

# NEWSLETTER

## BUILD. SERVE. STAND.



JOIN US FOR WORSHIP  
Sundays at 10am



SHORELINES  
Sept. - Nov. 2025

# PASTORAL UPDATE



The start of fall brings with it new rhythms and routines and activity. It can be stressful, even when it's fun and delightful. The ease and carefree nature of summer in our house is quickly replaced with schedules, homework, cross-country meets, mountain bike races, chess club, music lessons, and youth group. We have a fairly complicated family calendar. I adore back-to-school season for many reasons, but also notice that my stress level is higher.

We all know that chaos and stress are not limited to one particular season of the year or time of life. Your specifics may be different, and yet we all have a need for a faith foundation that can sustain us through a variety of stages and chapters in life. There are a few practices that have been grounding me lately that I will prioritize this fall in the midst of the chaos. I hope you will take some time to be intentional about the faith practices, old or new, that you want to prioritize in the next three months. Here are some of mine:

- Gratitude - I've been practicing gratitude through a nightly journal that rests on my nightstand. It's small, so I can only fit a handful of words on it. Every evening, I jot down at least one thing from that day for which I am grateful. I also recently completed a 'City of Gratitude' puzzle that features gratitude in a whimsical way. As I did the puzzle, I brainstormed ideas for our first ever Gratitude Festival, which will be held on Wednesday, November 19. Stay tuned for more info!
- Movement - I recently started Pilates classes and have found it to be a great way for my body to feel connected, healthy and calm. It grounds me and is helping me connect my body to my mind and my soul. If I can't get to a Pilates class and don't feel up for a run, I go out for a walk. Walking helps me to pay attention to God's creation and my company.
- Reading - It's no secret that I love to read. Reading for me is one of the ways that I grow my empathy and take the focus off of myself. It's rare for me not to root for a character that the author wants me to cherish. As one author, Taylor Jenkins Reid, wrote to her daughter what she wanted her to glean from her writing was that "there are so many different ways to live your life." Each one is valuable, and reading about the diversity of characters, fictional or not, widens my ability to see the depth of others.
- Meditation - I'm currently listening to Oliver Burkeman's "Meditations for Mortals." 40 meditations that are 5-8 minutes long each-a small nugget to ponder. I am also a big fan of the app Calm, and listen to their sleep meditations or stories when I'm feeling particularly restless or wound up.

I hope our fall sermon series helps you reflect on what practices you want to claim for this particular time and season in your life. It can be a small practice that takes one minute, or a handful of different ones that captivate your spirit. May they ground you to weather the ups and downs that come your way.

With gratitude for you,  
Pastor Brooke

**BROOKE HEERWALD STEINER**  
LEAD PASTOR

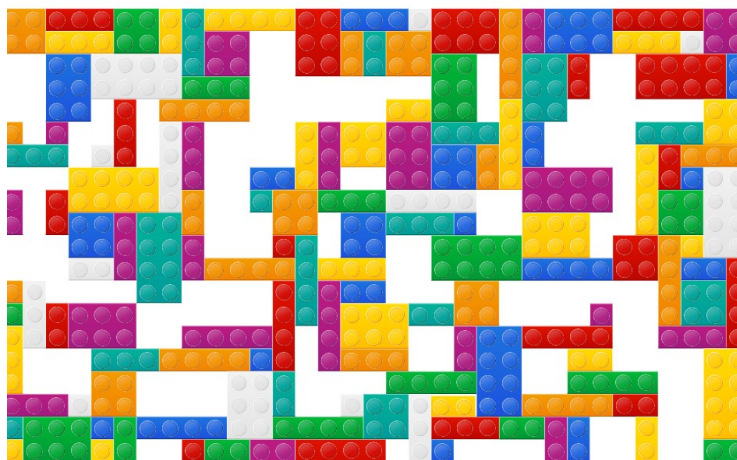
brooke@excelsiorumc.org  
office: 952.474.5471 x103

BUILD. SERVE. STAND.



