

NEWSLETTER

BUILD. SERVE. STAND.



JOIN US FOR WORSHIP
Sundays at 10am



SHORELINES
June - August 2026

SUMMER AT EUMC

This summer offers our congregation an opportunity to hear fresh voices, explore meaningful stories, and celebrate the many gifts within our church community while Pastor Brooke is on sabbatical. Throughout the season, we will gather for worship shaped by guest preachers, music, storytelling, and the shared experiences of our congregation.

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

JUNE: We are pleased to welcome guest preacher Rev. Dr. John F. Ross throughout the month of June as he leads us in worship and reflection.

JULY: On July 5, we will celebrate love of country and neighbor through music. Following that service, Pastor Terry Benedett-Farmer will lead us in a summer worship series. On July 26, we will also hear special music and stories shared by Jeff Fawbush and Eric Larson.

AUGUST: On August 2, we will join together for an ecumenical worship service at Excelsior Commons. Beginning the following week and continuing through September 6, members of our congregation will share their voices and perspectives through a lay preaching series.

GUEST PREACHER PROFILES



Rev. Terry Benedett-Farmer will serve as the primary point of contact during Pastor Brooke's sabbatical, providing pastoral care and leadership throughout the summer. She will also lead a sermon series in July. Pastor Terry spent her childhood in St. Charles, MN. She attended and worked at the University of Minnesota Cooperative Extension Service. After graduating with a B.A. in Philosophy & Religion from Midland Lutheran College, Fremont, NE she attended The Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO graduating in 1989 with a Master of Divinity. In 1990, she was ordained Elder in the Rocky Mountain Conference of the UMC continuing five generations of ministers in her family. Her ministry included serving congregations in Colorado and as District

Superintendent for churches from in the Denver/Colorado Springs area. In 1998 she was privileged to study in Jerusalem with Jews, Muslims and Christians from Denver and with UM leaders in Seoul, South Korea. With Larry she attended World Methodist Conferences in Brazil and England. Since retiring in 2008 she has helped care for grandchildren while enjoying "Life with Larry," skiing, camping, hiking and traveling. Their travels include visiting their children and grandchildren in Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Colorado and Minnesota. In 2022 they bought a home in Medina, MN and found their church home with Excelsior UMC. They feel very blessed to be serving Excelsior UMC with their granddaughters, Elle and Sophia and mother, Lisa Richter and friend, Jeff Fawbush. Jeff invited all of them to EUMC!



Reverend Dr. John F. Ross will serve as guest preacher from June 7 - June 28. Rev. John is the Executive Director of The Saint John's Bible Heritage Program at Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. The Heritage Program is an international initiative for individuals and institutions to explore the artistic and spiritual beauty of The Saint John's Bible—the first hand-written, hand-illuminated monumental Bible in 500 years. Prior to his work at Saint John's, he served for 18 years as the Senior Minister of Wayzata Community Church—a 3,000-member United Church of Christ congregation in Wayzata, Minnesota. John began his 30 years of ordained ministry at First Community Church, Columbus, Ohio where he was Senior Associate Minister for 12 years. John received his B.A. degree in

1989 from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He completed his Master of Divinity in 1995 at the Methodist Theological School of Ohio, and his Doctor of Ministry in May 2004 through the Chicago Theological Seminary. John is married to his college sweetheart, Sheila, and together they enjoy a full and fast-paced life with their four grown kids: Brady, Madeleine, Anne Marie, and Logan.



Summer Music Sundays

Lake season has arrived, and that means that it's time for our Summer Music Sundays! In the spirit of our exploration of storytelling, we have asked our resident composers & songwriters to share their music with us, along with their creative and inspirational processes. You've already had the pleasure of hearing from Jeff Whitmill on 5/31, and we will be hearing music and stories from Jeff Fawbush and Eric Larson on July 26th. Take a minute to read below to learn a little more about these marvelous creatives!

In addition, on July 5, we will be exploring love of country and neighbor through music. Please join us!



Eric Larson grew up in Long Lake, just north of here and begged his parents for a guitar when he was 13 so that he could accompany himself singing. Finding that he didn't have much patience for learning other people's songs, he almost immediately started writing his own and has continued to do so in the

ensuing 35 years. His songs seem to return again and again to a few essential themes: the magic that can be found in life's small, quiet moments and the joy and heartache of different kinds of human relationships.



