



CROSSROADS

Presbyterian Church

*To know Christ and bring others to Him*

"I am about to do  
a new thing; now it  
springs forth, do  
you not perceive it?"

ISAIAH 43:18-19

# ANNUAL MINISTRY REPORT

2024-25



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# Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday June 1, 10:15 a.m.

## Agenda

1. Call to Order and Opening Prayer.....Rev. Scott D. Samuelson

2. 2024–2025 Annual Reports

a. **Necrology Report**

Rev. Scott D. Samuelson remembers Crossroadians who have gone to be with our Lord from May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025:

Scott Kennison	5/13/2024	Barbara Donald	12/12/2024
Mary Ann Schreiner	5/21/2024	Jan Maier Harmon	12/18/2024
Bill Johnson	7/3/2024	Bob Buth	2/12/2025
Alice Mueller	9/16/2024		

b. Deacon Report.....Shari Van Beek, Deacon Moderator

c. Session Update.....2024–2025 Session

d. Reception of Annual Report.....Rev. Scott D. Samuelson

3. Terms of Call.....Elder Jeff Clark

4. Election of Deacons, Elders, and Nominating Committee.....Elder Kevin McGowan

5. Closing Prayer & Adjournment.....Rev. Scott D. Samuelson



# Pastor's Letter

Dear Crossroadians,

In September 2024, we chose to ground our program year on this prayer of the Apostle Paul:

*"I pray that, according to the riches of God's glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love." -Ephesians 3:16-17*

It's a beautiful prayer! And God has met these longings with strength and compassion. In the process, the words of this prayer have become much more than sentiment; they have taken root in our lives. For as we have walked through a season of unforeseen transition, we have felt the Spirit's power firming up our inner selves. We have relied on Christ to dwell within and fill us, so that we might walk into the unknown with courage. And we have seen such genuine love and affection bind us to one another and ground us even more deeply in our shared hope and joy. Thanks be to God!

This year has left me amazed at the goodness of God. We have watched our children and our students grow in stature, in confidence, and in faith. They are increasingly woven into the fabric of our church and even lead us out of their giftings with the support of our staff, ministry teams, and volunteers. Adult Education provided formative small group experiences for all who seek to deepen their faith, along with classes that explored topics such as the breadth of God's church, the often misunderstood faith of 20- and 30-year-olds, and new rhythms for noticing the movement of the Spirit all around us.

Mission has responded to the destruction in Asheville, NC, from Hurricane Helene by rallying Crossroadians and sending two teams to aid in the cleanup, sit with folks in their grief, and look for signs of renewal. Church Life continues to bring us together, confident that the bonds created in fellowship and fun will evolve into relationships of care and discipleship. Our Finance folks helped us shore up resources to faithfully live into the call God has placed upon this church. HR navigated staff transitions by walking alongside departing staff members and grafting in new colleagues swiftly and seamlessly. And, through everything this year brought, our Worship leaders and volunteers have pointed us to God's unfailing provision and gathered us in praise!

What a year we've had! Every gift from God has deepened our faith and clarified our call; every challenge has been met with God's incredible grace. When our Head of Staff, the Rev. Susan Sytsma Bratt, made the difficult decision to leave and attend to her health and wholeness, this church family surrounded her with love, shared gratitude for her significant ministry, and released her with much affection into a new season in her life. Our Session and Pastor Nominating Committee have navigated this transition so thoughtfully. And my incredible colleagues in ministry have faithfully and joyfully stepped into every gap so that our congregation might continue to follow where Christ leads.

In every season, God is good! May we look back with gratitude. May we step forward with hope and courage and joy.



*Scott D Samuelson*  
**Scott D. Samuelson**  
Acting Head of Staff

# Session Letter

Greetings from Session! We've had another good and busy year, filled with change, transition, visioning, and hope. All the while, we've aimed to faithfully live out our call as ruling elders to both govern and discern God's call for our congregation.

We kicked things off last July with a special meeting to receive the Compass Team's report of conclusions and recommendations, summing up their extensive work discerning who we are and where God is leading us next. This proved to be timely and invaluable as we moved into the fall and received the news that Pastor Susan would be stepping down. After working with Pastor Susan to plan a good and meaningful transition and farewell, we were grateful that the Compass process had laid some very useful groundwork to collaborate with Presbytery to move quickly toward nominating a Pastor Nominating Committee and initiating the congregation-wide process of finding our next senior pastor. Meanwhile, we are enjoying the chance to work more closely with Pastor Scott as moderator of Session and head of staff, appreciating the joy, patience, wisdom, and encouragement he brings to these roles.