# CURRENT SERMON SERIES

## BRICK *by* BRICK



*Brick by Brick: Building a Life of Faith* is a fall sermon series that uses Legos to explore how our lives of faith are built piece by piece. Just like every Lego creation needs a strong foundation and every piece matters, our faith grows as we learn, practice, and build together in community. Sometimes what we build falls apart, but God is always with us, helping us create something new. Together, we'll discover what it means to build lives—and a world—rooted in love, hope, and joy.



## Blessing of the Backpacks and Kickoff Sunday on September 7

Join us Sunday, September 7 for a celebration to kick off the beginning of the school year! All students are invited to bring their backpacks for a special blessing during worship.

After worship, all ages are invited to stay for fellowship, food, and fun - including an inflatable obstacle course!



## Holiday Building Hours

The building and office are closed  
Wednesday, November 26 and  
Thursday, November 27.



# BUILD. COMMUNITY



## CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

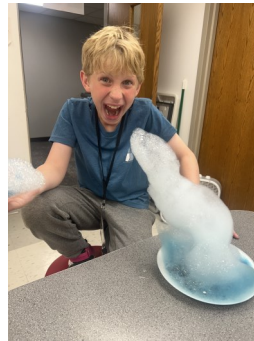
### Fall Kick-Off on Sunday, September 7 at 10am

Our 2025-2026 children's ministry programming kicks off with a Blessing of the Backpacks in worship, our first day of fall Sunday School, and fellowship, food, and fun following worship. Our children's ministry is continuing to grow! We are excited to be able to provide age-specific activities for our children. We are asking all parents to volunteer at Sunday School once a month to make this possible. As always, non-parent volunteers are also welcome!

---

### *True North: Trusting Jesus in a Wild World VBS 2025*

We had an exciting week at True North VBS, where kids learned how to trust Jesus in our wild world. Thirty children attended VBS, and we had a record number of volunteers, including many of our middle and high schoolers. Thank you to everyone who participated to make this week possible!



---

## Upcoming Fall Family Events - Mark your Calendars

October 5: Degler Farm at 1pm  
October 25: Trunk or Treat at 2pm





## YOUTH MINISTRY

There is a lot to look forward to with Youth Group at EUMC this school year!

Youth Group will be weekly on Wednesdays from 6-8pm. We will start each evening with eating dinner and visiting together in community. We will connect with songs, prayer and curriculum conversations. We will end with a favorite game – anything from Apples to Apples to Sardines!



Our curriculum this year is from *Shine: Living in God's Light*. There are 3 units we will dive into:

- *Seeking Justice Together* explores justice and focuses on Jesus' call for justice, *Caring for the Vulnerable*, and *Setting Things Right*.
- *Seeking God Together* explores spiritual practices that can deepen and transform our relationship with God and others. We will discover *God Within Us*, *God Above Us*, and *God Beside Us*.
- *Seeking Peace Together* explores God's shalom in worship and faith formation classes. The Hebrew word *shalom* means "peace," and it signifies all of life being complete, healthy, and whole. In this section we will search for ways to find *Peace with God*, *Peace Within*, *Peace with Others*, and *Peace with Creation*.

Youth Group Kick-Off is Wednesday, September 10. We are excited to have Tiffany Frazier joining us for some Faith & Fitness!

## Youth SummerFest Camp at Gustavus



Off to Summer Festival Camp!



Arrive at camp



Messy fight fun



Silent disco



Candy store visit

## Adult Groups at EUMC

Are you looking to get more connected with other adults at EUMC? Below is a list of our current adult groups that meet weekly, monthly or a couple times a year. Please see EUMC website for most updated information.

### Men's Bible Study

**Monday, 7:30-9am, weekly**

A group of men who meet for book discussions and to support each other. September 1 we will discuss the book "If You Want to Walk on Water You Have to Get Out of the Boat" by John Ortberg. Join us for donuts and discussion. Contact Lynn Hughes.

### Pastor's Bible Study

**Monday, 9:30-10:30am, weekly**

Pastor Brooke leads a discussion of the upcoming week's scripture. No preparation required- just come! Starts September 8. Meets at EUMC. Contact Pastor Brooke.