Jeff Whitmill is a composer, arranger, and conductor who has taught bands, orchestras, and choirs in schools, and who had led the same aggregations in community ensembles. With only a few exceptions, he's written ensemble music for groups with which he was affiliated, either by playing French Horn in them or leading them. Most of the

pieces were for single performances, though a few of the band pieces and several choral anthems have been repeated. He has also written 428 descants for church choirs and instrumental soloists in the United States and several foreign countries. He has worked in over 40 musical theatre productions, mostly as Music Director or Conductor, but occasionally throwing in some scoring assistance or sound design. The first public performance of his work was when he was in high school and wrote music (and a few lyrics) for a musical version of a Moliere comedy, *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*. His wife, Glenna, played key roles in overseeing logistics and occasionally covering percussion parts, as needed. They are both very much enjoying the wonderful quality of the music here at EUMC.



Jeff Fawbush: Jeff's first instrument, around age 10, was a baritone ukulele. He moved on to a six string acoustic guitar as an eighth grader. He had a short stint as a percussionist in junior high, then took up flute and saxophone in high school and college. Though Jeff received a teaching degree in music from

Moorhead State University, he never really felt called to teaching. "There is too much I myself need to learn," he says.

Jeff is very grateful for the opportunity to serve at EUMC and has come to believe in the power of music to convey messages of love, hope, and peace.

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES



Kids & Families: Summer at EUMC

Sunday School wrapped up the spring exploring Jesus’s miracles and teachings, along with the healing ministry of the disciples. Throughout the summer, children will continue learning stories from the prophets, Gospels, and letters as Sunday School meets during worship each week.

Vacation Bible School returns this summer with a “Superheroes” theme! Kids can look forward to Bible stories, skits, music, games, crafts, treats, and hands-on experiments as we explore faith, courage, and compassion together.

Families are also invited to enjoy several summer gatherings:

June 11 at 6:00 p.m. – Pizza and playground fun at So-Hi

June 17 at 6:00 p.m. – Picnic dinner and mini golf at Big Stone Sculpture Garden and Mini Golf

July 12 after worship – Water Day at EUMC

Watch the weekly email for additional details. We look forward to a fun and faith-filled summer together!



Registration is open for Vacation Bible School!

Join the fun! August 3-6

Time: 5:30 – 8pm daily (dinner included)

Who: Ages 4 to completed 5th grade. Youth in 6th grade and above can volunteer to help.

