

# NEWSLETTER

## BUILD. SERVE. STAND.



JOIN US FOR WORSHIP  
Sundays at 10am

SHORELINES  
March -May 2025

# PASTORAL UPDATE



As we enter the sacred season of Lent, we are invited to renew our spiritual lives in meaningful ways. Traditionally, Lent has been a time of fasting, prayer, and self-denial. Christians commonly give something up for the forty days of Lent—coffee, meat, chocolate, social media. I once tried to give up sugar in my tea for Lent—and was incredibly unsuccessful. I decided I would not grow closer to God by drinking bitter tea!

Instead of giving something up, what if we also took something on—something that brings healing to the world and draws us closer to God? One of my favorite practices is answering the question, “what is saving you right now?” It first came from Barbara Brown Taylor, well-known author and speaker, who was asked to answer this as she spoke at a gathering. We are so good at naming the things that are draining us, exhausting us, or killing us, sometimes quite literally. What about naming what saves us?

The Monday morning Bible study has started using this as our check-in question. Another way we phrase it is, “what is bringing you joy right now?” The answers from each other are delightful and increase our own joy, even though we do not experience it all. Here are some of the things that are saving us from despair, from giving up, from hopelessness, from feeling alone:

- Watching the birds out the window
- An albino squirrel in the neighborhood named Loretta
- Spending time every evening texting family around the country
- Taking care of our bodies
- Walking outside
- Upcoming vacations to warm locations
- The ordination of a gay clergy friend
- Very cold temperatures that are killing mosquitos
- An irritating errand that turned into a lovely evening
- Stopping to notice service workers
- Being more flexible in life

As we journey towards the cross and forward to Easter, church language is heavy on salvation. What does this mean for our everyday lives? How can we experience saving right now? I encourage you to spend forty days reflecting and noticing the things that bring you joy, help you cope with your day, and fill you with sustenance to keep going. Positive social connections, self-care practices, creative outlets, nature immersion, time with animals, or small comforts all can remind us of this. Feel free to give up caffeine or gossip. Also feel free to add something into your life that connects you with the joy and delight of God’s world.

With deep gratitude,  
Pastor Brooke

**BROOKE HEERWALD STEINER**  
LEAD PASTOR

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## Lenten Worship Series Bless This Mess

Life is messy. The world is very messy. Luckily, our faith gives us practices to help navigate the chaos with grace and intention. During Lent, we'll be looking at how we can bless the messes around us, within us, beside us. Honoring our bodies as sacred, embracing Sabbath in a restless world, and fighting and forgiving will help us release the burdens we carry. We will explore the wisdom of living with enough, confession that brings healing, and the role of routines to ground us in God's love. We do not have to have everything together in order to be transformed by God's presence.

March 9	Sabbath
March 16	Living With Enough
March 23	Fight & Forgive
March 30	Routines & Rituals

## WEDNESDAY LENTEN SERVICES

### March 19 & April 9

All ages are invited to join us for a soup dinner at 6pm and reflection time in the sanctuary at 6:30pm. There will be age-specific programming for children, youth and adults are at 7pm. These services will illuminate the season of Lent and bring more meaning to worship and your connection to God and others.

## LENTEN WORSHIP SERVICES



**Palm Sunday April 13 at 10am**  
Join us for a festive Palm Processional and Children's Interactive Worship.



**Good Friday Worship April 18 at 7pm**  
Join us for an evening of reflection and music.



**Easter Egg Hunt & Community Brunch**  
**Saturday, April 19 at 11am**  
Come join the fun! Kids will hunt for eggs outside, weather permitting. Meal to follow.



**Easter Sunday Worship**  
**April 20 at 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

Bring your basket and join us for our annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 19 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 stay for a community brunch at 11:15am.



### Young Families Camping Weekend

Join EUMC families for a weekend of games, swimming, campfires, s'mores, and more! Our 5th annual family camping weekend will be held **August 8-10**. We will be staying at Baker Campground again this year.

