



Congregational Newsletter April 2015

SOTP Statement of Purpose

"We care for God's children of all ages by growing disciples who make disciples."

NEW MEMBER GATHERING

Have you been worshipping with us here at Shepherd of the Prairie for a while now and think you would like to learn more about our church or think you might be interested in becoming a member? Please join us for the New Member Gathering on **Sunday, April 26, from 3:00-5:00 p.m.** This will be an opportunity for you to find out more about the life and ministry of our church



and to give prayerful consideration to whether or not you want to enter into formal membership in the SOTP family. You're also invited to hang around for our **Youth Mission Trip Trivia Night** (see page 8)—it's always is a lot of fun!

Those who desire to become members will be welcomed during the worship services on the following Sunday, May 3. Please call the church office to let us know if you will be participating with us and if you will need child care during the gathering.

LENTEN WORSHIP SCHEDULE				
Date	Worship	Topic		
April 2 (Maundy Thursday)	7:00 p.m. Worship	"A Question of Faithfulness"		
April 3 (Good Friday)	Children's Service, 10:00 a.m. & Regular Service 7:00 p.m.	"Tenebrae"		
April 4 (Saturday)	5:00 p.m.			
April 5 <i>(Easter Sunday)</i>	7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m .	*** Note time change for the 10:45 a.m. service ***		

A Note From Pastor Mark

Dear Christian Friends,

Easter reminds us that whatever your level of belief, Jesus is in charge of both life and death.

He walks with us each day.

He allows the real stuff of life to challenge us and teach us. He rescues us from being destroyed by the hardness of life. He gives us peace of mind when we are confused. He promises to be there for us at death's door and beyond.

Looking at John's gospel we see the words "Peace be with you" spoken by Jesus to his followers on the next evening following his resurrection. His disciples were probably feeling anything but peace as the political and religious powers went about destroying remnants of Jesus' ministry. They clung together behind locked doors in fear.

But Jesus found them, walking right through the locked door. A week later he comes to them again and repeats "Peace be with you."

I remember times when Jesus' peace was with me in difficult situations and I couldn't understand how it could be: When my mother was dying and in her last days and I longed to be with her several hundred miles away, but I needed to be at my job. A number of years ago on my birthday and we arrived at the restaurant and number of people from church were there to celebrate with us. When we were close to welcoming our daughter Grace and I was affirmed in a dream that all was well with the pregnancy.

But there were many other times that I felt like Peter at the tomb, confused and bewildered about life's happenings, and didn't open my heart and mind to Jesus' peace.

Jesus tells us in his Word that he knows his own. He not only knows our name and thoughts but he knows how many hairs are on our head. He knows how we were formed in our mother's womb.

It is a relief to know that when Jesus called Mary by name at the tomb, her confusion and despondency left her and she recognized her Maker.

We have hope that when Jesus calls each of our names, our eyes will be opened, our hearts will burn with love and understanding, and peace will come upon us as we see the "Truth" face to face.

Until that day, we have the privilege of walking with Jesus through his Word and in prayer with him.

- What scriptures give you hope?
- What life experiences have been difficult for you? What helped you get through them?
- Have you been a source of hope for another in trying times?

Even though life will still be confusing and difficult at times, we can continue to build our relationship with Christ.

Pastor Mark

Pastor Bill's Adult Education News

The Book of Revelation. No biblical book has caused more confusion, spawned more crazy theories, earned authors more money from those crazy theories, frightened more people, or given others more hope than this last book of the Bible. Martin Luther wasn't fond of it, and yet more of our liturgy comes from this book than any other. It's time we took a look at what it's all about, and the Easter season is a great time to do just that. Beginning on Sunday, April 19, and continuing for the next four weeks, we'll explore the whys and wherefores of the Revelation to St. John. Of course, five weeks will allow us only to scratch the surface, but it's a start. And by getting at the basics, perhaps we can begin to demystify some of what's there. So come and join us every Sunday from April 19 through May 17 at 10:20 a.m. and on Wednesdays from April 22 through May 20 at either 11:00 in the morning or 7:00 in the evening. Come join the conversation!

Please note: there will be no adult classes on Sundays or Wednesdays from March 29 through April 15.