In addition to this important big-picture transitional work, we stayed plenty busy overseeing the other workings of the church: updating policies to ensure we're being inclusive and welcoming to all, approving plans for artwork in the beautiful Gallery Immanuel, keeping tabs on finances and the work of all the ministry teams, participating in Presbytery meetings and trainings, and the joyful tasks of serving communion, assisting with baptisms, receiving new members, and meeting with our confirmands to hear about their faith journeys.

Aside from all this busyness and work of the church, one of the joys of being on Session is being able to pray together. At each Session meeting, we set aside time to pray for the concerns of individual elders and pastors as well as the church and broader world. We also draw prayer partner names each month, so we can be praying more personally for each other as we seek to build deeper and more authentic relationships as brothers and sisters in Christ. Our doors, ears, and hearts are always open to hear your thoughts and concerns, so don't hesitate to reach out!

**Cathy Sanders**  
Clerk of Session



**2024-2025 Session Members (back row, from left to right):** Rev. Scott D. Samuelson, Jack Dobson, Steve Skowbo, Jeff Clark, John Gustafson, Joann Steidinger, Kevin McGowan, Jon Carlson.

**(Front row, from left to right):** Karen Patten, Barb Janssen, Clerk of Session Cathy Sanders, Erin Gibowski, Rev. Susan Sytsma Bratt, Robin Johnson, Trudy Lampen

# 2024-2025 Session

## Elder Class of 2025: Term ending June 30, 2025

Name	Ministry Team
Erin Gibowski	Church Life
Robin Johnson	Children & Family
Kevin McGowan	Youth
Jack Dobson	Adult Education
Trudy Lampen	Human Resources

## Elder Class of 2026: Term ending June 30, 2026

Name	Ministry Team
Barbara Janssen	Church Life
Tyler Steck	Children & Family
Joann Steidinger	Mission
Jeff Clark	Human Resources

## Elder Class of 2027: Term ending June 30, 2027

Name	Ministry Team
Jon Carlson	Worship
John Gustafson	Adult Education
Joey Sulsberger	Mission
Karen Patten	Finance
Steve Skowbo	Finance / Stewardship

## Other Session Members

Name	Position
Rev. Scott D. Samuelson	Moderator
Rev. Susan Sytsma Bratt	Moderator (term ended: 11/24/24)
Cathy Sanders	Clerk of Sssion
Mark Laux	Treasurer
Olivia Johnson	Youth Elder (one-year term)

# The Past Year at Crossroads

## Adult Education

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We continue to see God at work in Adult Education (AE) with strong interest and participation in both classes and small groups. Additionally, we have participant reflections to report of how classes or small groups have offered them joy and community.

**Small Groups:** Our focus this year was on transforming and growing our small groups. Tom Taylor and Nancy Ponstein attended a Barna online class in the fall titled, “Transformational Small Groups”. Based on what they learned, along with the Compass Study emphasis on small groups, AE formed a Small Group Project Team (Tom Taylor, John Gustafson, Nancy Ponstein, and Anna Langholz) to coordinate our small group ministry. We learned that small groups across the world include interest/recreation groups in addition to Bible studies. Thus, we held a workshop on Feb. 8, 2025 for all small group and interest group leaders to get their input on what support they need as they disciple their members. The feedback from the workshop requested quarterly workshops on training and more. We are planning on hosting a training workshop in June for all small group leaders. We also experimented with offering short-term, small group experiences during Lent with 6-week Lenten small groups on the book of Luke (matching our Lenten sermon series). We filled four small groups on Sunday morning, Wednesday evening, and Thursday morning, including a youth small group.

**Sunday Morning Classes:** Our classes provide entry points for members and visitors to participate in group discussion on faith formation, church history, and cultural impacts on our faith. This past fall, Jeff Carlson led over 30 people in a very informative church family class outlining the growth of the Church from its inception to today. This past winter, Tom Guay presented his research on why young adults have left the church in “Never Too Late” to over 50 participants with very lively discussion. Mike McIntyre taught 20 people via hands on practice in How to Know Your Neighbor, which participants recommended that we offer again. During Lent, Scott Samuelson, Anna Langholz, Shari Van Beek, and Samantha Carlson led 15-25 people in “Spiritual Practices”, including prayer, fasting, labyrinth, and audio divina. We had two Exploring Membership Classes in the fall and winter with not only our pastors, but also Greg Johnson and Heather VandeSande.

**Wednesday Evenings:** With the Children’s Ministry moving from weekly Wednesday night programming to once a month, AE approached this year as a time to determine adult midweek interest and try new strategies. We started the fall with a six-week class “Christianity and World Religions” with 16 participants who enthusiastically came every week to learn more. Our next class, “Incarnation”, offered preparation for Advent with eight people. AE decided to devote our energies in the winter to small groups and offered Lenten Small Groups with one meeting on Wednesday evenings.