Cost: \$25/child, \$60/family max

Contact Kallie with questions. Email: kallie@excelsiorumc.org





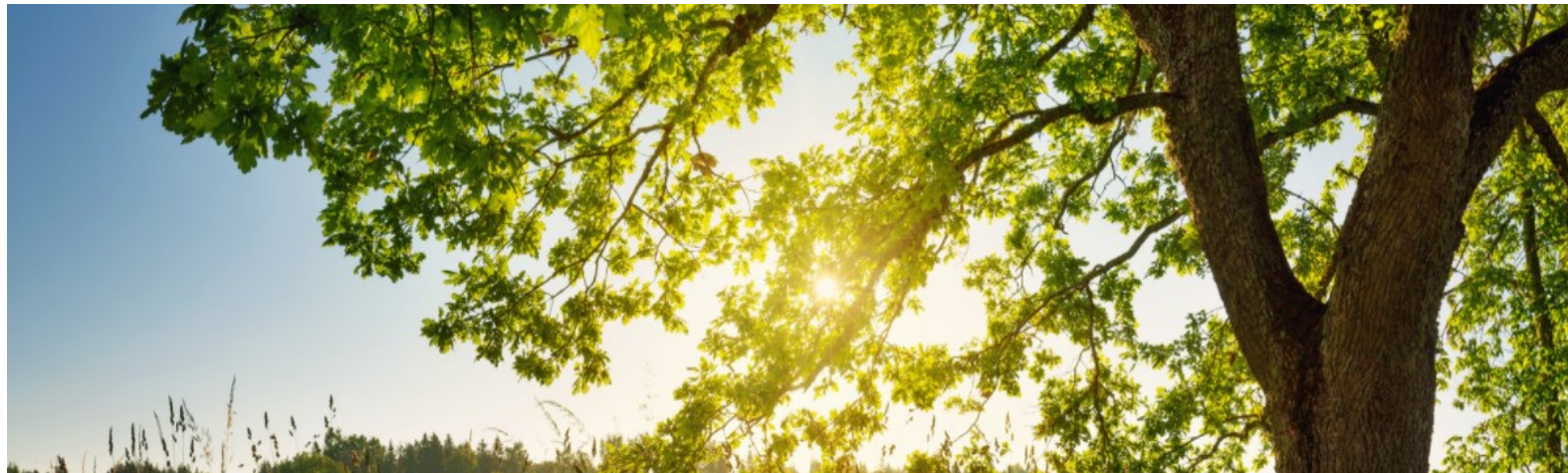
Youth Group 2025-26 Recap

We had such a fun and meaningful year in Youth Group! We played games all around EUMC inside and out, we baked treats, we performed skits, Pastor Brooke taught us about communion, we made kits for the Ukraine, we shared our musical talents during worship, we did team building activities, we went to each other's musicals at school, we did the hokey pokey, we had large group and small group time discussing our curriculum, we shared our highs and lows, we ate meals together thanks to many EUMC families! A very special thank you to Larry Farmer, Kurt Jewell, Marlee Mayo, Kallie Stroh, and all the adults that volunteered and supported us in Youth Group this year!

Youth Summer Fundraiser

An enormous THANK YOU to our EUMC congregation for the support of our Youth Summer Fundraiser! Every single envelope was taken and returned with either a payment enclosed or an online donation. We raised above and beyond what we were hoping for! The envelopes from 1-100 totaled \$5,050 in requests, and we raised \$5,303.88!!! The four middle school students going to Summer Festival Camp and the eight high school students going to Chicago for our service-learning trip are completely covered. Stay tuned for the next Shorelines article to hear all about it!





LEADERSHIP

As we move from spring into summer, the leadership team continues to see encouraging signs that the ministries of our church are thriving. In recent months, we have invested significant time preparing for Pastor Brooke’s sabbatical to ensure strong coverage plans were in place. Our staff team, with the support of Pastor Terry Benedett-Farmer, has faithfully maintained continuity and momentum across our ministries and in worship over the past several weeks.

Property Updates Beginning Soon:

The project to resurface the parking lot will begin soon as part of our ongoing commitment to providing a welcoming environment for everyone who visits our building. This important improvement to the first impression of our church has been made possible through the many generous commitments and gifts given toward our Foundational Generosity Campaign. Our contractor anticipates completing the work during the work week, and we do not expect Sunday worship parking to be impacted.

As we move forward with this project, our Trustees are working closely with So-Hi Community Park to coordinate these improvements with Phase 2 So-Hi Park improvements. This collaboration will help ensure a seamless and cohesive finished result for both the church and the broader community.

The Leadership Team is deeply grateful for the many ways our congregation continues to invest in this faith community. Thank you for your support through your time, talents, generosity, witness, and prayers. We invite everyone to remain engaged as we listen together and continue discerning how God is calling this congregation.

Your Leadership Team

Leadership Chair
Julie Newell

Communications
Kaitlin Holm

Finance
Kurt Jewell, Gabe Wiebenga

Ministry Team Liaisons
Jennifer Brady-Johnson,
Beth Firkins

Staff Parish
Phil Pulitzer, Bill Lester

Trustees
Lynn Hughes, Jesse Nelson



This summer we are embarking on a special journey to seek out and share the stories living right here within our congregation.

In June, we will gather for two storytelling experiences focused on how we serve and show up for one another and the world—through volunteering, caregiving, practicing self-care, building community, and pursuing justice and joy.

These gatherings are open to everyone - please RSVP to the office, John Peichel, or Sarah Nelson. Join us Sunday, June 14 (12:00–2:00 PM) at the Welles’ home or Tuesday, June 16 (6:00–8:00 PM) at the Lesters’ home. Every great storytelling experience needs both storytellers and listeners! We hope to see you there.



SO-HI COMMUNITY PARK

As the days grow longer and the weather warms, it's been wonderful to see neighbors and families returning to So-Hi Community Park. The playground continues to be a vibrant gathering space, filled with laughter, connection, and playing outside—just as it was intended.

This spring has also brought exciting momentum for what's ahead. We're grateful to share that alongside our Hennepin County Youth Activities Grant, we have received a generous \$50,000 donation from the Blythe Brenden-Mann Foundation to support garden improvements. We're especially excited to bring this vision to life as a thoughtfully designed sensory garden—an inviting space for all ages to explore, gather, and enjoy for years to come!

We're also beginning to see physical progress on site. Concrete work on new sidewalks is scheduled to begin in June, alongside improvements to the annex parking lot. From there, work will continue on the sport court surface and surrounding enhancements.

While this progress is exciting, we are still actively seeking additional community support to fully bring Phase 2 to life. Every contribution helps move the project forward and ensures this space can serve our neighborhood for years to come.

We're hopeful that by late summer, we'll be celebrating together in a newly improved and expanded space.

Thank you for being part of what makes So-Hi so special—we can't wait to share what's next.