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



### True North VBS 2025

At True North VBS, we'll take kids on an Alaskan adventure where the northern lights shine over majestic mountains, racing rivers, and sparkling glaciers. As they trek the tundra, they'll discover how easy it is to lose sight of what's true in our wild world today. Through Bible stories, games, crafts, singing, snacks, and meeting new friends, True North VBS reveals that Jesus is a faithful friend we can always trust. Jesus is our True North!

Date: July 28 - July 31

Time: 5:30-8pm (dinner is included)

Who: Ages 4 years old to completed 5th grade

Youth in 6th grade and above can participate or volunteer to help! Contact Kallie Stroh if you have questions.





## YOUTH MINISTRY

### Better Together! Ecumenical Youth Ministries Fellowship Event

In February, our EUMC Youth hosted our EYMF friends from Trinity Episcopal, St. David's Episcopal and Mount Calvary Lutheran. We spent a wonderful evening together connecting over dinner, a team building event, prayer stations and singing songs.

We divided into teams of youth from each church and the "How much love can your bridge hold?" challenge was to collaborate and build a bridge out of materials like spaghetti noodles and marshmallows to see who could build the strongest bridge! The youth then participated in a variety of prayer stations set up around the main floor experiencing different ways to pray and connect to God. Some prayer stations were intended for individual quiet time, while some were meant for small group conversations. We ended the evening in the sanctuary lifting our hearts together with camp songs!



**SUMMER  
FESTIVAL**

### Youth Summer Camp for 6-9 graders July 20-23, 2025

We are looking forward to heading back to Gustavus Adolphus College for Summer Festival Camp again this year! Summer Festival is an ecumenical church camp. Check-in is Sunday, July 20 @ 1:30pm and camp goes through 11:30am on Wednesday, July 23. The campers eat

meals in the wonderful cafeteria and stay in dorm rooms, with 2-3 kids per room. Friends of EUMC youth are invited to join us! Sarah and Kallie will be attending, and the day is structured to have large group activities, EUMC small group time, and free time. It's a very fun and meaningful experience, just ask those that went last year! Cost is \$310 per child. Stay tuned for a camp fundraising event this Spring! If you are interested in attending or have any questions, please contact Sarah Heyd.

## Celebrating New Members



**Chris and Ron Ball** live in Mound and come to us from Minnetonka UMC. They have 3 adult children and five grandchildren and are lucky they all live in the Twin Cities.

Chris and Ron both enjoy cooking, travel, and camping, and they recently purchased e-bikes, so add biking to the list! Chris had the opportunity to tour Ireland, Wales and England with her choir and they were the featured choir at the international Church Music Festival in Coventry England in 1992. Ron is an electrical inspector. He has scuba dived in Mexico and been on about a dozen mission trips to Panama.



**Carley and Chris Campbell** live in Excelsior with their daughter, Claudia, who is 9 years old and in the third grade. Chris is in advertising and Carley is a geriatric nurse practitioner. They enjoy mountain biking as a family and also gardening. They have converted part of their property into a native prairie. An interesting thing about Carley is that her mom grew up in Tanzania. Her grandparents were Lutheran missionaries, and she has been to Tanzania three times!



**Sharon and Larry Fox** live in Chaska with their 7 year old daughter, Ember. Sharon enjoys reading, gardening, and hiking. She has hiked the Grand Canyon three times! Once rim to rim!

Sharon grew up attending Epworth UMC in Arizona with her brother Jason Fleck and now are happy to be sharing the same church family again!



**Jacob Kolander and Noah Schillewaert** come to us from Redwood Falls and Monticello respectively where they were both involved in ministries. They are living in Waconia. Noah's hobbies include decorating, making flower and plant arrangements, trying new restaurants, shopping, travel and spending time with family and friends. He is a project coordinator for a stone countertop fabricator. Jacob is the City Administrator for Maple Plain. His hobbies include traveling, hunting, camping, lake trips and travel and spending time with family. He loves organ music and can even play. Jacob and Noah appreciate EUMC's openness, inclusiveness, and support of the LGBTQ+ community.