**Invitation:** We invite all to join a small group or class this Fall to experience the depth of growth found in community and discipleship through group study. If you have ideas or questions, please contact one of us below or via email at [adulted@crossroadspres.org](mailto:adulted@crossroadspres.org).

**Adult Education Ministry Team:** Jack Dobson (elder), Tom Guay (co-lead), John Gustafson (elder), Stephanie Hancock, Mike McIntyre, Ian McKinney, Nancy Ponstein (co-lead), Rev. Scott Samuelson, Anna Langholz, Tom Taylor, Shari Van Beek

## Children & Family Ministry

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This year marked a season of growth and innovation in Children and Family Ministry. One of the most exciting developments was the launch of *Crossroads Station*, a fresh approach to mid-week programming. This event-based experiment replaced our traditional weekly classes with four dynamic gatherings in the fall and four in the spring, each followed by a six-week musical rehearsal season.



*Crossroads Station* was designed to help families integrate faith into daily life beyond Sunday mornings. Through interactive events, games, creative projects, and hands-on mission opportunities, children and families experienced faith formation in a new and engaging way. This new model responded directly to parent feedback and provided meaningful mid-week connection while requiring fewer volunteers. Attendance ranged from 15–35 participants per event, demonstrating strong interest and participation in this new format.

Our musicals continue to be a highlight of our ministry year. Under the enthusiastic leadership of Jenee O'Connor, *Back to the Manger*—our Christmas musical—welcomed 44 children, while our spring production,

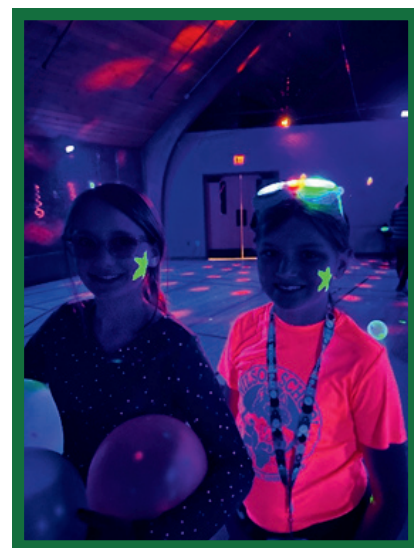
*Faith News*, engaged 33 children. These rehearsals and performances foster community, creativity, and spiritual growth, and consistently draw our largest mid-week crowds.

We also strengthened our commitment to supporting families through *Parent Pep Talks*, offered in collaboration with Youth Ministry. This year, we hosted impactful sessions including a workshop on anxiety and depression with Heidi Rowley, School Psychologist with Elmbrook School District, and a cyber safety talk with Officer Lewis Johnson, School Resource Officer for the Mequon-Thiensville School District. These events offered practical tools and encouragement for parents navigating today's challenges.

Looking ahead, we are eagerly preparing for *VBS 2025: True North*. We are once again partnering with two local churches to steward our resources wisely and maximize the creativity of our decorations and materials.

Our Sunday School program served 30 registered children this year, with many more visiting or dropping in throughout the year. We continue to use the Dwell curriculum, which is well-loved by our dedicated teaching team and offers a rich, engaging approach to spiritual formation.

We give thanks for the creativity, dedication, and enthusiasm that has shaped this ministry year, and we look forward with hope and energy to what God has in store next.



**Children and Family Ministry Team:** Jackie Buday, Robin Johnson (elder), Christa Middleton (Director of Children & Family Ministry), Jessica Minder, Annie Nielson, Keri Patterson (chair), Tyler Steck (elder)



## Crossroads Christian Preschool

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! We cannot help but praise our loving, giving, and gracious God as Crossroads Christian Preschool (CCP) finished its 20th year of serving the community! On February 23, 2025, students, parents, past and current teachers, preschool volunteers and alumni filled the church to celebrate this milestone. People who had ever been involved with the preschool filled the chancel while Pastor Scott prayed a blessing.



The dedicated, loving, and amazing team of teachers were Ashley Hinz (3K lead teacher), Erika Nunes (3K teacher assistant), Jenny Huizenga (2K lead teacher), Sarah Bivins and Laura McDowell (co-2K teacher assistants) and Sarah Bivins (teacher aide). Maureen Leurquin, Director of Preschool, completed 19 years overseeing the school.

Our dedicated substitute teachers were Jenee O'Connor and Amy Accola. We were also blessed by our caring volunteers, Nancy Follis, Deb Fiedler, and former 3K teacher assistant Joan Chyko.



