



FAITH BRIDGE

ANNUAL REPORT
2023

Letter from Pastor Ben:

I want to begin by thanking you for your support of the mission of Faithbridge during 2023. Our mission of being a Community Who Actively Follows Jesus is made possible by your prayers, your participation, your talents and your generosity. I am grateful to have been a part of this mission with you over the last six months, and am looking forward to what 2024 has in store for us all.

Many of you know that we faced some serious financial obstacles last year, and I am proud to say that we have turned the corner on those obstacles. I want to celebrate what you've done this year regarding the finances of the church. But know this, money only enables us to fund the mission; the mission is not about money. It's about loving God and loving others in active, tangible ways.

For instance, one of our largest mission focuses is the Mobile Food Pantry (MFP). In the fall of 2022 we purchased an RV and you put in the work to convert it into a food pantry on wheels. You fundraised and built the MFP in order to put it into action in January of 2023. Over the course of the year you held 12 MFP days in the community of Stoutland, Missouri, in cooperation with the senior center and Share The Harvest. During those events, you made personal contact with 137 families; providing them with food assistance, feminine hygiene products, and family diapers for children and adults. You've been friendly faces to many who have very limited access to those services. You've prayed with people, served people, and learned how to love others as a community. And the good news is that in 2024 we plan to expand into Miller county by adding another event each month. Way to go!

You also funded \$9,817 worth of local missions to organizations like Kid's Harbor, The Changing Table, the School of the Osage, the Alzheimer's Association, and Citizen's Against Domestic Violence (CADV). You also gave \$2,756 to the Idiot's Club of the lake area to provide for the needs of children within the lake area schools. Beyond local missions, you also sent over \$15,000 to our denominational missions initiatives across the globe. You provided clean drinking water in remote areas of the world. You provided funds that helped during national disasters and local crisis. You're a generous church. Again, way to go!

On top of all of that generosity, you also overcame a financial shortfall that endangered the mission of the church this summer. Over the last four months of 2023 you increased your regular giving by 39%. Another 16 families began giving to the church for the first time in those same four months, and many of our regular givers increased their regular support by over 16%. Way to go!

Worship and group participation has increased last year as well. We've seen an increase during our in-person worship services of 26% over the last two quarters of 2023. Your online participation has grown by 11% as well. 36 people placed their membership in the church and over 30 were baptized or reclaimed their baptisms.

All of those things are good things, but they are just numbers unless you remember that the numbers mean something. For most of those numbers, they mean people. They mean lives connected to, lives touched, lives impacted by the good news of Jesus because of your efforts. You are making a difference in the lake area and in the Kingdom of God.

I am honored to serve as your pastor during this time and look forward to what God has in store for us in the coming years. Keep up the good work!



FINANCIALS

	2021	2022	2023
Annual Giving and Other Incomes			
Annual Regular Giving	\$ 252,319	\$ 228,294	\$ 273,947
Annual Other Incomes	\$ 20,406	\$ 27,877	\$ 43,987
Total Annual All Income Sources	\$ 272,725	\$ 256,171	\$ 317,934
Annual Total Expenses	\$ 279,969	\$ 279,534	\$ 287,781
Annual Total Income less Expenses	\$ (7,244)	\$ (23,363)	\$ 30,153

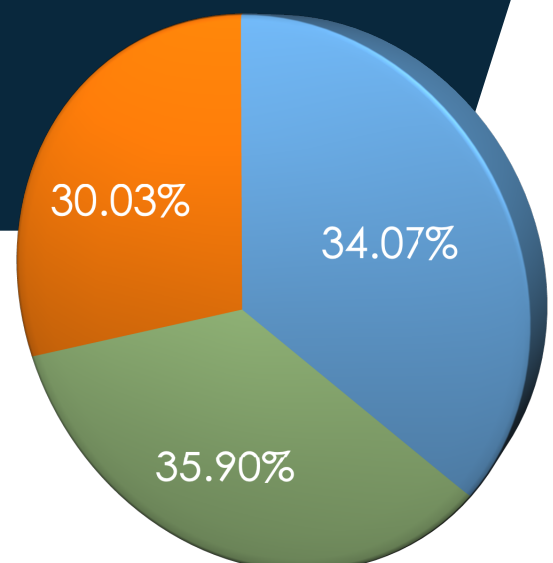
When you give to FAITHBRIDGE, you are funding the mission of being a community who **ACTIVELY** follows Jesus. Actively following Jesus comes from his description in Matthew.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 33:37-39

At FAITHBRIDGE we live out an active faith by creating communities within the church who love God more through intentional acts of worship and devotion. We also love others by intentional acts of compassion, mercy, generosity and mission to the lake area communities.

