

NEWSLETTER

BUILD. SERVE. STAND.



JOIN US FOR WORSHIP
Sundays at 10am

SHORELINES
March - May 2024

PASTORAL UPDATE



Once a month, a dozen of us gather in the upstairs meeting room to explore a different contemplative prayer practice. We are led by Peter Watkins, a spiritual director, who guides us through reflection and discussion on what we're learning from each practice. We are open about the roadblocks, challenges, and sticking points to each practice as well as what's working. Some resonate with us, some do not.

During Lent, it's a great time to practice prayer in some new ways. You may not have thought of these as prayer before, but I encourage you to try one and see what it feels like. Below is a brief summary of some practices we have been exploring. We've also prayed through silence, journaling, and the Examen Prayer. Feel free to contact me if you'd like more detailed information about any of the prayer practices.

Lectio Divina: Praying through Scripture

Find a comfortable position and take a few deep breaths. Pick a scripture (such as Psalm 42, Isaiah 9:1-6, Matthew 6: 25-34, John 15: 1-10, Philippians 2:1-11) and read it slowly, out loud or silently. As you read it, listen for a word or phrase that stands out for you. Reflect on that word or phrase. Read the passage again, listening for a word or phrase that reflects what God is saying to you today. Reflect on that word or phrase. Read the passage a third time, listening for a word or phrase that reflects how God wants you to respond. Reflect on that word or phrase. Express your gratitude to God for the experience.

Deep Listening: Praying through Listening to Others

Deep listening is a gift that is so similar to being loved that most people cannot tell the difference. When you seek to listen deeply to another person, try using evoking questions as you do. They are different from questions of fact—helping the person see a new perspective or come to a new awareness. Can you say more about that? What was that like for you? What images come to your mind when you think about this belief? In which situations do you feel most authentic? What help or support do you desire? Do not worry about what you will say in response. Receive their thoughts as a gift, just as your listening ear is a gift to them.

Loving Kindness Meditation: Praying through Loving Activism

This prayer begins with yourself and has you move towards people further away from you. You recite the same words for each person you are praying with and for. Beginning with yourself, recite these words: *May I be filled with loving kindness. May I be safe from inner and outer dangers. May I be well in body and mind. May I be at ease and happy.* Repeat them as many times as you need to. Think of someone for whom you love, recite the prayer. You keep praying this for others, moving to someone who is neutral, then someone who has irritated you, then someone who has hurt you. Lastly, you can cast the prayer out broadly to the world.

With gratitude,
Pastor Brooke

BROOKE HEERWALD STEINER
LEAD PASTOR

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BUILD. SERVE. STAND.





Celebrating Diversity

Encountering God in Disability

Lent Worship Series Celebrating Diversity

Disabled people are full members of the body of Christ. Unfortunately, this is not always the reality experienced in churches. Ableism, discrimination that favors able-bodied people, has taught us to view disability as brokenness instead of sacredness. Throughout Lent, we'll be examining disability through a different lens: one that celebrates disability and values the gifts it brings to our faith community. We will challenge our preconceived ideas of disability to bring about a more whole and just world for all.

- March 3 Family Service
- March 10 Systemic Disability
- March 17 Beyond Tolerance

UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

Environmental Justice Sunday April 14

Join us for this special worship service coordinated by our Social Justice Team ahead of Earth Day.

Special Music Sunday May 4

Another opportunity to experience the wide range of musical talent in our congregation. Join us for this musical extravaganza!

LENTEN WORSHIP SERVICES



Palm Sunday March 24 at 10am

Join us for a festive Palm Processional and Holy Communion.



Good Friday Worship March 29 at 7pm

Join us for an evening of reflection and music.



Easter Egg Hunt & Community Lunch Saturday, March 30 @11am

Come join the fun! Kids will hunt for eggs outside, weather permitting. Meal to follow.



Easter Sunday Worship

March 31 @ 9 & 10:30am (livestream)

Celebrate the Risen Christ! All ages will worship together thru music, a short message, and scripture.

BUILD. COMMUNITY



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Easter Egg Hunt & Community Lunch

Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on **Saturday, March 30 at 11am**. In case of inclement weather or muddy conditions, the egg hunt will be held indoors at EUMC.

Following the Egg Hunt, everyone is invited to stick around and join us for a community lunch at 11:30am.



Young Families Camping Weekend

Join EUMC families for a weekend of games, swimming, campfires, s'mores, and more! Our 4th annual family camping weekend will be held **August 9 - 11**. We will be staying at Baker Campground again this year.

See the children and youth newsletters for information on reserving your campsite.