**Susan Robertson** and wife Bren Villard have 2 children: Todd with grandchildren Finn, age 2 ½ and Jace 3 months and Brian with granddaughter Lucy, age 13.

She loves being active and has already jumped into being active in our church by participating in Bible study, Sarah/Lydia Circle and Simpson Shelter ministry.

Susan enjoys reading, exercise, sports activism, and cooking.





## LEADERSHIP

### Leadership Team Update: Off and Running!

The new year is in full swing, and so is the Leadership Team! With our growing church community, we're tackling exciting challenges—expanding children's programs, outreach ministries, facilities upkeep, and staff updates.

We're also welcoming transitions! As some leaders complete their three-year terms, we're grateful for their service. A huge thank-you to **Jill Jewel** (Trustees) and **Tyler Cronk** (Finance) for their dedication! Tyler is kindly staying on until we find a replacement. Interested in nominating someone? Contact Brooke!

Looking ahead, **Phase II of So-Hi Community Park** is in the works! Plans include landscaping, a shade structure with seating, and new basketball hoops on a resurfaced annex lot. **Bill Lester** is leading the charge to secure grants and funding.

If you ever have questions about what's happening with the Leadership Team, **Brooke or Julie Newell** are happy to chat! For meeting minutes or details from documented discussions, **Sarah Nelson** (Communications) is also a great resource.

Find the 2025 Leadership Meeting dates on our website—we'd love your support as we keep growing together!

As always, we are here for you.

Your Leadership Team:

Julie Newell (Chair)  
Sarah Nelson (Communications)  
Tyler Cronk (Finance)

Bill Lester & Phil Pulitzer (SPRC)  
Jennifer Brady Johnson & Beth Firkins (Ministry Teams)  
Jim Stromberg & Jill Jewel (Trustees)



### Welcoming New Employees to EUMC

**Jamie Rahm**, Nursery Childcare. Jamie is a California native who met her husband while they were both in the military. She moved to Minnesota with her husband 3 years ago. Her family also includes a dog named Penny. The 3 of them love being on the water in the warm months and reading a good book during the winter. Jamie works full time as a Clinician Recruiter with Park Nicollet and is pursuing her Master's degree with the University of Minnesota. She loves children and is excited to join our community!



**Blair Prax**, Custodian. After spending the last five years as building manager at Shepard of the Hills church in Edina, Blair is thrilled to begin a new journey at EUMC. He has lived in Edina the last 20 years with his wife Siri and their daughter Avalon.

# SERVE. OTHERS



## OUR COMMUNITY

A big thank you to all the Excelsior UMC members who took part in our Reverse Advent shopping event. We received 40+ boxes filled with supplies and food items that will be used to restock our outdoor Little Free Pantry. The pantry, as well as our twice monthly ICA Food Shelf event, has seen record usage and we appreciate your support.

Our next community lunch will be held on Saturday, April 19 from 11:15am-12:15pm following the Easter Egg Hunt at 11am. Be on the look out for a SignUp Genius to donate food and sign up to help serve the meal.

Feel free to contact Cherrie Blackford, Denise Foote, or Becky Martin for more information.



## Electronics Recycling on Climate Justice Team Agenda

In February, we brought together an enthusiastic group of church members who want to reduce their use of plastic. As this article was written halfway through the month-long Plastic-Free Challenge, Excelsior Methodists Punt Plastics was in 19<sup>th</sup> place out of 238 teams and had taken actions that saved 81 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere!

The electronics recycling event is for our church and members of the community. Many items, such as laptops, notebooks, gaming systems, cell phones, and EV, cell phone and lead acid batteries are free to recycle. Items with a fee include DVD and Blu-Ray players, boom boxes, speakers, TVs, printers, microwaves, and air conditioners. For a complete list, see [ecyclemn.com/items-accepted-for-recycling/](http://ecyclemn.com/items-accepted-for-recycling/).

