

# SAINT LYDIA'S

SHARING THE MEAL • TELLING OUR STORY • WORKING TOGETHER



St. Lydia's is a neighborhood church. We work together to dispel isolation, reconnect neighbors, and subvert the status quo.

## ANNUAL REPORT 2015

# 2015 was about... **G R O W T H**



This year we launched

## **WAFFLE CHURCH**

“Sticky faith for friends and family”

- Sarah McCaslin began as our Waffle Church minister
- Monthly services focused around key themes and seasons of Christian life and included art, communion, and waffles
- We welcomed an average of 33 people, many of them new to St. Lydia’s
- We planted mustard seeds, decorated a cloth for our communion table, hung stars from our ceiling, and ate many waffles!

At Vespers I can sit quietly with other Lydians and  
**reflect and pray.**  
St. Lydia’s is the community that I was looking for, but within that community I found a home.



**Michael**



We also launched

## **VESPERS**

“Song, space, and silence in a busy city”

- Zachary Stevens-Walter began as our Vespers Liturgist and Coordinator
- Monthly services include a scripture reflection, contemplative silence, candle lighting, and improvised music led by congregants and guest musicians
- We welcomed an average of 17 people, many new to St. Lydia’s
- Congregants wrote new songs, prepared scripture reflections, and creatively arranged the worship space

## We collaborated with the newly formed **GOWANUS HOUSES ARTS COLLECTIVE**

to host an exhibit of photographs taken by children and youth who are residents in the Gowanus Houses, a nearby public housing unit. Young artists had the opportunity to share their perspectives of their neighborhood with housing residents, neighbors, and all those who came to view work through the Gowanus Open Studios weekend.



**Tracey Pinkard  
& Chris O'Falt**

Co-founders of Gowanus Houses  
Arts Collective

When we started the Gowanus Houses Arts Collective it was our hope that our Gowanus neighbors would come together to create youth programming for a woefully under-served public housing unit. No organization better represents the promise of that hope than St. Lydia's.

# CONNECTION

## We listened to **NEIGHBORHOOD VOICES**

by inviting two long-term residents to come and preach at St. Lydia's.

Leroy grew up in the Gowanus Houses and is now a community leader. Bill grew up just around the corner from St. Lydia's, and is a leader at St. Agnes Church.

Both shared stories of the blocks surrounding our new location that helped us understand the neighborhood we're a part of.



**Bill**

**Leroy**



Chloe

Our collaboration with the faith-based social justice organizing network, Faith in New York, is a tangible way I live out my faith. In the midst of an overwhelming injustice in the world, St. Lydia's gives me hope that a faith-based community can be a source of both comfort and change, all at once.

# J U S T I C E

## This Fall we articulated a positive theology of sexuality and the body with the **THIS IS MY BODY PREACHING SERIES**

- 6 guest preachers shared diverse perspectives on gender, race, sexuality, and embodiment
- feminist theologian Phyllis Trible delivered a lecture on Eve and Adam

## and we created a **SOCIAL JUSTICE SHOW UP TEAM**

- a group of congregants who show up to meetings, marches, and protests to work for justice
- trained for their work through Faith in New York's Prophetic Leadership School
- supported the work of Faith in New York and Families United for Racial and Economic Equality around issues of Islamophobia, police violence against people of color, and economic injustice

## We continued to work for **RACIAL JUSTICE**

- 7 sermons delivered by Emily and guest preachers challenging police violence toward people of color, mass incarceration, and systemic injustice
- 14 diverse participants attended a reading circle of Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me*
- 1 widely shared blog post encouraging pastors of predominantly white congregations to preach against racism in the wake of the Emanuel AME shooting in Charleston, SC
- 1 prayer vigil held for the victims of the Emanuel AME shooting in Charleston, SC





We were profiled in the **ATLANTIC**

““ I don't think it's our main goal as Christians, to be comfortable all the time. ””



and the **WALL STREET JOURNAL**

““ We will always privilege love and relationship and what's right over rules and regulations. ””

# VOICE

Emily shared a story of the racial and economic inequality unveiled in her neighborhood after Hurricane Sandy with 30,000 teenagers at the

## ELCA YOUTH GATHERING in Detroit

““ Just as my eyes are opening to the truth of our brokenness, they are opening to God's promise of liberation. ””



and she spoke at **WHY CHRISTIAN**

organized by Nadia Bolz-Weber and Rachel Held Evans, alongside some truly powerful female speakers.