CCP continued to offer a wide array of early childhood programs, including half-day 2K and 3K, music class with Todd and Jenee O'Connor, a Nature and Science program, and Lunch Bunch. Every day the children are reminded that they are loved by God and are taught how to pray. Maureen continued to apply for and receive grant money, which was used to support the preschool, church, and provide tuition relief for preschool families.

A preschool parent reflected on the positive impact CCP had on their family this past year: "We had a wonderful experience at CCP! Our daughter has grown in knowledge and confidence. The CCP staff created a warm, safe and faith-centered program. As parents, we felt well-informed and part of the school community. We highly recommend this program to others!"

**Preschool Board Members:** Rev. Susan Sytsma-Bratt (through November 2024), Rev. Scott Samuelson, Mike Miller (staff liaison), Andrew Rowley (human resources), Robin Johnson (elder), Diane Petersen.

## Church Life Ministry

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The Church Life Ministry Team at Crossroads lives out our mission to be a community that joyously spends time with one another, both inside and outside our church walls. The team promotes and supports recreational, educational and fun filled church events-promoting unity through connection!



During the 2024-25 year we have supported many Intergenerational activities. Our brunches have seen growing numbers around our tables as food and fellowship abound! The all-Church Square Dance continued to be a fun evening to kick up our heels, swing a partner and catch our breaths! The off campus Great Getaway retreat at Green Lake in November provided an abundance of fun, fellowship and service. Respite for others. Clearly it was a memorable time for all! We've supported several recreational activities and support groups while continuing to offer our host partner experience for all new members. Church Life Ministry team is the heart and soul of Crossroads when it comes to support, fellowship and fun!

The support groups, that Church Life Ministry Team sponsors for members and guests alike, bring people together at different, and often difficult, stages in their lives. Grief Share, a national model of providing resources for those suffering a loss, has provided members and guests opportunities to come together on their grief journey. We hosted two 12-week programs in the past year. Included in the Grief Share program are two special events: Loss of Spouse and Surviving the Holidays. Our Alzheimer's support group has provided impactful meetings for families and friends of those dealing with the realities of Alzheimer's Disease. Our new member host program pairs new members with seasoned Crossroadians, providing those important connections needed when joining a large church. The YOGA ministry is also part of our group. YOGA has several mission partners throughout the year. We celebrated the expansion of this program as they surpassed giving over \$25,000 to selected non-profits in our area. We call this a win/win--the participants realize the benefits of yoga to their physical, emotional and mental health, while the non-profit beneficiaries receive financial support for their missions.

Recreational and fellowship activities supported by this ministry team include Men's and Women Golf, Pickleball, Softball, and Crossroads Dinner Group.

We invite everyone to check in with our weekly news and website for information on how to sign on to join any of our Church Life Ministry Team's offerings. We love to watch our programs grow, and YOU are welcome!

CLMT is always happy to help out in anyway we can. From setting up and bussing brunches, assistance on cleaning up our church rolls, recognizing our veterans, to handing out ice cream treats after warm Wednesday night worship, we delight in donning an apron or rolling up our sleeves to assist.



We have seen GOD at work through our well-attended events, the connections made between young and old, and the enthusiasm to be unified as a community of believers. We look forward to what the new year has to offer and welcome any new participants to join our team. We are so very grateful for the opportunity to serve on the Church Life Ministry Team. We do have fun!

**Church Life Ministry Team:** Laurie Uhl (team lead), Erin Gibowski (elder), Barb Janssen (elder), Jenée O'Connor (staff), Lynn Klemm, Hayley Trier, Jane Connors



## Human Resources Ministry

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Crossroads is blessed to have a talented and dedicated staff who are instrumental in helping our flock live into our mission of knowing Christ and bringing others to Him! It is the responsibility of the HR team to make sure our staff are supported, guided and cared for so that they can be effective in their various roles.

This has been a busy year for staff and for our HR team as we have gone through significant transitions and closely walked the journey together. Through it all we have seen God at work in amazing ways. God was ever present as we walked alongside Pastor Susan's discernment journey, always assuring us and her that there was a plan in place and all was well. Pastor Scott's excitement and willingness to temporarily step into our head pastor role was truly a response to the Holy Spirit working in his life as well as an answer to many prayers. He has shepherded us beautifully and deeply in this time of need, and his growth has been incredible! We found it to be no coincidence that Anna was still searching for her calling and she was eager and available to spend another season with Crossroads. That was a true gift from God.

Jenee and Todd O'Connor celebrated 20 years at Crossroads. Through all of the changes within Crossroads during that time, Jenee and Todd have been our anchor. They have ensured that our worship and music programming thrive and that God is glorified in everything we do. Their unique gifts continue to be a blessing each week and we are so thankful for their service.