Blessings,

Pastor Bill

NOTICE OF SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Please be advised that the Congregational Council has called a special meeting to be held on <u>Sunday May 3, 2015</u> immediately following the 10:45 a.m. service.

The purpose of this meeting is to review the recommendation from the Building for Mission 2020 team and a proposal to raise up a Building Team to begin work on expansion plans.

Please plan to attend this very important meeting.

Peace and Blessings,

Bob McDuffee

—Congregation Council President

Ministry Musings

I love being around children. Each week I enjoy watching and listening to the Children's message and absolutely love it when the kids, big & little sing or play the bells and chimes. I even like it when a baby cries or a child is noisy (or plays the drums along with the band). Children inspire and amaze me!!

But over the past couple of months four kids have really touched me in very tangible ways and I admire their parents and how they are being faithful to the promises made at their children's baptisms.

A young boy here at SOTP, Logan, painstakingly printed out the alphabet, upper & lower case on wide lined paper and sent it to the office for "kids who don't know their letters". The pages will be given to the Little Lambs so they can practice their letters. His desire to help others shines brightly!

A few weeks ago we were privileged to be part of Ellie Conway's baptism. Baptisms always bring me to tears as I welcome my new sister or brother; but this one was special because just before the baptism itself, big brother Aiden and friend Jill stood in front of us and sang "Jesus Loves Me". Their beautiful clear voices and the joy and faith shining in their faces touched me beyond description.

And then very recently, a little girl here at SOTP, Elaine, sent Pastor Mark a note asking him and us to pray for her friend Bella who has cancer. She even included a drawing of her and her friend. What a witness of faith and love that we can all learn from.

I'm sure we have all been ministered to by an act or word of a child. All of these times remind me of when Jesus said that we must receive the kingdom of God as a child does. I've often heard it said that "children are the future of the church" but I don't agree with that statement. These children tell me that children are the present of the church and that they are ministering to us even now.

Donna Kelly

—Lay Ministry/New Member Coordinator

Ministry Musings

SUPPERS WITH LUTHER



Are you new to being a Lutheran, or has it been a while since you were confirmed? Come join us for "Suppers with Luther" on Wednesday evenings in April. We will be looking at the core values and practices of the Lutheran Church. Come at 5:30 p.m. and grab dinner and bring it to the Adult Ed room and we will learn as we eat together. The class will run from 5:45 to 6:45 p.m. (you'll be able to hang around for Pastor Bill's class at 7:00 if you'd like). We will meet April 8, 15, 22 and 29, so come and join us! If you have any questions please contact Donna Kelly through the church office or at donna@sotpmail.com.

THANKS

Thank you to all of you who brought soup to our Wednesday Lenten Soup suppers. Thanks also to those who helped behind the scene!

—FFAA Committee (Fun For All Ages)

Our Spring sale was a wonderful success. I'm sending a large heartfelt Thank you to all who helped make the projects, those who set everything up, the wonderful bakers and everyone who bought projects and baked goodies. With your help we were able to pay \$1,376.00 to the principle of our building loan. Thank you so very much.

—Alice Hallett

IMPORTANT DATES

April 5No Sunda	y School in celebration of Easter
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- April 9.....WELCA—Mary/Martha
- April 17......Free Celebration of Hope dinner at Drury Lane http://exodusworldservice.org/event/celebration-hope
- April 25......WELCA Spring Retreat
- April 26....... New Member Meeting, Trivia Night, Bible Bucks Store open
- May 3Special Congregation Meeting (see page 3)
- May 4Northern Illinois Food Bank (see page 12)
- July 12Shepherd of the Prairie will honor **Pastor Mark's 25**th anniversary of his ordination on July 12, with an open house from 1:00-4:00 p.m., at the Huntley Park District's Cosman Center. More information and an official invitation will be forthcoming.

WELCA

MARY/MARTHA

The Mary Martha bible study will meet on Thursday, April 9, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. and will be led by Joanne Bychowsky. The study will be from the GATHER magazine, session 8: **INSPIRED BY THE LORD**. All women of the church are invited to attend.