Stellar Vacation Bible School

Registration is open for Vacation Bible School. This year's theme is Stellar. We'll launch kids on a cosmic question where they'll have a blast shining Jesus' light to the world!

At VBS, we start each night with dinner and fellowship. Participants can expect a fun time interacting in the telling of Bible stories, watching skits, singing new songs, playing games, enjoying tasty treats, making crafts, and trying out lab experiments.

Date: July 29 - August 1
Time: 5:30 - 8pm daily
Who: Ages 4 to completed 5th grade
Cost: \$20/child, \$50/family max

Youth in 6th grade and above can volunteer to help. Contact Kallie (kallie@excelsiorumc.org) if you have questions.



YOUTH MINISTRY

EYMF at EUMC

In December, we had a wonderful youth gathering hosting our Ecumenical Youth Ministries Fellowship with our friends from Mount Calvary, Trinity Episcopal and St. David's Episcopal. We ate pizza together, played a big group game, sang campfire songs with guitars in the sanctuary & spent time at multiple prayer stations set up around the main floor. There were creative prayer stations with arts, crafts, and music; solitary prayer stations with reflective questions and thoughts; and small group prayer stations with conversations and activities.

We are looking forward to our upcoming EYMF activities this spring!

Wednesday, April 10 - Karaoke/Coffee House Music Night @ Trinity Episcopal

Wednesday, May 8 - Baking the Sweets @ St. David's Episcopal

Saturday, May 11 - Smokes & Sweets Fundraising Dinner & Music @ Mount Calvary Lutheran



Summer Festival Camp 2024

We had such FUN at Middle School Summer Festival Camp last year! Sarah will be taking a group again this summer. Kaley, Isobel and Annabelle are excited to participate again. Who else can join us? Camp takes place on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College Sunday, July 14 through Wednesday, July 17. This is for kids that have completed 6th grade through 9th grade. The cost is \$220 per person, and for EUMC youth we have a scholarship fund that will cover at least half the amount.

This is a wonderful youth church camp full of meaningful conversations, well-organized activities, and fun. We stay in the dorms and eat meals in their great cafeteria. We play large group games, sing songs with the band, and listen to speakers talk about the camp curriculum. We also have small group time with our EUMC group to reflect on our day and what we are learning from the curriculum. Kids have free time each day to swim in the pool, rest or spend time with friends. We can't wait to go to Summer Festival Camp again this year!

Please reach out to Sarah (sarah@excelsiorumc.org) with questions and interest.



Tony Brancale: Tony came to Excelsior UMC because of our rainbow doors outside, our community reputation, and working on the West Interfaith group. He works in the Minnetonka schools as a Family Resource Facilitator. He has 3 adult children and 7 grandchildren. Tony is an avid baseball fan, enjoys reading, biking, traveling and yoga. He's a stage IV Colon cancer survivor and has lived in both Australia and Germany.



Joanna and Craig Finch: Joanna is a full-time mom and full-time creative project manager at Best Buy. Craig is a full-time dad who spends his days working and chasing children. Craig enjoys watching sports, playing golf, and hiking. Joanna likes running, cross-country skiing, biking, and gardening. They are parents to Will (8), Emi (5), and Claire (2). They came to Excelsior UMC and felt very welcomed from day one. They love the community, children's programming, and the small groups offered.