### Brown Bag Discussion Group

**Monday, 11am-noon, weekly**

A women's group who meet to discuss books and current events. Contact Kay Thompson.

### Walking Prayer Ministry- *new this fall*

**Tuesday, 1:30pm, weekly**

Join a group of adults for a walk inside the church, praying for those in our church family and faith community. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes and bring your water bottle. Contact Tiffany Frazier.

### Balance & Stretch

**Tuesday, 2pm, weekly**

A gentle exercise class. We use chairs for seated exercises, if desired. There is no charge, but attendees are encouraged to bring donations for our Little Free Pantry each week. Contact Tiffany Frazier.

### Men's Support Group

**Saturday, 8-10am, weekly**

A group of men who meet to share updates on their lives and support one another. Contact Jeffrey Johnson.

### Sarah/Lydia Circle

**2nd Thursday, 1 pm, monthly**

A women's group who meet for connection, service and learning. Contact Joyceln Hughes.

### Contemplative Practices Group

**3rd Sunday, 11:15am-1pm, monthly**

Each month focuses on a new contemplative prayer practice. Contact Pastor Brooke.

### Cover Girls Book Group

**4th Monday, 1pm, monthly**

Books and discussion leaders are chosen at a get together in June, followed by lively discussions each month. Contact Sue Judd.

### Prime Timers

Adults (primarily age 60 and up), meet for fellowship, prayer, and various social events, including a weekend get-away, throughout the year. Contact Kristie Lester or Susan Dragsten.

### Dine Around- *new this fall*

Starting in October, "Dinner for eight" informal potlucks will meet 5 to 6 times during the year. Each month the "diners" are mixed up so that you are always meeting with different people. Singles or couples, young or old are all welcome. Contact Kay Thompson, Joyceln Hughes, Sarah Nelson.





# LEADERSHIP

Hello EUMC Community!

As we step into fall, I'm especially grateful for the ways God continues to move in and through our church family. Here are a few updates from our Leadership Team, along with some big thank-yous.

## Staffing

SPRC spent August interviewing for our new office administrator. In the meantime, wonderful folks stepped up to cover office needs—we can't thank them enough for keeping things running smoothly.

## Sabbatical

Looking ahead, Pastor Brooke will be taking a 20-week sabbatical in late spring and summer of 2026. We'll know by early September about funding, and more details will be shared as plans come together. For now, just know it's on the horizon, and we're excited to see how God will use that season of renewal.

## Shout-Outs & Thank-Yous

- To our music ministry—you continue to bring such creativity and beauty to worship. Your gifts are deeply valued!
- To everyone who helped with Vacation Bible School—what a joy to have a record number of kids this year!
- To the team that prepared for Kick-Off Sunday (Sept. 7)—thank you for making it the BEST!  
To all who quietly fill in and support church life—your steady hands and hearts are a true blessing.

## Property & Future Planning

At So-Hi Community Park, we've received a preliminary sketch with ideas for adding shade and expanding possibilities for our green space—an exciting step forward!

Finally, we've been encouraged by the positive response to launching a capital campaign this fall. This will help us address both our debt and property needs, ensuring we continue to grow in ministry together.

As always, we are here for you.

Your Leadership Team:

Julie Newell (Chair)

Sarah Nelson (Communications)

Kurt Jewell & Gabe Wiebenga (Finance)

Bill Lester & Phil Pulitzer (SPRC)

Jennifer Brady Johnson & Beth Firkins (Ministry Teams)

Jim Stromberg & Lynn Hughes (Trustees)

# SERVE. OTHERS



## OUR COMMUNITY

### Llamas & the Library at So-Hi Park

Over 200 people enjoyed spending time with llamas and friends!



### Backpack Giveaway

Thanks to your generosity we were able to provide backpacks and school supplies to 92 members of our local community! Our students included new preschoolers and new college students along with our traditional K-12 students. This year we also had the opportunity to provide 40 refurbished laptops which were gifted via a lottery. Our families expressed their gratitude time and time again. We couldn't have done it without your donations and volunteer help.



We will be hosting our third annual Reverse Advent Event again this year. Last year we had over 40 families participate. They provided much needed food and household supplies for use in the Little Free Pantry. We will have more information available in November.