In the hope of attracting more participants, we are looking for a location that is more visible and easily accessible than our church parking lot. If you have any ideas, please talk to one of our team members: Dave Abramson, Jackie Colby, Susan Dragsten, Jeffrey Johnson, and Duffy Larsen-Abramson. Watch the bulletin and Thursday emails for more information.



# STAND. FOR JUSTICE

# FIGHT TODAY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

### Tree Planting with Native American Pipe Ceremony to Celebrate Earth Day

Our Climate and Racial Justice Teams are planning a special celebration of Earth Day on April 27. As part of the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day, we are planning to explore the deforestation caused by toilet paper and other paper demand. There will be a tree-planting ceremony following worship. We will highlight the 2025 Theme *Our Power – Our Planet* by sharing the story of a community Protest to save Minnehaha Falls neighborhood and sacred sites of the Mendota Mdewakanton Sioux Community.

Tribal Chair, Sharon Lennartson will be present to share the story of her community's protest of the Re-route of Hwy 55 in 1999. It was the longest occupation of urban land in recent US history. It led to the destruction of four Bur Oak Trees which were the center of Native celebrations on their sacred site.

The tree we will plant was a sapling grafted from a twig of one of the four trees. Lee Newcomb of our congregation, with ties to the Mendota Mdewakanton community, gifted us with this so that we might be a part of this generational restoration. The acceptance of this tree honors the Hwy 55 protest and celebrates our share belief in protecting the earth and creating a sustainable future.

Plan to attend our worship on April 27 and participate in the tree planting and Native Pipe Ceremony following the worship service.

### Highway 55 protesters rebuild in the wake of state's bulldozers

Campaign against  
planned reroute  
continues in the  
courts and at site



Photos from the Village publication, January 20, 1999. At left, a woman climbed an oak tree laying in the path of the planned reroute and strung yarn to jam any chainsaw used in felling the tree. At right, three men construct a shelter for protestors.



## CALENDAR

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

### Sundays in March

10am- Worship and Sunday School  
March 2- Children's Interactive worship, communion, no Sunday School  
11am- Children's Choir rehearsal

### Mondays in March

7:30am- Men's Bible Breakfast  
9:30am- Bible Study with Pastor Brooke  
11am- Brown Bag discussion group

### Tuesdays in March

2pm- Balance & Stretch with Tiffany

### Wednesdays in March

7pm- Choir rehearsal

### Saturdays in March

8am- Men's Support Group

### Tuesday, March 4

5pm- Simpson meal service

### Wednesday, March 5

6pm- Soup Dinner  
6:30pm- Ash Wednesday worship

### Thursday, March 6

6:30pm- Anti-Racism Team meeting

### Friday, March 7

5pm- Youth Late-In until 11pm

### Wednesday, March 12

3pm- ICA Food Shelf  
6pm- Youth Group & Confirmation  
Mentor night

### Thursday, March 13

1pm- Sarah/Lydia Circle

### Sunday, March 16

11:15am- Contemplative Practice

### Tuesday, March 18

6:30pm- Leadership meeting at EUMC

### Wednesday, March 19

6pm- Soup Dinner  
6:30- Lenten service

### Monday, March 24

1pm- Cover Girls book group

### Wednesday, March 26

3pm- ICA Food Shelf  
6pm- Confirmation

### Sundays in April

10am- Worship and Sunday school  
11am- Children's Choir rehearsal  
April 6- Communion  
April 13- Children's Interactive Palm Sunday worship, no Sunday School  
April 20- Easter worship at 9am and 10:30pm (livestream)

### Mondays in April

7:30am- Men's Bible Breakfast  
9:30am- Bible Study with Pastor Brooke  
11am- Brown Bag discussion group