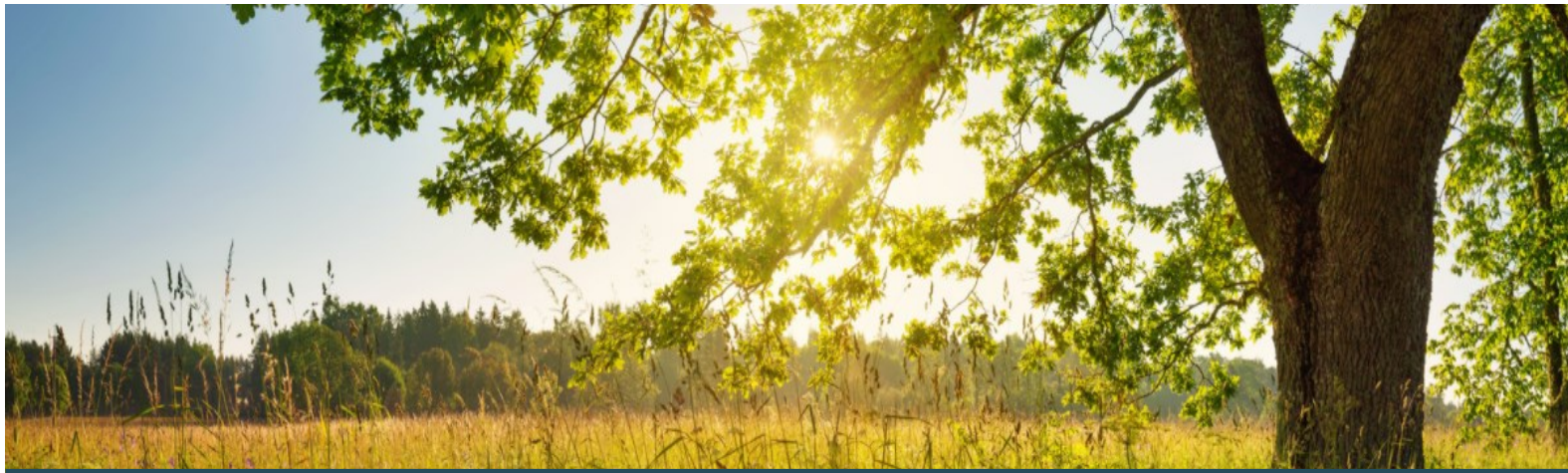
Beth and Ezra Firkins: Beth and Ezra moved to the area a year ago with their two children, Miles (6) and Luca (4). Beth works full time doing health and safety learning and development for tech companies. Ezra works full time doing video, graphics, and writing for a wealth management company. Beth enjoys yoga, crafting, art, and cooking. She once walked (very quickly) Grandma's Marathon with friends in seven hours. Ezra enjoys yoga and economics and once lived in India for three months. Beth and Ezra found Excelsior UMC when a family member visited and recommended it. They really appreciate the sense of community and values of our congregation.

No Photo Available

Jen Turner and Gabe Wiebenga: Jen works as a human resources professional and Gabe works in marketing. Together they have 3 children: Isaac (12), Josef (10), and Isaiah (6). Jen enjoys cycling, yoga, violin and downhill skiing. Gabe enjoys music, cycling, basketball, and reading. Jen has traveled a lot internationally and is half-Korean. Gabe's last name is Dutch and he's visited the village where his family originated in the 1600s in the Netherlands. Everyone in their family is very different and they came to this church because there was something that resonated with everyone.



Linda and Delbert Schrock: Linda and Delbert recently moved here from Indiana and live in Chaska. They attended one service online and then came in person. They particularly love the variety of ages, the unscripted services, and the warmth and friendliness of the congregation. They have two adult children and two grandchildren. Linda enjoys quilting, reading, writing and baking (especially cookies, pies, and sourdough bread). Delbert is busy building a model '57 Chevy Belaire Convertible.



LEADERSHIP

Winter 2023-2024. It's the winter...that wasn't. Rain, snow, frigid temperatures, freezing fog. It's certainly one we'll remember for many years to come. The last 3 months at EUMC have been memorable too. Here's a recap and some exciting plans in our future:

Our 2023 Stewardship Campaign has wrapped up and although it was a success in that many new people stepped up to support our church, we were not able to reach our goal to increase our operating budget. We are still running at a deficit. Our team will brainstorm and implement income generating and cost cutting measures. It's not too late to adjust your 2024 pledge or start donating toward our wonderful staff and building. Perhaps consider donating your tax refund to church or a portion of a work bonus! Talk to Tyler, Brooke or the office with questions.

Our small groups are going strong. If you join the Monday morning Bible study led by Pastor Brooke, you'll find the discussion table was overflowing! It's wonderful to see a group of all ages with both long time and new members learning together.

February 11 brought us an exciting music focused Sunday with the theme: Comfort. We are certainly blessed with talented musicians at this church!

Another excitement is the growth of our congregation. In the coming weeks, we'll have a number of families and couples joining our church and committing to "Loving Beyond Ourselves".

Looking forward:

My Body is Not a Prayer Request by Dr. Amy Kenny is our latest all church book read throughout lent in the lead up to Easter. Join the This and That book club on Thursday, March 21 at 6:30pm to have a meaningful discussion about Dr. Kenny's book.

The joint City of Excelsior/EUMC So-Hi Playground will be breaking ground in May. It's exciting to be able to offer a park option to our neighbors living next to us on the south side of Highway 7.

Summer plans are forming. The summer VBS "Stellar" will be a fun time for our kids! Mark your calendars for the evenings of July 29- August 1st. And for those who don't have kids in the program, consider volunteering!

In closing, we'd like to give a big "thank you" to John Fischer who will be rolling off the Leadership Team after his three year term. He's been one of Trustee reps throughout our remodel so deserves a special pat on the back.

As always, we are here for you.