WELCA SPRING RETREAT Sunday, April 25

This spring we are attending the Northern IL Synod's WELCA 2015 Spring Retreat, "Power of Forgiveness" lead by the Rev. Dr. Janet Hunt, Pastor from First Lutheran in DeKalb and author of "Dancing with the Word" weekly blog. The retreat takes place at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center in Oregon, IL. We will be carpooling, leaving SOTP at 7:00 a.m. The cost is \$35 which includes morning coffee, lunch, snacks and materials (please bring your Bible). All women are welcome to join us. There is a sign up sheet in the Crossroads. Please turn your money in to Michelle Rankin in the church office--she will register everyone at once. Please sign up by April 1st.

STEWARDSHIP TALES

Nearly all of us pay a considerable portion of our income in taxes, and no one, including our government, expects us to pay more taxes than required. Your gift may help you pay less tax, but this is likely to take some advance planning. Stocks and bonds often make good gifts to the church. The reason is that stocks and bonds that have increased in value over the years are subject to considerable taxes when sold. However you can give stocks



and bonds to your church and claim a significant tax deduction and avoid taxes. Here is an example: Harvey worked for 30 years at a company which offered stock options as part of his benefit package. Each year he and his wife bought a few shares. His company believed in reinvesting profits, so the stock didn't give him much income, yet it grew in value each year. Instead of making a cash gift to their church last year, they gave some of the stock. That allowed them to claim the full value of the stock as a deduction, and use or invest their cash income. Stocks and bonds are chosen as an example because more and more people have invested in them in recent years. There are other items that enjoy similar possible advantages: Real Estate, Life Insurance Policies, Jewelry, & Antiques. This may be a way to give more and cost you less.

FOOD PANTRY

SOTP is committed to the Grafton Food Pantry program, which meets the needs of families and individuals who do not have the means to purchase food and other essential items. Food items needed this month:

Deodorant, Toothpaste, Canned Fruit, Snacks - such as Potato chips, Popcorn, Marshmallows—Meal in a box

YOUTH CULTURE NEWS

From The Word...

In the first chapter of John we are told that "the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us" (NIV), or as Eugene Peterson so wonderfully puts it, "moved into the neighborhood." (The Message). That may sound a

"The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish."

—John 1:14 (The Message)

bit odd, but that is in fact what God did. While we were lost in our sin, God didn't tell us that we had to figure out our own way to get to Him... because we can't! Instead, He came to us... in our own form, on our own turf, in our own "neighborhood." In order to reach us, God became one of us. As a result, we could see Him, understand Him, and receive the life-changing Good News of the Gospel!

The incarnational ministry of Christ is one we should model in our own lives as we seek to minister to our children. Times have changed, and the culture our kids live in is far different

from the one in which we were raised. We can't expect our kids to meet us in our world. Instead, we need to be incarnate. That means we need to enter their world and to understand their culture. If we can do that, we will earn their respect and they will be more likely to listen to us as we communicate the Good News about Jesus Christ.

Yes, times have changed, but God's message hasn't. Let's take that message and live it out—incarnationally—in the "neighborhood" of our primary mission field: our kids and their world.

TRIVIA NIGHT

YOUTH MISSION TRIP TRIVIA NIGHT FUNDRAISER April 26

Shepherd of the Prairie Lutheran Church's youth mission trip team will be hosting a Trivia Night Fundraiser on Sunday, April 26, beginning at 6:00 p.m. to help fund their upcoming mission trip to McCreary County, Kentucky.

You are invited to participate in our Trivia Night in a number of ways:

First, we'd love to have you test out your trivia skills by registering to compete at our Trivia Night. You can register a team of up to 8 people to compete, or you can just register yourself and we will assign you to a team.

(Continued on page 10)

YOUTH CULTURE NEWS

Trends

Teens and Lack of Sleep

Did you know that for healthy growth and development, our teenagers need between nine and ten hours of uninterrupted sleep each and every night? And, did you know that more than ninety percent of American high school students are chronically sleep-deprived? How much sleep are your kids getting? Without an adequate

amount of sleep, our teens are more likely to face a host of physical, mental, and cognitive problems. The reasons for sleep deprivation are many, including things like late bedtimes, too many organized activities, too much

homework pressure, and waking up to check a cellphone. Parents, God has given us the responsibility to protect our children from harm and to provide for their well-being. Check you teenager's sleep habits and make adjustments where necessary. Don't let them sleep with their phone in their room. Set a curfew. And make sure that they are getting at least nine hours of sleep a night.

