellent sermon on Consecration Sunday.

Our congregation's finance committee continued with the New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program as a way to teach the biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving in our stewardship education emphasis this year.

Fifty one members signed up for the breakfast and fifty nine signed up for the lunch. More showed up for breakfast and lunch. A huge "Thank You" to the Parish Life folks and their crew for doing such a great job in not only preparation, but also in making the difficult look easy and elegant.

Pledges totaled over \$138,000.00. It has been noted that members are giving all that they can. A major hurdle is that fewer people are attending church and the other members who have in the past generously contributed have either left the church or have gone to their eternal reward. We recognize that stewardship is much more than meeting a budget. We each have gifts of talent and time that we can give to the church, its members, and the members of the greater community.

What we need to do is to focus on what our needs are in order to serve Christ, and to work toward meeting those needs to make Him known to others. God has given us great abundance; let us give accordingly to each other.

We have served on this committee for 10 years and feel that there is a need for some "new talent" for the committee. If you would like to volunteer, we will be glad to help you in the transition.



WOMEN OF THE ELCA

Our Women of St. Mark's unit is a partner in the total ministry of the church to make Christ known worldwide. We practice turning faith into action.

~ **Shirley Hill, Chair, Barbara Thomas, Treasurer**

The highlight of the year was an excellent Bazaar/Rummage Sale, under the expert leadership of Becky Miller Pryor. The profit of \$1632.17 was distributed to local and global charities, as follows: Shepherd of the Streets, United Churches of Lycoming County, Camp Mt. Luther, St. Anthony's Center, Habitat for Humanity, Church Women United, Lutheran World Relief (shipping), ELCA International Disaster Response, ELCA Domestic Disaster Response, American Rescue Workers, NGA-Newberry Branch, and Family Promise. As in the past, leftover items from the sale were recycled to various other local charities.

We take great pride in the making of quilts to spread love and comfort all over the world. Many thanks go to our faithful group of women who come each Wednesday morning or spend many hours at their sewing machines at home. These dedicated quilters are Ruth Sherlinski, Grace Arner, Shirley Hill, Ernestine Doane, Bunny Ditchfield, Elsie Sechler, Ruth Rees, and Becky Pryor. New members are invited to join us, as our group grows smaller, due to illnesses.

In addition to the quilts, we send kits and soap bars to Lutheran World Relief. The Blanket Sunday collection of \$272.00 went to our Synod to purchase blankets. All these donations came from individuals in our

congregation. On behalf of people dealing with wars, natural disasters, or poverty, we thank you for your compassion.

Bernadette Jones arranged a lovely evening at our annual Women & Children's Dinner. We were entertained with an excellent musical program while enjoying Bob Jones' delicious food. St. Mark's men and boys cooked and served the meal.

We thank God for our church family here at St. Mark's. Your generous support with donations of quilt and kit materials, soap, rummage sale items, and money is heartwarming. Thank you for sharing God's blessings!!



WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Our mission statement contains many elements that are crucial to our ministry. To Know Christ, and to make Christ known.

The purpose of the Worship and Music Committee by Word and Sacrament in and beyond the congregation. To this end the Committee shall see that the worship of God is conducted in good order in accordance with the Bible and the Lutheran tradition.

~ **Ray Huff, Chair**

The Worship and Music Committee, in an oversight capacity, continued to be very busy again this year within the congregation, as well as in the community. We have two beautiful spaces for worship. The nave was sight for Sunday liturgies, weddings, funerals, concerts and other events. The chapel was utilized in many ways as was intended when it was renovated. The chapel provided a warm atmosphere for Morning Prayer, Advent and Lenten services, funeral visitations, Children's Church and more.

This was certainly a challenging year for the committee. We were served by the wonderful musical and administrative talents of Donna Elkin for the large part of the year. God saw our needs and we have an outstanding director, composer, pianist, organist and youth aficionado in Christian Humcke. He has energized the Chancel Choir and worked extremely well with our youth. We are so fortunate to have Christian as our Director of Music.

The committee is pleased to recognize the musical groups serving in the church's worship: the senior choir, the adult hand bell choir, and the many groups and soloists both vocal and instrumental. Under the direction of Donna Elkin and Christian Humcke, various youth have participated during the past year as instrumentalists as well as being in the senior choir. We are truly blessed to have some talented and giving members who share their talents and will hopefully continue for many years.

The Altar Guild was extremely active again this year with the many scheduled and unscheduled activities to keep the church supplies and articles in proper order.

Acknowledgment must be made for the diligent service of our committee members, musicians, the behind-the-scene helpers and those who share in the worship leadership roles. Without the assistance, leadership and contributions of all of them, our services to the Lord would not be as fulfilling. We express our appreciation to Donna Zierdt Elkin and our Intentional Interim, Pastor James West, for his continuing roles and leadership in our worship and music experience.

Additional communion assistants, assisting ministers, and acolytes were introduced this year. The service opportunities are always expanding and the need for volunteers to fill these roles is always present.

Children's Church continues to occur during the late service on the second Sunday of every month. The children do a terrific job in taking turns at leadership in their service. The service is completed in time for the children to join all in the nave for Holy Communion.

Thanks are due for those who so graciously help in the many duties to keep things flowing throughout the entire year, especially the committee members: Bev Hieber, Cindy Huff, Linda Rosini, Michele Owen, Karen Boone, Lou Kolb, Walt Haussmann, Dan Ziegler and Christian Humcke.