Celebrating New Members

Please welcome this wonderful new member class!



Sean and Sara Johnson: Sean is a software tester at Entrust in Shakopee. Sara is a computer programmer at MEDITECH. They have two children, Mia and Luke. Sara enjoys scrapbooking, hiking, and sports. Sean enjoys golf, hiking and sports.



Emma Good and Grant Buchanan: Emma and Grant recently got engaged! Grant is a lawyer and Emma is in graduate school and works as a Personal Care Assistant. They were drawn to EUMC by the welcoming doors. Emma says "I was driving by and thought EUMC seemed very welcoming - I was right!"



Celia and Ed Schrotenboer: Celia and Ed both enjoy reading, travel, hiking and spending time with family. They have 5 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild. They have been married for 55 years! They are excited to be part of an all inclusive church and look forward to getting involved.

Sydney Hardek: Sydney loves all things sports. She also enjoys walking her dogs and reading. In college, Sydney was the mascot for the St. Paul Saints! Like many of our new members who were attracted by the welcoming doors, Sydney says, "the doors have just the right message."



OUTREACH MINISTRY

The Outreach Team has had a busy and meaningful spring serving our community. Our on-site ICA Food Shelf continues to operate on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, and we are beginning to see an increase in appointments after a slower start to the year. At our most recent event on May 13, we provided food for more than 45 families. We continue to work with community partners to ensure the safety of our clients.

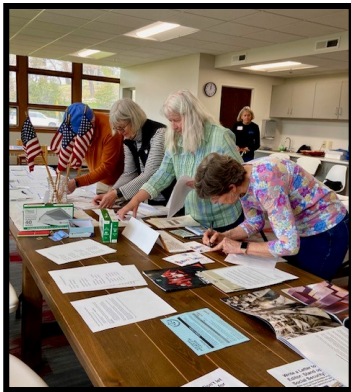
We also continue to maintain the Little Free Pantry, which is stocked daily with shelf-stable food, hygiene items, diapers, and household supplies. As summer begins and school is out, use of the pantry continues to grow. Thank you for your ongoing support of these important ministries.

In April, Outreach hosted a community meal during the EUMC Easter Egg Hunt, serving more than 100 children and adults. We are also preparing for the annual Backpack Giveaway on August 12. This event provided school supplies and backpacks to more than 90 students last year. Look for details as we get closer to the date of the event.

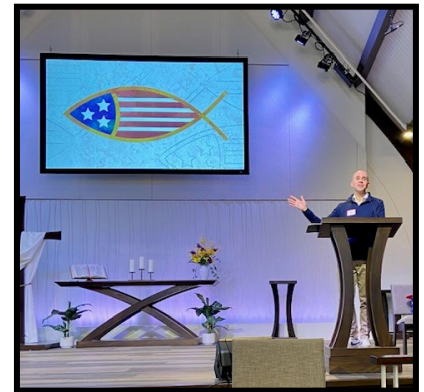
STAND FOR JUSTICE. SERVE OTHERS.

ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

In keeping with the EUMC's mission to Build Community, Serve Others, and Stand for Justice, the Environmental and Social Justice Ministry Team (ESJMT) hosted "Strengthening Democracy and Social Justice Day" on April 25 at EUMC. The popular event hosted over 65 guests from the church and the wider community.



Activities began with Keynote Speaker Rev. Dan Stark, Minister of Pastoral Care and Adult Education with Wayzata Community Church, and Chaplain in the Air Force Reserves. Rev. Stark's address, "Christian Nationalism - Under God or Under Control?," anchored the day's theme of identifying authoritarian creep within both the Christian church and civil society.



Following the keynote address, participants attended a variety of educational and action-oriented sessions focused on civic engagement, democracy, and responding to current social and political challenges. Activities included guided self-assessments to help participants identify their preferred approaches to

civic involvement, discussions on aligning personal values with public action, and conversations about recognizing and responding to authoritarianism. Throughout the day, attendees had opportunities to take direct action through letter-writing campaigns on issues including immigrant protections, environmental stewardship, and voting access, resulting in more than 140 letters sent to state and federal representatives. Local civic engagement organizations also shared resources and opportunities for continued community involvement. Special thanks to event co-chairs Marlys Gapstur-Sand and Duffy Larson-Abramson for co-chairing the event, EUMC staff for their support, and to the enthusiastic audience for making the day a success.

SIMPSON SHELTER

Since January, volunteers from our congregation have been serving dinners and some lunches at Simpson Shelter's newly remodeled facility. The updated space has been a wonderful improvement, featuring a modern, state-of-the-art kitchen that makes meal service more efficient and enjoyable for everyone involved.