Latest Research

Developing Readers

It's been said that "readers are leaders." It's important to encourage your children to become well-rounded readers. By virtue of reading, young readers also stimulate their brains to grow and thrive, which results in the ability to read at higher and higher levels over time. According to a new reading

assessment report, we aren't doing a good job at teaching our kids to read. In fact, the average U.S. college freshman reads at a seventh grade level. Parents, God has called us to nurture and raise our children to His glory by

encouraging them to develop their intellectual gifts and abilities. This includes reading. Experts say that reading development starts in elementary school as students are encouraged to read both in and out of the classroom. Help your kids set limits on screen time and get them interested in reading books. By reading, they will not only sharpen their abilities, but they will learn about the wonder of God's world.

QUICK STATS

- In the U.S., more than 24 million children live in a home where there is no father physically present. (U.S. Census Bureau)
- Online girls are more than twice as likely as online boys to report contact from someone they did not know that made them feel scared or uncomfortable. (Pew Research Center; Teens, Social Media, and Privacy report)

(Continued from page 8)

New price: \$10 pp

The cost to participate is per person and includes dinner served by members of our mission trip team. We will also provide child-care if you want or need to bring any young children with you. There will be opportunities to win prizes, raffles, a bake sale and a silent auction. It's a great way to spend a fun evening with members of our community and support our efforts to help those in need.

Second, we are looking for sponsors for Trivia Night. Business owners are invited to either sponsor a Trivia Night team for \$100, or a round of trivia for \$150. If you sponsor a Trivia Night team, we will supply any promotional items you have (Business cards, pens,



keychains, etc.) at a team's table. If you sponsor a round of trivia, we will announce your business as a round sponsor at the beginning of a round of trivia and hand out any promotional items you may have. ALL sponsors will be listed on a flyer the participants will be given to take home at the end of the evening. This is a great way to promote your business to up to a couple of hundred people all at the same time.

Finally, we are looking for donations of prizes (items that were donated last year were small electronics such as Blue-tooth speakers, earphones, phone cases, and thumb drives; promotional clothing, gift cards and gift certificates), items for raffles (gift baskets, auto services, other services, a night out, etc.), and larger items for our silent auction (last year a stay at somebody's time share was donated as well as some great items for a "man cave"). In order to successfully raise funds at our trivia night we rely heavily on donations from our community and are extremely grateful for whatever can be given. We will make sure to acknowledge any donations you can make.

To sign up to participate in our Trivia Night by either being a participant, sponsor, or to donate, please contact Greg Dowell at 847-917-4734. You may also email Greg at greggornation@gmail.com.

SPRING/SUMMER SUPPER CLUB

Á BON APPÉTIT!

HOT DOGS AND HAMBURGERS ON THE GRILL?

WELCOME ALL! Right now may be a little early for grilling. Nevertheless, SOTP Spring/Summer Supper Club is here! It is time to meet and greet with new and old friends.

Sign up on the gold colored sheet on the bulletin board in the Crossroads or on-line using this link: http://tinyurl.com/o3yas2z

In May through August we will be sharing hospitality and food within small groups of 6 to 8 people. Groups are made up from the sign up list. Singles are welcome.

Each group meets four times determining what, when and how they will meet. Often one home hosts the main meal while others bring salad, desserts, etc. Some groups decide to "eat out" or "order in" for one or all of their meals—it is up to the folks in that particular small group.

For more information or questions please contact Sandy. Phone 224-569-6041 or e-mail sandyhupert@gmail.com.

STUBBS FAMILY UPDATE

The Stubbs family, the missionaries we help support in Tanzania, are in their 9th year doing the Lord's work. Randy stated in their latest newsletter: "We have been blessed in so many ways during our time in Tanzania and now we are enjoying some of the fruit that is ripening and seeing others forming. We give thanks for the opportunity to be here long enough to truly make a difference in the lives of so many here and to receive even more from those that we live and work with here. Thank you for continued prayers and other forms of support."

Please continue to pray for this family and their work in Africa.