Your Leadership Team:

Julie Newell (Chair)

Jennifer Brady Johnson (Ministry Teams)

Bill Lester & Phil Pulitzer (SPRC)

Jill Jewell (Communications)

Tyler Cronk (Finance)

John Fischer & Jim Stromberg (Trustees)

SERVE. OTHERS



OUR COMMUNITY

March Food Share Month at ICA

Neil's Story

Neil came to the food shelf after a long career and a lifetime of self-sufficiency. Nearing retirement he was diagnosed with cancer and needed help. Because of his illness, his ability to work was significantly curtailed, reducing his income. Because of that he couldn't keep up with all his bills. Neil came to ICA for help and thanks in part to your gifts, we have been able to provide Neil with the food he needs to make ends meet. And while that food support is critical, we also provided him with a listening ear and emotional support as he navigates his cancer treatment. Thank you for helping us care for neighbors like Neil!



Record Numbers of Neighbors Need Help

ICA is seeing record numbers of families visiting the food shelf. With over 1000 families visiting each month, our food stock is in constant need of being replenished. Traditionally the spring is a time when contributions of food and financial support begin to decline. In response ICA joins the hundreds of other food shelves in Minnesota to encourage contributions during March Food Share month. It's the second most important time of the year for food and financial contributions.

March Food Share Month Goals

To ensure we can continue to provide for neighbors like Neil we need a significant community response. You can make a difference by helping ICA collect 200,000 lbs. of food and \$300,000 during the month of March. You can bring your gifts of food to EUMC anytime during the month of March. And you can make financial gifts through EUMC or directly to ICA via their website. When you make a gift through ICA's website be sure to indicate that you are a member of EUMC.

Food, Jobs and Housing

It might also be helpful to know that ICA provides more than just food for our neighbors in need. We think of our services as encompassing: Food, Jobs, and Housing. In 2022 ICA helped more than 35 people find new employment. And we shared over \$300,000 in rental support to help keep families in their apartment housing.

Thank you for ALL you do to help ICA care for those in our community who need a little extra support. Your gifts matter and are making a difference for the thousands of people like Neil who come seeking help. Thank you!!

Scott Searl
ICA Director of Philanthropy

STAND. FOR JUSTICE



FIGHT TODAY
FOR A BETTER
TOMORROW

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Environmental Team is part of the Social Justice Ministry Team at EUMC. As stated in UMC's Social Principles, *"All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings."**

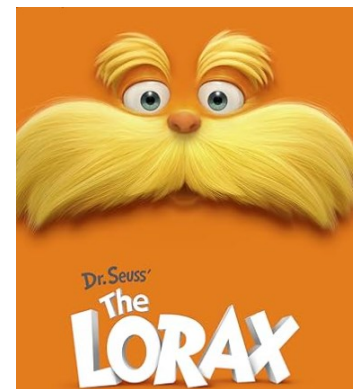
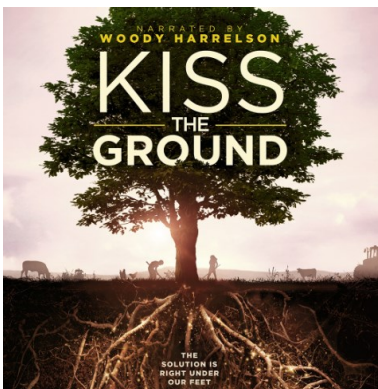
Monday, April 22, is Earth Day with a theme of Planet vs. Plastic. This is the 54th year of this event, whose purpose is to encourage support and action for environmental protection and justice. EUMC will be hosting a variety of events/activities in April, beginning with an Environmental Justice Sunday on April 14. Buff Grace, Director of Faith Networks at Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light, will preach. Following the service, congregants can sign letters to state and national legislators asking for action on environmental issues.

On Family Sunday, April 21, children will be able to make seed kits from newsprint.

Monday evening, April 22, we will be showing two films, *Kiss the Ground*, a documentary about regenerative agriculture for adults, and *The Lorax*, for children. We all know that changes need to be made to prevent further environmental degradation and we should be part of that change.

*"Therefore, let us recognize the responsibility of the church and its members to place a high priority on changes in economic, political, social, and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically equitable and sustainable world..."**

*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church-2016. Social Principles: The Natural World





CALENDAR

Calendar subject to change. Check website calendar for current schedule.