Our children and youth programs have thrived with the commitment and talents of Tanya Naas, Christa Middleton, and Maddi Hosni. It has been a gift to see so many children engaged in Crossroad programs. Our amazing preschool celebrated 20 years and continues to be at full enrollment thanks to Maureen Leurquin, Crossroads Preschool Director.

Mike Miller joined us this year as our new operations director. He navigated quite a challenge upon arriving in the midst of a pastoral transition, accounting systems conversion, and the departure of Carol Bird, our former operations head. His background in accounting and fiscal management has contributed to ensuring we are fiscally responsible and good stewards of our Crossroads assets. Our very own Josh Thompson has joined Mike in managing the ongoing needs of our facilities and has been a great addition to the team. Our administrative staff, Lillian Ramsey-Schley and Joey Thurmond, worked relentlessly to ensure operations were smooth at Crossroads and that we didn't miss a beat! Lillian's expertise and calm demeanor, and Joey's fresh perspective and knowledge from prior church administration work, were invaluable!

The Holy Spirit has been at work in many of our staff as they have engaged in deeper faith journeys to better serve in their respective callings. Scott became a spiritual director after completing a certificate in spiritual direction from the Christos Center for Spiritual Formation. Anna is currently engaged in this same spiritual direction program. Tanya Naas completed her certificate in youth and theology from the Institute for Youth Ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary. Christa Middleton began a PCUSA program to become a certified Christian Educator. What a blessing it is to have staff investing in deeper education and spiritual development.

We have been blessed with the gifts of new staff to Crossroads: Anna Langholz (temporary associate pastor), Mike Miller (operations director), Josh Thompson (facilities manager), and Joey Thurmond (administrative coordinator). We also said goodbye to the following staff members in this last year: Pastor Susan System Bratt (head of staff), Carol Bird (operations director), Jesse Read (staff accountant), Brad Johnson (facilities manager), Afia Allen (culinary & event coordinator).

HR team transitions took place as well. Jeff Clark replaced Mary Schigoda as our ministry team leader. David Steck recently joined the HR ministry team, filling the position held by Andrew Rowley. Thank you to all for serving. We give thanks to those who have led us in the past and for those who continue to take us into the future, working tirelessly to ensure we continue to serve this thriving community and respond to God's call to action for Crossroads.

**Human Resources Ministry Team:** Jeff Clark (chair), Trudy Lampen (Session liaison), Wendy Bushell, Jeff Porter, Jim Trubshaw, Dave Steck

## Mission Ministry

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The Crossroads Mission Ministry team helps members live out our call to serve our brothers and sisters in need, as we serve and seek justice for the poor and marginalized. Every month, we highlight approximately 30 mission service opportunities through “Let’s Go Serve,” offering numerous ways to put one’s faith into action at one of our mission partners or through our mission ministries.

- **Cathedral Center:** The new “Cooking at Crossroads” program welcomes volunteers to gather in the Crossroads kitchen to make 120 meals each month for women and families experiencing homelessness in Milwaukee. Sixty meals made that day are served to guests that evening, and the other 60 are frozen for future use. This program increased the number of meals Crossroads provides to Cathedral Center by 1,440 annually. This is in addition to the approximately 420 meals prepared, delivered, and served by other groups of Crossroads members.



- **Gracious Gifts:** Our alternative holiday gift market raised nearly \$18,000, benefiting 15 of Crossroads’ mission partners, along with eight local, national, and international charities.



- **Hurricane Helene Disaster Recovery:** Two teams of Crossroads members traveled to Asheville, NC, to assist residents whose lives were significantly impacted by Hurricane Helene. In April, a ten-member team partnered with Habitat for Humanity to repair two homes located just outside of Asheville. In May, a twelve-member team collaborated with Fuller Center Disaster Recovery to support families in Swannanoa, NC, the town hardest hit by the hurricane.

- **Family Sharing:** Crossroads members donated approximately 2,800 pounds of food to Family Sharing, enough to feed 50 families facing food insecurity for a full year.
- **Faith in Action:** Our weekend of service took place October 5-6. More than 85 Crossroads members filled over 200 volunteer spots through 23 service opportunities in Ozaukee and Milwaukee Counties.
- **Family Promise:** Portlight Shelter guests receive homemade meals from Crossroads members five nights a week, for seven weeks a year. Volunteers prepared, delivered, and served nearly 630 meals to families and individuals experiencing homelessness in Ozaukee County.
- **Habitat for Humanity:** Crossroads hosted a well attended Housing History workshop in the Fall, then invited the community to attend a Housing, Race, and Equity workshop in February, both of which were presented by Habitat for Humanity. Crossroads volunteers also helped the Presbytery Coalition in completing its 29th home.
- **Yoga:** In April 2025, Crossroads Yoga Ministry's all-time donations exceeded a total of \$25,000. All of which went to Crossroads mission partners and a few other select organizations. Beneficiaries in 2024-25 included Presbyterian Disaster Relief – Ukrainian Refugees, Sea Literacy, Habitat for Humanity, Family Promise, and Mercy Chefs in Asheville, NC.

