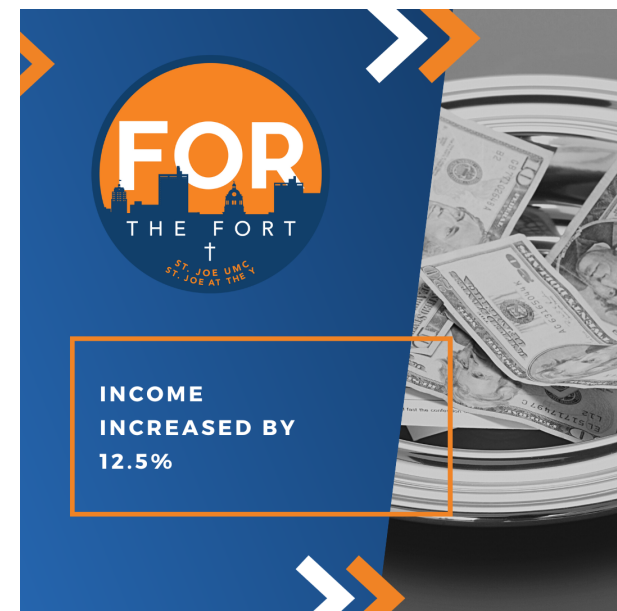


A look back at 2023

St. Joe UMC

Winter 2024 Newsletter

From Pastor Glenn...



As we start 2024, St. Joe UMC and St. Joe @ Y have something every church is looking for: MOMENTUM. Compared to 2022, 2023 giving to the mission of the church has increased by 12.5%. Worship attendance increased by 20%. Children participating in Sunday morning worship programming increased by 24% and elementary participation in Level Up increased by 60% from last year.



New ministries like The Canvas and Keystones are starting and the partnership with the Fort Wayne YMCA is strong. We clarified our vision of being "For the Fort" by describing the beginning to live according to our core values as a congregation: Faithful, Fearless, and Fruitful.

The key question a church faces when it discovers momentum is, "What do we do with it?" Momentum, energy, and the life that comes to a congregation has to be given away for more energy, momentum, and life to unfold in the midst of the congregation.

On Saturday January 13, 2024 our church council and staff met for most of the day. The big issue considered was the state of the church facility. They received a report from the Facilities Team led by Pastor Mark Fenstermacher. This team had also contracted an architectural firm to assess the state of the facility. While the basic bones of the structure are all sound, there are items requiring significant maintenance on the horizon. Copies of the report from the Facilities Team and the architectural audit are available now at the Mission Center to everyone. The Council has asked the Nominating/Lay Leadership Team to name teams of folks to secure a specific systematic plan for improvements and a second team to discern funding sources for what likely will be a significant investment in the life of the church. They also want to engage the membership of the church in the conversation. They hope you'll attend a town-hall to learn more about the information January 23, 2024 at 6:30p in the Sanctuary.

I have to admit, the next steps here are big ones. There is much to do. Nonetheless, we have seen what God can do in the last year! God will meet us in the future as well. That is what is so exciting about the current moment. We are just beginning to look past our present moment and in faith trust in this truth! God will meet us there.



MISSION (What are we doing?)

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

VISION PROPER (Where is God taking us?)

We are called to be For The Fort.

VISION FOCUS (Who will we focus on?)

St Joe @ the Y, The Canvas, For Families, Keystones

VALUES (Why are we doing it?)

Because we want to be:

Faithfully seeking with one another the call of Jesus Christ (through his teaching in scripture),

Fearlessly responding to the Holy Spirit with costly love in real relationships, and

Fruitfully leading neighbors to the transforming grace of God in Christ.

STRATEGY (How are we doing it?)

We will faithfully worship, engage with others during services, and pray with our church. We will fearlessly give of our financial blessings to support the mission of the church and serve within my gifts for the sake of our church and community. We will allow God to bear fruit by learning and sharing our faith story.



Rev. Glenn Knepp – Lead Pastor

Pastor Ashley Moreland

Rev. Chris Dourson

Rev. Dr. Ron VerLee – Pastor of Visitation

Administration

Erica Gray: Office Administrator
Ginny Stine: Financial Manager
Barry Davis: Facilities Manager

For Families

Teah Aldred-Ash: Director
Holly Glentzer: Faith In Motion

St. Joe @ Y

Ashley Moreland:
Campus Pastor
Austin Lambert:
SJ@Y Worship Lead

The Canvas

Chris Dourson:
Associate Pastor
Chelsea Dourson:
Canvas Worship Lead

The Classic

Beth Wind:
Director of Choirs
Dr. Jonathan Young:
Accompanist

Caring Ministries

Laura Deckard: Coordinator

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Endowment Fund



The Endowment Team has been very active! They are reworking the Charter and guidelines by which their work is governed. You'll be hearing more from them about that soon. They also made disbursements to help support investments in worship tech (\$1,000), to encourage missional generosity with A Baby's Closet (\$1,000), and to support Pastor Ashley with a scholarship to encourage her seminary education. Great work to John Painter and team! For more information contact John Painter or the church office.