MISSION TEAM NEWS

EASTER OFFERINGS

Your offering envelope box contains special envelopes for Palm Sunday and Easter in addition to your regular donation for general and building funds. Please make sure that your regular donation for general and building fund is not in the SPECIAL envelope. The SOTP Easter offerings this year will be divided between these two charities:

- Feed My Starving Children
- Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD BANK

ATTENTION! The event you have all been waiting for has finally arrived. On **Monday, May 4, from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.**, the Mission Committee has committed 50 volunteers to help at the NIFB. The original commitment was for 40, but because of your enthusiasm and dedication the number was increased to 50. So there is no need to sit back and wait to see if you are needed. You are! We realize that it is a Monday and some of you will have to choose between work, school, and NIFB, but they are making it a little more difficult to go on Saturday. After the May event, we will get a notice out asking for your input on a possible Saturday date in October or November.

If you can go May 4 email Sid Sorensen at sorensensid@comcast.net or call 224-858-4168.

FINANCIAL NEWS

THRIVENT CHOICES

Thrivent policy holders have a choice of where they want their **Choice Dollars** to go. Shepherd of the Prairie is one of those choices. And, if you elect to send your Choice Dollars to Shepherd of the Prairie, those funds will be deposited in the Endowment Fund. What a great way to leave a legacy to our church! Shepherd of the Prairie received \$752.00 in Choice funds in January and so the Endowment Fund is growing, thanks to you who elected our church for your Choice Dollars.

You will be hearing more about our Endowment Fund in the coming months. The Fund will be used in various ways to enrich our church and community.

FINANCIAL NEWS

TREASURER'S REPORT

Operating Budget Year-to-Date as of February 28, 2015:

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
General Fund Income: General Fund Expenses: Net Income:	\$ 87,526.78 \$ 89,016.42 \$ (1,489.64)	\$ 92,282.00 \$ 87,778.00 \$ 4,504.00
Net income.	$\Psi (1, 703.07)$	Ψ +,50+.00

General Fund Notes: Through February, operating expenses exceed revenues. Member contributions are less than budget. Expenses are over budget \$1,238.42. Overall General Fund Income is less than Expenses to Budget YTD \$5,993.64 prior to funding Provision Accounts. We continue to encourage the restraint of staff and mission teams in their spending in the various expense categories.

Building Fund Year-to-Date as of February 28, 2015:

Building Fund Begin Balance 02/01/2015: Debt Reduction Donations Building Fund Donations: Mission Plus Interest Income Memorial Donations Building Fund	\$ 68,931.49 \$ 5,134.00 \$ 28,429.71 \$ 56.80 \$ 1,100.00
Total Building Fund Income:	\$ 34,720.51
Loan Principal Payments: Loan Interest Payments: Principal Only Payments: Total Building Fund Expenses:	\$ 23,716.78 \$ 3,631.22 \$ 1,684.10 \$ 29,032.10
Ending Fund Balance:	\$ 74,619.90
Net Income:	\$ 5,688.41

The February month end building loan balance is \$662,044.34. Thank you for your faithful tithing as we continue to cover our mission operational costs and funding our building loan obligation.

Jim Henley SOTP Treasurer

BUILDING FUND UPDATE

Loan Balance	\$645,174.00	
Estimated Payoff Date	August.	2019

APRIL VOLUNTEER SCHEDULES

ALTAR GUILD

Saturday 5:00 p.m. Becky Tuzik & Sue Blotch

Sunday (setup & take-down)

Apr. 5 (7:00 a.m.) Sue Wehnes

Apr. 5 (9:00 a.m.) Judie Symbal & Donna Newbanks Apr. 12-26 (9:00 a.m.) Sue Wehnes & Donna Newbanks

Sunday (take-down)

Apr. 5 (11:00 a.m.) Sandy Hupert & Barb Beaudette

Apr. 12 (10:45 a.m.) Jan & Don Koerner
Apr. 19 (10:45 a.m.) Pam & Darren Walloch
Apr. 26 (10:45 a.m.) Linda Jahr & Marlene Boehler