**2024-25 Mission & Outreach Steering Team:** Joann Steidinger (chair), Jean Ellen Trubshaw (vice chair), Joey Sulsberger (elder), Rev. Scott Samuelson, Kelly Carter, Wendy Jabas, Suzy Frazier, Liz Sellers.

**Mission Partner Liaisons:** Mary Schigoda (Advocates), Shari Van Beek (Benedict Center), Bob Anderson (Big Brothers/Big Sisters), Joann Steidinger (Bread of Healing, Milwaukee Rescue Mission), Liz Sellers (Cathedral Center), Suzy Frazier (Family Promise), Wendy Jabas (Family Sharing, Our Next Generation), Jon Strawbridge (Habitat for Humanity), Pat Weatherhogg (Interfaith Caregivers), Cathy Sanders (Ministerio de Vida, Tippecanoe), Sarah Stefaniak (Sea Literacy).

**Mission Ministry Leaders:** Trudy Lampen (Angel Tree), Dick Janssen (Chili Guys: St. Ben's), Nancy Follis (Craft Corps), Julie Westerhausen (Gracious Gifts), Pat Vicenzi (Hotel Freebies, Mitten Tree Ministry), Erin Goldschmidt (Mission Garden), Bonnie Patton & Marian Hinkleman (Quilting & Sewing Ministry), Bill Hoover (S.H.E.D. a.k.a. Serve Him Every Day)

## Worship Ministry

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Throughout the program year, the Crossroads Worship Ministry Team (WMT) has lived into its mission to foster the creation of worship experiences that glorify the triune God and uplift His church. God's Spirit has truly been at work cultivating a community where children, youth, and adults 1) lead worship joyfully and willingly as musicians, liturgists, audiovisual techs, ushers, decorators, and more and 2) come together socially for a fellowship cookout twice annually.

Outdoor Worship occurred on six Wednesdays from late June through the end of July 2024, celebrating Communion twice. Sunday services continued year-round at 9:00 a.m. with live streaming, led by Rev. Susan Sytsma Bratt (Senior Pastor, resigned November 24, 2024), Rev. Scott D. Samuelson (Associate Pastor), and Rev. Anna Langholz (Transition Supply Pastor, October 2024–May 2025). The pastoral transition thoughtfully prepared by Pastor Susan after over five years of servant leadership went so smoothly that it didn't even feel like we were in transition!

Our pastors and Worship Ministry Directors Todd and Jenee O'Connor (celebrating 20 years on staff) planned music, liturgy, and sermons for each worship series with guidance from the Vision Team: "Jesus' Parables: Stories that Changed Lives" (summer), "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" (fall), "Church in Progress" (stewardship), "Words for the Beginning: Advent Reminders for New Seasons" (featuring quilts), "Who We Are & Who We Are Becoming" (winter), and "Everything in Between: Meeting God in the Midst of Extremes" (Lent). Themes were often mirrored in art exhibits curated bimonthly and Adult Education opportunities on Sundays and Wednesdays. The Quiet Room continued its third season as a Prayer Room, appointed with self-guided experiential prayer stations rotating according to the church year.

With a mission to glorify God through the thoughtful, professional exhibition of art, a brand new "art :: light" program team led by Randy Crosby refurbished the gathering space wall into Gallery Immanuel and held a gala grand opening reception on June 30. Exhibits included "Turn Your Eyes" (faces of Jesus), "Burst into Bloom" (mixed media), "Serving Our Communities" (watercolors), "Stitch" (quilts), "Unity" (youth mural), "Artist Almighty" (macro photography), and "Stole Vogue" (liturgical garments).



Musical highlights were anchored by the Worship Choir monthly and Festival Choir & Orchestra quarterly. Adult and youth worship teams led energetic praise times for Great Getaway and Confirmation, with opportunities for the Joyful Noise Children's Choir and Cherub Choir to sing up front (especially the musicals "Back to the Manger" and "Faith News"). Various instrumental ensembles popped up regularly, with intergenerational handbells in late Advent and the six-member Chancel Ringers before the Annual Meeting. We again hosted three Sunday community choir matinees in November and December, plus two choral matinees in May and Homestead High School's Chamber Orchestra in June.