Along with the new facility has come a new volunteer model. In the past, volunteers were responsible for bringing food, preparing it, and cooking meals. Today, meals are planned in advance, and volunteers simply arrive to help prepare, serve, and clean up after the meal. The streamlined process makes volunteering easier while continuing to provide meaningful opportunities to serve our neighbors.



We will be taking a break from dinner service during the summer and plan to resume in the fall. If you have ever considered volunteering with Simpson Shelter, we encourage you to sign up for a shift and experience the new facility and volunteer program firsthand.



Summer Calendar

Sundays: 10am - Worship & Sunday School

Communion on June 7, July 12 (second week in July due to July 5th being an All Music Sunday)

Ecumenical Service & Communion: August 2 (at Excelsior Commons)

Special Events & Services

Kickoff to Summer with Pizza at So-Hi Park Family Event: June 11 at 6pm

Storytelling/Listening Events: June 14 at 12pm at the Welles' home, and

June 16 at 6pm at the Lesters' home.

Red Cross Blood Drive: June 16 from 12pm-6pm

Big Stone Mini Golf Family Event: June 17 at 6pm

Water Day & Picnic: July 12 following worship

Summer Fest (Middle School Students): July 19-22

Service Learning Trip (High School Students): July 26-31

Vacation Bible School: August 3-6

National Night Out Community Meal: August 4

VBS and Youth Trip Celebration: August 16

Blessing of the Backpacks: August 30

Ministry and Group Meetings

Men's Bible Breakfast: Mondays at 7:30am

Pastor's Bible Study: Meeting at coffee shops during the summer. Please contact Pastor Terry for details.

Brown Bag: June 15, July 13, August 17 (11am)

Men's Support Group: Saturdays at 8am

ICA Food Distribution: June 10, June 24, July 8, July 22, August 12, August 26 (2pm - 5pm)

Leadership Meeting: July 20 (5:30pm)

Safety Team: July 21 (6pm)

Cover Girls: August 24 (1pm)

Please note that the following groups will not be meeting over the summer and will resume in September: Social Justice, Simpson, Sarah/Lydia Circle, Stretch & Balance, Music Groups.

Dates and events are subject to change.

Be sure to check the most up-to-date calendar on our website:

<https://excelsiorumc.org/calendar>

Looking Ahead: Shorelines

As we look to the future, we want to reaffirm our commitment to keeping our congregation informed and connected. Clear and effective communication is an important part of our life together as a church.

With that in mind, we want to let you know that Microsoft Publisher, the software currently used to produce Shorelines, is being discontinued. As there is no direct replacement planned, we are exploring new tools and evaluating the best ways to continue sharing news, ministry updates, and other important information. We will keep you informed as plans develop.

FINANCE REPORT

Thanks to your generosity, the church is in a strong situation financially through the first part of 2026. Giving is up 15% through the first four months. This will help the church manage through the summer.

As many have seen in our personal lives, costs have increased slightly in 2026 compared to last year, however, this was anticipated and the church continues to operate within its budget.

A key highlight so far was paying off one of two loans in the amount of **\$214,573** in February. This was the smaller remodel loan. This is a significant achievement for our congregation primarily made possible through the Foundational Generosity Capital Campaign. Reducing this debt allows us to direct more resources toward mission and ministry.

Thank you for your continued support of Excelsior United Methodist Church and its ministries. Your involvement makes this a thriving community spiritually and financially.

-Kurt Jewell & Gabe Wiebenga

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
881 Third Ave, Excelsior, MN 55331

STAFF

REV. BROOKE HEERWALD STEINER
Lead Pastor

JEANNIE SHUBITZ
Music Director
Jeannie@excelsiorumc.org

SARAH HEYD
Youth Ministries Director
952.474.5471 Ext. 2 | Sarah@excelsiorumc.org

KALLIE STROH
Children's Ministries Director
952.474.5471 Ext. 4 | Kallie@excelsiorumc.org

ELIZABETH GUILLAUME
Office Administrator
952.474.5471 Ext. 3 | Office@excelsiorumc.org

BEVERLY ECKHARDT
Treasurer
952.474.5471 Ext. 5 | Bev@excelsiorumc.org

BLAIR PRAX
Facilities Manager
Blair@excelsiorumc.org

JEFFERY FAWBUSH
Instrumentalist & Songwriter

JAMES LeVOIR
A/V Coordinator

ALYSSA SMITH
Nursery Childcare

DIANE BAYSINGER
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
 952.474.5471