What does your giving look like as it relates to that mission?
(You can see the percentages below)

- Community
- Love God
- Love Others



The Coffee and Conversations group meets twice a month for some caffeinated discussions and a little fun.



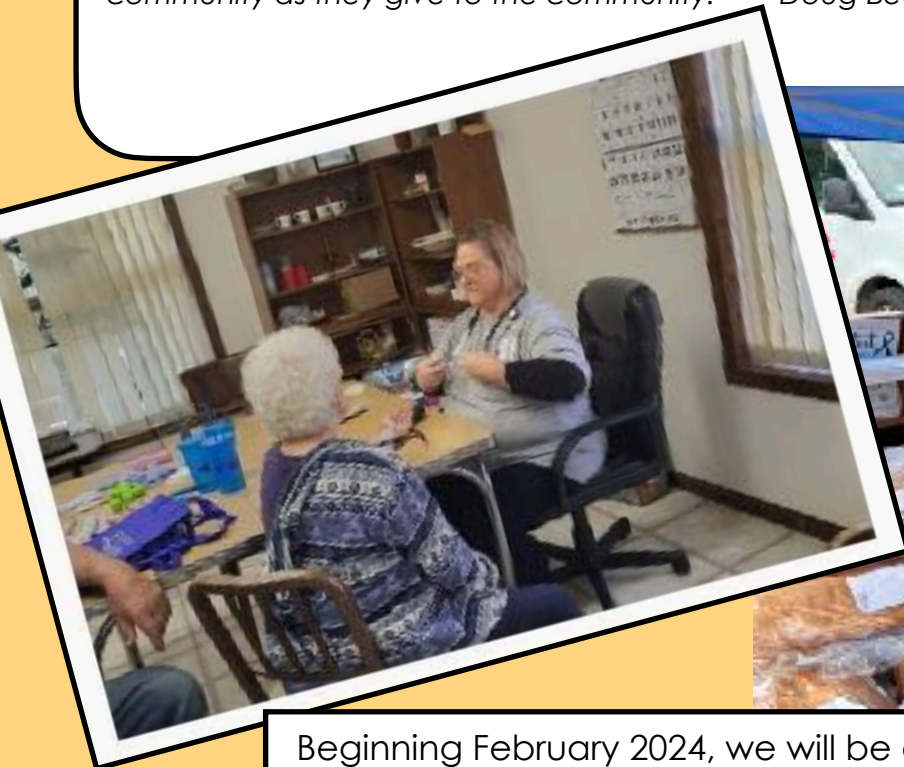
MOBILE FOOD PANTRY



"When Faithbridge UMC first started (in 2009), the vision was to be an outward focused church. We used Acts 1:8- "Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" as our guide. It encourages us to serve our community, as we did a few years ago with giving out food boxes to serve 400 families in our local community(Jerusalem). We are now expanding our mission to serve those in the wider community (Judea, Samaria). We hope to serve even larger communities and be an example for other communities to start their own missions.

We have served the community of Stoutland together with our partner, Share the Harvest, for 12 months. In the month of December, we served over 60 families with food, diapers, period products and clothing. To celebrate the Christmas season, we gave out turkeys, chickens and the fixings in addition to the regular food choices.

I am so proud of everyone that has helped to make this vision come to fruition. Some of our workers have become friends with the Stoutland community giving hugs and wishing each other well. I have heard everyone who helps in this project feels they get as much from the community as they give to the community." ~ Doug Beck



Beginning February 2024, we will be expanding the reach of the MFP into Miller county. We will be partnering with the Eldon Food pantry in serving the community of Olean.

WAYS TO CONNECT INTO THE COMMUNITY

One of the easiest ways to connect to the FAITHBRIDGE community is through the weekly worship service at 9:30 every Sunday morning. Our services last about an hour and features prayer, modern music, scripture, and practical sermons that will help you live out your faith. We offer message series that last up to 6 weeks, making it easier to start something new many times a year. Series vary between deep dives into Biblical characters, books of the Bible, and practical life situations.

Come as you are. There's no need to dress up for worship. After all, we are a lake community. That means lake attire and flip flops are the norm at Faithbridge.

People often gather before service to catch up on life over a cup of coffee or a soda, with snacks. If you can't make it in person, you can join us online through the website www.forthelake.org, or from our Facebook page.

You could also connect through serving with the Mobile Food Pantry (MFP) team each month. You can also meet people at one of our monthly group gatherings. To get more information about ways to jump on the MFP team, or find a study or social group, contact the church office at 573-348-9454, or email us at office@forthelake.org.

If you need a community to be in prayer for you and with you, let us be that community. You can always give us prayer requests from the home page of the website, or through the Connect Card during the worship services. We believe prayer is one of the primary ways we connect to God. It has the power to change the human heart, and ultimately the world.



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