WMT provided powerful visual and interactive ways to engage and respond during worship services: in beauty seeing Eastertide butterflies and red Pentecost streamers; in awe sharing "God Sightings" during stewardship; in reverence lighting Christmas Eve candles; in gratitude writing what brings us joy on neon Post-it notes; in wonder choosing Epiphany Star Words; in repentance receiving ashes; in celebration waving palm fronds; in reflection moving through physical body prayers; in community around Communion tables; in darkness extinguishing Good Friday candles; in elation shouting "Christ is Risen!" outside at sunrise and decorating two Flowering Crosses of Easter; and in freedom being anointed with water crosses to wash away the ashes of Lent for Eastertide. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"



**Worship Ministry Team:** Jon Carlson (elder), Hank Hart (member at large), Jenee O'Connor (Worship Ministry Associate Director), Todd O'Connor (Worship Ministry Director), Rev. Scott D. Samuelson, Rev. Susan Sytsma Bratt, Julie Westerhausen (team lead)



## Youth Ministry

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Youth Ministry has flourished this past year. Our students are invested in growing their faith, committed to each other, and strengthened by the Crossroads community around them. Our youth are present and active in worship and frequently share their time and talents to help lead worship.



Our Youth Ministry Director, Tanya Naas, and our Middle School Coordinator, Maddy Hosni, strive to make our students feel accepted, valued, and loved. Helping our students and families navigate the challenges teenagers face is a joy and a privilege. It's a priority to find ways to support our students at church and in the community as they showcase their talents on stages, courts, fields, canvases, and classrooms.

Our students continue to wonder and ask thoughtful questions about God and our faith. Their openness with leaders and peers continues to impress as does their desire to deepen their relationship with Jesus.

Our students continue to wonder and ask thoughtful questions about God and our faith. Their openness with leaders and peers continues to impress as does their desire to deepen their relationship with Jesus. As students study God's word at Sunday school, youth group, or on winter retreats, they are eager to learn and actively engaged. Students have a curiosity about Scripture and life in biblical times. During our Lenten study of Luke, students wondered if Jesus had acne as a teenager, which led to lots more questions. Did people get acne back then? Would the climate where Jesus lived make acne more or less likely? If a teenager did have acne in Jesus' time, would people think it was a skin disease? Our students are finding common ground with Jesus and connecting to His humanness. Making the "bigness" of God personal for our teens is a goal of lessons and small group discussions. Who knew the Holy Spirit would use the problem of pimples to work in our students' lives of faith?



Youth ministry and food go hand in hand. The Café freezer is always stocked with freeze pops, and pizza is a must-have during Christians and Romans. At the Table offers our students opportunities to try new foods from a variety of cultures while learning valuable skills in the kitchen. Our panel of dads who judged our cooking competition in January were pleasantly surprised by the caliber of the food they tasted. Divine Donuts expanded during Lent this year to partner with Adult Education to study the book of Luke. Students met weekly with donuts, bagels, muffins- really any sugary breakfast food will do! Great ministry happens when we gather together around food.

Whether it was at youth group, at Sunday school, on mission trip, at Great Escape, or on worship team; our students showed up eager to engage with one another and open themselves up to what God might have planned for them, and those plans are so very good!

**Youth Ministry Team:** Maddy Hosni (Middle School Coordinator), Olivia Johnson (youth elder), Shelly Lemminger (member at large), Kevin McGowan (elder), Tanya Naas (Youth Ministry Director)

## Deacon Ministry

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27 Deacons, including two youth Deacons, served our communities at Crossroads in the 2024-2025 term. Shari Van Beek was Moderator of the Deacons and Pastor Scott/Pastor Anna served as our liasons.

**New Initiatives:** This year at our meetings, we focused on serving others by having a person from a ministry team come and talk about their ministry in more detail. We also had Mike McIntyre come and do an exercise with us on how to listen to others and not always turn it back to ourselves. As Deacons, we served our communities by sending out one Deacon letter to our church families and reaching out with visits or phone calls. We have also been helping some of our older members and disabled get to church by giving rides.

- Emailed or mailed out a uniform letter twice this year.
- Provided 50 Christmas flowers and 30 Easter flowers to the homebound and those grieving the prior 6 months.
- Sent cards to the Veterans.
- Presented the families of children being baptized with a blanket.
- Provided families with meals at a time of need and as an ongoing need, bringing meals to the Tyler Steck family.
- Served at funerals and memorial services and had receptions held here at Crossroads.
- Presented prayer shawls to those who experienced a loss or health concern.
- Provided home communion for members who are unable to attend church.
- Met with Elders on the fourth Monday of each month celebrating fellowship, sharing and a meal. Had a great time being together.
- Encouraged Deacons to remember their community member with personal birthday cards and anniversary cards and messages of care and concern throughout the year.
- Deacons delivered 32 Valentine bags to the homebound this year.