### Tuesdays in April

2pm- Balance & Stretch with Tiffany

### Wednesdays in April

7pm- Choir rehearsal

### Saturdays in April

8am- Men's Support Group

### Tuesday, April 3

6:30pm- Anti-Racism Team meeting

### Wednesday, April 9

3pm- ICA Food Shelf  
6pm- Soup Dinner  
6:30pm- Lenten service

### Thursday, April 10

1pm- Sarah/Lydia Circle

### Sunday, April 13

11:15am- Contemplative Practice

### Tuesday, April 15

5pm- Simpson meal service

### Wednesday, April 16

6pm- Youth Group

### Friday, April 18

7pm- Good Friday worship

### Saturday, April 19

11am- Easter Egg Hunt  
11:15am- Community Brunch

### Tuesday, April 22

6:30pm- Leadership meeting- virtual

### Wednesday, April 23

3pm- ICA Food Shelf  
6pm- Confirmation

### Monday, April

1pm- Cover Girls book group

### Sundays in May

10am- Worship and Sunday school  
May 4- Children's Interactive worship, Communion, no SS  
May 18- Confirmation Sunday

### Mondays in May

7:30am- Men's Bible Breakfast  
9:30am- Bible Study with Pastor Brooke  
11am- Brown Bag discussion group

### Tuesdays in May

2pm- Balance & Stretch with Tiffany

### Wednesdays in May

7pm- Choir rehearsal

### Saturdays in May

8am- Men's Support Group

### Thursday, May 1

6:30pm- Anti-Racism Team meeting

### Wednesday, May 7

6pm- Youth Group

### Thursday, May 8

1pm- Sarah/Lydia Circle

### Tuesday, May 13

5pm- Simpson meal service

### Wednesday, May 14

3pm- ICA Food Shelf  
6pm- Youth Group & Confirmation  
Banquet

### Sunday, May 18

11:15am- Contemplative Practice

### Monday, May 19

1pm- Cover Girls book group

### Wednesday, May 21

6pm- Youth Group

### Wednesday, May 28

3pm- ICA Food Shelf  
6pm- Youth Group Party



# FINANCE TEAM REPORT

## 2024 Update:

We finished 2024 slightly better than break-even. This is a big, positive step in the right direction and could not have been done without your willingness to significantly increase financial contributions. Our leadership team also reduced costs compared to our approved budget, primarily due to the timing of filling open staff positions due to retirement & limiting property spending to break/fix activities.

## 2025 Forecast:

Based on your feedback via contribution cards, we are forecasting \$540k in contributions in 2025. This represents a 10% increase over 2024 and puts us more than 50% of the way to a \$600k operating budget - where we feel we need to be to support our growing congregation and ministries.

Our cost outlook is comparative to prior years in both composition and total spend. We have budgeted \$539k in expenses, which will effectively keep us at "status quo" operations, but does not address larger, one-time expenses (parking lot, roof) that are not included in the budget.

EUMC is in a unique position. We are growing our impact in both breadth and depth within our local & faith communities, and to continue supporting that exciting trajectory, we need to continue our focus on expanding giving and prudent spending.

## Capital Campaign Update:

The end of 2024 marked the conclusion of the 3-year giving period ('22-'24) for the capital campaign that financed our recent renovations. We finished the year with approximately \$310k on our line of credit. Any additional donations prior to the conversion of the line of credit (est. June 2025) will be automatically applied to our line of credit to reduce financing costs.

~Tyler Cronk and Beverly Eckhardt

## Holiday Building Hours

The building and office are closed  
Monday, April 21  
Monday, May 26



# 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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## STAFF

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*Instrumentalist & Songwriter*

**JAMES LeVOIR**

*A/V Coordinator*

**BLAIR PRAX**

*Custodian*

**ALYSSA SMITH**

*Nursery Childcare*

**JAMIE RAHM**



*Nursery Childcare*



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