COMMUNION BREAD BAKERS

Maundy Thursday
Apr. 2......Elaine Neukirch
Apr. 5......Nancy Ottinger, Jen Powe

Apr. 12.... Joann Ward

Saturday

Apr. 4, 11...... Apr. 19.... Michelle Miller

Apr. 18Michelle Saletta Apr. 26.... Mary Trodahl Apr. 25Michelle Saletta

COUNTERS: Warren Brody, Donna Turner, Dottie Bobzin

NURSERY

Service April 5 April 12 April 19 April 26 9:00 a.m. Ien Kolcz len Powe Judie Symbal TBD 10:45 a.m. TBD (11a.m.) Ien Powe Sandy Hupert Mary Lee Rishel Clean **TBD** Sandy Hupert Mary Lee Rishel Ien Powe

GREETERS

Saturday 5:00 p.m. Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Apr. 4...... Elizabeth Anderson
Apr. 11 Becky Tuzik
Apr. 18 Lois Kenyon
Apr. 25 Stevie Massei

Apr. 4...... Joanne Klinger
Apr. 12..... Joanne Klinger
Apr. 12..... Joanne Klinger
Apr. 12..... Joanne Klinger
Apr. 12..... Sie Wehnes
Apr. 26..... Sie Wehnes
Apr. 26..... Sie Wehnes
Apr. 26..... Sie Wehnes

Sunday 10:45a.m. Bob & Caroline Malm

WELCOME

Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Apr. 5 Joanne Klinger

Apr. 5 Helen Fenzan

Apr. 12..... Jack and Mary Conti Apr. 12 Judy Petropolus & Apr. 19 Jan Suski & Joanne Bychowsky

Joyce Thompson Apr. 19..... Elaine & Guy Neukirch

Apr. 26..... Joanne Bychowsky Apr. 26..... Noreta Walker

April Birthdays

Date

- lacob Riebock
- 2 Mary Tabatt
- 3 Dave Frederickson, Kristen Bala. Robin Anderson
- 4 Amy Casablanca
- 5 Darlene Soest, Mary Lee Rishel
- 6 Dorothy Carlborg, Janet Suski
- 7 Larry Scimeca, Dotty Lucia, Lynn Moran
- 8 Lindsay Debolt, Lindsay Sparks
- 9 Mitchell Flanagan, Roger Clausen, Cole Raines, Addison Raistrick
- 10 Donald Kundich. Debbie Lindquist, Kerry Miller, Paige Cordle, Ryder Reed, Camden Dean
- 12 Frank Cesario, Elloise Torkelson
- lack Conti, Suzanne Alpert, Delainey Black
- 14 Marc Piskule, Catherine Johnson, Cecilia Ramey
- 15 Joan Kimminau, Kim Frendreis, Kathleen Bloomfield, Wylder Weston, Jianna Trevino
- 16 Ernest Hermes, Roberta Seroni, Linda Dungey, Iill Behm, Jennifer Huston, Brooke Mans, Lilly Lee
- 17 Kathy McGuine, Seth McCulloch
- 18 John Boehler, Marcie Schlachta. Alan Torkelson
- 19 Luke Palmero, Angela Crase
- 20 Troy Fleener, Zachary Ulmer
- 21 Jeffrey Cordle, Juliette Riebock
- 22 Dan Wentzloff, Dean Dobrolinsky, Allison McCann, Calle Meidrich
- 23 leff Roberts, Kyle Frendreis, Matthew Kann
- 24 Dorothea Grate
- 25 Kane Luedtke
- 26 lanice Burseth, Kelvin Walker, Rebecca Hennessey, Jill Lamb, lamison Mathiesen
- 27 Andrew Brown
- 28 Walter Roth
- 29 Jenny Territo
- 30 Ken Lemke

Staff and Contacts

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Michael Waal

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Jill Gillming

Little Lambs

Sandy Martin

Cherub Choir

Michael Waal

Blessings Choir

Denise James

Joy Ringers

Michael Parmele

Sunday School Director

Sue Wehnes, Renae Greene

Contributions Secretaries

Tammy Uteg

Music Librarian

Congregation Council

Bob McDuffee, President

Marlene Boehler, Vice President

Mike McCann, Secretary

Jim Henley, Treasurer

Adam Adams Amy Brittain

Cliff Dungey

Matt Greene Larry Newbanks