### Elizabeth Guillaume, Office Administrator



Elizabeth joined the Excelsior UMC staff this month as Office Administrator. She brings more than a decade of experience in nonprofits and social service organizations, with a focus on supporting immigrant and refugee communities.

She studied at the University of Notre Dame and Florida International University and is fluent in Spanish.

Elizabeth grew up in Chanhassen and now lives in Victoria with her two children, Nico and Francesca. She loves experimenting with new recipes, planning her next travel adventure, learning new words, and hunting for treasures at thrift shops.



# STAND. FOR JUSTICE



FIGHT TODAY  
FOR A BETTER  
TOMORROW

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

### Social Justice Ministry Team Makes Changes for Better Impact

The direction of the social justice ministry at EUMC was at the top of the Social Justice Team's meeting agenda in August.

The 17 people attending discussed how the team was divided into two groups—one working on racial justice issues and the other on environmental justice concerns—for the past several years. Pastor Brooke talked about the results of the brainstorming meetings she held in April to try to determine which social justice issues our congregation is passionate about. The results were too diverse to narrow down to a just few topics.

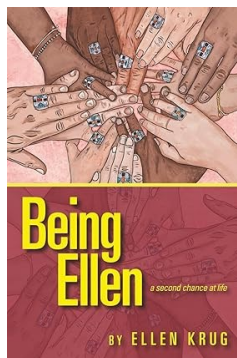
The consensus at the August meeting was that working as one large group will allow the team to have more impact. The large group will meet monthly to plan resources, education, and experiences for the congregation. Smaller task forces will be organized to carry out those experiences. The goal is that using short-term task forces will enable more people to be involved in social justice ministry.

**Next meeting Sept. 18:** Social Justice Team meetings will be on the third Thursday of each month, with the Sept. 18 meeting agenda dedicated to choosing the event topics for 2025-26.

### Fall Social Justice Events

#### ***Being Ellen* Book Discussion with Ellen Krug on Nov. 3**

Ellie Krug will return to EUMC to discuss her latest book, *Being Ellen: A Second Chance at Life*, on Monday, Nov. 3, at 6:30 pm. Ellie is an engaging and inspiring speaker who has become a powerful advocate for inclusivity since she transitioned to being female at the age of 52. EUMC invited her two years ago to talk about her first memoir, and the event was extremely meaningful and well received. You can buy copies of *Being Ellen* in the church lobby beginning in September.



#### **How Our Food Choices Affect Our Health and the Environment, Oct. 23, St. Luke Presbyterian**

Several members of the Social Justice Team are helping to plan an event about food and the impact of diet on food security and on the health of our planet. The event is sponsored by a group of west metro congregations that work together to promote environmental causes. It will be held on Oct. 23 at St. Luke Presbyterian Church in Minnetonka. Details remain to be worked out, but the evening may include a vegan dinner and a panel discussion. The goal is for participants to learn how they can eat more sustainably and help to reduce food insecurity.



## CALENDAR

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

### Sundays in September

10am- Worship and Sunday School  
Sept. 14- Communion

### Mondays in September

7:30am- Men's Bible Breakfast  
9:30am- Bible Study with Pastor Brooke  
beginning the 8th  
11am- Brown Bag discussion group

### Tuesdays in September

1:30pm- Walking Prayer Ministry  
2pm- Balance & Stretch with Tiffany

### Wednesdays in September

6pm- Youth Group beginning the 10th  
7pm- Choir rehearsal

### Saturdays in September

8am- Men's Support Group

### Tuesday, September 9

6:30pm- Leadership meeting- virtual

### Wednesday, September 10

3pm- ICA Food Shelf

### Thursday, September 11

1pm- Sarah/Lydia Circle

### Tuesday, September 16

12 to 6pm- Blood Drive

### Thursday, September 18

6:30- Social Justice Team

### Sunday, September 21

11:15am- Contemplative Practice

### Monday, September 22

1pm- Cover Girls book group

### Tuesday, September 23

10m- Simpson meal service

### Wednesday, September 24

3pm- ICA Food Shelf

### Monday, September 29

10am- Simpson lunch meal service

### Sundays in October

10am- Worship and Sunday school  
Oct. 5- Communion and Children's  
Interactive worship, no Sunday School