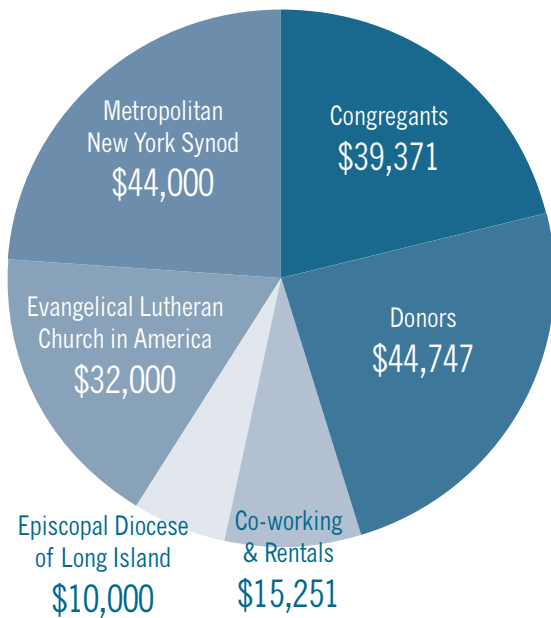
““ Being a Christian is living at the fulcrum of your fear. That's where Jesus does his best work. ””

# GIVING IN 2015

THIS YEAR OUR  
CONGREGATIONAL  
AND DONOR GIVING  
HAS BEEN STRONGER  
THAN EVER.