Sundays in March

10am- Worship and Sunday school

March 10- New Member Sunday

March 24- Palm Sunday worship

March 31- Easter Sunday worship at 9am & 10:30am (livestreamed)

Mondays in March

7:30am- Men's Bible Breakfast

9:30am- Bible Study with Pastor Brooke

11am- Brown Bag Mondays

Tuesdays, March 5, 12, 19, 26

2pm- Yoga with Tiffany

Wednesdays in March

6pm- Youth Nights (Mar. 6, 13, 20)

6:15pm- Joyful Noise rehearsals

7pm- Four Plus More rehearsals

7:45pm- Lenten/Easter Choir rehearsals (Mar. 13, 20, 27)

Saturdays in March

8am- Men's Support Group

10am- Women Who Sing rehearsal

Thursday, March 7

6:30pm- Anti-Racism Team meeting

Monday, March 4

5pm- Simpson Housing meal service

Wednesdays, March 13 & 27

3 to 5pm- ICA Food Shelf

Thursday, March 14

1pm- Sarah/Lydia Circle

Sunday, March 17

11:15am- Contemplative Practice Group

Thursday, March 21

6:30pm- All Church Read Discussion

Friday, March 29

7pm- Good Friday worship

Saturday, March 30

11am- Easter Egg Hunt

11:30am- Community Lunch

Sundays in April

10am- Worship and Sunday school

April 21- Family worship, no Sunday school

Mondays in April

7:30am- Men's Bible Breakfast

9:30am- Bible Study with Pastor Brooke

11am- Brown Bag Mondays

Tuesdays in April

2pm- Yoga with Tiffany

Wednesdays in April

6pm- Youth Nights (3, 10, 17)

6:15pm- Joyful Noise rehearsals

7pm- Four Plus More rehearsals

Saturdays in April

8am- Men's Support Group

10am- Women Who Sing rehearsal

Thursday, April 4

6:30pm- Anti-Racism Team meeting

Wednesdays, April 10 & 24

3 to 5pm- ICA Food Shelf

Thursday, April 11

1pm- Sarah/Lydia Circle

Tuesday, April 15

5pm- Simpson Housing meal service

Thursday, April 18

6:30pm- That & This Book Group

Sunday, April 21

11:15am- Contemplative Practice group

Monday, April 22

1pm- Cover Girls

5:30pm- Earth Day event

Sundays in May

10am- Worship and Sunday school

May 12- Family worship, no Sunday school

Mondays in May

7:30am- Men's Bible Breakfast

9:30am- Bible Study with Pastor Brooke

11am- Brown Bag Mondays

Tuesdays in May

2pm- Yoga with Tiffany

Wednesdays in May

6pm- Youth Nights (1, 8, 15)

6:15pm- Joyful Noise rehearsals

7pm- Four Plus More rehearsals

Saturdays in May

8am- Men's Support Group

10am- Women Who Sing rehearsal

Thursday, May 2

6:30pm- Anti-Racism meeting

Tuesday, May 6

5pm- Simpson Housing meal service

Wednesdays, May 8 & 15

3 to 5pm- ICA Food Shelf

Thursday, May 9

1pm- Sarah/Lydia Circle

Saturday, May 11

6pm- Smokes & Sweets at Mt. Calvary

Thursday, May 16

6:30pm- That & This book group

Sunday, May 19

11:15am- Contemplative Practice group

Monday, May 20

1pm- Cover Girls

FINANCE TEAM REPORT

Thank you for everything you do to support EUMC financially; every contribution matters and is appreciated! All gifts as well as progress on commitments (Operating and Capital) can be seen on your quarterly statement.

Operating Budget Update: The EUMC leadership team is finalizing the 2024 budget, and as communicated during our church meeting on January 28th, we are projecting a budget shortfall of nearly \$88,000 for 2024. The leadership team is evaluating all options to increase contributions and bring down costs; staff and facilities represent 80% of our projected budget. We will be utilizing dedicated funds and memorial funds, where appropriate, to bridge the gap between projected spend and projected contributions. The \$25,000 remaining balance of our rainy day “emergency” fund will only cover a portion of the projected budget shortfall.

Capital Campaign Update: We have now utilized all gifts received to date and have drawn on our credit facility. Any funds received going forward will be used to pay the final expenses and pay down our loan; completing contributions timely will help to reduce the ongoing debt service associated with our construction loan. Thank you again for your generosity!

Tyler Cronk and Beverly Eckhardt

Holiday Building and Office Hours

The building and office will be closed
Monday, April 1 and Monday, May 27



PURPOSE

Loving Beyond Ourselves

VISION

To be known as a nurturing, inclusive and courageous Christian community.

MISSION

Sharing God's love by building community, serving others, and standing for justice.

CONTACT US

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JOSH KNOWLES

Custodian

DIANE BAYSINGER

Nursery Childcare

KATY GLICK

Nursery Childcare



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