### Mondays in October

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

### Tuesdays in October

1:30pm- Walking Prayer Ministry  
2pm- Balance & Stretch with Tiffany

### Wednesdays in October

6pm- Youth Group  
7pm- Choir rehearsal

### Saturdays in October

8am- Men's Support Group

### Sunday, October 5

11:15am- New Member class

### Sunday, October 5

1pm - Degler Farm Family Event

### Wednesday, October 8

3pm- ICA Food Shelf

### Thursday, October 9

1pm- Sarah/Lydia Circle  
6:30pm- Social Justice Team

### Sunday, October 19

11:15am- Contemplative Practice

### Tuesday, October 21

5pm- Simpson meal service

### Saturday, October 25

2pm- Trunk or Treat

### Wednesday, October 22

3pm- ICA Food Shelf

### Sunday, October 26

11:15am- Leadership meeting at EUMC

### Monday, October 27

1pm- Cover Girls book group

### Sundays in November

10am- Worship and Sunday school  
Nov. 2- Communion  
Nov. 23- Children's Interactive worship,  
Communion, no SS

### Mondays in November

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

### Tuesdays in November

1:30pm- Walking Prayer Ministry  
2pm- Balance & Stretch with Tiffany

### Wednesdays in November

6pm- Youth Group  
7pm- Choir rehearsal

### Saturdays in November

8am- Men's Support Group

### Thursday, November 13

1pm- Sarah/Lydia Circle

### Sunday, November 16

11:15am- Contemplative Practice

### Tuesday, November 18

5pm- Simpson meal service

### Wednesday, November

6pm- Gratitude Festival

### Thursday, November 20

6:30- Social Justice Team

### Monday, November 24

1pm- Cover Girls book group



# FINANCE TEAM REPORT

The primary action for the finance team is finalizing plans to refinance our capital campaign bridge loan, which is the loan that funded the remainder of the building remodel. We have been gradually paying down the loan and have a current balance of \$316k. The existing loan needs to be refinanced by the first week of June and will be converted from an interest only loan to a traditional principal plus interest loan. Prior to refinancing we intend to use existing funds and recent donations to pay down the loan by an additional \$108K. The expected balance for the new loan will be a little over \$208k at 6.75%. This change will help lower our monthly operating expenses, as our loan payment will drop from \$2245 to \$1450 per month.

~Kurt Jewell, Gabe Wiebenga and Beverly Eckhardt



## 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

excelsiorumc.org 952.474.5471  
881 Third Ave, Excelsior, MN 55331

## STAFF

**REV. BROOKE HEERWALD STEINER**

*Lead Pastor*

Ext. 1 brooke@excelsiorumc.org  
651.238.5906

**JEANNIE SHUBITZ**

*Music Director*

**KALLIE STROH**

*Children's Ministries Director*

Ext. 4 kallie@excelsiorumc.org

**SARAH HEYD**

*Youth Ministries Director*

Ext. 2 sarah@excelsiorumc.org

**ELIZABETH GUILLAUME**

*Office Administrator*

Ext. 3 office@excelsiorumc.org

**BEVERLY ECKHARDT**

*Treasurer*

Ext. 5 bev@excelsiorumc.org

**JEFFERY FAWBUSH**

*Instrumentalist & Songwriter*

**JAMES LeVOIR**

*A/V Coordinator*

**BLAIR PRAX**

*Custodian*

**ALYSSA SMITH**

*Nursery Childcare*

**JAMIE RAHM**



*Nursery Childcare*



Non-Profit Organization  
Permit No. 39  
Excelsior, Minnesota  
U.S. Postage Paid

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

881 Third Avenue  
Excelsior, MN  
55331

 [excelsiorumc.org](http://excelsiorumc.org)  
 952.474.5471

BUILD  
COMMUNITY  
SERVE  
OTHERS  
STAND  
FOR JUSTICE