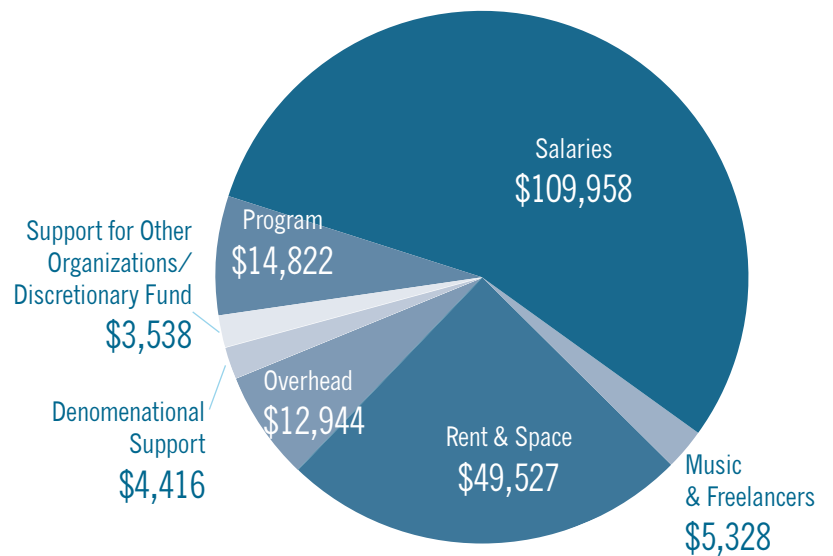
## 2015 Income\*

TOTAL: \$185,369



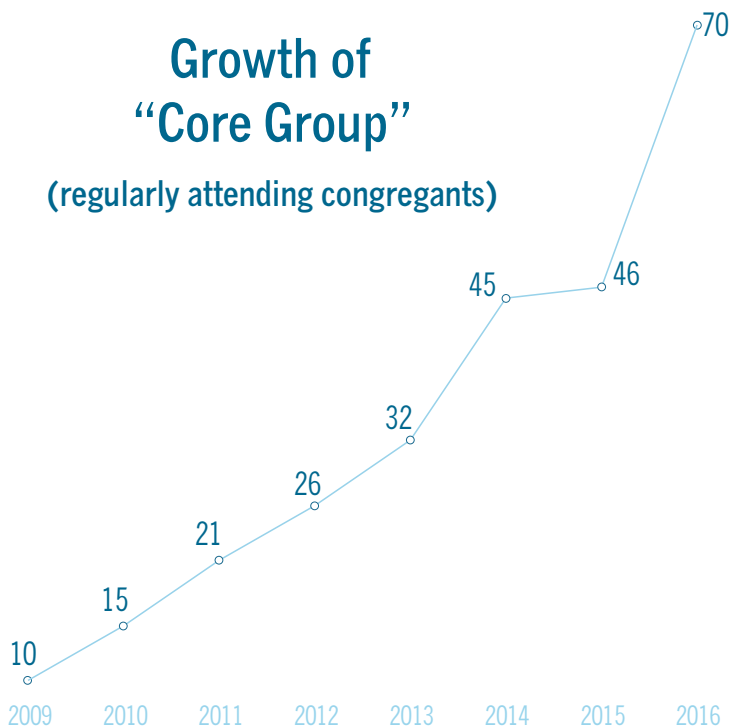
## 2015 Budget\*

TOTAL: \$200,523



## Growth of “Core Group”

(regularly attending congregants)



## St. Lydia’s Attendance and Regular Giving by Year

Year	Average Attendance	Congregational Giving	Donor Giving
2010	15	\$4,699	\$18,305
2011	18	\$8,760	\$11,661
2012	21	\$10,585	\$21,373
2013	33	\$19,449	\$18,973
2014	41	\$18,244	\$12,782
2015	48	\$39,371	\$44,747

\*All financial information reflects St. Lydia’s regular operating budget, and does not include amounts for the “Room at the Table” Campaign.

# LEADERSHIP



## EMILY SCOTT, Pastor

Emily Scott imagines her ministry as “creating space for moments of transcendence through ritual.” She founded St. Lydia’s in collaboration with colleague Rachel Pollak and congregants in 2009, and was ordained as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 2012.

## JULIA STROUD, Community Coordinator

After four years working in television and theater, Julia Macy Stroud found herself studying Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary and graduated with a Master of Divinity in 2014. She’s passionate about feminist theology, queer theory, and anything with a liberative bent.



## ZACHARY STEVENS-WALTER, Vespers Liturgist & Coordinator

Zachary is a recent graduate of Union Theological Seminary where he studied preaching and worship. Originally from El Cerro, New Mexico, Zachary came to New York City as a student at Eugene Lang College. He is also a musician and multi-instrumentalist.

## SARAH McCASLIN, Waffle Church Minister

Sarah is an ordained minister and licensed social worker whose career has been devoted to fostering the human capacity for resilience, growth, and meaning-making. After many years working with the homeless and mentally ill, followed by seven years in parish ministry, Sarah has turned her attention to counseling, mostly recently as a staff therapist at the Psychotherapy and Spirituality Institute.



## LEADERSHIP TABLE



**Phil**  
Fox Rose



**Jane**  
Van Cleef



**Burke**  
Gerschtenslager



**Charlotte**  
Moroz



**Hannah**  
Soldner



**Jason**  
Whittle

# WITH THANKS TO OUR DONORS

## FRUIT OF THE VINE

(\$250–\$499)

Ollie Batchelor  
John Biro  
Adele Crawford  
Paul Fromberg  
Pauline Hewitt  
Margaret McGhee  
John & Julia McCray-Goldsmith  
Penny Nash  
Kurt & Joanna Nelson  
Alicia K. & J. Andrew O'Brien  
Elizabeth Phillips  
Earl F. & Christiane Ronneberg  
Thomas Skillings  
Carolyn Spitz  
Caroline M. Stacey  
Sarah Tuley  
Mieke Vandersall  
13 congregants

## MILK AND HONEY

(\$500–\$999)

Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Miles Blackley  
Helen Burr  
Matthew Burt  
Ian Doescher  
Chip Ford  
Ashley Goff  
Maryanne & Carl Kehlenbach  
Sarah McCaslin  
Stephanie Spellers  
Scott Weidler  
4 congregants

## LOAVES AND FISHES

(\$2,500–\$4,999)

Donald & Ellen Schell  
2 congregants

## MANNA FROM HEAVEN

(\$5,000–\$9,999)

Robert & Janet Buescher  
David & Marilynne Scott  
Daniel Simons  
Leesy Taggart

## THE BREAD OF LIFE

(\$1,000–\$2,499)

Leslianne Braunstein  
Mary Jane Donohue  
Richard Fabian  
Mildred Kreider  
8 congregants

## THE HEAVENLY BANQUET

(\$10,000 and above)

The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island  
The Episcopal Diocese of Texas  
Trinity Church, Wall Street

With special thanks to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
and the Metropolitan New York Synod for their partnership and support

# We wouldn't be here without you.

\*donor amounts include giving for "Room at the Table" campaign