Faith In Motion Dance Studio



For years, we have closed enrollment for each class at 10 dancers. In the 12 years Faith in Motion has been open, I remember filling a class two, maybe three times. In fact, when we opened in 2012, we only had seven dancers total led by two instructors...SEVEN DANCERS. These seven dancers basically did all of the routines in each style at recital. By the time we reached the temporary closure in March 2020, we had grown to a studio of 52 dancers. During that time, circles during "Circle Time" filled rooms, we led 5-6 classes each hour, and group dance performances barely fit on the stage. It was a great time and a surreal feeling. Unfortunately, when we returned in June 2020 with lots of restrictions, less than half of our 52 dancers returned. In addition to low enrollment during this time, we were unable to gather people together for performances, and events we looked forward to participating in were cancelled. It was depressing. Though this was a dark time, Faith in Motion didn't stop dancing. We continued to work hard, advertise, and dance! As we continue to rebuild post-pandemic, things are looking up! Finally breaking out of the "20s" in enrollment numbers is SO encouraging!! Thank you to those who have recently joined our Faith in Motion family AND those who persevered through the not-so-good times with us! We will keep dancing and shining our light for all to see!!

From Pastor Ashley...



Did you know the YMCA's mission statement is: "To put Christian principles into practice that build a healthy mind, body, and spirit for all." 2 words stick out to me: "**Christian**" and "**for**". It's no wonder St. Joe UMC, St. Joe @ Y, and the YMCA are such great partners! We too want to live out our **Christian** life and we are **For** The Fort!

As 2024 begins, there are a few new ways I want to bring to your attention that YOU can help live out our mission as part of St. Joe @ Y. We've begun to launch 4 new initiatives. The first is "Faith & Fitness", a 6-week program designed to be a well-rounded experience in building a healthy mind, body, and spirit. Each week will bring one of the Y's more popular class to give you a taste of what it's like and then end with a time of devotional and prayer. It's open to members and non-members. The second is "The MomCo", an intentional time of community for moms (Y members only, sorry!). It will meet twice monthly and be a great place for moms to encourage and support one another. The third is "Centering Practice", a 30-minute class (Y members only) that will make space for peace and calm with 20 minutes of guided, focused silent prayer with others. The fourth is still in the planning stages but we want to help support the staff of the Y by partnering with the Y to offer regular times where the staff can engage with each other, support one another, and perhaps learn a new skill, like reducing stress or financial planning.

All of this, of course, is on top of what we already do: Sunday morning worship, the 4 major community events we partner with the Y, and chaplaincy! Chaplains are always needed to sit at the prayer table for 1-2 hours a week and to engage in new ways that are being rolled out to support the Y staff.

Sound like a lot? It is. But it's all aimed at accomplishing our mission of making disciples of Jesus and being For The Fort, so it's worth it. Many hands make light work so if you're looking for a sign to help or participate, this is it. Let's go together and let people know there are Christians out there FOR them.

For Families: Youth

Our year started out with pizza, fun and some very frustrating puzzles. We were searching for the missing piece in the Old Testament and it turned out to be love that Jesus brought to us and we need to share with the world! Matthew 22:36-40 We will continue to have Sunday Night Youth the 1st & 3rd Sundays of most months and welcome any student grades 6-12. Also open to this age is CHURCH CAMP!! Director Sara Daniels stopped by to tell us of the great week we will have at camp July 14 - 19th. This is a special week that is open to both Middle and High School students and Teah will be joining them for the whole week! There are also camp opportunities for grades K-12 many other weeks of the summer! Please email taldredash@stjoemin.com for more information!



For Families: Children



As we celebrate the New Year, we are also celebrating all of the new life that is happening in our community every day! A great way to support new moms, new babies and new families is to donate to the Diaper Dash! Everything collected at St. Joe UMC will be donated to A Baby's Closet (a ministry of Associated Churches) which provides supplies, classes and a loving environment for new families and babies in Fort Wayne. Collections from St. Joe at the Y will provide a bag of diapers and gift cards to the families of Child Watch at JRL YMCA. What an excellent way to share God's love by providing for new babies in our community!

If you are feeling the tug to work with children this year, Teah Aldred-Ash is looking for more volunteers to help with Level Up on Wednesdays, Sunday School at 9am / 10am / 11am, Nursery Care and special event assistance. Please email taldredash@stjoemin.com for more information!

Keystone: Seniors For The Fort



The keystones are moving full speed ahead with many activities in the next few months. In addition to the ongoing weekly Women's Bible Studies and Pickleball, we have the Lunch Bunch, a monthly after-Church social at a local restaurant starting and another visit in March to the Arena Dinner Theatre. There will be a Pickleball doubles tournament in February, and a soon-to-begin indoor weekly walking track. The Men are planning another Saturday morning breakfast in February, and if that isn't enough, we are also beginning a monthly Game Day! History buffs will have an opportunity to work on their Family Legacy in April!

The Canvas: Contemporary Worship at 9a



Cathy Townley, a trusted coach for new worship starts and reinvigorating worship will be joining the Canvas team on Friday February 9 and Saturday February 10, 2024. This will be an all day event focused on equipping each and every worshiper to be engaged in ways that will help this missional community GROW. The workshop is open to all who attend St. Joe UMC and St. Joe @ Y and the learnings can apply in every worship setting.

United Women In Faith



The UWF officers met and made a list of activities they would like to see take place in the first half of 2024. We look forward to seeing you and don't hesitate to give any suggestions for future events.

- Bible studies starting January 18th
- Baby shower for a Ft. Wayne organization
- Annual rummage sale in April (start sorting your closets now)
- Spring luncheon with a speaker