Challenges continue each year, mainly in the areas of volunteerism, meeting parishioners' needs, and increasing our active membership. It may not be obvious to some, but it truly takes a host of people to keep the church, music and worship services ministering properly. This is most evident during the seasons of Advent and Holy Week, but the need continues every day during the year. There exist many opportunities for volunteer ministry at St. Mark's. Please feel free to contact any member of the Worship and Music committee or Pastor West if you are able to share in any of the various volunteering capacities. Together we all will continue to praise and proclaim Jesus Christ through His Word and Sacrament.



YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

The purpose of the ministry of these Coordinators is to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and to the entire world by planning and administering the total educational program of the parish, as well as its youth and family ministry program. To this end, the Youth and Family Ministry Coordinators supervise educational opportunities, celebrations and fellowship activities for all youth and adults, in and beyond the congregation, in the Christian faith as found in the Bible and the Lutheran tradition.

~ **Bernadette Jones and Michele Owen,**

Youth and Family Ministry Coordinators

- 1 The Christian Education Committee, Vicki Haussmann, chair, is instrumental in assisting Michele and Bernadette with plans, hands-on help, and new ideas. Sally Bjornstad and Audrey Comerford are also on the committee.
- 2 Bernadette and Michele are focused on keeping lines of communication open with our new pastor as far as informing him of events and their procedures and making themselves available as a resource regarding our congregation and community.

Christian Education:

1. CELEBration (rally day) was on September 10. In addition to the meal and the children's games, we invited the committees of the church to set up information tables at which everything that was going on in St. Mark's.
2. For Sunday School curriculum, we use Sparkhouse's WHIRL program which is lectionary based. The materials are very "user friendly" and reinforce each Sunday's lesson with the children.
3. Our children were divided into the following configuration based on numbers, age, and/or grade level: grades 1—5.
4. Our middle school class of 6-8 graders continues with the *To Know, to Live, to Grow* program by Augsburg Fortress.
5. Though letters of invitation were sent out, there were no candidates for confirmation this year. We look forward to renewing the program next year.
6. Karen Boone teaches the high school class. The curriculum has involved topics on CDs and is currently discussing the book, "The Case for Christ." The class is consistently attended by 5-7 youth.
7. The monthly rotation schedule for teachers continues to be successful, although volunteers are sparse.
8. The only adult class this year meets in the middle lounge and has been renamed Master's Gardeners. It is led by Kathy & Gregg Dancho on a variety of subjects.
9. While still teaming up with Trinity Episcopal Church, we are currently alternating years in regard to hosting. Last summer it was here. The program was Pandamania, revived from several years ago. The materials are still relevant and timely. Roughly three dozen children attended, with 12 of our teen assistants and 11 adults in teaching/support positions.
10. Bernadette organized, facilitated, and helped to lead Confirmation Camp this year.
11. We hosted Lutheran Shared Ministry's School of Religion in October. This year, we focused on Reformation 500 and promoted Lutheran/Catholic dialogue.
12. After School of Religion, the dialogue continued on Wednesday evenings as a discussion group, meeting at Perkins

13. The Way, a process of faith formation, was discontinued this year. A lay leader is needed.
14. Children's Church continued on a once a month schedule during the school year.
15. A celebration for all Sunday School attendees, choir, and all others who wished to attend was held in Fellowship Hall during the Sunday School hour at Easter.

Youth and Family Ministry Activities:

1. Passing on Faith remains a keystone of our family ministry at St. Mark's. Milestones celebrated this year: Receiving blankets for newborns; Prayer Pillows; Confirmation; Progressions; Remembrance Service; 70+, Single, and Still Praising God continues as an annual event honoring our senior parishioners. The Wedding Anniversary celebration was held for four of our couples.
2. Michele planned the annual Fishing Derby at Doebler's farm. It was our biggest turnout yet; about 40 people!
3. Michele continues to assist with setup and teardown of the July Fourth outreach. Our youth also continue in this service.
4. Bernadette continues assisting the July Fourth concert by finding talent and writing/narrating scripts.
5. The Annual Church Picnic was held at Montoursville's Indian Park. Bernadette has reserved the pavilion again for this year.
6. A film series was presented in the Crossways Room each Sunday through the summer. This year, Bernadette showed *Luther: Rebel/Genius/Liberator* and *Risen*. Discussion ensued after each installment. There was room for more to attend.
7. A picnic was held for the confirmands, their families and mentors.
8. Six of our youth were confirmed on the first day of Sunday School, 2017. A reception for families and friends was held afterward.
9. Our Pack'n'Wrap for Operation Christmas Child was held in November. Participants enjoyed a light meal and packed 36 shoe boxes with small gifts for needy children around the world. Money was donated toward the \$7/box shipping.
10. Family Advent Wreath Making & Luncheon was attended by about 15 people on the first Sunday of Advent. Advent boxes were also prepared for families to use to collect non-perishables for the food bank.
11. Kids' Night Out was well attended. About 9 of our youth assisted.
12. The participants attending the Christmas Cookie-Baking event produced the cookies sent for our shut-ins.
13. Christmas Caroling and cookie delivery was conducted by our volunteer carolers. Visits were made later in the