**2024-2025 Deacons (back row, from left to right):** Rev. Scott D. Samuelson, Thor Riedesel, Maria Jarvi, Tom Dvorak, Jonnie Dvorak, Karen McKinney, Hayley Trier, Jim Naas, Sarah Stefaniak, Pat Hopfensperger.

**(Front row):** Samantha Carmona, Calli Guay, Janet Bates, Shari Van Beek (Deacon Moderator), Mary Beth Hart, Sharyl Dobson, Dawn Root, Roger Root, Samantha Carlson, Josie Krygiel (Youth Deacon).

**(Not pictured):** Bob Anderson, Melissa Berg, Melinda Bootsma, Sandy Carlson, Chris Carter, Jeff Funnell, Becky Milne, Taylor Lemminger (Youth Deacon), Katie Straub

# Church Staff

## Pastoral Staff

Associate Pastor/Acting Head of Staff.....Rev. Scott D. Samuelson

## Program Staff

Worship Ministry Director.....Todd O'Connor

Worship Ministry Associate Director.....Jenee O'Connor

Director of Children and Family Ministry.....Christa Middleton

Director of Youth Ministry.....Tanya Naas

Middle School Youth Coordinator.....Maddy Hosni

Organist.....Carol Leonard

## Administrative Staff

Operations Director.....Mike Miller

Administrative Assistants.....Lillian Ramsey-Schley, Joey Thurmond

Childcare Providers.....Amy Accola, Jackie Buday, Jen Lange, Carrie Meyer,  
Maya Middleton, Katie O'Connor, Mary Steck, Kimberly Theune

Childcare Substitute Providers.....Jay Hodge

## Facilities and Hospitality Staff

Facilities Manager.....Josh Thompson

## Crossroads Christian Preschool

Preschool Director.....Maureen Leurquin

Preschool Teachers.....Ashley Hinz, Jenny Huizenga, Sarah Bivins,  
Laura McDowell, Erika Nunes

Preschool Substitute Teachers.....Sarah Balistreri, Jenee O'Connor

**Departed Staff:** Afia Allen (Culinary & Events Coordinator, ended May 2025), Carol Bird (Operations Director, ended September 2024), Rev. Susan Sytsma Bratt (Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, ended November 2024), Louanne Hockstad (Administrative Coordinator, ended July 2024), Brad Johnson (Facilities Manager, ended October 2024), Rev. Anna Langholz (Temporary Supply Pastor, ended May 2025), Jessie Read (Accountant; ended August 2024).

# Pastors' Sending & Blessing

Dear Friends in Faith,

We continue to be in awe of God's unfailing love and unexpected grace! Just when we think our paths are set, a new wind of the Spirit blows through our lives. Often change is disconcerting; always it forces us to adapt. But in that place within us of excitement, anxiety, hope, and possibility, the Spirit does a mighty work.

As we look back on this year, we see the Spirit of Christ leading in new and unforeseen ways. The two of us had the privilege of shepherding our church family through a time of transition. It has shaped us as much as it has shaped our church! And it promises to give even more clarity to Crossroads' call to take part in God's renewal of this world.

As you look back on this year, how has Jesus guided, challenged, comforted, or stretched you? What have you learned about yourself and God's call upon your life? How have you heard the Spirit's whisper (or shout) when you needed direction?

Even more this year, Crossroads has grown in courage and trust as followers of Jesus Christ! We inhabit that in-between space as our PNC faithfully searches for our next pastor, as Anna leaves for her first ordained pastoral call, and as Scott leads with wonderful colleagues through the end of this transition. Through all that comes, Christ remains our rock, our refuge, and our strength!

This year has reminded us to remember that life is short, and we haven't much time to gladden the hearts of those who make the journey with us. So, be swift to love and make haste to be kind.

Receive these words of blessing:

May the Lord take great delight in you.

The Lord quiet your heart with God's love.

The Lord rejoice over you with singing, this day and every day.

Alleluia and amen!

Grace upon grace,



*Scott D Samuelson*

**Scott D. Samuelson**  
Acting Head of Staff



*Anna Langholz*

**Anna Langholz**  
Temporary Supply Pastor



# Mission Statement

Inspired by God's abundant grace,  
Crossroads welcomes, loves, and offers all a safe place to experience authentic connection.

We love and value everyone as Christ first loved and valued us.

In an imperfect world we remember, and remind others, that all belong to God,  
all are redeemed by Christ's sacrifice, and all are indwelt by the living spirit of God.

Understanding the strength of a rope with many strands,  
we rely on our diversity of theological perspectives to bind us as a family in common purpose  
equipped to make a lasting positive impact locally and around the world.

Matthew 28:18–20







**CROSSROADS**  
Presbyterian Church

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[crossroadspres.org](http://crossroadspres.org)